

# RES ANTIQUITATIS

JOURNAL OF ANCIENT HISTORY

VOLUME 4

Centro de História de Além-Mar

# CHAM

Universidade Nova de Lisboa  
Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas  
Universidade dos Açores

## **Res Antiquitatis. Journal of Ancient History**

Volume 4 / 2013

Published by

Centro de História de Além-Mar

Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas / Universidade Nova de Lisboa /

Universidade dos Açores

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[cham@fcsh.unl.pt](mailto:cham@fcsh.unl.pt)

ISSN 1647-5852

Copies: 250

Printed in Portugal by

PUBLITO – Estúdio de Artes Gráficas, Lda.

Parque Industrial de Pitancinhos

BRAGA – Portugal



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## Abstracts

## Guidelines for Contributors

# Editorial

Antiquity remains the horizon pursued by the works published herein. Its thread connects studies on Ancient History with other works that regard its influence in subsequent times, especially in European culture. To introduce the reader to the contributions selected for this volume, a good method is to walk backwards in time. Thus, we start in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Music and Literature. The *maestro* Davide Nadali conducts the music that reverberates in the first article, regarding 19<sup>th</sup> century Operas evoking Biblical figures of prophets, priests, impious kings and queens. Nebuchadnezzar or the mythical Semiramis, rulers of Babylonia, are two of the most interesting personages starring in such *libretti*, most of them composed by the talent of Nadali's own countryman, Rossini, Solera and, of course, Verdi.

José das Candeias Sales, on his turn, raises interesting reflections on how our own compatriot, the novelist Eça de Queirós, fashioned the literary characters of two travel comrades in the Middle East, a German and a Portuguese. Although both men shared a common European and Christian background, Eça de Queirós uses the Holy Land as a mirror presenting each other's personalities and cultures very differently.

José Jorge Gonçalves takes us still back further, to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, with his depiction of the manner how a Benedictine chronicler, Friar Leão de São Tomás, conceived the origins of monasticism by relating it to the *exempla* of the ancient Hebrew prophets and other heterodox movements before the rise of Christianity.

We must skip further back in time, right to Antiquity, where Nuno Simões Rodrigues, in the Greco-Roman world, tries to understand

how the Athenian *polis* coped with the meddling between private and public spheres.

L. Battini, on her side, inquires if ancient Mesopotamians, namely the Assyrians, left traces, in the surviving sources, of aesthetic judgments separating official “fine arts” from other arts and crafts, that would be considered, through a modern perspective, as “popular” or “minor”.

Adriaan de Man and Sandra Marques offer, in this volume, a short note as a preliminary study about ancient Greek vases in Portugal, probably Nikosthenic. It contributes for the knowledge about Greek artefacts in Portuguese collections, and also for its understanding among different styles, provenances and producers.

Luna Watkins wishes to attain a somewhat more ambitious goal. The short note she presents reflects the groundwork she has been developing on the relationship between concepts and definitions in ancient Mesopotamian religion.

Finally, the interview with Professor Pascal Vernus, the eminent French Egyptologist, is one of the highlights in this volume. We are all very grateful to the kindness he dispensed to us by sharing some of the stories and experiences of his life and career – it was only possible because of the not lesser consideration of our dear Colleague and Teacher, Professor Maria Helena Trindade Lopes.

Francisco Caramelo  
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Studies

RES  
ANTI Q



# Nebuchadnezzar, King of Assyria. Rewriting Ancient Mesopotamian History in Fiction

Davide Nadali  
Sapienza Università di Roma

NABUCCO  
*O prodi miei, seguitemi  
S'apre alla mente il giorno;  
Ardo di fiamma insolita,  
Re dell'Assiria io torno!*

T. Solera, *Nabucco*, Part IV, Scene II

*Nebuchadnezzar, Sardanapalus, or Ninus himself,  
for we don't know his actual identity, but the Assyrians' monarch,  
in any case, sets foot on the banks of the Seine.*

*L'Illustration*, 1847  
(Quoted by Bohrer 2003, 66.)

The depiction of the Ancient Orient, in literature and in images, began in Europe well before the actual discoveries of the ancient Near Eastern civilisations that once populated the regions of Mesopotamia. This imaginative repertoire of accounts and paintings sought to represent the cities, buildings, and people of the ancient Near East according to the canon of invention by adopting and re-interpreting Greek historians and the Bible as the most authoritative sources. Moreover, these reconstructions, although built upon clichés and stereotypes,

had longevity since they were in part used and adapted by archaeologists themselves immediately after the discoveries of the ancient past of Assyria in northern Iraq in 1842. It seems that the strong and well-anchored repertoire of imaginative images of the ancient Orient persisted, contrary to archaeological data (sometimes misinterpreted owing to the inaccuracy of archaeological methods at the time), and were, in some way, necessary to make the ruins of the cities of ancient Assyria visible and understandable to 19<sup>th</sup> century European audiences. The objective was now different but worked through the same system of references and representations to try to balance reality and invention.

The creation of stage sets for the operas which deal with stories and characters of the ancient Orient faced the same problems and therefore solutions, particularly in a period in which nothing was known of the forms of ancient cities and buildings: for that reason, the city of Babylon and the palace of Queen Semiramis were conceived by the mixing of Egyptian and Persian architectural features, even inserting Indian elements and details of the Ottoman architecture and fashion (in fact this was the Orient known by stage designers of 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe)<sup>1</sup>.

Something changed after 1842, when the archaeological exploration of ancient Assyrian cities began with the French and British discoveries at the cities of Khorsabad and Nineveh, and the Assyrian galleries (with their displays of Assyrian and Mesopotamian sculptures) were opened in the Musée du Louvre and the British Museum. The quick diffusion, thanks to the publication of articles and pictures in popular newspapers and journals of the period, and the notoriety of the accounts by the British A. H. Layard<sup>2</sup>, allowed the stage designers of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to glean materials and references for a more accurate and reliable representation of events involving, for example, Semiramis and Nebuchadnezzar. These were two of the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Nadali 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Bohrer 2003, 132-167.

most representative cases: respectively the subjects of two important operas by Gioachino Rossini (*Semiramide*, 1823) and Giuseppe Verdi (*Nabucco*, 1842).

In particular, the opera *Nabucco* by Giuseppe Verdi represents a very interesting moment in the change of stage sets from its opening at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1842, the same year as the first archaeological explorations by the French consul Paul-Emile Botta started in the site of Kuyunjik in northern Iraq. However, this production of *Nabucco* in Milan was too early for the archaeological works in Assyria which only started at the end of 1842, and the first news of the discoveries of the ruins of the ancient Assyrian cities and sculptures of the royal palaces of the Assyrian kings reached Europe after Paul-Emile Botta left Kuyunjik to begin the excavations in the village of Khorsabad, north-east from Kuyunjik, in the spring of 1843<sup>3</sup>.

It has already been observed how the stage sets for the later productions of *Nabucco* were positively affected by the discoveries of the ancient Assyrian past<sup>4</sup>: elements of Assyrian culture, in particularly the large bull colossi and the bas-reliefs, were immediately perceived as the best elements for the precise connotation of the scenes, since they referred to an ancient Orient finally known through its original features. If the ancient Orient was at first seen and mediated through ancient Egypt and Persia, it could finally have its own personality and systems of reference, although Egyptianizing and Persian style attributes and features would continue to be used in the construction of the places of Queen Semiramis and King Nebuchadnezzar. Indeed, if we want to be philologically precise, even the use of the recently discovered ruins of ancient Assyria was inappropriate since Assyrian sculptures, jewellery, and costumes were in fact adapted to represent Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

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<sup>3</sup> Bohrer 2003, 71. Indeed, the discovery of the Assyrian palace and sculptures in Khorsabad was clearly described by Botta in letters he sent to Jules Mohl who published the correspondence in the *Journal Asiatique* as *Lettres de M. Botta sur ses découvertes à Khorsabad, près de Ninive* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1845). See Larsen 1996, 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Nadali 2010-11.

This confusion or, again, the mixing of different styles and cultures created a new hybrid subject, with crossed references to the ancient Mesopotamian world incorporating both Assyria and Babylonia: however, this interchangeable possibility was probably not so strange for both the stage designers and the audience that became familiar to these new representations which progressively (although not completely) substituted the Egyptian and Egyptianizing elements of the old (pre-1842) scenes.

The Italian poet Temistocle Solera (1815-1878) wrote the libretto of *Nabucco*: biblical references are explicit (each part of the libretto is preceded by a quotation of the prophet Jeremiah) and Solera used the original French tragedy *Nabuchodonosor* by Auguste Anicet-Bourgeois and Francis Cornu (1836) as inspiration. A ballet built upon the same French text had already been staged at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan in 1838, four years before the first production of Verdi's *Nabucco*. However, the text by Solera, while depending strongly on the original French tragedy (they have similar plot and characters), introduces changes in the arrangement of the story and, as we will see, Solera interchanges Assyria for Babylonia.

Beyond the text by Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu, which sources did Solera use for the drafting of his *libretto*? Did he know the previous works entitled *Nabucco* which refer to the deeds of the ancient king of Babylon? If the Bible was undoubtedly a major source, why did Solera so often interchange Babylonia and Assyria?

As we have already noted, Solera's main source was the Bible<sup>5</sup>. In fact, many references to the Bible are clearly identifiable throughout the libretto, and some characters (differently, for example, from the French text of Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu) are created and modelled upon biblical figures: the figure of the High Priest Zaccaria recalls the main and authoritative prophets of the Old Testament (such as

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<sup>5</sup> Later, in 1879, Giuseppe Verdi himself would declare to Giulio Ricordi how the *libretto* of *Nabucco* by T. Solera immediately attracted his attention: «Mi rincasai e con gesto quasi violento, gettai il manoscritto sul tavolo, fermandomisi ritto in piedi davanti. Il fascicolo cadendo sul tavolo stesso si era aperto: senza saper come, i miei occhi fissano la pagina che stava a me innanzi, e mi si affaccia questo verso: 'Va', pensiero, sull'ali dorate'. Scorro i versi seguenti e ne ricevo una grande impressione, *tanto*

Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Daniel), with his influential role and his God-given ability to predict the future<sup>6</sup>.

In Part III, Scene V, after the famous chorus of the Jews along the river Euphrates («Va', pensiero, sull'ale dorate»), Zaccaria blames his people for the lament and curses the future of Babylon<sup>7</sup>:

### ZACCARIA

Oh chi piange? Di femmine imbelli  
Chi solleva lamenti all'Eterno?...  
Oh, sorgete, angosciati fratelli,  
Sul mio labbro favella il Signor.  
Del futuro nel buio discerno...  
Ecco rotta l'indegna catena!...  
Piomba già sulla perfida arena  
Del leone di Giuda il furor!  
A posare sui cranî, sull'ossa  
Qui verranno le jene, i serpenti,  
Fra la polve dall'aure commossa  
Un silenzio fatal regnerà!  
Solo il gufo suoi tristi lamenti  
Spiegherà quando viene la sera...  
Niuna pietra ove sorse l'altiera  
Babilonia allo stranio dirà!<sup>8</sup>

---

*più che erano quasi una parafrasi della Bibbia, della cui lettura mi dilettao sempre* («I went back home and with an almost violent gesture I threw the manuscript on the table, standing before it. The manuscript, falling on the table, opened: I do not know how, but my eyes stared at the page it was in front of me and this verse, 'Fly, thought, on wings of gold', immediately appeared to me. I scan the following verses and I am really impressed particularly *because they were nearly a paraphrase of the Bible* that I read with pleasure»). Emphasis mine. See the episode as registered by Pougin (1886, 63).

<sup>6</sup> It has been suggested that the figure of Zaccaria might reflect, in role and temperament, the character of Moses in the opera *Mosé in Egitto* by G. Rossini (Petrobelli 1994). See also Ley 2010, 147-149.

<sup>7</sup> When quoting the names of the characters, I have chosen to follow the Italian spelling when I refer to the *libretto* by Solera and the French one when I refer to the tragedy by Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu, accordingly.

<sup>8</sup> T. Solera, *Nabucco*, Part III, Scene V: «Oh, who is it that weeps? Who is it raises lamentations, / as of timorous women, to the Everlasting? / Oh, rise up, brothers in anguish, / the Lord speaks from my lips. / In the obscurity of the future I see... / Behold, the shameful chains are broken! / The wrath of the Lion

His words find a nearly perfect parallel in the curses of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah:

«And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.

It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there.

But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.»

(Isaiah 13:19-21)

«Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad.

Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed.»

(Jeremiah 51:7-8)

The role of Zaccaria, as High Priest with prophetic prerogatives and skills, is in fact unanimously acknowledged by his people:

TUTTI

Oh, qual foco nel veglio balena!  
Sul suo labbro favella il Signor...<sup>9</sup>

---

of Judah / already falls upon the treacherous sand! / To settle upon the skulls, upon the bones, / hither come the hyenas and the snakes; / midst the dust raised by the wind / a doomed silence shall reign! / The owl alone will spread abroad / its sad lament when evening falls... / Not a stone will be left to tell the stranger / where once proud Babylon stood!».

<sup>9</sup> T. Solera, *Nabucco*, Part III, Scene V: «Oh, what a fire burns in the old man! / The Lord speaks through his lips!».

However, as we will see later, this undoubted reference to the Bible (almost a direct quotation) does not explain some incongruities in the libretto of the opera which are, on the contrary, absent from the French text.

Solera changes some other parts of the plot of the tragedy of Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu, concerning the relationships between Fenena and Ismaele, whose love story is slightly shortened and concentrated; again, other characters (Noemi; the women of the palace of Babylon; Manassès, Ismail's brother and ally of Abigaïl) are absent and one of the most incisive changes made by Solera concerns the role and temperament of Abigaille who, since the beginning, contrasts her sister Fenena and acts against the authority of Nabucco, king of Babylon<sup>10</sup>.

In fact, Abigaille in Solera's text, more than in the French tragedy, is a main protagonist of the story being a rival of her sister Fenena, since she also loves Ismaele and pretends to claim the power as the favourite daughter of the king of Babylon. In the opera, the sentimental rivalry between the two sisters is a classical situation occurring between two sopranos: the political rivalry increases and inflames the opposition between the two women, with the final Abigaille's sentence to death of her sister, the real daughter of the king of Babylon and, for that reason, the favourite. In the French tragedy by Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu, in the last scene of the Act Four, Phénenna is killed by her sister (then, thanks to divine will she returns to life) and Abigaïl is in turn killed by Nabuchodonosor himself with his sword. In the text by Solera, Fenena is saved by the sudden arrival of Nabucco before being sacrificed by the Babylonian priests and Abigaille commits suicide by swallowing poison.

In the opera by Verdi and Solera, Abigaille is a heroine with a great thirst for power: from her condition of slavery she became the queen of Babylon with the support of both the priests of the god Belo and the

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<sup>10</sup> In the French tragedy, *Nabuchodonosor*, Abigaïl first saves her younger sister Phénenna who was prisoner of the Jews. Then, Abigaïl's lust for power transforms the love for her sister into hate up to condemn her to death together with the Jews, after she usurped Nabuchodonosor's throne.

soldiers of the army. In particular, it seems that the figure of Abigaille, as shaped by the words of Solera and strengthened by the music of Verdi, recalls the temperament and behaviour of the Assyrian Queen Semiramis. This parallel seems particularly significant since Abigaille, although in Babylon and claiming the power of her father Nabucco, is named queen of Assyria.

Of course, the reference to Semiramis reflects European feelings towards the ancient Assyrian queen, and, more generally, women of the East: her description implies moral judgement on sexual behaviour and despotic behaviour<sup>11</sup>. In particular, Abigaille's warrior tendencies are pointed out (maybe with tacit allusions to possible sexual intercourse with the soldiers of her army, as is often also said of Semiramis)<sup>12</sup>: the support of the soldiers seems to be really important for her career of leader and queen of the city. This aspect can also be recognised in a passage of the text of Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu, when Abigaïl speaks to her sister, making clear the differences between their behaviours:

### ABIGAÏL

Faible enfant, tu veux lutter contre moi? Mais tu ne sais donc pas que la tendresse de Nabuchodonosor faisait toute ta puissance?... qui te soutiendra, qui te défendra maintenant?... le peuple? t'a-t-il jamais vue descendre jusqu'à lui? Ou, par un sourire, une faveur, l'as-tu jamais élevé jusqu'à toi? Non... Toujours enfermée dans ton palais... toujours entourée de tes femmes, t'es-tu jamais montrée aux soldats de notre père?... non... Moi, je suis connue du peuple qui m'a vue souvent le défendre et le proté-

---

<sup>11</sup> On how the figure of Queen Semiramis has been transformed and transposed in Europe since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see the detailed analysis and considerations by Asher-Greve 2007. On Semiramis as the main character in theatre and opera since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, see Ranzini 2012. See also Pinnock (2006, 233-248) and Seymour 2013.

<sup>12</sup> As reported by the Greek historian Ctesias (4<sup>th</sup> century BC) who, inventing the idea of the "Oriental Court", says that the Assyrian Queen Semiramis was used to physically eliminate all those soldiers with whom she had sexual relations. See Lanfranchi 2010, 42.

ger: de l'armée qui m'a vue combattre avec elle: j'aurai donc pour moi le peuple et l'armée... que te restera-t-il, à toi?<sup>13</sup>

Phénenna is devoted to palace life, sharing (wasting, in Abigail's opinion) her time with the women of the palace, as in fact happens in Scene II of Act II when the script expressly remarks that: «au lever du rideau, toutes ces femmes sont gracieusement étendues sur des divans ou sur de riches tapis. *A la mollesse de leur pose, à la richesse de leurs costumes, on reconnaît les femmes de Nabuchodonosor.* Des esclaves font brûler des parfums à leurs pieds»<sup>14</sup>, a very typical oriental scene according to the eyes and feelings of Europe at that time, full of prejudices and implicit judgments, as is clearly pointed out by the description of sluggishness of their poses.

Also in the text of Solera, Fenena is a weak woman who, having fallen in love with the Jewish Ismaele, converts herself to Judaism and frees the Jewish prisoners of Babylon. This act is harshly reproached by the High Priest of Belo, the god of Babylon, and for that reason Abigail is deserving of power:

GRAN SACERDOTE

Orrenda scena  
S'è mostrata agli occhi miei!  
[...]  
Empia è Fenena.  
Manda liberi gli Ebrei;  
Questa turba maledetta  
Chi frenar omai potrà?  
Il potere a te s'aspetta...<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> A. Anicet-Bourgeois and F. Cornu, *Nabuchodonosor*, Act II, Scene XIII.

<sup>14</sup> Emphasis mine.

<sup>15</sup> T. Solera, *Nabucco*, Part II, Scene I: «My eyes have witnessed/a terrible sight! / [...] Fenena is a wicked woman, she is setting the Hebrews free! / Who now can check/this accursed rabble? / Power awaits you...».

When dealing with this passage of power, from Nabucco (through Fenena) to Abigaille (by means of an insurrection supported and sided by the priests and soothsayers), Solera always refers to Assyria as the region and land claimed by Nabucco and his usurper daughter Abigaille. In fact, the words “Babylon” or “Babylonians” occur only three times in all of the text: it is interesting to notice that, although the plot is set in the city of Babylon and, at least once, Nabucco expressly addresses the Babylonians, the name of the city is never associated with the concept of king and kingship. Nabucco, for example, is never named, by himself or by others, as king of Babylon or Babylonia. On the contrary, Solera always prefers to refer to Assyria: the terms Assyria and Assyrian(s) occur fifteen times in the text and this is the preferred wording when Solera needs to identify the royal power of either Nabucco or his daughters. Both the Jews and the Babylonians refer to Assyria as the originating region of the power of Nabucco.

The opera begins with the desperate shout of the Jews who fear that Nabucco «il rege d’Assiria» (the King of Assyria) has fallen on them: in response, the virgins invoke God to destroy «d’Assiria le schiere» (the legions of Assyria). Immediately afterwards, Ismaele arrives and tells that Nabucco, «dell’Assiria il re» (the King of Assyria), is entering the city. As a consequence of the fact that Nabucco is king of Assyria, his daughters are named as Assyrians: Fenena is «prima fra le assire» (this first among Assyrian damsels) in the words of the High Priest Zaccaria. Even Abigaille addresses her sister Fenena as «assira donna» (Assyrian maid); and Abigaille herself is claimed as queen of Assyria by both the high priest of Babylon and the king Nabucco himself:

GRAN SACERDOTE

Eccelsa donna, che d’Assiria il fato  
Reggi, le preci ascolta  
De’ fidi tuoi<sup>16</sup>.

---

<sup>16</sup> T. Solera, *Nabucco*, Part III, Scene I: «Peerless lady, ruler of / Assyria’s fate, hear the prayers / of your faithful subjects.»

and

NABUCCO

Te regina, te signora  
Chiami pur la gente assira<sup>17</sup>.

Although unbalanced, it might be stated that the definition of Assyria and Babylonia is used interchangeably, but it must be pointed out that Assyria is always linked to the power and authority of the king.

In particular, this exchange is much more frequent in the text by Solera than the original French tragedy<sup>18</sup>: if the sources used by Solera are taken into consideration – the French tragedy *Nabuchodonosor* by Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu, staged at Paris in 1836, the ballet by Antonio Cortesi, staged at Teatro alla Scala in Milan in 1838, and the Bible – what inspired Solera to this rewriting of the story of Nebuchadnezzar, changing him from the king of Babylon to the king of Assyria?

As has already been stated, this “confusion” might also be traced to the sources (the Bible included)<sup>19</sup> used by Solera for the writing of his *libretto*: it also occurs in previous works, entitled *Nabucco*, where the king of ancient Babylon is referred to as the king of Assyria, even if the plot is clearly set in the palace of Babylon and in the celebrated Hanging Gardens of Babylon<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> T. Solera, *Nabucco*, Part III, Scene III: «Then let the people of Assyria / call you lady and queen.»

<sup>18</sup> In fact, the text by Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu refers only once to «the kingdom of Assyria», a definition used by Abigaïl when she claims the throne of her sister claiming that she is «la souveraine du royaume d'Assyrie» (Act II, Scene XII). It seems interesting to point out that this refers to Abigaïl, maybe an implicit reference to the legendary figure of Semiramis, queen of Assyria, also in the French tragedy (as it was previously argued for the figure of Abigaille in Solera's text). In fact, Anicet-Bourgeois and Cornu regularly refer to Babylon (the city), Babylonia (the region), and Babylonians (the people) in their text: Nabuchodonosor is in fact labelled as King of Babylon and his daughter, Phénenna, is called «la Babylonienne» (the Babylonian).

<sup>19</sup> As, for example, for what concerns the prophecy by Isaiah (13-14) where the fall of Babylon may refer to the fate of Nineveh (Dalley 2008: 32), or the reference in the Book of Chronicles of the deportation of the Judean king Manasseh by Esarhaddon to Babylon that must be read as Nineveh (Dalley 1994, 47; Van De Mieroop 2004, 1). Lastly, see Dalley 2013, 107-126.

<sup>20</sup> Among the previous works, see *Il Nabucdonosorre* by Gaetano Polidori (1807), *Nabucco* by Giuseppe Urbano Pagani-Cesa (1816), and the best known (probably also by Solera and Verdi) *Nabucco* by Giovan Battista Nicolini (1816, published for the first time in London in 1819), where the figure of Nabucco, king of Babylon, is reinterpreted, in accordance with the contemporary period, as an alter ego

It is interesting to note that it appears that these works, dealing with the history and life of Nebuchadnezzar, were affected by the tradition and transmission of Greek historians (from Herodotus onwards), who often misplaced Babylon and Nineveh, and indeed in some way founded the legend that the city of Babylon had Assyrian origins thanks to the building activities carried out by the Assyrian Queen Semiramis. In particular, the accounts by Diodorus of Sicily and Ctesias – whose *Persika* are indeed mostly known thanks to their citation by Diodorus – precisely explain and show this confusion between the two regions and cities of ancient Mesopotamia, saying that Babylon was built by the Assyrian Semiramis. According to a legend widely diffused in the Hellenistic world, Semiramis was also responsible for the legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Diodorus of Sicily gives a different version admitting that Semiramis did not plan the Hanging Gardens, but that they were built by a «Syrian king» (*History*, II.10.1), information also reported by Quintus Curtius Rufus (*History of Alexander*, V. 1.35).

In any case, they were not the result of the building activity of a Babylonian king: indeed, only Berossos, a Babylonian priest living in the 4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, states with certainty that the Hanging Gardens were built by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia trying to readjust the false, but by then widespread, Greek tradition that the main works, buildings, and evocative hanging gardens of Babylon were the result of the intervention of the (legendary) queens of Assyria Semiramis and Nitocris<sup>21</sup>.

Recently, the original location of the Hanging Gardens has been questioned and debated. This originates with the consideration that Herodotus does not mention them in his description of Babylon,

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of either Napoleon (in Nicolini's tragedy) or the Habsburg Kaiser Franz I (in Pagani-Cesa's text). Other times, the text refers to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and the presence in Babylon of the Prophet Daniel (Polidori's text), with Nebuchadnezzar's name used for Nabonidus. In general, on the genesis of many poems and tragedies centred on King Nebuchadnezzar as an allegorical figure of European history and politics, before the creation of the libretto by Solera, see the detailed reconstruction by Ley 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Haas 1999; Bichler and Rollinger 2005, 202-206; Seymour 2008, 104-109; Rollinger 2008, 374-377; De Breucker 2011.

and takes into account the observation by S. Dalley that the Persians diverted the river Euphrates when they captured the city<sup>22</sup>. Thus it seems that the argument of the existence of the Hanging Gardens in Babylon, referred to by Ctesias (and so Diodorus), Berossos, Strabo, and Curtius Rufus, is not valid and may have its origins in the above-mentioned confusion between Nineveh (Assyria) and Babylon (Babylonia)<sup>23</sup>. This confusion probably derived from Mesopotamian sources themselves, since it was quite common to label other Mesopotamian cities as “Babylon”, as happens with the city of Nineveh, the so-called “Old Babylon”<sup>24</sup>. In the Assyrian period, particularly during the reign of Sennacherib, the rewriting of the Epic of the Creation saw the national Assyrian god Aššur chosen as the victorious hero, substituting the Babylonian god Marduk<sup>25</sup>.

Thus, exchange and confusion was also frequent in ancient times, and perhaps Greek historians might have been affected by this way of writing the history of the cities favoured by the Assyrians and Babylonians. However, if the ancient cuneiform sources give Babylon predominant importance (since it becomes the name for other cities, even for Nineveh), Greek historians seem to reverse the practice by giving more importance to Assyria, its kings, and its cities. Taking into consideration Ctesias (although his mistakes are clear), the absence of any reference to the Neo-Babylonian kings and kingdom is evident (differently from Herodotus who mentions Babylonian kings and queens after the Assyrian hegemony). In Ctesias’ opinion, a cultural continuity between the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians might be delineated, excluding the Babylonians (such an exclusion expresses Ctesias’ thought about the insignificant role of the Babylonian empire, motivated by the attribution of the foundation of Babylon to an Assyrian queen like Semiramis)<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Dalley 1994: 46; see also Bichler and Rollinger 2005.

<sup>23</sup> See in particular the studies by S. Dalley (1994; 2008) concerning the location of the Hanging Gardens at Nineveh, on the one hand, and the origin of the confusion between the two Mesopotamian cities, on the other.

<sup>24</sup> Van De Mierop 2004; Dalley 2008; 2013, 107-126.

<sup>25</sup> Dalley 1994, 49; Porter 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Lanfranchi 2010, 48; 2011: 195.

Looking through Solera's *libretto*, a pattern similar to the exchange made by Ctesias and other Greek historians can be recognised, with Assyria (the region) as the term for Babylon (the city): it is difficult to ascertain whether Solera used classical sources that, in fact, strongly affected the perception and vision of Babylon in the Europe of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (starting from the several legends and texts dealing with both Semiramis and Nebuchadnezzar, as has already been noted)<sup>27</sup>. Surely, given his education in literature and music, and his activity as poet and novelist, he must have been familiar with Greek and Latin texts. If Solera took historical information for his plot from both classical sources and the Bible, it seems he relied more on the tradition passed down by Greek historians (accepted also by other previous and contemporary authors), since the Bible is much more precise, at least in defining Nebuchadnezzar as the king of Babylon (with the exception of the Book of Judith where Nebuchadnezzar becomes king of Assyria and ruler of Nineveh)<sup>28</sup>.

This fact would contradict the comment by Verdi who defined the *libretto* by Solera as a paraphrasing of the Bible. Another anecdote concerning how the Bible has been important and fundamental for the drafting of the *libretto* tells that Verdi told Solera to write the prophecy of Zaccaria in place of a duet between Fenena and Ismaele in the third act, saying:

«Chiusi a chiave l'uscio, mi misi la chiave in tasca, e tra il serio e il faceto dissi a Solera: 'Non sorti di qui se non hai scritto la profezia: eccoti la Bibbia, hai già le parole bell'e fatte'»<sup>29</sup>.

Other reasons might explain this confusion and, probably, this was also due to the cultural milieu of the time when the history of the ancient Orient was filtered through indirect sources (albeit considered both direct and authoritative).

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<sup>27</sup> See McCall 1998, 185-192.

<sup>28</sup> Dalley 1994, 47.

<sup>29</sup> «I locked the door, I put the key in my pocket, and speaking half in jest, I said to Solera: 'You do not get out of here before writing the prophecy: here's your Bible, you already have the words written for you'». See the anecdote as related in Pougin 1886, 66-67.

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Despite the inconsistencies and the continuous confusion between Assyria and Babylon, by quoting Assyria and defining Nabucco as the king of Assyria, the *libretto* of Solera must have been seen as a great invention and a blessed coincidence by the stage designers. If at first they had to invent the places and buildings of the unknown ancient Babylon<sup>30</sup>, later they could make use of the recent discoveries made by French and British archaeologists at the Assyrian cities of Khorsabad and Nineveh<sup>31</sup>. It was not Babylon, but what did it matter? The text described Nabucco as king of Assyria, and the discoveries in northern Iraq were just waiting to be used to build the perfect setting for the opera. The stage designers must have been delighted!

The rewriting of Mesopotamian history found its perfect realisation in fiction with an almost contemporary overlapping of words and pictures. In particular the case of the 1846 production of Verdi's *Nabucco* at Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket in London where the title of the opera was changed into *Ninus, King of Assyria*<sup>32</sup>. Once the British archaeological discoveries had been publicly announced, and the Assyrian galleries in the British Museum had been opened, later staging must surely have benefitted from the new title and the king of Assyria (regardless if he were Nebuchadnezzar, Sardanapalus, or Ninus) really did set foot in London.

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<sup>30</sup> At the time of the first staging of *Nabucco* in March of 1842 in Milan, nothing was known about the shape and nature of the ancient Near Eastern cities and palaces: stage designers were thus obliged to resort to imaginary pictures mixing Egyptian, Persian, Indian, and Ottoman elements.

<sup>31</sup> See the stage scenes made by Filippo Peroni who introduced elements of the Assyrian architecture and sculptures for the representation of *Nabucco* in 1857, by which time the Assyrian antiquities were well-known to the audience. See the discussion in Nadali 2010-11.

<sup>32</sup> Ley 2010: 228-230; Seymour 2013: 15.

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# Under the Sign of Orientalism: Travel Comradeship in *A Relíquia* by Eça de Queirós

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«— *Então, ambos com o mesmo roteiro, podíamos acamaradar, Dr. Topsius! (...).*  
— *Pois acamarademos, D. Raposo! Será uma deleitosa economia! (...)*  
— *D. Raposo, nós temos sido bons amigos...» (...)*  
— *Adeus, companheiro, adeus! (...) e beijámo-nos na face como dois irmãos.»*<sup>1</sup>

Eça de Queirós, *A Relíquia*

The novel *A Relíquia* (*The Relic*) by Eça de Queirós (1845-1900) was published in *feuilleton* between April 24<sup>th</sup> and June 10<sup>th</sup> 1887, in Rio de Janeiro's newspaper *Gazeta de Notícias*, after a gestation which dates back, at the least, to 1880<sup>2</sup>. The first version of the work, which would be published in volume in the same year of 1887, would be almost finished 5 years earlier, in late 1882, and was written

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<sup>1</sup> Queirós 2004a. This edition will be used to guide us in all citations.

<sup>2</sup> The publication of his tales and novels in the Portuguese and Brazilian press was a literary and artistic practice to which Eça de Queirós gave particular attention deriving from the socio-cultural role played by the press itself (cf. Reis 1983, 7).

during the author's stay in Bristol, where he performed his duties as Portuguese consul. The second version would be finished in September 1884, already in Portugal. In June 1885, Eça would have been in London to document himself for his third version<sup>3</sup>.

The plot of *A Relíquia* focuses around Teodorico Raposo, the protagonist and narrator, who lived with an old, rich and very devout aunt. Influenced by a friend, he decides to approach the aunt with a scheme to inherit her wealthy fortune. As such, he pretends to be a religious devoted. He asks her aunt to finance a trip to Paris, but she refuses flatly stating that Paris was the city of vice and perdition. Teodorico asks, then, to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The aunt consents and asks him to bring her a souvenir. The nephew promises to bring a religious relic which would help to enhance her worship and spend her days in a much better way.

The hypocrite nephew travel to Egypt and Palestine, and during the trip takes an unholy and immoral life, engaging with an English woman (Miss Mary) in Alexandria, who offers him a package with her nightdress, to remembering him the moments they spent together. Before returning from the Orient, after a mystic dream, Teodorico remembers his aunt's request and with the branches of a bush weaves a crown, wrapped it and put it in his luggage. However, he passes by a woman beggar and gives her the package that he thought contained the nightdress.

Arriving in Lisbon, he reports hypocritically to his aunt all the penances and fasts suffered during his pilgrimage and offers her the package, saying it contained the Christ's crown of thorns. The opening of the supposed relic is made before a huge audience of priests and devout ladies in an atmosphere of anxiety. To the amazement of all, instead of a sacred object, came to light the nightdress of Teodorico's English lover. This unusual episode worth Teodorico the expulsion of his aunt's house and the loss of the fortune he craved.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Matos 1993, 829.

In order to survive, Raposo starts to sell relics from the Holy Land, which he manufactures in large quantities, but soon grasp the futility of falsehood and lie. Though, Teodorico recognizes that he lost her aunt's big buck fortune for not being even more hypocritical and cynical: if, in that day he had the courage to declare that the night-dress belonged to St. Mary Magdalene, he would be admired by all and would have inherited the fortune.

As it is recognized by Eça's scholars, we are before a work written in full maturity of the author, coming to light of day when one of his most famous novels, *Os Maias*, was already almost complete<sup>4</sup>. Nonetheless, *A Relíquia* does not generate sentiments of great appreciation among all critics and, apparently, on Eça de Queirós himself. Albeit he obviously did not reject it, he personally did not admired his «worthless book», as he wrote in a letter sent on July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1887 to his friend Luís de Magalhães:

«Eu por mim, salvo o respeito que lhe é devido, não admiro pessoalmente *A Relíquia*. A estrutura e composição do livreco são muito defeituosas. Aquele mundo antigo está ali como um trambolho, e só é antigo por fora, nas exterioridades, nas vestes e nos edifícios. (...). O único valor do livreco está no realismo fantasista da Farsa...»<sup>5</sup>

During these years, in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, literary critics have also left unflattering opinions about *A Relíquia*, some for the scarce and pathetic draw of characters or for the inconsistency and schematic

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. *id.*, *ibid.*, 829.

<sup>5</sup> «For me, except for the respect it deserves, I don't personally admire *A Relíquia*. The worthless book's structure and composition are very defective. That ancient world lays there like an encumbrance, and is only ancient on the outside, in the exteriorities, in the garments and in the buildings. (...). The only value of the worthless book is in the fanciful realism of the Farce». *Apud* Matos 1993, 829. This letter written by Eça de Queirós, where he assumes and emphasizes the flaws of his prose, in an enormous exercise of literary self-conscience, served to moderate Luís de Magalhães' enthusiasm who had published in the journal *A Província* a torn critic to the novel (cf. Reis 1983: 13). It should be noticed that Eça had applied with *A Relíquia* for the D. Luís prize of the Royal Academy of Sciences (Lisbon), loosing in favour of Henrique Lopes de Mendonça, who presented the work *O Duque de Viseu* (*The Duke of Viseu*): cf. Matos 1993, 24 e 830.

repetition of the their psychological types (immoral, mediocre, incomplete, empty); others due to the unlikelihood of the mystic dream of Teodorico Raposo, however beautiful, gracious or lyrical purporting it could be; or simply because it was a boring, inconsistent, extravagant and inconceivable book. Some even do not hesitate to classify the work as simply as a «thwarted experience» (João Gaspar Simões)<sup>6</sup>.

It is unquestionable that it is a book written in the first person (autodiegetic, omniscient and whose narrator had a «testimonial nature»<sup>7</sup>), by a mediocre and relatively ignorant character, full of schemes and subterfuges of conduct, where predominates the style of pure farce and of unrealistic invention. The social satire in this markedly autobiographic narrative rejects sanctimoniousness and hypocrisy in general.

By framing *A Relíquia* of Eça de Queirós as an object of literary production, we need to consider the excessive force of attraction, almost uncontrollable, that the Orient in general, and Egypt in particular, wielded over the European literate world of the 1800's. After the Napoleonic campaign into Egypt (1798–1801), the «Orient temptation» hit it in such a way that «erudite tourism» converted into a cultural bath mandatory to European writers, painters, literates and intellectuals. Orientalism presented itself as a new Humanism, a new Renaissance («Oriental Renaissance»). The primitive cradle of civilizations resurged filled with colour, mystery and fascination. The Orient became a kind of «subjective homeland»<sup>8</sup>, «a mythic and real permanent reference»<sup>9</sup>, «an historically mythic and real Orient»<sup>10</sup>.

Orient and Orientalism were furiously in fashion leaving its impressions in the 1800's Western Europe, in the «travels to the Orient» and in their artistic productions, in the most varied fields of

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<sup>6</sup> See the appreciations about *A Relíquia* that A. Campos Matos mentions from Pinheiro Chagas, Camilo Castelo Branco, Oliveira Martins, João Gaspar Simões, Álvaro Lino, João Maria Bello, Valéry Larbaud, Machado Rosa, Guerra da Cal e Beatriz Berrin (cf. Matos 1993: 830-832).

<sup>7</sup> Reis 1984, 179, 180, 194, 200, 203; Reis 1996, 396.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Lima 1993a, 431.

<sup>9</sup> Lima 1995.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

expression (from music to furniture, passing through architecture, decoration, painting, illustration, literature and historical narrative).

Eça de Queirós, in the path of many other European scholars (e.g., Gustave Flaubert, Maxime Du Camp, Théophile Gautier, Chateaubriand, Vivian Denon, Jean-François Champollion, Gérard Nerval, Edmond About, etc.), also made, from October 1869 to January 1870, the Oriental route and, like many others, left about it abundant reminiscences in his productions<sup>11</sup>.

In this approach, the main attention will focus on the literary features of Teodorico Raposo, the main character in *A Relíquia*. He is genuine and exclusively concerned about women and to live a snugly life that his maternal aunt's substantial inheritance was going to provide him as her only heir. By this, or through this, we intend to undertake a journey along his contacts and «friends» during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, particularly with his main interlocutor in *A Relíquia*, Topsius, the learned German, who was a naturalist's grandson, an Egyptologist's nephew and, himself, a scholar interested in the stories of Herod and of the Egyptian Lagid Dynasty.

### **On the way to Jerusalem, with a stopover in Malta and Alexandria**

Truly subpoenaed by his aunt D. Maria do Patrocínio Neves, a fanatical and intransigent Catholic devout, to go to Jerusalem in pilgrimage, Teodorico leaves home excited by its intrinsic sensual aspect, immediately unveiling the pleasant moments of enjoyment that such a journey could provide. The sensuality and desire raised by the Orient in many men of the 1800's appear well channelled by Eça towards Teodorico Raposo's character, already so prone to such purposes. Teodorico personifies a very cherished idea by the Queiro-

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<sup>11</sup> Literary Orientalism had in Byron, Moore, Goethe, Hugo, Lamartine, Vigny, Chateaubriand, Gautier, Nerval, Flaubert and in Eça himself, famous exponents among so many others (cf. Lima 1993a, 429, 431).

sian novelistic and its critical vision of the 1800's Portuguese society: cupidity for money.

In Malta, one of the stops in the outlined grand and holy itinerary, Teodorico meets the German Topsius. By announcing the first encounter of the Portuguese and the German, Eça de Queirós immediately places them in diametrically opposite ethical and existential positions: Teodorico dedicates himself to ephemeral utilities and obligations of daily life; Topsius is persuaded by the scholarly duty to clarify all historical-archaeological-scientific matters, as much enigmatic as they would reveal themselves.

From the circumstantial communication then started arises an unavoidable noticing, that both had the same itinerary, despite the different motivations that moved them: the German wished to visit the holy places (Judea and Galilee) and Alexandria to «collect notes» for the two works he cherished; the Portuguese, self-interested nephew, accomplishing a pilgrimage on behalf of his wealthy and devout aunt. By explicit suggestion of the Portuguese, they become «travel comrades» and seal their new status with some beer mugs.

The Franco-Tuscan expedition of 1828-29, sponsored by the Tuscan Grand Duke Leopold II and organized by Jean-François Champollion (1790-1832) jointly with his disciple and friend, the Italian Ippolito Rosellini (1800-1843)<sup>12</sup>, allowed Champollion to read, translate and copy hieroglyphic texts, from Alexandria to Assuan, in Nubia and Abu Simbel; in short, a little everywhere, proving the quality and validity of the decipherment method he discovered and announced in 1822<sup>13</sup>.

During the journey made into the Orient (Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Anatolia), Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880) and Maxime Du Camp (1822-1894) spent eight months in Egypt (from November 1849 to

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<sup>12</sup> In the journey, Champollion and Rosellini would also have the company, among others, of the draughtsman Nestor L'Hôte (1804-1842) and Pierre François Lehoux (1803-1883).

<sup>13</sup> Coordinated by Rosellini, the expedition resulted in several epigraphic reliefs and drawings of the main ancient monuments, which would be gathered in fourteen handwritten volumes, latter published in ten volumes in the work *I Monumenti dell'Egitto e della Nubia, disegnati dalla spedizione scientifico-letteraria Toscana in Egitto* (1832 to 1844). This work joined the *Description de L'Égypte* (1809-1829), produced by the Napoleonic expedition scholars, and converted itself in one of the major works of obliged research of the newly created discipline of Egyptology.

July 1850). The two friends sailed up the Nile, from Alexandria into the area today called Lake Nuba, in Sudanese territory, having the opportunity to cross the desert riding a camel and to climb the pyramids<sup>14</sup>.

In 1869, twenty years after Flaubert/Du Camp, it would be the occasion for Eça de Queirós himself, with his friend and future brother-in-law, D. Luís de Castro Pamplona, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Resende, to establish a pair to meet the Orient and to attend the opening of the Suez Canal. A few months earlier than Eça de Queirós and D. Luís de Castro Pamplona, it had been the time of Ricardo de Guimarães, viscount of Benalcanfor, to visit Cairo with his travel companion, the Englishman Haking<sup>15</sup>.

The intellectual atmosphere created in Romantic Europe, of enthralled enthusiasm and curiosity for the exoticism and the aura of mystery from Egypt, rapidly made it into a more than desirable, almost mandatory, destination. Soon, the attraction for the hidden secrets of the ancient Egyptian civilization made adventurers and scholars from all kinds depart into an eagerness for discovering and collecting Egyptian antiquities without precedents, beginning a time that had almost nothing of archaeology but, instead, could well be designated as an organized and systematic «pillage of antiquities».

The idea of journey's comradeship of which *A Relíquia* gives testimony through the characters of the Portuguese Teodorico and the German Topsius follows, therefore, a well attested cultural habit of the 1800's in which Eça himself took part. Moreover, already Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), French poet and critic, had done the same in *Le Roman de la momie* (1858), reporting his travel companions' adventures in Egypt, the Englishman Lord Evandale and the German

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<sup>14</sup> In the return from the Orient, Gustave Flaubert would write, between June and September 1851, *Voyage en Égypte* (only published posthumously, in 1881), an account on the stay that the novelist himself considered a monument of his personal memory, finding reminiscence of it in all his work. *The Voyage* by Flaubert is an incalculable literary document and a precious testimony of Egypt of the time. Maxime du Camp in turn, besides his *Le Nil (Égypte et Nubie)* of 1853, dedicated to «a Théophile Gautier», also made 150 calotypes, which makes him one of the first photographic reporters of his time, which publishes in *Égypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie, dessins photographiques recueillis pendant les années 1849-1850 et 1851. Accompagnés d'un texte explicatif et précédés d'une introduction*.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Araújo 1988, 25 (note 13), 169, 177 (note 23).

Dr. Rumphius<sup>16</sup>. Also Gautier had travelled through the Orient, witnessed the opening of the Suez Canal and was touched by its breathtaking sensations. It is still admitted that Eça de Queirós, profound admirer of Gautier, has taken from him, besides the taste for exotic names, elements for the characterisation of his German Topsisius.

In Eça's plot – naturally very critic, but eventually for that reason, also very effective – the characters of both Teodorico and Topsisius appear as personages strongly affected by very distinct hereditary and educational factors<sup>17</sup>. The literary game of contrasting their ancestries is explicit and it is expected that the inevitable difference of habits, customs and cultures of both men would be emphasized from it.

The Luso-German comradeship blatantly brings together two fellows situated in distinct intellectual levels, with different existential attitudes.

The stay and experiences of Teodorico and Topsisius in Alexandria are described by Eça from the point of view of the difference of being and staying of both characters, where material and spiritual hardly comes together. Teodorico delights in sloth and in the sensual pleasures provided by the delightful Mary, an Englishwoman from York. For her, Teodorico renounced to see «...o Cairo, o Nilo e a eterna Esfinge, deitada à porta do deserto, sorrindo da Humanidade vã...»<sup>18</sup>.

Contrasting the Portuguese cultural disdain for the millennial Egyptian culture, the German Topsisius pleased with visiting ruins and, under his umbrella, always holding a wagged pencil, noted down everything he could<sup>19</sup>. The Luso-German contrast is complete.

In everything they are different and distinguished, the Topsisius «*Of Imperial Germany*» and the «*Raposo, Portuguese, from overseas*»<sup>20</sup>. The behavioural and intellectual dichotomy drawn by Eça de Queirós makes Teodorico Raposo as someone who is criticized by Topsisius and,

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<sup>16</sup> Gautier 1980, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Reis 1996, 396.

<sup>18</sup> «...Cairo, the Nile and the eternal Sphinx, laid on the desert door, smiling of vain Humanity...»: Queirós 2004a, 74.

<sup>19</sup> Queirós 2004a, 113.

<sup>20</sup> Queirós 2004a, 71.

in a way, ridiculed by the sensuality of the narcissistic seducer. In the memorial writing of Teodorico it is clearly understood this feeling of inferiority, in the same way as it shows, here and there, some critical disdain, filled with mediocrity, about his German «companion». The fellow travellers even have a serious disagreement, even though it ends with an honourable hand shake.

The notes of patriotism or, if one prefers, the anti-German sentiment, are deep traits of Eça de Queirós' French culture<sup>21</sup>. The writer reveals, in some passages of *A Relíquia*, reflections which he adopted from French mentality and vision about Weimar Germany and German affairs of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, that is, during Bismarck's mandate as Prussian chancellor, especially from 1870 to his resignation in 1890.

Topsius' strong intellectual individualism, extraordinariness and excessive patriotic vanity are, to Eça, active features of the pragmatism, militarism, unmeasured ambition and aggressiveness of Bismarck's Germany.

The panorama of evident superiority of Topsius towards the Portuguese Teodorico, to which Eça bows himself in several passages, is motivated by a pronounced anti-German background. The depreciation and ridiculing of the savant German's pedantic erudition are ways to sublimate the differences of attitude present in the Luso-German encounter and to criticize the supremacy and lack of respect from the German.

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Under the sign of the journey to the Orient, *A Relíquia* therefore rests, immediately, in the Luso-German relationship of Teodorico and Topsius. Hence, the work appears in the narrative drawn by Eça de Queirós as an intimidation of the Portuguese to the German or, if we will, a confrontation between, on the one hand, Science and Reason;

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Lino 1993, 51-56.

on the other, everyday life, as a quotidian simultaneously made of belief, faith, reality and farce.

Amid the mediocre, unreal, fanciful and almost caricatural general environment, the tendency towards Oriental exoticism and the charm for ancient civilizations which *A Relíquia* reveals, is result of the European intellectual attitude and of the Queirosian conception that privileges the sensibility and the sensory refinement and prefers the delightful, jocose and lyric picturesque<sup>22</sup>. The impressionistic record of the environments and of the historical reconstitutions (according to some, copied from Flaubert<sup>23</sup>) is very well accomplished, for example, in the «portraits» of Alexandria.

It is obvious that in here lies a clear influence of the Oriental itineraries of Eça himself. The Orient journey in 1869, to watch along D. Luís de Castro Pamplona, the Earl of Resende, the inauguration of the Suez Canal, took place in a decisive phase of Eça's mental evolution and left visible impressions in his literary creation, in works such as *Egipto. Notas de Viagem* (1926), *Folhas Caídas* (1966) (both, therefore, published posthumously), *O Mandarim* or *A Relíquia*<sup>24</sup>.

The mythic and romantic Orient captured and integrated his literature in the Orientalism in vogue in the Europe of his time. The very idea of travel narrative he practiced, as a traveller and as an author responsible for the creation of his characters and of his diegetic material, is another vector of his assimilation within the redoubt of «Orientalist discourse» or aesthetic-literary orientation.

The dialogues between Teodorico and Topsius are, as Eça's style showed, natural, lively, and quite witty, based on a straightforward psychological and attitudinal confrontation-complement.

As a matter of fact, it is known how Eça de Queirós valued good taste and manners in sociability, the aristocratic climate of flashy and

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. Mendes 1983, 27, 28, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Saraiva, Lopes 1989, 927, 928. See also Lima 1993a, 429-434.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Saraiva, Lopes 1989, 937. Besides the mentioned fictional works, there are many other Queirosian works where there are references or passages of orientalist inspiration, such as *A Correspondência de Fradique Mendes*, *Notas Contemporâneas*, *Os Maias* and *Lendas de Santos* (cf. Lima 1993b, 437; Araújo 1988, 219). See also Lima 1995.

relevant conversation, as well as the hilarious situations frequently generated by *l'art de bien parler*<sup>25</sup>.

Regardless any fanciful misrepresentation of both characters, the Luso-German Teodorico-Topsius dichotomy-complement drives and sustains the narrative's actions and the incidents during the «pilgrimage» of both men into Oriental lands. The Luso-German sociability and communicability, with the mentioned hues of pious hypocrisy or of intellectual superiority, derive of a simplistic mental-literary construction that puts, on one side, the «illustrious Lusitanian» Teodorico, pseudo-learned tourist, somewhat queasy and distracted, as a paradigm of animality and futility; and, on the other, the «more learned» Topsius, as expression of erudition and wisdom. Thus, the outlined socio-pedagogical exercise reveals itself quite efficient.

Through the cultural dimension underlying the formation of Eça de Queirós as a writer, the double sides embodied by these two characters is the result of the derogatory trend that marked French mentality, from 1870 onwards, relating to all things German. In this way, the material of *A Relíquia* is a precious testimony of the Orientalist billow that marked European culture in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Mendes 1983, 33.

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# Brother Leão de São Tomás: the *Benedictina Lusitana* and the 17<sup>th</sup> century vision on the origins of Monasticism in Biblical Antiquity

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## 1. Brother Leão de São Tomás, chronicler of the Order of St. Benedict: the *Benedictina Lusitana* (1644-1651)

The present study intends to better understand the particular ways by which a Portuguese clergyman and scholar conceived the precursors, in Biblical Antiquity, of European monasticism during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. His name was Leão de São Tomás, a monk of St. Benedict's Rule. As Lens of the University of Coimbra, his foray through history-writing with the composition and publication of *Benedictina Lusitana* earned him recognition as chronicler of his own Order. This work comprised two volumes, both printed at Coimbra in 1644 and 1651, by the typographers Diogo Gomes de Loureiro and Manuel de Carvalho, respectively<sup>1</sup>.

At the beginning of the first volume, Brother Leão de São Tomás addresses the readers, presenting the work and warning that it would be divided in two treatises: the first would refer to the origins of monasticism, to the hagiography of St. Benedict and the foundation of the Benedictine Rule and Order; the second would concern the arrival

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<sup>1</sup> A facsimile edition exists of two tomes, with introduction and critical notes by José Mattoso (Lisbon, Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, 1974).

of the Order in the Iberian Peninsula and the first monks who settled there, founding monasteries by the year 700. It is exactly this chronological boundary that sets the start of his second volume.

This date represents Brother Leão de São Tomás' fundamental position about History: it gave start, in his own words, to a «fateful century for Spain because, from then on, it would be subjected to the tyranny of the Arabs, and the Empire and Glory of the Gothic kings would fade»<sup>2</sup>. In his mind is clearly the Muslim invasion of the Iberian Peninsula led by Tāriq ibn Ziyad, which brought the defeat of the Christian Hispano-Visigoths in the battle of the river Guadalete, near Cádiz, in the year 711.

From statements such as this stand out an obvious Eurocentrism or Christian-centric vision that implied, above all, an inverse feeling of aversion to the Muslims, also called indistinctively “Saracens”, “Moors” and “Arabs”. Such invaders that came from outside Europe, bearing a very different culture and religion, laid on its feet the Christian kingdom of the Visigoths, a «glorious empire», in the author's own words, subjecting its people to a «despotic» regime, yielding the idea that Muslims brought religious intolerance to the Peninsula. This intolerance, we know today, was not quite real in the Middle Ages.

This vision that Brother Leão transmits is conditioned, of course, by his historical context, where such religious tolerance had already disappeared. In Portugal, for example, religious minorities such as the Jews and Muslims had been officially replaced, by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, by a social group called *Cristãos Novos*, «New Christians», i.e., people who had received baptism by force. This marked one of the significant differences between these «New Christians» and the «Old Christians»: the latter could claim to be Roman Catholics through several generations of family tradition.

Born in Coimbra, probably 1574, Leão de São Tomás studied Grammar, Oratory and Poetry. He took his vows for St. Benedict's Order in the monastery of Santo Tirso (Northern Portugal) the March

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<sup>2</sup> In the original: «Seculo fatal pera Hespanha, pois nelle ficou sojeita à tirannia dos Arabes, & feneceo o Imperio, & gloria dos Reys Godos» (*Benedictina Lusitana*, tome I, fol. 4v of the preliminary pages.

5<sup>th</sup>, 1590. Graduated at the University of Coimbra; there, he was attributed with the Lens of Gabriel (from June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1617), Durando (which he took over May 31<sup>st</sup>, 1635), of Escoto (from November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1641), Vespera (from May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1645) and Prima of Theology (from April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1648).

He was twice Rector of St. Benedict's College of Coimbra (1627 and 1638), being responsible to consecrate the College's church in March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1634. Diogo Barbosa Machado (1682-1772), Catholic presbyter, bibliographer and writer, states in his *Bibliotheca Lusitana* that Brother Leão de São Tomás died in Coimbra, June 6<sup>th</sup> 1651, aged 77 years old, of which 61 were devoted to religious profession<sup>3</sup>. However, Inocêncio Francisco da Silva (1810-1876), another important Portuguese literate and bibliographer, argues against this chronology, stating that Brother Leão's death occurred June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1661, aged 86<sup>4</sup>. Inocêncio Francisco da Silva, however, does not only argue over the correct date of demise of the *Benedictina Lusitana*'s author. He also contradicts, with violent attacks, the prevailing views concerning the results of Brother Leão's chronistic effort, otherwise well accepted among their peers and even praised by Barbosa Machado. Inocêncio writes:

«This work is filled with erudition and, at first sight, reveals broad studies and in-depth knowledge of his author about Ancient things; but the fact is that, having Brother Leão de Santo Tomás been devoid of good principles of criticism – or was induced by objectionable reasons that swept him by wrong guides, supporting his narratives in false chronicles of Peres, Dextro, etc., claiming to adopt legitimate and genuine texts, and taking assertions of Brito, Bivar, Higuera, etc. as truthful – also left evidence, at least, of negligence in the way he examined some of the documents that he produces in his labour, and of minimal credulity concerning the information that other confreres have given to him»<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> *Bibliotheca Lusitana*, Tome III, Coimbra: Atlântida Editora, 1966 (rep.), 4-6.

<sup>4</sup> *Diccionario Bibliographico Portuguez*, Tome V, Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1860 (rep.), 170.

<sup>5</sup> *Id., ibid.*, 170-171.

Such harsh criticism from Inocêncio Francisco da Silva came from a man that was accustomed to a positivist inspiration and heuristic discipline. It focused, however, on a text that was already two-centuries-old, produced at a time when historical exercises depended on different values. This study does not have the purpose to classify the veracity of Brother Leão's information or to evaluate his sources and interpretations of the facts; it is essentially interested in the ways he weaves his observations on Ancient peoples, and how its work can contribute to a better understanding of how 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century European culture could conceive other parts of the world. In particular, these lines will deal mainly with the information he collects and how the author leverages them to achieve his ends.

Above, there was opportunity to present his position regarding Islam; now, we may focus in the Hebrew world.

## **2. The thesis of Brother Leão de São Tomás: the vision of the Orient and Antiquity**

The essential of the theses of Brother Leão de São Tomás about the distant past and the East is connected to the genesis of the monastic phenomenon. Such is stated early in his work, right at the opening, in «Treaty I. When it comes to the principles of the Monastic State, life of the great Patriarch St. Benedict»<sup>6</sup>.

In the first prelude of the tome («Prelude First. The principles of monastic life in the time of old Law»)<sup>7</sup>, he starts by establishing the perfection of the “Law of Grace” (the Law of Christ, Christianity) in contrast to the Law of Moses, the “Old law” (i.e., Judaism). However, more than to uphold the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, Brother Leão legitimizes the monastic way of life by establishing its

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<sup>6</sup> In the original: «Tratado I. Em que se trata dos principios do estado Monastico, & vida do Grande Patriarcha Saõ Bento» (*Benedictina Lusitana*, tome I, fol. 1).

<sup>7</sup> In the original: «Praeludio Primeiro. Dos principios da vida Monastica no tempo da Ley velha» (*id.*, *ibid.*).

roots back to the time of the Old Law, regarding both the eremitical and Cenobitic movements as its precursors. Even by doing so, says Brother Leão that «the old law did not have the real image and perfect substance of future Good, but had its contours and shadows»<sup>8</sup>. Almost paraphrasing St. Paul: «For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then shall we see face to face. Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known.»<sup>9</sup>

By assuming there were monastic phenomena in the Old Law, only the Christian monasticism acquires, however, the perfection conferred to by the law of Christ; incidentally, referring to Samuel as the founder of the Cenobitic movement, he claims that he was «the first who launched the first rude lines of the Cenobitic monastic state to which, afterwards, the Law of Grace gave the lively ones and proper perfection, by the virtue and efficacy of the blood of Christ the Redeemer, our Lord»<sup>10</sup>.

### **3. The prophets of the Old Testament and the foundation of monasticism**

To Brother Leão, the founders of monasticism were two prophets of great weight in the history of Israel. Samuel appears as the founder of Cenobitic monasticism; Elijah is the precursor of the eremitic monks. Concerning Samuel, the author states that he was

«the first one who, one thousand and a hundred fifty years before the coming of Christ, instituted the Religious colleges of those days, in which were raised the most devoted of those who wanted to learn the Law, to be literate, sage and intelligent, learning

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<sup>8</sup> In the original: «Não teue a ley velha a sustancia & imagem real, & perfeita dos bens futuros, mas teue as linhas, & sombras delles» (*id., ibid.*, tome I, fol. 1).

<sup>9</sup> I Corinthians 13, 12.

<sup>10</sup> In the original: «ser o primeiro que lançou as primeiras & rudes linhas do estado monastico cenobitico, a que depois a ley da graça deu os vivos, & perfeição deuida, com a virtude & efficacia do sangue de Christo Redemptor e Senhor nosso» (*Benedictina Lusitana*, tome I, fol. 2).

together to sing and to play so that, by the sound of their musical instruments, more solemnly, and with greater edification of the people, they would sing the divine praises»<sup>11</sup>.

Not much further, the author argues that such colleges were «houses of doctrine, not only schools where one could only learn, but also convents where, in certain times and hours, God was praised»<sup>12</sup>. Those who lived this way in such schools were called in the Scriptures as Prophets, not because «they all prophesized and harbingered future things, but because, according to the phrase in the same Scriptures, to sing the divine praises is one way to prophesize»<sup>13</sup>.

Apparently, the Benedictine chronicler did not realize that, by pointing Samuel as the initiator of conventual life, he was taking from St. Benedict himself the credit of creating a substantial part of his Rule. On the other hand, Brother Leão does not clarify if the activities of Samuel's students included prayer, if the Benedictine conception of *ora et labora*, where prayer coexisted with work, or even if those youths were exclusively dedicated to the Divine Office.

Nevertheless, he argues that Samuel founded two such schools, one in Gibeah<sup>14</sup>, home to Saul, and another in his own homeland, Ramah<sup>15</sup>, governed by himself<sup>16</sup>.

The eremitic monasticism, according to Brother Leão, was founded 146 years after the death of Samuel and 930 years before the coming of Christ by another Prophet, Elijah, elected by God once he was generated. As attested by the vision of his father, Iobab, «angels

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<sup>11</sup> In the original: «foi o primeiro que mil & cento & sincoenta & tantos annos antes da vinda de Christo, instituiu Collegios de Religiosos daquele tempo, nos quaes se criavaõ os mais deuotos que querião aprender a ley, fazer se letrados, sabios, & inteligentes nella, aprendendo juntamente a cantar & tanger, pera que ao som de seus instrumentos musicos, com mais solemnidade, & mayor edificação do pouo cantassem os diuinos louvores» (*Benedictina Lusitana*, tome I, fol. 1-2).

<sup>12</sup> In the original: «casas de doutrina, não erão precisamente escollas em que sò se aprendia, senão tambem conventos, em que a certos tempos & horas se trataua de louvar a Deos» (*id., ibid.*, fol. 2).

<sup>13</sup> In the original: «não porque todos Prophetassem & prenunciassem cousas futuras, senão porque conforme a phrase da mesma Escritura, cantar os louvores diuinos he hum modo de profetar» (*id., ibid.*).

<sup>14</sup> In the original: «Gabaa».

<sup>15</sup> In the original: «Ramatha».

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Benedictina Lusitana*, tomo I, fol. 2.

dressed in white saluted the newborn boy, giving him flames of fire to eat and with the same fire they washed his mother's breast»<sup>17</sup>.

As inferred from this passage, divine election, for Brother Leão, is expressed in a double form, besides the signs directed towards Elijah: on the one hand, the vision granted to his father; on the other hand, the purification of his mother, whose signs of recent pregnancy were washed away by the angels with fire. Regarding the prophet himself, says Brother Leão:

«Elijah appeared in the world like a man made of fire; his words were like a torch that burned the hearts of men; and so, I am not wondered that he left and triumphed over this world in a chariot of fire, as said in the Sacred text»<sup>18</sup>.

Next to myth and mysticism, Brother Leão makes historical authority arise to legitimate monasticism through Elijah's example, by reference to ancient authors. Concerning the birthplace of Elijah, he initially refers that the Prophet would be a native of Tishbe, in the land of Gilead, beyond the River Jordan<sup>19</sup>. Resorting to John, the Patriarch of Jerusalem (387-417 CE), he situates it, however, in the territories of the tribe of Manasseh. Just ahead, he mentions Adricomius<sup>20</sup>, who placed the city in the territory of the tribe of Gad; and, still, Dorotheus<sup>21</sup> and Epiphanius<sup>22</sup>, who maintained that Elijah was born in Arabia.

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<sup>17</sup> In the original: «Anjos vestidos de branco que saudauão ao menino nacido, & lhe dauão a comer chamas de fogo, & com o mesmo fogo lauauão o peito da may» (*id., ibid.*, fol. 3).

<sup>18</sup> In the original: «Apareceo Elias no mundo como hum homem todo composto de fogo, & suas palauaras erão como hũa facha aceza que abrazauão os coraçõs dos homens; E assim não me espanto que em carro de fogo fosse sahindo & triumphando deste mundo como consta do Sagrado texto» (*id., ibid.*, fol. 3).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. I Kings 17, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Christianus Adricomius Delfus (1533-1585), priest native of Delf, composed a set of treaties gathered in the so-called *Chronicon*.

<sup>21</sup> Dorotheus of Antioch, Arian bishop of Antioch between 376 and 381, was later Archbishop of Constantinople.

<sup>22</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis (born between 310-320, deceased in 403), bishop of Salamis and Metropolitan of Cyprus, was one of the speakers at the Council of Antioch (376). He attacked Origen and urged John, Bishop of Jerusalem, to condemn Origen's doctrine.

The eremitic life of Elijah, according to Brother Leão, developed in three distinct periods: by the divine inspiration, he firstly retreated to the mountains of Ephraim and there lived in a cave for several years somewhere along the river Carith; God provided his sustenance with food subtracted from the table of king Ahab of Israel himself. Later, escaping from Queen Jezebel, the prophet withdrew to the desert, where it is said he have been for forty days before his arrival at Mt. Horeb, in Sinai. Finally, he settled on Mount Carmel, seeking for *contemplation* and to live a *solitary life*; nevertheless, many disciples gathered there, joining him three times a day «in a house they had as Oratory, in order to sing the divine praises»<sup>23</sup>. Thus, concludes the chronicler of St. Benedict, Elijah «not only, by himself, initiated hermitic life, but preserved and incremented the cenobitic one, in the colleges of the Prophets.»<sup>24</sup>

#### **4. Other forms of religious association in the Old Testament: the Rekabites and Essenes**

Brother Leão de São Tomás writes the first pages of *Benedictina Lusitana* with the clear intention to reconstruct the origins of the monastic movement through the light of the Old Testament's prophets. Moreover, he seeks to find those origins in the virtues and holiness of two great figures, as were Samuel and Elijah. An important factor in his choice of such characters is their proximity to God himself.

In this sense, competition from any other communal religious movements present in the Old Testament could not be admitted. Brother Leão selects two that he considered to comply with such condition: the Rekabites<sup>25</sup> and the Essenes. Regarding the former, he states that

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<sup>23</sup> In the original: «em hũa casa *que* tinhão a modo de Oratorio pera cantarem os lououres diuinos» (*Benedictina Lusitana*, tomo I, fol. 5).

<sup>24</sup> In the original: «não sò por sua pessoa deu principio à vida eremitica, mas conseruou, & augmentou a caenobitica nos Collegios dos Prophetas» (*id.*, *ibid.*).

<sup>25</sup> In the original, «rechabitas». According to Jeremiah 35, the term derived from Recab, Jehonadab's father, Patriarch of the Rekabites.

«...the institute of the Rekabites was reputed to be pious and religious because they lived outside the cities, in fields and in Tabernacles, or portable houses, as guests and pilgrims on the land; they did not make crops or plant vineyards, nor they drank wine or were accustomed to delicate dishes; all of which is reported in chapter thirty-five of Jeremiah; [... they] were similar to the monks of nowadays»<sup>26</sup>.

The Rekabites originated from Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, or from his descendants, who are known in the Scriptures as the *Kenites*<sup>27</sup>; Joshua gave them lands in Jericho, which they left to join the tribe of Judah on his journey to the desert of Arad, more than one thousand and four hundred years before the birth of Christ. From this option of detachment from the mundane world and of retreat into the wilderness, concludes Brother Leão that they constantly aspired towards eremitic life. In fact, the episode in which the Book of Jeremiah highlights the Rekabites is linked to their fidelity towards the divine precepts (such as their refusal to consume wine), as opposed to the disobedience of the sons of Israel<sup>28</sup>.

Turning now to the Essenes, Brother Leão writes:

«...they were the most religious people amongst the Jews, very different from the Pharisees and the Sadducees; [...] being more than four thousand men, their belongings were common property to all; they had no women, slaves or servants but instead served each other, and professed; their everyday fast [...] became already part of their nature; they were not opponents of Christ our Lord [...]»<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> In the original: «o instituto dos Rechabitas consta que foi pio & Religioso; porque viuião fora das Cidades pellos campos em tabernáculos, ou casas portateis & leuadiças como hospedes & peregrinos sobre a terra, não fazião searas, não plantauão vinhas, nem bebião vinho, não vsauão de manjares delicados, o que tudo consta do capítulo trinta & sinco de Hyeremias; [...] erão semelhantes aos monges de agora» (*Benedictina Lusitana*, tome I, fol. 5).

<sup>27</sup> According to information from the Brother Leão himself (*id.*, *ibid.*); «Cineos» in the original.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Jeremiah 35.

<sup>29</sup> In the original: «era da gente mais religiosa que entre os Iudeõs auia mui diferente dos Phariseos, & Saduceos; [...] passando de quatro mil homens, eram seus bês communs a todos não tinham molheres,

However, to Brother Leão, none of these movements were prior to Samuel and Elijah. The Rekabites were not because «the way of their religion and observance is more modern than Elijah»<sup>30</sup>. In fact, the Rekabites would be descendants of Jehonadab, a relative of Moses' wife, forbidden by their Patriarch to live in cities and to drink wine; Brother Leão argues that Jehonadab lived when Jehu began to reign in Israel, 902 years before Christ, in a time when Elijah would already have ascended to Heaven for twelve years<sup>31</sup>.

With regard to the Essenes, he mentions that there were two branches: the Samaritan Essenes, whose beliefs were “filled with errors”; and the Palestinian Essenes, who lived on the banks of the Jordan, near the Dead Sea and who, according to the ways of their living, would demonstrate themselves to be a sort of upcoming of Christianity. Both, however, proceeded from the Rekabites, and so, could not have existed before Samuel and Elijah<sup>32</sup>.

## Conclusions

Brother Leão de São Tomás, when designing the *Benedictina Lusitana*, sought, essentially, to sketch the history of his own Order, with few concerns about the various movements which gradually built the Western Monasticism. The pages on which we are holding in this study constitute, therefore, an exception to the body of his work. Nevertheless, they are deserving of attention because they denote how the author shaped ancient writings to legitimize his views.

The search for the origins of monasticism in the past was not an innocent feature in his work. It was based on relevant figures of the Old Testament, namely the prophets Elijah and Samuel, but never in dissident movements within Judaism. Brother Leão finds similarities

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seruos nem criados, hūs aos outros se seruião, & ministrauão, & seu jejum cotidiano [...] tinham já convertido em natureza; não forão aduersarios a Christo Senhor nosso [...]» (*id., ibid.*, fol. 6).

<sup>30</sup> In the original: «o modo de sua Religião & obseruancia he mais moderna que Elias» (*id., ibid.*).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. *id., ibid.*, fol. 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Id., ibid.*, fol. 7.

with monasticism, however, in two of these movements: the Rekabites and the Essenes. Revolving around them, he tries to weave an argument that would not leave any doubts that the beginnings of monasticism could never lie in such movements. He goes further: recognizing though the virtues and the religious zeal manifested by both Rekabites and Essenes, he considers the prophets as those who were closest to God. Brother Leão's pages are filled with descriptions of fantastic ways which Yahweh used to legitimize the prophets, showing that they were, indeed, at his service.

However, the author did not hesitate to distance himself and his assertions from Judaism: the forms of religious association in ancient Israel were, to him, nothing but a pale image of the true monastic movement that would emerge centuries later, under the light of the faith of Christ; for him, it was Christianity that imprinted in monasticism the "seal of truth" and its fulfillment. On the other hand, he was a 17<sup>th</sup> century man who spoke about a distant past and, therefore, described it according to the standards of his own time. Expressions like «...similar to the monks of nowadays...», referring to the Essenes, or his description of the Elijah's followers experiences in «colleges» or «schools» demonstrate that Brother Leão adopted a comparative standard to confront the past through anachronistic perspectives: the way by which he describes the precursors of monastic movements reminds one of his coeval painters, when representing scenes from the Old Testament by using scenarios and characters constructed from landscapes, architecture and clothing of their own time.

Finally, a word about the landscape that dominates the imagination of Brother Leão de São Tomás: his ideal of monastic sanctity focuses on a distanced relationship with the urban environment, which undeniably contrasts with the reality of his experience as a religious man and teacher connected to the University of Coimbra. On the first pages of his work, we find praises on hermitic life through the example of the prophet Elijah, although it does not conform to the countryside ideal expressed in the case of Samuel, absolutely cenobitic. We find this paradigm, however, in the experience of detachment from the

mundane of Rekabites and Essenes, groups who live away from urban environments. We can highlight the case of the former, though: the character of their communities was nomadic; they did not cultivate the land and lived as foreigners or pilgrims in tents or houses that could easily be carried when moving.

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# Popular Art and Official Art: a possible and useful classification in Mesopotamian iconography?

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One of the principal distinctions in the modern system of art classification is that between official art and popular art, sometimes called, respectively major and minor, or “fine” and “applied”<sup>1</sup>. Official art is always well considered, as the expression “fine arts” demonstrates, and implies a judgement of an aesthetic value. On the contrary, popular one often lifts problematic judgments. It is neglected as not important<sup>2</sup>, not artistically found, not interested in expression of emotions and not conformed to canonical “beauty”. Sometime it is over-estimated upon moot reasons: “popular” is like “simple”, “more truthful”, “more lively”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Quite a few books are concerned with these definitions in Europe, being used for long, since Medieval times: see, for example, Talon-Hugon 2008; Court 2002; de Maison Rouge 2002; Makravis 2002, 588-593; Cometti, Morizot and Pouivet eds. 2005, 7-18 and 33-99. The bibliography in the USA is more developed in reference to contemporary art and to “mass culture”. Some recent analyses concerning the Ancient Near East try to overcome these concepts: Winter 1989, 321-332; Mazzoni 2001, 292-309; Suter and Uehlinger eds. 2005; Matthiae and Romano eds., 2010<sup>1</sup>, 615-1031. The last ICAANE, held in Warsaw (2012), dealt with these subjects within the framework of the third theme.

<sup>2</sup> «Les arts mineurs (principalement décoratifs) produisent des formes dont la fonction signifiante et l’impact émotionnel sont réduits à peu de chose» (Mavrakis 2002, 590). «Les arts mineurs constituent à cet égard une zone indécise à la frontière de ce qui est de l’art et de ce qui ne l’est pas» (*ibid.*, 591).

<sup>3</sup> But in the academic world, the prejudices against “minor art” are still present: Korichi 2007, 173-207; Cometti Morizot and Pouivet eds. 2005, 8-16; Talon-Hugon 2008. Some philosophers in aesthetic consider as the basis to judge an artistic work its aesthetic satisfaction, that is, its beauty: Mavrakis 2002, 583-590.

What do these modern definitions mean if used for ancient cultures? How can they help us in understanding ancient productions?<sup>4</sup> Today, according to the most used term, an object is considered of popular art<sup>5</sup> if it is made with a poor material, in a serialization production, in a linear and not naturalistic style. But also if its producer and its consumer belong to the “popular class”; if the producer is anonymous and, finally; if his or her abilities are only taught orally.

So, in the more widespread definition of popular art four elements are essential: material quality, type of production, style, social class of producer and consumer. Nevertheless, these four conditions are not always honoured. For example, contemporary art manipulates poor, used, daily or even impermanent material<sup>6</sup>. But one couldn't say that this is not official art. Contemporary art employs sometimes a serialization production, when it uses moulds or reproductions of identical subject, in equal technique, in unchanged composition<sup>7</sup>. So, the work of an artist can be identified before reading the picture's legend. This explains why the paintings can be called from the colour used or from the year(s) of their achievement. And the most recent innovations come from the introduction of the computer<sup>8</sup>. Despite these features, such art is considered official<sup>9</sup>.

The style is not a good criterion to designate an artistic creation as popular or official. Linear style is not necessarily linked to popular art.

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<sup>4</sup> Winter (1994, 1995b, 2002, 2007) and Orthmann (2008) try to find the textual expression of beauty as a mark of ancient aesthetical judgement. Bahrani (2003) starts from a programmatic reject of the “colonialistic” approach (=modern use of writing and analysis), even if she doesn't explain how one can better understand art without employing present-day language. Apart from the difficulties to follow her in the simplistic judgements of other scholars, as well as in assertions without developed explanations, she fails to define the specific field of Mesopotamian aesthetic and values, leaving unsolved theoretical points and focusing only in “official” monuments.

<sup>5</sup> Talon-Hugon 2008; De Maison Rouge 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Acrylic paint doesn't resist for a long time and museums' inspectors try to resolve this problem: De Maison Rouge 2002, Millet 1987.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Alechinsky (in Butor & Sicard 1984).

<sup>8</sup> «La mutation majeure du moment, c'est l'arrivée d'Internet et des techniques numériques, l'ouverture d'un monde de communication totale mais incontrôlable. C'est donc un nouveau rapport au temps qui commence. (...) On entre pour de bon dans le “Postmoderne” vu comme l'après sans mémoire des temps modernes»: De Maison Rouge 2002, 80-81.

<sup>9</sup> De Maison Rouge 2002.

In the last century of painting history, all kinds of styles were tried and they haven't changed the official definition of this art<sup>10</sup>.

At last, the social class of producer and consumer is of a quite difficult definition, if applied to ancient societies. What is "popular class"? This term, invented in Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE, is difficult to be applied to all the economic and social situations which existed before.

In this paper I'd like to check if the modern definition of popular and official art also worths for Mesopotamian iconography of historical times and how it helps a better understanding of ancient art<sup>11</sup>.

### **I. Is it possible to apply the modern definition of popular art to the Mesopotamian iconography?**

According to the definition of popular art as traced before, four elements distinguish official and popular monuments. Could they be applied to ancient Mesopotamia? First of all, it's very difficult to explain the concept of "popular class" in the ancient Mesopotamian society<sup>12</sup>. Craft and art production have been discovered in towns, inhabited mostly by elite and by what can be called "middle class". Middle class was formed by well-off people working for temples or in trade, having property ownership and real estate.

The pooriness of the recovered material is a constant feature of Mesopotamian civilization because of the lacking of stone and wood. Clay is the sole Mesopotamian material used everywhere and by everyone in all periods<sup>13</sup>. Temples and palaces, houses, facilities, storage containers, vessels, etc., were made of earth. Literature, legal documents, and private letters were written on tablets of clay. Moreover, clay figurines are attested even in royal palaces.

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<sup>10</sup> Zarka 2010, Michaud 1997, Millet 1987.

<sup>11</sup> For studies concerning the esthetic, see: Winter 1994, 1995a, 1995b, 2002, 2007, 2010; Feldman 2005, Orthmann 2008, Breniquet 2012, while Bahrani 2002, 2003, 2008 and Steadman & Ross (2010) don't convince. See also Feldman 2004, Browne 2006, Winter 2007 and Fales 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Liverani 2011, Fales 2009-2010.

<sup>13</sup> Moortgat 1967; Curtis and Reade 1996; Margueron 1997, 2004.

Mesopotamian productions used two kinds of style from the beginning: one was more naturalistic; the other, more linear<sup>14</sup>. Thus, the kind of style as defined by modern terminology – linear for popular art and naturalistic for official one – cannot be used for Mesopotamia.

Finally, the conscience of being artist did not exist in Mesopotamia<sup>15</sup>. Craftsmen and artists were both anonymous, received the same training in workshops; their main responsibility was to conform with tradition and the furtherance of what people had created before them. Originality was not a criterion of judgement in artistic or craft production. In that sense, the real difference between popular and official art has to be found in special requests, tasks, goods and significance dictated by king or temples' institutions. It is difficult to know whether considerations over social status or income established or not a distinction between artists and craftsmen.

The criteria used today to distinguish official from popular arts don't correspond to the Mesopotamian production of the historical era<sup>16</sup>. Other factors support this idea, as the exchanges of iconographic subjects, objects and methods between official and popular art.

## II. From official to popular art

Some subjects used in official art shift afterwards in popular production.<sup>17</sup> For example, a “geese goddess”<sup>18</sup> first appears in stone

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Moortgat 1967, Barrelet 1968, Amiet 1981, Spycket 1981, Börker-Klähn 1982, Collon 1982 and 1986, Matthiae 2002, Assante 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Orthmann 2008; Winter 1995b, 2002, 2007; Breniquet 2012. However, during the Late Bronze Age, written documents concerning international exchanges expressed for the first time a mark of special consideration for some artists (Steel 2013). For other periods see Millard 2005. The individualities so recognised were exchanged between kings of different countries, from Mesopotamia to Egypt, to Anatolia and Syria.

<sup>16</sup> Winter 1995b, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Few scholars have already observed some similarities between popular and official works without a systematic approach: van Buren 1930, 103, pl. 25, n. 139; Barrelet 1968, 336; Woolley & Mallowan 1976, 175; Matthiae 2002, 57-58. New interests are now arising: Suter and Uehlinger eds. 2005; Matthiae and Romano eds. 2010<sup>1</sup>, 615-1031; Battini, in press 1.

<sup>18</sup> The nickname of Woolley (1926, 375) has long been used till now. This is not the place to consider the exact identification of the goddess: for a bibliography of precedent works, see Battini 2006a and Maxwell-Hyslop 1992.

reliefs at the end of Early Dynastic period (2500-2400 B.C.), then in cylinder seals during the Akkadian period, to continue throughout the Ur III and Old Babylonian periods, when the subject is also attested in clay reliefs<sup>19</sup>. In stone reliefs and cylinder seals the theme is enriched with figures, elements and symbols. The goddess (**Fig. 1**), more often in profile, sitting on a goose, sometimes laying her feet on a second goose, is receiving a worshipper in a space symbolically marked by elements such as a crescent, a plant, a scorpion, a water flowing vase, a star, fish, etc.<sup>20</sup>. These elements reveal the links of the goddess with water, earth and sky, the three components of the inhabited world, and hence with abundance, life and reproduction.

The passage to popular art, as well as the choice of different media, provoke interesting changes in the goddess' representation and even in her significance. First of all, clay reliefs reduce the subject essentially to the goddess (**Fig. 2**) and some elements, such as the vase and astral symbols. They prefer frontal representation, repetition of scheme and composition, and thanks to the use of moulds, the subject results more conventional and repetitive. At the same time, the frontal representation establishes a more direct link between the goddess and the owner of the clay relief. It's more important to render this direct relationship to the goddess than to reproduce a devotional scene. The reasons have to be sought in the particular needs of the people buying clay reliefs.

### **III. From popular to official art**

Popular subjects affect occasionally official art. One example of this concerns a carved relief of one of Tukulti-Ninurta I's (1243-1207 B.C.) stone altars (**Fig. 3**)<sup>21</sup>. Two servants, so called "Gilgamesh", with

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<sup>19</sup> Battini 2006a and Battini in press 1.

<sup>20</sup> These "secondary" elements are in fact essential for the understanding of the seal: Collon 1995, Battini 2006b, Pittman 2013. This evidence, always recognized for *kudurru* (Seidl 1989, Slanski 2003/2004) and other reliefs (Börker-Klähn 1982, Black & Green 1992, Green 1995, Muller 2002), has long been neglected for seals with few exceptions: Frankfort 1934, Amiet 1961, 1973 and Winter 1986.

<sup>21</sup> Börker-Klähn 1982, pl. 135: Istanbul 7802.

six curls in the hair and a rayed disk over the head, dress a short skirt and hold a standard, also with a rayed disc on top. Both surround the king, and are taller than him. They set a vertical direction to the scene, because of their heights combined with the height of the standards and head disks which they bear. The standards reach the altar's rim and end with the same disc standing over the heads of both "Gilgamesh" and in the altar's volutes. One of the possible interpretations of the altar is that it celebrates the king, who is being honoured by the two "Gilgamesh"

However, its comparison with a kind of a popular production of the Old Babylonian period allows for a better understanding of the altar's relief. It concerns three-dimensional clay models and two-dimensional clay carved reliefs celebrating the deity who appears surrounded by the frames of the temple door (**Fig. 4**)<sup>22</sup>. Like the altar, they often represent, at the sides of the god two similar "Gilgamesh" figures, with six-curled hair, a standard identical with the ones from the altar, and the sun-rayed disk. Such representation signifies the investiture of the deity with its strongest powers, being a symbol of victory against the evil which threaten the entrance of the temple, in its quality as an "ambiguous" place.

The altar of Tukulti-Ninurta I can be interpreted in the same way: the king appears with the maximum of his power, as vanquisher of all evils that menace his kingdom. The ruler, thus, can be compared with the god at the temple entrances of the Old Babylonian examples cited, suggesting for him a quasi-divine nature.

Finally, the insistence to represent the disk evoked the protection of Shamash, the "sun-god", and established a justification for the king's rule<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Battini, in press 2. Sometimes the god is not anthropomorphically represented but through symbols and animals.

<sup>23</sup> Seidl 1971 and 1989, Mayer-Opificius 1984, Orthmann 1992. Oaths of loyalty were sworn before the emblem of wingless or winged sun disk in the II<sup>nd</sup> mill. and I<sup>st</sup> mill. (Dalley 1986, 92-101. But the sun disk and especially the winged disk changed attribution and significance: Teissier 1996, 92-101, Ornan, 2005, 208-210. About the importance of divine symbols see Van Buren 1945, Tosun 1956, Seidl 1971, Green 1995, Braun-Holzinger 1996, Slanski 2003/2004 and Giovino 2006.

Tukulti-Ninurta I is thus presented as a righteous, strong and victorious king, comparable to the gods. It is quite possible to see a perpetuation of this theme in the “Gilgamesh” with six hair curls posted to protect entrances in Neo-Assyrian palaces.

#### **IV. Discovery of popular objects in official buildings**

Popular objects, like clay figurines, have been found in official buildings. Their use by people living in the palace can be established, giving a new insight of the life of the élite<sup>24</sup>. Prophylactic figurines of clay dogs and *apkallu* were buried under the floor of official buildings (Nimrud, Ninive, Khorsabad), as in private houses (Aššur) (**Fig. 5**)<sup>25</sup>. They are mostly attested in the I<sup>st</sup> millennium BC when, according to Braun-Holzinger, an augmentation of fears and worries increase the representation of demons and monsters, in comparison with the II<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC.<sup>26</sup>

#### **V. Between official and popular art: glyptics**

Glyptics belonged to all kinds of people, whether members of the political and religious elite, or common people. Some of the seals' inscriptions let discover the owners' identity: kings, courtiers, functionaries, officials, priests, templar officials, merchants, scribes, smiths, cooks, soldiers, carpenters, messengers, barbers, canal inspectors, goldsmith and other craftsmen. Even the most humble people can take advantage of the so-called BURGUL seals, made in clay or wood, in a very schematic style, used once for a specific legal act<sup>27</sup>. If this type of seal is widely distributed, social status of seal-cutters and other

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<sup>24</sup> For example, in Mari: Margueron 2004, 489-491, 514-515; and 1997, 731-753.

<sup>25</sup> Van Buren 1931; Ellis 1968; Rashid 1983.

<sup>26</sup> Braun-Holzinger 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Renger 1977, 77; Collon 1986, 218-220; Postgate 1994, 286.

craftsmen, however, still remain difficult to be deduced<sup>28</sup>.

Whether the elite chooses specific artists or used the same artisans as other people it remains a subject under discussion. Both proposals could exist in different times. Only a deeper study of seals' style and inscriptions could partially answer to this question<sup>29</sup>. However, even if artists were responsible for making the seals destined to the elite, their social consideration, incomes, the existence of special trainings are impossible to be deduced without new discoveries. Certainly, some seals supported a political message and their use was reserved to one part of the society<sup>30</sup>. Others concern a greater number of people and more individual aims.

## **VI. Serialization: a manner of production**

Exchanges between popular and official arts concern not only themes but also techniques. Serialization, considered today as typical of popular art, was used in Mesopotamia for clay figurines and plaques, made by hand or in moulds, as well as for royal statues. The set of king Gudea's statues (second part of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century BC) belongs to this form of serialization (**Fig. 6**) repeating the materials, positions and subjects<sup>31</sup>. Another example is given by stone votive statues of the Early Dynastic period, widely produced in Mesopotamia.

## **VII. Provisional conclusions**

The modern distinction between popular and official does not have correspondence in ancient Mesopotamian society. It can be useful for modern analyses, without forgetting that, from the point

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<sup>28</sup> On seal-cutters, see lastly the articles of Meijer (2010) and Feller (2010). For a general comprehension of craftsmen, see Gunter ed. 1990; Zettler 1996 and Stein 1996. Like others, Steel's last book (2013) failed to demonstrate the important social status of craftsmen. Their social consideration in the ancient Mesopotamian society at different periods is still uncertain (cf. Zettler 1996).

<sup>29</sup> As the last study of Otto (2013).

<sup>30</sup> Mayr and Owen 2004; Otto 2013, 50-51.

<sup>31</sup> Spycket 1981. For a recent analysis of this series see Suter 2000.

of view of Mesopotamians, it doesn't matter. This distinction cannot be found in written documents where the word *ummanu*, «master», defines an artist or craftsman. Negative judgements do not affect productions made in a linear style, nor productions considered today as “minor”. What can distinguish official works is the spread of a political/religious message and the astonishing materials and prices. Finally, official and popular arts pursue the same aims: one “aesthetic” and one more “philosophic”. All kinds of production fulfil the need of making life more pleasant.<sup>32</sup> In addition, each is linked to specific needs depending on social status: political or religious needs for institutions, or apothropaic and prophylactic for people. Their difference lies only in their meanings: imposed by political or religious messages, or demanded by the needs of living people.

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<sup>32</sup> See Winter 1994; 1995b and 2002.

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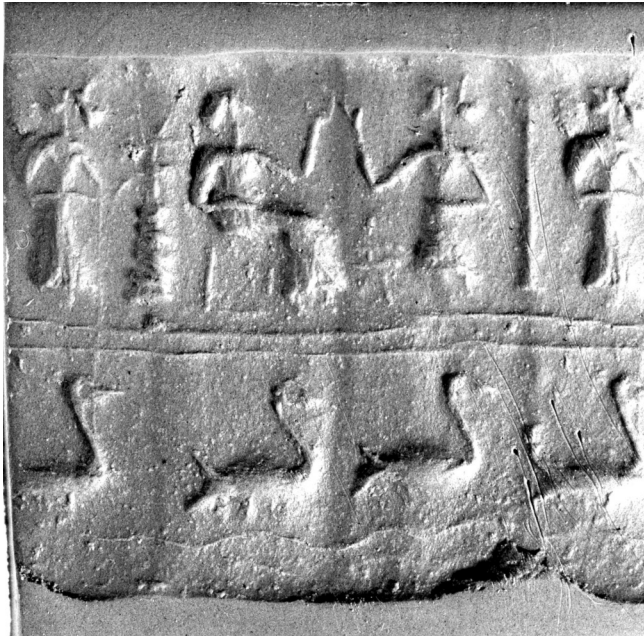
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**Fig. 1:** Cylinder seal of the “geese goddess” (Paris, Louvre, AO 15478).



**Fig. 2:** Clay relief of the “geese goddess” (Woolley and Mallowan 1976, 147, pl. 80).



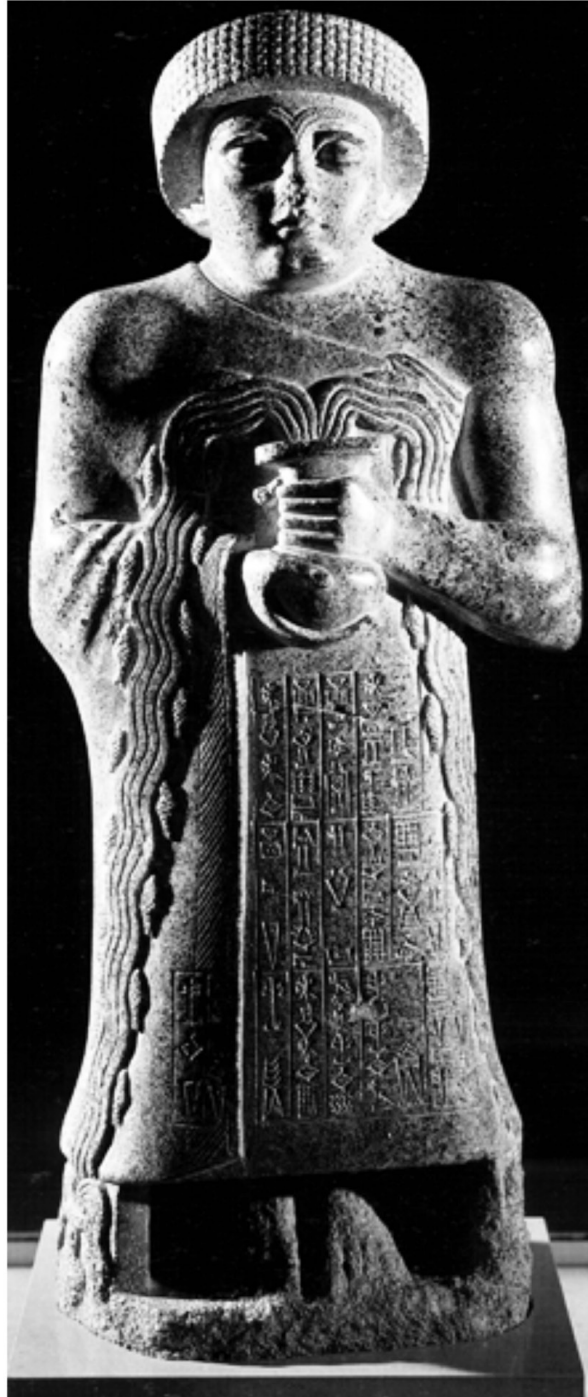
**Fig. 3:** Carved relief of the altar of Tukulti-Ninurta I  
(Istanbul, Archaeological Museum 7802).



**Fig. 4:** Model of a gate overwhelmed with a godly presence (Barrelet 1968: 814, pl. 81).



**Fig. 5:** Dogs buried under the floor (Curtis and Reade 1996: 116).



**Fig. 6:** Statue of Gudea (statue N. Paris, Louvre, AO 22126)..

# The ambiguity of the public and the private spheres in the Athenian *polis* of the Tyrannicides and Pericles

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It is well known that the *Iliad* begins with a dispute between two kings, Achilles and Agamemnon, who argue over the same concubine. The young woman Briseis has been made prisoner by the Achaeans and handed over to the king of the Myrmidons as a part of the spoils of war. Agamemnon receives Chryseis, the daughter of an Apollo's priest, who, however, asks for her to be restored to him. Feeling at a disadvantage, the pastor-king of the Achaeans orders Achilles to return the young woman he had been given as a prize. This causes a fissure between the two leaders and dissension among the Achaean army, thus setting up the end of the Trojan War<sup>1</sup>.

In the *Odyssey*, during the twenty-year long absence of the king of Ithaca, a group of noblemen take up residence in the royal palace, while waiting for the queen to choose one to be her husband and new ruler of the Ithacans. Prince Telemachus worries that his mother's suitors have taken over his house and consume his goods while waiting for Penelope to make her choice. In order to solve this problem, the prince convenes an assembly of Ithacans in Ulysses' palace and asks the suitors to relinquish this way of courting his mother, but is unsuccessful and his possessions continue to be squandered in the name of public interest<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Il.* 1.105-201.

<sup>2</sup> *Od.* 2.6-256.

These two Homeric episodes refer to supposedly private problems: in the first instance, possession and enjoyment of a concubine, the urgency of a wedding in the second instance. However, they also prove to be of public interest. In the *Iliad*, the Briseis incident leads to an argument that will ultimately affect the course of the political conflict between the Achaeans and the Trojans. In the *Odyssey*, Penelope's marriage has implications in the political and economic situation of Telemachus' estate, whereupon he tries to find a solution, thus turning his mother's marriage into a matter of the State<sup>3</sup>.

The instances mentioned above are two examples of the ambiguity between the public and private spheres that characterised the Classical Antiquity. Indeed, as in religion, where the sacred and the profane, that is, the religious and the political, become almost socially indistinguishable, so do public and private walk *pari passu*, being the line that separates their sphere of influence not always noticeable.

Throughout most of what has been called the Classical Antiquity, and unlike what is nowadays regarded as the ideal situation, this lack of distinction had an impact on how societies functioned. The elements pertaining to what the Romans have called the *res publica*, and those belonging to each individual's private life, seem to be one side of the same coin. These two aspects could hardly escape such an ambiguity, however, as the social and political institutions of these communities demanded that it be so.

Societies structured around a monarchic regime, as was the case several times during the Classical Antiquity, meant that one family (*genos/gens*) had a prominent role, so that their private lives, options and conduct were affected and limited because of their public status. The opposite was also true. Therefore, a political alliance was often strengthened by a marriage, and its dissolution could change the life of the city permanently. Pompey's story is an example of this: in 59 BC, Pompey married Julius Caesar's daughter in order to establish the first triumvirate, but, in 54 BC, the alliance was irremediably shaken by his wife's death.

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<sup>3</sup> For more on this issue, see Finley 1982, 88.

The goal of this essay is, however, to present two Athenian instances, one from the end of the archaic period and the other from the classical period, which have become archetypes for this historically ambiguous relationship. This paper will show that the distinction between the public and private spheres is not always clear, going so far as to suggest that such distinction may be impossible, for reasons internal and external to the sources.

### **The Tyrant-slayers Case**

The first instance has become known in the history of Ancient Greece as the episode of the Tyrannicides<sup>4</sup>. After Pisistratus' tyranny, which ended with his death in 527 BC, his son Hippias, joining forces with his brother Hipparchus, succeeded as the ruler of Athens. Together, they controlled the affairs of the Athenian *polis*. However, the powerful families of Athens did not acknowledge the Pisistratids as their father's legitimate successors, leading the city's allegiances to divide. Furthermore, Hipparchus gained political enemies due to the lifestyle he so publicly embraced, in particular his inclination towards the arts and practices considered morally dissolute<sup>5</sup>.

Hipparchus was assassinated during the Panathenaic Festival of 514 BC. According to the ancient sources (Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle and Pausanias)<sup>6</sup>, the homicide was the consequence of a love entanglement, which would have interfered with the public life of Athens at the time. Thucydides goes so far as to say that "the fact of Aristogiton and Harmodius was undertaken upon an accident of love..."<sup>7</sup>.

Although there are some differences among the historical and literary sources, the story is briefly told and remains basically the

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<sup>4</sup> For more information on the Tyrannicides, see Taylor 1991<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Arist. *Ath.* 18.1.

<sup>6</sup> Hdt. 5.55-61; 6.123.2; Thuc. 1.20.2; 6.54-59; Pl. *Smp.* 182c5-7; *Hipparch.* 228b4-229d7; Arist. *Ath.* 17-19; Paus. 1.23.

<sup>7</sup> Thuc. 6.54.1, ed. T. Hobbes.

same. Harmodius was Aristogiton's lover – a relationship that may fall into the pederastic tradition of Ancient Greece<sup>8</sup>. Both descended from a Boeotian family and supported the Pisistratids<sup>9</sup>. The young Harmodius would have caught Hipparchus' eye, but rejected and reported him to Aristogiton. Feeling offended by Hipparchus' harassment, and afraid that the tyrant's status might deprive him of his lover, Aristogiton "immediately planned the destruction of the tyranny", as is stated by the historian of the Peloponnesian War<sup>10</sup>. The situation deteriorated when Hipparchus, feeling vexed, decided to publicly humiliate Harmodius by rejecting the participation of one of his sisters in the Canephorae procession, claiming that she was not worthy of such an honour (because, he implied, she was not a virgin) and that Harmodius was effeminate<sup>11</sup>. Aristogiton and Harmodius decided then to carry out their revenge through a conspiracy which ended in the assassination of the Pisistratid during the celebrations of Athena:

"Falling upon him recklessly, extremely infuriated, one by love, the other by insult, they stabbed and killed him... And so it was that, because of a love quarrel, there arose Aristogiton and Harmodius' conspiracy and the execution of such a rash act of audacity."<sup>12</sup>

Harmodius and Aristogiton, from now on known as the Tyrannicides or the tyrant-slayers, were ultimately executed, the first one having "swiftly found death at the hands of the guards, and the other later on, after having been captured and tortured for a long time."<sup>13</sup> According to Aristotle, after the foundation of Democracy in Athens,

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, we may also argue this relationship would be in some way different that a pederastic one was supposed to be, relying there the reason for hostilities among the Athenians. The process against Timarchos is perhaps another example to consider in this context. We'll discuss the subject in another *forum*. On Greek pederasty, see the excellent synthesis of Skinner 2010, 119-134.

<sup>9</sup> Hdt. 5.55; Ferreira and Leão 2010, 116.

<sup>10</sup> Thuc. 6.54.3.

<sup>11</sup> Thuc. 6.56; Arist. *Ath.* 18.2.

<sup>12</sup> Thuc. 6.57.3, 59.1.

<sup>13</sup> Arist. *Ath.* 18.4.

the Tyrannicides became the object of an attempt of “heroicisation”, especially in the context of the anti-tyrannical movements observed in the *polis* throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, as can be seen in several representations of these two lovers as martyrs for the Democracy<sup>14</sup>. Kritios and Nesiotes’ sculpture, depicting the two executioners in the heroic nudity typical of the archaic and classical Greek style, shows that Aristogiton and Harmodius became the focus of public worship. In fact, the sculpture of the tyrant-slayers may have been the only representation of human individuals in the great Athenian square up until the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, symbolizing their great act of heroism and their love of freedom<sup>15</sup>. Moreover, they became the object of *skolia* or banquet songs, to which Aristophanes bears witness, saying “never was such a man seen in Athens” when referring to Harmodius<sup>16</sup>.

Naturally, the contemporary hermeneutics believes that Hipparchus’ assassination goes beyond the love affair to which the ancient sources attribute it.

Aristogiton and Harmodius’ Boeotian origins must be highlighted, since they raise the possibility of a political conflict linked to the families’ roots and parties<sup>17</sup>. However, the fact that these sources have ascribed the event to a romantic instance, a matter that belonged to the private sphere but ended up affecting the public lives of the Athenians, is still relevant. That is, the Tyrannicides’ action ultimately led to the end of tyrannies in Athens from 510 BC on, and was an important step

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<sup>14</sup> Arist. *Ath.* 18.6; Paus. 1.23.1-2 mentions a woman called Leaeia (Lioness), who may have been Aristogiton’s lover and aided in the process.

<sup>15</sup> Paus. 1.8.5. This sculpture may likely be a second version of this subject, since the first one, a bronze monument carved by Antenor at the time of the democracy in Athens and erected in the agora, was likely stolen by the Persians in 480 BC and taken to Susa. The statue would have been brought back to Athens by Alexander, according to Arrian (*An.* 3.14), or by Seleucus, according to Valerius Maximus (2.10.1), or even by Antiochus, according to Pausanias (1.8.5), but it was ultimately lost and was never copied. A replacement of the stolen statue was then ordered to Kritios and Nesiotes, who presented it to the city in 477 BC. The original piece was also lost, but this version was copied during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, having survived until this day. One of these copies is stored in the Archaeological Museum of Naples. See Brunnsåker 1955.

<sup>16</sup> Ar. *V.* 1225-1226; on the songs, Rocha Pereira 2012<sup>11</sup>, 237 n. 129; on the songs about the Tyrannicides Jesus 2010, 157 n. 240.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. Lavelle 1988, 211-215.

in the institution of Democracy. To think that everything may have started with a jilted love...

Plato's words are suggestive in this regard:

“it is in the interest of the rulers, I suppose, that their subjects should not harbour elevated thoughts and that there should be no strong bond of friendship or union among them which only love, above all else, is likely to inspire... This lesson have the Athenian tyrants learned by experience, for Aristogiton's love and Harmodius' bond with him were so strong as to defeat their power.”<sup>18</sup>

### **The Aspasia Affair**

The second instance analysed in this paper is that of Aspasia of Miletus<sup>19</sup>. There are not many sources available regarding Aspasia, and they are all from the point of view of the men with whom she had relationships. All that is known is that she was born a free woman in Miletus, circa 470 BC, in a particularly intense period regarding the political standing between Asia Minor, Persia and Athens. Indeed, this was around the time that Miletus attempted to gain Athens' protection, after having been under Persian rule. The Persians had destroyed the city in 496 BC, taking political and military control until 478 BC, at which point the Milesians joined the Delian League<sup>20</sup>. At the same time, however, rebellions against the Athenian hegemony were breaking out all over the Hellenic *poleis*, such as the ones in Megara and Sparta in 446 BC<sup>21</sup>. When war broke out between Miletus and Samos, Athens intervened on behalf of the former, in order to gain control of the city of Priene. Aspasia played, *de facto* or not, an important role in this situation.

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<sup>18</sup> Pl. *Smp.* 182c.

<sup>19</sup> There are several works on Aspasia, of which the following are of particular interest: Solana Dueso 1994; Henry 1995; González Suárez 1997; Jouanna 2005.

<sup>20</sup> For more on this subject, see González Suárez 1997, 12.

<sup>21</sup> On biographical data, see Solana Dueso 1994, xi; see also Earp 1954, 142-147; Greggor 1953, 27-32; Barron 1962, 1-6.

It is believed that Aspasia arrived at Athens c. 450-445 BC with her sister and brother-in-law, an active Athenian politician known as Alcibiades “the Old”, who had been ostracised years before and was only now returning to his birthplace. At that time, the *polis* was going through a period of political turmoil, with conflicts between the thalassocratic faction and the land party. This opposition could be felt throughout the entire territory of the Hellenic cities. The confrontation between Athens and Sparta in the beginning of the Peloponnesian War was a reflection of that.

Aspasia’s migration to Athens can be explained by her family ties to Athenian politicians, which granted her immediate access to the local circles of power, where she gained great importance. In fact, since her arrival to Attica until 429 BC, she lived as the “wife” of the Athenian statesman Pericles and had a son who was named after his father. On the other hand, Pericles’ first wife’s name is still unknown, which may carry some significance as to the Milesian woman’s importance in his public and private life (cf. Plu. *Per.* 24.8-9).

Aspasia’s social and political path is believed to have been an intense one, socialising with individuals such as Hippodamus of Miletus, Phidias, Xenophanes, Socrates, Aeschines and Plato<sup>22</sup>. Tradition confirms that she was a Rhetoric master and Socrates’ teacher in this subject, which, if it proves true, may explain the place awarded to her in collective memory<sup>23</sup>.

Aspasia was part of an elite, which supported thalassocratic and liberal ideals at the scale of the current Greek political framework, arguing for the Athenian supremacy in the Mediterranean. Pericles clearly fit into this context. However, the historical sources provide an alternative, and perhaps complementary, image of Aspasia of Miletus. According to other ancient texts, Aspasia may have been a *hetaira*, a free woman who fit neither the concept of the traditional wife (*politiss*

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<sup>22</sup> Plu. *Per.* 24; González Suárez 1997, 18-19.

<sup>23</sup> The problems surrounding Aspasia’s origins are discussed by Solana Dueso 1994, and González Suárez 1997, for example.

or *gyne*) nor that of the concubines (*pallakai*) or even the ordinary prostitutes (*pornai*)<sup>24</sup>.

It is true that comedy (especially that of Aristophanes, although it is known that Cratinus and Eupolis already followed this tendency; cf. Plu. *Per.* 24.9) is the main source from which this image of Aspasia has been built. And one must not forget that, what matters the most for comic poets, is caricature and exaggeration. However, several other authors have pointed out that every woman who did not follow the norms of the Athenian society would be belittled by and subordinated to the established order<sup>25</sup>. It should not be forgotten that, instead of remaining within the “legendary” *gynoecium*, as was the case of the feminine elites in Athens, Aspasia participated in social gatherings where politics were the main subject, which would be unthinkable for a woman of good family. Furthermore, her oriental background may also explain some of her more unusual behaviour within the Athenian society. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Aspasia has been represented comically.

On the other hand, Aspasia was not the main target of authors like Aristophanes. Instead, they used her as a means to attack Pericles, her “husband”/lover, at the time also the ruler of Athens – Aristophanes was an antimilitarist and, therefore, anti-Pericles<sup>26</sup>. In fact, as it has been said, the Ancient authors were only interested in her because she was connected to Pericles and the little information available on her is a result of this relationship: “her arrival at and departure from Pericles’ house marks both her appearance and disappearance from History.”<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, from this relationship between the statesman and the Milesian woman there arose, at the time, a spiral of ideas that started out in the private sphere and spread to the public world. This amorous liaison with a foreign woman who did not belong to the feminine elites of the *polis* resulted in Pericles being seen as sexually unre-

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<sup>24</sup> On Greek women, see e.g. Curado 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Solana Dueso 1994, xv.

<sup>26</sup> Sousa e Silva 2006, 16-18.

<sup>27</sup> González Suárez 1997, 22.

strained, which had an effect in his public image and discredited his political intervention. As such, Aspasia was used as a weapon against Pericles, emasculating him, the guilt of his wrong decisions being assigned to her<sup>28</sup>.

This is, then, how Aspasia's image was delineated: a foreigner who seduced an Athenian citizen with great political responsibilities, over whom she had an unusual effect, and who was moved by a personal egotism that superseded the interests of the *polis*.

Thus, it is symptomatic that Athens' assistance of the Milesians in the conflict against Samos was a result of Aspasia's involvement in the process. Plutarch states: "As for the war against Samos, Pericles is accused of having ordered it mainly because of Miletus, at Aspasia's request" (*Per.* 25.1.); or "But, as it seemed that he waged war against Samos to please Aspasia... who dominated the main politicians" (*Per.* 24.2.).

Some lines ahead, in Pericles' biography, the Chaeronean treatise writer mentions an old woman named Elpinice, whose task is to evaluate the statesman's decisions regarding Aspasia:

"What admirable exploits, Pericles, and worthy of a crown! You have made many of our brave citizens perish, fighting not against the Phoenicians and the Medes... but ruining a city of our own race and allies." (*Per.* 28.6.)

The goal was to show a politically unacceptable situation, negatively reinforced by the fact that it was instigated by the whims of a statesman's lover, through whom the council was eroticised, losing its eminently public nature and becoming a domestic topic of discussion.

Similarly, in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* – which was Plutarch's source (*Per.* 30.4.) – Aspasia is seen as the cause of Athens' economic blockade against Megara, which, for some, was the root of the Peloponnesian War. According to the poet, 'in order to avenge the offence

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<sup>28</sup> *Id., ibid.*, 19.

done to her by some Megarians, who had kidnapped two of her courtesans, Aspasia convinced Pericles to defend the expulsion of Megara from the Athenian markets, reducing the city to extreme poverty.’ Acting as if he were Zeus, Pericles persuaded the assembly to pass a decree towards this end<sup>29</sup> (Ar. *Ach.* 520-535). This is, therefore, a comical explanation in the shape of political caricature and social satire, which echoes the Trojan war, begun with the kidnapping of a woman (a subject discussed by Herodotus in the preamble: Medea, Europa, Helen), of something which can only be understood within the context of the Athenians’ political ambitions at that time.

In the same sense, in the case of Samos, it would seem obvious that the historical alliances between Miletus and Athens were, on their own, enough to decide the war against the Samians, as well as their resistance to the Attic *polis*’ hegemonic intents<sup>30</sup>.

Curiously, there is no mention to this *casus belli* in Thucydides. This means that, Aristophanes and Plutarch, while serving a political matter, provide testimonies that intentionally state that the Peloponnesian conflict was brought about by Pericles’ personal reasons, essentially by private matters. Therefore, the rhetoric used to construe this image brings to the discourse the elements necessary to obtaining the desired final effect.

The process of impiety (*asebeia*) in which Aspasia was involved and that ultimately led Pericles to expose himself in the public square can also only be understood within this political context, where the private life of a statesman is brought to public debate in order to weaken him (for more on the proceedings, see Plu. *Per.* 32.1). The grounds for the legal procedure that this process entailed are still discussed today, because Aspasia could not be accused of such an offence since she was not an Athenian. But it is not entirely impossible that the accusation involved pandering or pimping, where the goal was to tarnish Pericles’ character. This is, in a way, what Plutarch does when he expresses the notion that the statesman had decided to

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<sup>29</sup> Sousa e Silva 2006, 43.

<sup>30</sup> González Suárez 1997, 55.

spark “the fire of war... hoping to dispel the accusations and diminish the ill attitudes.”<sup>31</sup> Once more, the private became public, at the service of personal interests...

The case-story of Pericles and Aspasia, already then compared to Heracles and Omphale’s (given her strength and his weakness and sexual connotations, *Plu. Per.* 24.9), was “repeated” several times afterwards, some of them during the Classical Era. This was the case, for example, of Antony and Cleopatra (1<sup>st</sup> century BC) and of Titus and Berenice (1<sup>st</sup> century AD), which had profound public repercussions, as their contemporary sources corroborate, and have become paradigms, since, as it is known, the rhetoric with which the public is mixed and mistaken for the private has worked...and worked very well, for those who fomented it.

## **Final Remarks**

In conclusion, it can be said that the episodes of the Tyrannicides and Aspasia, which occurred in Athens during the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, are proof of an ambiguous relationship, which has continued throughout the whole of History. Both the differentiation and the separation of the public and private spheres have often depended on the interests of societies and agents, of the individual but also of the collective, of ideologies, their practices and representations, particularly visible in the political sphere, as the examples discussed above show. However, and adding to this, is also the fact that public and private are essentially modern concepts and are far away from the horizon of the Ancient<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> *Plu. Per.* 32.6. On Aspasia’s process, beyond the references cited on Miletus, see Ferreira 2010, 129.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. Vasconcelos e Sousa 2011. We wish to thank Sara Melo Santos her availability in translating and reviewing this article into English.

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# Interview

RES  
ANTI Q



## Interview: Pascal Vernus\*

Pascal Vernus is a unique and singular personality. As Director d'Études (Égyptien) at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris IV) since 1976, he devoted his life to teaching and research in Egyptology. If his training as linguist and philologist led him to embrace especially studies on language, writing and literature, it did not stop him, though, to intervene in subjects such as religion, political history and even archaeology. His *curriculum* counts with more than 400 publications, among books, book chapters, articles in proceedings of congresses and journals.

He lectured in courses and conferences in universities, museums and scientific institutions from all over the world. For example, at the Universities of Aïn-Shams (Cairo), Yale, Liège, Genève, Köln, Johns Hopkins (Baltimore), Philadelphia, Lisbon (Universidade Nova) and Barcelona (Universidad Autonoma); at the Fondation Égyptologique Reine Elizabeth and the Institut des Hautes Études de Belgique (both in Brussels); the Museo Arqueológico Nacional de Madrid, the Egyptological Seminar (New York) the Académie de France in Rome and, finally, the Università degli Studi in Milan...

He also occupied several charges, such as member of the Conseil National de la Recherche (section 32) since 1995; scientific member of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (Cairo), from 1973 to 1976; member of the scientific and administration councils of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale (1989-1995) and of the École Pratique des Hautes Études (1990-1998). Moreover, he was responsible of the formation of the DEA "Grammaire comparée" (since 1991);

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\* This interview was conducted by Maria Helena Trindade Lopes (HTL).

of the équipe d'accueil "Langues et littératures de l'Égypte ancienne" (EPHE IV<sup>e</sup> section); member of the Comité de paléographie hébraïque and of the Comité de la Société Française d'Égyptologie.

Moreover, he is part of the Editorial Committee of the *Revue d'Égyptologie* and of *Lingua Aegyptia*; Director of the section "Textes égyptiens" of the collection *Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient*; member of the Editorial Committee of Athlone Publications in Egyptology and Ancient Near East; in charge of the "Égypte pharaonique" section of the *Dictionnaire Universel des dieux et des déesses* (Seuil).

He was president of the Société de linguistique de Paris in 1995 and vice-president of the organization committee of the XVI<sup>e</sup> Congrès International des linguistes (Paris, July 1997). To his distinction with the Maspero Award, conceded by the Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles-Lettres (1982) we must add that he is Chevalier (July 1993), and Officer (July 1998) of the "l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques".

Pascal Vernus – as Egyptologist, professor and friend – is unique and absolutely unusual. Gifted with rare and extraordinary geniality, erudition and humor, Pascal Vernus went through life and the world carrying that wisdom which is a prerogative of the great masters who conquer time and distance by staying in people's hearts through eternity...

Pascal Vernus is not a name. It is, as Yourcenar would say, *the name...* and I always identify him behind his words... the expressivity of his face and smile, the different tones of his voice, as well as his silences, had accompanied me for over 25 years. I will always be grateful to life – and to the Muses – for putting in my path this major name in Egyptology of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

See you soon, my dear Professor!



**HTL : Comment a commencé votre intérêt pour l' Égypte pharaonique?**

PV : Mon intérêt est dû à un traumatisme scolaire. Un professeur un jour présenta à ses jeunes lycéens la civilisation égyptienne et l'écriture hiéroglyphique. Que ces images que sont les hiéroglyphes puissent véhiculer les énoncés d'une langue me posait problème. Je levai la main et demandai : « Comment ça se prononce ? ». Le professeur me rétorqua avec le ton condescendant de celui qui sait face à un ignorant : « Mais ça ne se prononce pas ! », en invitant, par une mimique, mes camarades à rire de ma si manifeste naïveté.

Cette cuisante humiliation m'avait d'autant plus marqué que je ne parvenais pas à comprendre comment une langue ne pouvait pas avoir de support phonétique. Quelques temps après – j'avais treize ans alors – je décidai d'en avoir le coeur net. Je réussis à découvrir dans l'annuaire téléphonique l'adresse d'une librairie orientaliste, où

j'achetais alors tout son fonds égyptologique. Il était fort maigre, car l'égyptologie en ces années n'était nullement médiatisée. Touché par ma passion, il me signala à J. J. Clère, Professeur à l'École Pratique des Hautes Études, lequel m'invita à suivre son enseignement. Jeune écolier, je quittais donc chaque vendredi à 16 heures le Lycée Condorcet sur la rive droite, m'engouffrais dans le métro, et arrivais essoufflé dans la vénérable Sorbonne. Dix-sept ans après, j'étais nommé Professeur pour succéder à J. J. Clère !

**HTL : Quelle histoire incroyable! Et comment a été cette expérience d'être un élève du lycée et dans le même temps, être suivant un cours – difficile – à la Sorbonne? Que ressentez-vous? Vous pouvait concilier les études au lycée et le cours à l'université ? Et votre famille, comment elle trouve cette double activité?**

PV : Avoir si jeune une vocation d'égyptologue n'était pas sans difficulté à mon époque. L'égyptologie restait alors confidentielle, loin de jouir de l'extrême popularité qui est la sienne actuellement. Le professeur Jacques Jean Clère qui m'avait reçu à son cours à l'École Pratique des Hautes Études fut lui-même critiqué pour avoir accepté un lycéen dans les murs austères de la Sorbonne ! Mes parents étaient inquiets, mon père, ancien élève de l'École Centrale, et qui exerçait la profession de directeur financier, n'avait guère d'intérêt pour l'archéologie. Malgré tout, je persistai dans ma vocation. Je menai de pair des études littéraires, jusqu'à l'Agrégation de Lettres Classiques, et mon perfectionnement en égyptologie. Je dois dire que j'avais reçu l'appui du Professeur Jean Yoyotte. Lui qui allait devenir des dizaines d'années plus tard mon co-auteur pour le *Dictionnaire des pharaons* et fut d'abord mon professeur particulier; Il corrigeait mes exercices de l'*Egyptian Grammar* de A. H. Gardiner. Par ailleurs, je suivais ses cours de religion à l'École Pratique, ainsi que ceux de Georges Posener, qui, lui aussi, m'avait pris en amitié.

Grâce à ces deux patronages, je soutins un doctorat de III<sup>e</sup> cycle consacré à la ville d'Athribis. Je fus nommé à 23 ans d'assistant d'histoire de l'Égypte ancienne à la Sorbonne. Ayant accompli mon service militaire comme Professeur à l'Université d'Ain Chams, je restais encore trois ans en Égypte comme pensionnaire de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie du Caire.

C'est alors qu'on me proposa de prendre à l'École Pratique des Hautes Études la succession de Jacques Jean Clère, celui qui m'avait jadis accueilli jeune lycéen. J'acceptai, bien sûr, et devins à trente ans l'un des plus jeunes professeurs de l'Université française.

**HTL : C'est une histoire vraiment inhabituel, mais cela ne me surprend pas, puisque vous êtes aussi un personnage hors du commun. Dans votre récit vous avez cité un ensemble de noms mythiques du passé. Comment étaient ces enseignants ? Jean Jacques Clère et Georges Posener ? De Yoyotte nous parlerons plus tard ...**

PV : Jacques-Jean Clère, qui m'avait ouvert ses conférences, alors que j'étais jeune lycéen, était un modèle de précision perfectionniste. Il mettait autant de soins maniaques dans l'étude des inscriptions hiéroglyphiques que dans le bricolage, qui était sa seconde passion. Il s'y adonnait si intensément que sa production proprement égyptologique s'en trouvait affectée. De Alan Gardiner – l'illustre maître de l'égyptologie – à qui il montrait avec fierté des rayonnages qu'il venait de fabriquer, il reçut le conseil suivant : « Professor Clère, make less shelves for your books, and more books for your shelves! »

Georges Posener, quant à lui, vivait dans l'égyptologie et pour l'égyptologie. Animée par une déontologie impérieuse, hantée par une très haute idée de la profession, il avait établi un système de valeurs à travers lequel se repérer dans la profusion quelque peu inégale d'une discipline en plein essor. Il eut l'aménité de me l'expliquer en m'invitant régulièrement à prendre un "petit noir" sur le zinc des bistrotts du quartier. Lui qui était alors Professeur au Collège de France, membre

de l'Institut, et unanimement reconnu comme une autorité mondiale ne craignait pas de s'entretenir à bâtons rompus, en toute simplicité, avec le petit assistant que j'étais.

S'il m'avait jugé digne de son amitié, malgré la différence d'âge et de statut, c'est qu'il avait remarqué que j'étais le seul de ses auditeurs à bien connaître la grammaire de l'égyptien. Il tenait en effet pour fondamental de parfaitement maîtriser les textes. « Philologie, tâche prioritaire » proclamait-il. Cet impératif, il l'imposa à toute une génération.

**HTL : Vous avez mentionné ci-dessus que vous aviez accompli le service militaire en tant que professeur à l'Université de Aïn Chams. Expliquez-nous comment cela était possible ... Et parlez-nous de ces années en Egypte, en tant que professeur et en tant que pensionnaire de l'IFAO ...**

PV : A cette époque, en France, le service militaire était obligatoire. Pas moyen d'y échapper. Vraiment pas moyen du tout ? Si, il y avait une possibilité pour ceux qui avaient fait de longues études et obtenu des diplômes. Ils pouvaient remplacer le service dans l'armée par le service en tant que professeur dans les pays qui avaient un accord de coopération culturelle avec la France. Bien entendu, je saisis cette possibilité, car je ne me voyais guère porter l'uniforme et obéir aux ordres stupides d'un adjudant dont la voix « sentait l'ail et le mauvais alcool », comme avait chanté Jacques Brel. J'étais un des rares agrégés de lettre ayant choisi la coopération. Par égard pour cette qualification, on me nomma Professeur de lettres au Lycée Français de La Marsa, en Tunisie, car c'était le poste le plus convoité des coopérants, parce que le plus prestigieux, et surtout le plus proche de la France.

Mais pour moi, l'affectation était catastrophique, car elle me condamnait à rompre pratiquement tout contact avec l'égyptologie pendant deux ans. Aussi je me rendis au ministère, obtint un rendez-vous où je déclarai refuser l'affectation en Tunisie et postuler un poste en Égypte. Le Directeur de la coopération qui recevait ma demande

demeura un moment abasourdi. Quoi ? Ce jeune homme dédaignait un poste auquel tous les coopérants rêvaient d'être affecté ! Et, le comble c'est qu'il souhaitait remplir ses obligations en Égypte, ce pays lointain voué au Colonel Nasser et aux soviétiques avec lesquels il avait noué une très étroite alliance; ce pays qui subissait une militarisation écrasante pour préparer sa revanche contre Israël.

Le Directeur m'avoua que « les bras lui en tombaient » (expression idiomatique). Mais c'était un brave homme; il décida d'accéder à ma demande jugeant qu'ainsi il ferait deux heureux: celui qui prendrait ma place au Lycée de La Marsa, et moi, l'hurluberlu illuminé qui renonçait au confort de la Tunisie pour la précarité de la vie Cairote. C'est ainsi que je fus nommé pour deux ans Professeur à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université d'Ain Chams.

**HTL : Incroyable. Avec vous, rien n'est prévu, jamais ... Et comment était la vie au Caire à l'époque ? Et comment était la réalité dans l'IFAO cette période ?**

PV : Quand je pris mes fonctions à l'Université d'Ayn Chams au Caire, l'Égypte ne m'était pas inconnue. En 1967, j'étais déjà venu pour participer aux fouilles de Tanis, sous la direction de Jean Yoyotte. J'avais pu en profiter pour une rapide visite du pays. Mais en 1971, la situation avait changé. Nasser venait de mourir. L'Égypte avait resserré son alliance avec l'Union soviétique. Mais surtout, elle préparait la guerre contre Israël. Tous les éclairages, toutes les vitres des fenêtres étaient peintes en bleu pour masquer la lumière aux avions ennemis, et dès le soleil couché, le Caire était plongé dans la pénombre. Devant chaque porte, un mur anti-bombe avait été dressé. Au Musée, les objets exposés étaient entourés de sacs de sable. Beaucoup avaient crevé, laissant leur contenu se déverser sur la statue, la stèle où le sarcophage qu'ils étaient censés protéger des explosions, et dont seule la partie supérieure émergeait désormais.

La paranoïa régnait : les téléphones des étrangers étaient sur écoute, leur courrier ouvert par la censure. Partout l'espionnage ;

il valait mieux se tenir à l'écart des endroits jugés stratégiques sous peine d'être immédiatement traîné au poste de police et perdre quatre à cinq heures pour se laver du soupçon d'espionnage.

Nous étions étaient confinés dans quatre villes, Alexandrie, Le Caire, Louqsor et Assouan, et nous ne pouvions nous rendre des unes aux autres que par le train. Il m'était donc impossible de visiter l'Égypte. Imaginez la contrariété pour une jeune égyptologue, impatient de découvrir le pays dont il étudiait avec passion le passé glorieux.

Bien entendu, dès que le carcan des interdictions se relâchait tant soit peu, je tentais immédiatement d'en profiter. Cela me fut tour à tour bénéfique et malencontreux.

Bénéfique, lorsque j'accompagnais une courte mission au Couvent Blanc de Sohag. A vrai dire, je n'étais pas spécialiste de l'époque copte, mais, c'était une bonne occasion de voir un peu de la Haute Égypte. Bien m'en prit ; en me promenant autour du Couvent Blanc, je découvris quelques blocs épars qui n'avaient jamais été répertoriés. Certains d'entre eux provenaient d'un monument du Grand-Prêtre d'Amon Ioupout I ; ils comportaient des bribes, mal comprises du célèbre guide de l'Au-delà, appelé Amdouat et provenaient sans doute d'un cénotaphe dressé à Abydos, puis démantelé par Amasis afin d'être réutilisé dans un monument érigé près de Sohag. Quoi qu'il en soit, c'était pour moi un survey fécond, qui donna matière à un article.

Malencontreuse, hélas, ma seconde excursion en territoire à cette époque interdit. Le Directeur de l'IFAO, l'admirable Serge Sauneron, était parvenu à ouvrir un petit chantier sur le site prédynastique d'Adaima, à côté d'Esna. Les autorités égyptiennes avaient fait savoir qu'il m'était possible de le rejoindre par le train. Quittant la gare d'Esna, je me rendis au poste de police pour me présenter, et attendre le chauffeur de Serge Sauneron qui devait me conduire sur le site. Mais ce malheureux chauffeur s'était perdu dans le désert, et j'attendis de longues heures sa venue. Lassé de cette attente, je décidai d'aller faire un tour à Esna. Les gens me dévisageaient d'un air soupçonneux. Voici que je traversais un pont, un de ces endroits jugés stratégiques que j'ai

évoqués ci-dessus, quand un imbécile me montra du doigt en criant « Un Israélien, un Israélien! » Aussitôt, en l'espace d'un instant, je me vis entouré d'une foule hostile bien décidée à me lyncher sur place.

Par bonheur, je connaissais le nom du commissaire de police à qui je m'étais présenté. C'était une autorité reconnue dans la ville, une sorte de parrain local. Avec l'énergie du désespoir, je hurlai ce nom. Il eut pour effet de calmer la populace, qui préféra suspendre mon exécution pour tirer l'affaire au commissariat où elle m'accompagna sans violence. Il s'en était fallu de bien peu que ma carrière d'égyptologue se terminât à Esna. Après tout, l'égyptologie s'en fût sans doute bien portée.

Vient la guerre du Yom Kippour. On conseilla aux pensionnaires de l'IFAO de se rendre à Louqsor pour éviter d'être rapatriés en France, car, paradoxalement ils ne souhaitaient guère le rapatriement, craignant de ne plus pouvoir revenir. La suite montra que nous avions pris la bonne décision. La guerre fut très brève, et, il faut le reconnaître, bien gérée par les USA qui surent en tirer parti pour pacifier les relations entre l'Égypte et Israël. L'Égypte estima avoir par cette guerre lavé son honneur, bafoué dans les conflits précédents. Désormais délivrée du poids écrasant des préparatifs guerriers suscités par le désir de revanche, elle pouvait envisager une politique d'ouverture "l'infatih". Pour nous, égyptologues, cela signifiait que nous allions pouvoir enfin circuler plus ou moins librement, et ouvrir des chantiers ailleurs qu'à Karnak ou Deir el-Médina, les seuls où j'avais pu travailler jusqu'alors. De fait, Serge Sauneron parvint à obtenir une concession archéologique dans l'Oasis de Kharga, sur le site de Doush, où j'eus tôt fait de me rendre. Il m'avait fallu attendre ma troisième année de pensionnaire, ma cinquième en Égypte pour enfin participer à des fouilles sur un site jusqu'alors inexploré. Inexploré par les archéologues, car, bien entendu, les pilleurs ne l'avaient pas négligé ! L'essentiel du secteur était occupé par des vestiges gréco-romains, plutôt que proprement pharaoniques. Néanmoins, j'y travaillais avec passion « Faute de grive on mange des merles » dit un proverbe français. Et puis la passion

pour l'archéologie est la même, quel que soit l'intérêt du site où elle s'exerce. « La sauce fait passer le merlan » : encore un autre proverbe.

Par ailleurs, mon activité à Karnak s'était révélée fructueuse. Nommé épigraphiste de la mission de Karnak-nord, je participai aux fouilles de Jacquet. Profitant de mon séjour, j'étudiai des blocs dans la cour du péristyle nord du VI<sup>e</sup> pylône du grand temple. Je parvins à les identifier, et à reconstituer ainsi une grande inscription de Taharqa que je publiai en 1975.

Hasard amusant du destin : Trente-six ans plus tard, venu à l'Université de Séoul pour participer à un colloque, je rencontrai une étudiante coréenne en égyptologie. Elle me dit faire sa thèse sur la XXV<sup>e</sup> dynastie ; elle tomba des nues quand elle comprit que j'étais le Pascal Vernus sur l'article duquel elle avait sué sang et eau au cours de ses recherches ...

**HTL : Incroyable ... A son retour d'Égypte, vous avez commencé à enseigner à l'École Pratique des Hautes Études à Paris. Vous étiez probablement le plus jeune professeur de la prestigieuse institution. Dites-moi, comment était-il ?**

PV : Alors que j'étais membre scientifique de l'IFAO, Georges Posener put enfin revenir en Égypte, après que sa présence eut été très longtemps impossible pour de tristes motifs politiques sur lesquels je préfère ne pas m'étendre. Quand j'étais en France, j'avais longtemps assisté à ses cours à l'EPHE et au Collège de France. Il avait bien voulu me témoigner alors une particulière bienveillance, parce qu'il appréciait, entre autres, mon intérêt pour la philologie et la linguistique, intérêt peu répandu alors chez les autres étudiants. Son long séjour à l'IFAO fut l'occasion de resserrer nos liens.

Nous nous croisions dans la pénombre des longs corridors du Palais Mounira. Les hauts plafonds de ce vénérable édifice lui avaient conféré une acoustique un peu solennellement désuète ; elle prolongeait d'une étrange amplitude la résonance de nos pas, à travers laquelle le craquement des antiques parquets de bois jouait une

manière de contrepoint. Le soir, nous nous retrouvions les deux seuls usagers de la bibliothèque. Georges Posener, aussi élevé que fût son statut, aussi profonde que fût sa science, aussi étendue que fût sa renommée, prenait la peine de s'enquérir de mes recherches, et savait alterner avec discernement conseils, encouragements et critiques. Un jour, avec un air très mystérieux, il me donna rendez-vous dans son bureau pour boire le thé. A peine avait-il reposé sa tasse qu'il m'interpella en ces termes : « Préférez-vous prendre la succession de Jacques-Jean Clère l'année prochaine à l'EPHE, ou rester encore deux années de plus au Caire pour me succéder dans ma Direction d'études ? »

Avec un humour raffiné, il s'était amusé à me poser abruptement la question avec le même détachement affecté que s'il m'eût demandé ma préférence entre le café mazbout (moyennement sucré) et le café zyada (très sucré). Quant à moi, je demeurai interloqué. Je n'avais jamais imaginé une telle perspective. Tout au plus, j'envisageais de postuler, à mon retour d'Égypte, une maîtrise de conférence ou une charge de recherches au CNRS. Georges Posener se délectait gentiment de ma surprise et de mon embarras. Il me fallut quelque temps pour pleinement maîtriser le tourbillon d'émotions contradictoires qui m'avait agité : surprise, joie, fierté, mais aussi inquiétude, voir angoisse : ferais-je l'affaire ? Après avoir longuement réfléchi, je lui fis savoir qu'il me paraissait raisonnable de choisir l'échéance la plus proche; c'est-à-dire la succession de Jacques-Jean Clère.

Par la suite, j'appris que Georges Posener en était fort marri. Il eût préféré que je lui succédasse dans sa Direction d'Études. J'eusse pu alors bénéficier de deux années supplémentaires en Égypte, au moment où le pays s'ouvrait aux archéologues. J'eusse peu aussi participer aux fouilles de l'Oasis de Dakhla, et plus particulièrement de Balat qui allaient tant apporter aux égyptologues.

Dois-je regretter ma décision rétrospectivement ? En tout cas, elle était motivée par l'incertitude de l'avenir et fondée sur un calcul élémentaire qu'illustre le proverbe français « Un "Tiens !" vaut mieux que deux "Tu l'auras !" »

J'avais donc présenté ma candidature à la Direction d'Études "Égyptien" IV<sup>e</sup> Section de l'EPHE. J'y fus élu sans coup férir, grâce aux

appuis du sortant, de Georges Posener et de Jean Yoyotte, qui était alors à la V<sup>e</sup> Section de l'EPHE. Me voici donc officiellement nommé à l'automne 1976, à l'âge de trente ans, donc le plus jeune à ce poste, comme l'avait été l'illustre helléniste Louis Robert.

On l'imagine aisément : toute l'égyptologie française bruissait de cette nouvelle; elle avait suscité les réactions contradictoires auxquelles peut s'attendre qui connaît les hommes : sympathie, jalousie, curiosité, irritation. A ma première conférence, se pressaient des dizaines d'auditeurs de tout âge, et mus par diverses motivations. Entre autres, certains étaient venus avec la gourmande espérance de me voir lamentablement écrasé par un devoir d'enseignement trop lourd pour mes frêles épaules : ils se réjouissaient à l'avance d'assister à mon "crash" scientifique, comme un avion aux mains d'un pilote trop inexpérimenté. J'ose croire les avoirs déçus. Jean Leclant, dont j'avais été autrefois l'assistant à la Sorbonne s'était prudemment tenu à l'écart de l'affaire. Quand il constata que j'assumais ma charge, il décida de profiter de l'aubaine. Il avait plus de cent thèses inscrites sous sa direction et de grosses difficultés à trouver un collègue sur qui se décharger de ce fardeau. Bien évidemment, il envoya tous ses thésards chercher auprès de moi bibliographie, conseils et guidance. Par ailleurs, il était très heureux de pouvoir compter désormais sur moi pour constituer avec Paul Barguet les jurys de la ribambelle de thèses qui devaient être soutenues. C'est ainsi que je fus convié à superviser et à juger la thèse d'une jeune égyptologue encore inconnu, mais qui allait faire parler de lui : Christian Jacq !

**HTL : Je ne crois pas ... Vous avez rencontré Christian Jacq en tant qu'étudiant d'égyptologie ? Et comment était-il, alors ? Il montrait déjà un certain intérêt dans l'art de l'écriture ?**

PV : Quand il préparait sa thèse sous la direction officielle de Jean Leclant, et, en pratique, sous ma supervision, Christian Jacq avait comme qualité première d'être un travailleur acharné ; son régime

moyen était quasi monacal, bien qu'il fût marié : pas loin de quatorze heures par jours. Son sujet de thèse n'avait rien de très spectaculaire : les termes utilisés pour décrire les déplacements du défunt dans les textes funéraires. Avec une minutie laborieuse, il s'était acharné à répertorier et à gloser tous les verbes de mouvement dans les Textes des pyramides et dans les Textes des sarcophages. Au demeurant le travail a été publié en 1986 sous le titre *Le voyage dans l'autre monde selon l'Égypte ancienne*. C'est un ouvrage utile pour les spécialistes des textes funéraires des hautes époques, mais bien évidemment guère susceptible de mobiliser les foules ni de déchaîner les passions ! Ce n'est pas grâce à lui que Christian Jacq a réussi à être tiré à onze millions d'exemplaires. En fait, il eut la chance de bénéficier d'un heureux concours de circonstances.

Après avoir soutenu sa thèse, qui fut jugée excellente par le jury et reçut la mention "Très bien", il ne parvint pas à obtenir un poste dans l'égyptologie institutionnelle. Il végéta alors dans la zone grise autour de cette discipline en écrivant des romans situés aux temps des pharaons. Pendant quelques temps, ils ne rencontraient guère de succès. Et puis soudain, tout bascula : les ventes connurent une croissance quasi exponentielle, chaque nouvelle publication dépassant les tirages de la précédente.

Comment expliquer cet étonnant changement ? Par un phénomène sociologique : dans les années quatre-vingt, le tourisme en Égypte connut une importante mutation. De tourisme élitiste, il devint tourisme de masse. Désormais ouverte suite à la politique de l'"infatih", l'Égypte offrait aux visiteurs un exotisme situé à peine à cinq heures d'avion pour les européens, et un émerveillement assuré, dans des conditions confortables et pour un prix franchement modique, à tout le moins comparé, par exemple, aux séjours en stations d'hiver. Or, les romans égyptologisants de Christian Jacq correspondaient très exactement à la soif égyptomaniacale que leur séjour dans la Vallée du Nil ne laissait pas de provoquer chez ces nouveaux touristes, issus des classes moyennes et le plus souvent de faible culture historique. A eux que décourageaient les publications égyptologiques trop soucieuses de

rigueur scientifique, ils leur fournissaient de bonnes doses d'un merveilleux pharaonique immédiatement accessible. Néfertiti était désormais disponible dans les kiosques de gare, à tout le moins en imagerie faute de l'être en chair et en os !

**HTL : Revenons maintenant à un personnage qui a déjà été mentionné à plusieurs reprises et j'ai eu le privilège de rencontrer, Prof. Jean Yoyotte. Je l'ai rencontré quand il était directeur du Bureau de l'Égyptologie du Collège de France et je me souviens de lui avec une grande estime. Il était toujours très gentil avec moi et a facilité mes horaires de travail dans la bibliothèque ... Il était un personnage singulier ... toujours fumer ... les lunettes sur le front ... Vous avez produit de nombreux ouvrages ensemble ... Parlez-nous de Yoyotte ...**

PV : Mes relations avec Jean Yoyotte remontent à plus de cinquante ans. A peine affermi dans ma vocation, je ressentis le besoin d'accéder aux travaux d'érudition, ayant très vite épuisé le suc des quelques ouvrages de vulgarisation alors disponibles. Je me présentai donc à la bibliothèque du Collège de France dont le bibliothécaire d'alors me refusa l'entrée, outré qu'un lycéen eut l'audace de frapper à la porte de ce lieu saint. J'allai voir Étienne Drioton, alors Professeur, qui, avec son extrême gentillesse me donna l'autorisation d'accès.

En ce temps là; la bibliothèque était peu fréquentée, car au début des sixties, Toutankhamon n'avait pas encore fait beaucoup de victimes. Parmi les cinq ou six lecteurs, le plus assidu était un grand homme très brun, jeune encore, au regard de braise dans de très profondes orbites. C'était Jean Yoyotte. Après nous être croisés et re croisés au pied des rayonnages pendant quelques mois, nous fîmes connaissance.

D'emblée une grande sympathie nous lia, par delà les dix-neuf ans qui nous séparaient. Il me présenta à Pierre Montet, qui, ayant appris que mes grands parents avaient des vignes dans le Beaujolais, me fit

venir chez lui goûter son propre vin qui provenait d'un vignoble très proche. Je me rappellerai toute ma vie, cette heure passée dans une cave de la rue Moulin-des-près avec l'ancien Professeur au Collège de France, Pierre Montet, et celui qui était appelé à l'être une trentaine d'années plus tard, Jean Yoyotte. A dire vrai, du vin, Jean Yoyotte n'était ni un amateur fanatique, ni un fin connaisseur. Mais il avait tant d'autres qualités qu'il semblait avoir été béni des dieux. Ce bel homme élancé, aux traits fins et réguliers avait dans sa démarche quelque chose de la grâce féline d'un danseur africain, quelque chose de Didier Drogba. Héritage de ses ancêtres ? Car il était métis, originaire d'une famille martiniquaise.

Au demeurant, son nom, très étrange et presque humoristique – en français familier “yoyotter” signifie avoir ça et là des conduites gentiment erratiques – s'explique par cette origine. Après l'abolition de l'esclavage, il fallut donner un patronyme aux anciens esclaves, qui, la plupart du temps, n'avaient que celui de leurs maîtres. Les officiers d'état-civil eurent donc à faire preuve d'imagination pour leur en attribuer un nouveau ; ils se laissèrent aller parfois à quelques fantaisies pour élargir le répertoire. Chez Jean Yoyotte, les avantages moraux le disputaient à ses atouts physiques. Son coup de crayon élégant en faisait un dessinateur doué, ce que laissait pressentir son écriture régulière et harmonieuse. Il avait une mémoire prodigieuse, une intelligence vive, une rapidité d'esprit fascinante, une perspicacité rare, une extrême acuité dans l'analyse. Toutes ses qualités, il les mobilisait au service de sa passion pour l'égyptologie, science dans laquelle son érudition et sa maîtrise de la bibliographie laissaient pantois.

Pendant son long séjour en Égypte, il avait accumulé un trésor de textes inédits, au fil de ses périples dans les campagnes ou de ses visites chez les antiquaires. Il faisait, bien sûr, l'admiration de ses collègues étrangers et suscitait la jalousie de certains de ses collègues français qui craignaient qu'un savant si doué leur fit de l'ombre.

Les dieux ne sont jamais totalement généreux : à toutes les qualités qu'ils lui avaient accordées, ils avaient perfidement ajouté un cadeau empoisonné : une extrême sensibilité. Il allait tout à la fois en béné-

ficier mais aussi en pâtir toute son existence. Car les épines de la vie, il en ressentait la piqure plus douloureusement que la moyenne des hommes. Les contrariétés l'affectaient si profondément qu'elles pouvaient provoquer chez lui de véritables dépressions. Elles en venaient parfois à rompre la continuité de ses recherches.

Voilà pourquoi il avait tant de mal à rédiger des travaux qui dépassassent les dimensions d'un gros article. Je dois avouer que j'ai dû batailler ferme pour parvenir à ce qu'il terminât les parties qui lui revenaient dans nos ouvrages en collaboration, *Le Dictionnaire des pharaons*, et le *Bestiaire des pharaons*. Mais cette relative fragilité ne doit pas masquer l'essentiel. Son admirable talent et son immense culture égyptologique font de Jean Yoyotte l'une des plus marquantes personnalités de l'égyptologie française, et même internationale. C'est une privilège pour moi de l'avoir fréquenté pendant plus d'un demi siècle. Nous passions des après-midi entières dans les cafés parisiens à discuter d'égyptologie, à échanger nos avis sur les dernières publications, à confronter nos recherches du moment. Et puis, quand ces questions étaient épuisées, nous nous détendions en évoquant la poésie et la chanson françaises, car nous étions tous deux des "fous de la langue". C'était à qui aurait le mieux en mémoire telle chanson de Brassens, tel poème de Prévert. Les garçons de café, devant ces joutes de bardes en laissaient presque tomber leur plateau d'étonnement. Jean Yoyotte illustre un type très rare: celui qui concilie la rigueur du savant et la sensibilité d'un artiste. D'où un style parfois jugé marginal, mais en fait original dans le meilleur sens du terme. Jean Yoyotte était un anarchiste de l'égyptologie.

**HTL : Mon Dieu! Maintenant, je comprends mieux l'empathie naturelle que je sentais avec M. Yoyotte ... J'intuit sa sensibilité ... Je me souviens bien de son regard, l'esquisse d'un sourire ... l'élégance des mouvements, oui ... Quel caractère ! ...**

**Excusez-moi, j'imagine que vous êtes déjà fatigué, mais j'ai encore deux ou trois questions. Le premier concerne à**

**vosre activité en tant que professeur. Vous avez participé à des panneaux et des conférences dans les plus prestigieuses universités du monde entier. Dites-moi un peu de cette expérience ... De les différences entre les écoles, les enseignants et les élèves ...**

PV : La science est par nature internationale, et c'est très bien ainsi. L'égyptologue doit comprendre très vite qu'il ne saurait limiter son horizon à son pays, et d'autant plus que sa discipline s'est gagnée une très large représentation institutionnelle de par le monde entier. Tables-rondes, colloques, congrès sont autant d'occasion de découvrir des chercheurs et des publics étrangers. Bien sûr, le plus enrichissant humainement et culturellement, à tout le moins pour un égyptologue qui détient un poste d'enseignement, c'est de faire des séminaires hors de son pays. Personnellement, je l'ai vraiment toujours apprécié. Je n'ai que d'excellents souvenirs de mes cours au Portugal, en Espagne, en Suisse, en Égypte, en Israël; etc. Bien sûr, selon les cas, la différence de langue peut constituer une difficulté plus ou moins grande, mais elle ne m'a jamais apparu rédhibitoire. Les universités françaises, pour des raisons politiques complexes, sont malheureusement très en retard, et c'est précisément en donnant des séminaires à l'étrangers que j'ai pu mesurer ce retard, franchement lamentable pour la cinquième puissance du monde. C'est par comparaison avec les universités américaines, et plus particulièrement l'Université Yale, qu'il m'est apparu le plus manifestement. Là-bas, tout est mis en oeuvre pour faciliter la tâche tant aux étudiants qu'aux professeurs. Un exemple suffira, car il est significatif : je pouvais le dimanche soir à minuit consulter un livre à la bibliothèque. En France, un appariteur grincheux eût clos l'accès le vendredi à 15 heures en me renvoyant d'un ton excédé au lundi suivant, au mieux en début d'après-midi. Outre les conditions matérielles, l'esprit de l'enseignement diffère dans les universités américaines. Il n'y a pas de barrière formelle entre professeurs et étudiants, mais un consensus implicite dans l'intérêt des uns et des autres. J'avais un public restreint mais attentif. Certains sont

devenus des égyptologues fully-fledged, comme Leo Depuydt, Steve Harvey, archéologue d'Abydos ; Mark Lehener, grand expert dans l'archéologie du plateau de Giza. Assistait à mes séminaires celui qui m'y avait convié, le professeur William Kelly Simpson. C'est une des plus grandes figures de l'égyptologie mondiale, éditeur de très difficiles papyrus administratifs du Moyen Empire, auteurs de nombre de travaux de premier ordre.

C'est, aussi, un représentant de l'aristocratie américaine, dans ce qu'elle a de meilleure. Fils d'un membre du parlement, époux d'une Rockefeller, il a su concilier sa passion pour l'égyptologie à sa passion pour l'art. Au-dessus du lit de la chambre d'ami où je dormais, quand il m'avait invité dans sa villa de Katonah, était suspendu un Corot. Il avait souvent prêté d'autres tableaux, en particulier des Matisse, à des expositions. Mais surtout, à l'élévation de sa position sociale, il a toujours associé l'élévation de son comportement sociable. Derrière son extrême courtoisie, derrière sa politesse distinguée, il y a, non pas de la prétention et du mépris, comme chez beaucoup, mais une véritable humanité, et plus encore, une profonde bonté. Il a fait de mon séjour à Yale l'un des meilleurs moments de ma vie d'égyptologue. Une petite anecdote pour illustrer l'évolution de nos sociétés. Quand je donnais mes séminaires, j'étais assis à une extrémité d'une grande table, et Kelly Simpson à l'autre. L'un et l'autre nous fumions furieusement la pipe, si bien que les étudiants assis, entre nous, de chaque côté étaient immergés dans un nuage de fumée odorante. C'était à la fin des années quatre-vingt-dix. Aujourd'hui, aux USA, le tabac est féroce-ment proscrit de toute forme de vie publique, et menacé même dans la vie privée ! « Times are changing » comme chantait Bob Dylan.

**HTL : William Kelly Simpson m'a dit, une fois, au Congrès International d'égyptologie que j'ai organisé à la Fondation Calouste Gulbenkian en 2001, parlant de vous : « il n'y avait plus personne comme lui ... » Il avait une énorme admiration pour votre génie ...**

**Eh bien, nous sommes dans la dernière ligne droite, l'avant-dernière question : Quel avenir envisagez-vous pour l'égyptologie les 30 prochaines années ? L'avenir sera marqué par des avancées majeures dans quels domaines ? Dans la vieille Europe, les États-Unis ou ailleurs ?**

PV : Je serai enclin à prédire, avec toutes les réserves d'usage, un avenir radieux pour l'égyptologie. L'Égypte pharaonique va continuer son expansion. J'ai appris récemment qu'il y avait un enseignement d'égyptologie en Thaïlande ! Elle va renforcer sa position de paragon de l'antiquité glorieuse dans l'imaginaire non plus seulement occidental (au sens large, USA, Japon, Australie, Amérique du Sud, Israël, etc. inclus) mais aussi mondial. Il est très significatif que les troubles politiques qui ont agité l'Égypte ces dernières années ne l'ont pas vraiment affectée. Certes, le flot des touristes s'est provisoirement tari, et avec lui l'une des sources de la fascination égyptomanaïque. Mais, paradoxalement, les découvertes archéologiques d'importance se sont multipliées (sépulture d'un pharaon de la Deuxième Période Intermédiaire à Abydos; sépulture collective dans la Vallée des Rois, etc.). Les médias n'ont guère cessé de donner un écho assourdissant aux nouvelles "pharaoniques", pourvu qu'elles fussent spectaculaires. Je pense, par exemple, à la thèse selon laquelle la mort de Toutankhamon serait due à un accident de char. Elle est très hypothétique et fragile, et ignore les vicissitudes subies par la momie après sa découverte. Et pourtant, elle a défrayé la chronique et passionné le public.

Quant à l'égyptologie vraiment scientifique, de belles perspectives lui sont largement ouvertes. Tout le territoire est criblé de missions archéologiques. D'autre part, elle est bien placée pour tirer les bénéfices d'une archéométrie aux progrès foudroyants, en particulier dans le secteur de la géo-morphologie, de la médecine et de la génétique, puisqu'elle est à même de leur fournir un abondant matériel.

Quant à son recrutement, peu de disciplines sont autant favorisées; Que de vocations d'égyptologues ! Tous ne parviendront pas à devenir des professionnels, mais ils contribueront à améliorer le peuplement qualitatif et quantitatif de ce que j'appelle la "zone grise".

Assurément, l'égyptologie se mondialise. Elle n'est plus l'apanage des nations occidentales majeures. Certes, celles-ci demeurent encore les références majeures, par leurs musées, leurs enseignements, et leurs productions scientifiques. Mais d'autres pays, jusqu'alors voués à un rôle marginal, apportent désormais des contributions d'importance. Cette mondialisation charrie avec elle sa koinè (langue véhiculaire), et c'est, bien sûr l'anglais.

Dans peu de temps, toutes les publications scientifiques de pointe se feront en anglais en égyptologie, comme c'est le cas, déjà, par exemple dans la linguistique générale, ou dans les sciences dites "dures". Je puis témoigner de cette évolution par ma propre expérience de chercheur. Désormais, dès qu'il s'agit d'un colloque international, je parle en anglais ; de même, je publie en anglais dans les ouvrages collectifs "techniques". Cela peut déplaire, mais c'est inéluctable. Encore faut-il savoir apporter des nuances. Les ouvrages de diffusion nationale demeureront dans la langue nationale. Et, paradoxalement, dans certains cas, l'utilisation de sa langue natale peut être impérative, ou à tout le moins profitable. Ainsi, bien que j'écrive désormais en anglais mes articles dévolus à la linguistique de l'égyptien, il m'arrive de recourir au français dans la traduction de certains exemples, tout simplement parce que je ne me sens guère capable faire apparaître autrement qu'à travers dans ma langue certaines nuances de sens, trop difficiles à rendre pour qui n'est pas "a native speaker of English".

**HTL : Mon cher professeur ... Je pourrais continuer cette interview sans limite de temps et d'espace ... Cela arrive toujours avec des personnages fascinants comme vous ... Mais arrêtons ce dialogue pendant un certain temps ... nous en reparlerons d'ici 10 ans ... Merci pour votre patience. Et pour finir, dites-moi : Quel moment dans votre vie, pleine de récompenses, prix et récompenses, vous vous rappelez avec plus de nostalgie ?**

PV : Mon souvenir le plus fort de ma carrière d'égyptologue n'est pas le plus heureux ; c'est celui de mon dernier entretien avec Jean Yoyotte. Dix ans déjà qu'il avait pris sa retraite. Notre livre sur le Bestiaire était sorti, après de longues difficultés éditoriales. Nos relations s'étaient temporairement et superficiellement refroidies, comme il arrive souvent entre les meilleurs amis. Et voici que la maladie qui le harcelait depuis longtemps lança sa grande offensive. Il résista vaillamment et connut une courte rémission. Tirant profit de ce cessez-le-feu qu'avait arraché la médecine à son bénéfice, il me fit savoir qu'il aimerait discuter avec moi un après-midi. Nous nous retrouvâmes dans un café du Quartier Latin, renouant ainsi avec notre tradition désormais cinquantenaire. Mais une tradition gravement menacée. Jean Yoyotte savait que la maladie, après un court répit, allait porter le coup de grâce. Je savais qu'il savait, et il savait que je savais qu'il savait. Comme je devais m'absenter pour une longue période, cet entretien risquait d'être le dernier. Feignant l'un et l'autre de n'en être point conscients, nous voilà derechef reprenant nos débats égyptologiques, avec la même ardeur et la même passion que naguère. J'ai encore présent à la mémoire le principal thème discuté ; au demeurant, il suscitait notre consensus. En tant qu'historiens, pensions-nous, il fallait prendre distance avec l'insidieuse idéologie pharaonique qui trompait les infrangibles frontières de l'Égypte et le contrôle de l'état sur tous les territoires qu'elles délimitaient.

En fait, les données convergeaient pour suggérer qu'étaient fréquentes, et même parfois régulières, les infiltrations de populations étrangères, particulièrement dans les marches orientales et occidentales du Delta. Je lui citais une inscription de Merneptah où la contradiction entre les proclamations idéologiques et la réalité était reconnue sous une phraséologie bien entendu arrogante. Il nota la référence sur un ticket de métro, comme il avait coutume de le faire. C'était en quelque sorte, célébrer un rituel pour la dernière fois. Par ce geste, il entendait me signifier son estime, car il était bien conscient qu'il n'aurait plus jamais l'occasion de traiter le sujet. De plus, étant donné son immense érudition, il connaissait probablement le passage

de l'inscription ; en fait, il avait fait semblant d'en découvrir l'intérêt par gentillesse. Nous nous quittâmes redevenus les meilleurs amis du monde, comme toujours unis par notre passion commune pour l'égyptologie, mais aussi, bien conscients, l'un et l'autre, que nous l'avions célébrée pour la dernière fois. Tout cela passa dans l'ultime regard que nous échangeâmes, les mots étaient superflus.

Quinze jours plus tard, il s'en fut.



# Short Notes

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# A Nikosthenic (?) vase from the Costa Cabral collection

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## 1. Collectionism and the taste for Greek vases

The often individual effort of valuing heritage, both at the level of the isolated object and of large public art and buildings, has a quite strong tradition in Western history. Motivations were always distinct, ranging from a sort of selfless evergetism to the political use of restoration, and to the private pleasure of owning and handling parts of a more or less distant past. In this field, Classical Antiquity itself is no exception, and has always been the target of a prolific collecting activity. True antiquarian circuits are registered in ancient Rome, for example in the handling of papyri, statues or furniture (Martial even describes something resembling an antiques market)<sup>1</sup>. An important part of this fascination had to do first and foremost with the construction of a collective memory, which can be seen very well in the field of publicly exposed ancient *spolia opima*, one of the multiple reflections of elite competition amidst a senatorial clique<sup>2</sup>.

Transposing this very thought to the Portuguese Renaissance, the political exploitation that underlies the energetic epigraphic activity of André de Resende is all too evident, as is the case with the similar intellectual interests of Friar Manuel do Cenáculo, both pioneers of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Holleran 2012, 248-254.

<sup>2</sup> Rutledge 2012, 123-125.

a particular scenario in Portugal that would end in an environment that somehow inspired other European courts<sup>3</sup>. Notwithstanding the obvious meaning of the term, collecting took on different importances until today, currently posing serious problems of legal, moral and ethical order regarding commercial treatment of ancient art. Also without introducing useless value judgments in this reasoning, it should be noted that very particularly in relation to Greek vases, collecting continues to receive a high relevance among us<sup>4</sup>, of which often no echo is found in mainstream circuits.

The enthusiasm of figures such as the Duke of Palmela, the Marquis of Sousa Holstein or the Marquis of Tomar (Costa Cabral), aristocratic figures who were actively engaged in the Portuguese political process during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, originated rich private collections, some of which were donated to museums, or ceded to temporary exhibitions, thus well known and preserved until the present day.

## **2. A summary on Greek vases in Portugal**

Beyond its intrinsic potentialities as manufactured objects, the uniqueness of Greek pottery is that of representing, more intensely than other productions, a strong vehicle of cultural transmission<sup>5</sup>, by stressing not only a high archaeological but also an aesthetic and artistic value. There are hundreds of such items found throughout the Mediterranean, and beyond – for example, along the Atlantic: in Portugal, Greek fragments are found at the larger rivers, even far away from the estuaries (see map). Besides its presence in settlements of clear eastern Mediterranean nature, the findings show that transport is also made to the interior through those same rivers<sup>6</sup>. The presence of a trademark, a price and a craftsman's name on many of the items suggests commerce, orders and sales. However, there is uncertainty

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<sup>3</sup> Brigola 2009, 5-6.

<sup>4</sup> Pereira *et al.*, 2008, 52.

<sup>5</sup> Alarcão *et al.*, 2007, 18.

<sup>6</sup> Pereira 2007, 10.

regarding the vessel transporters themselves, i.e., little is known about the behaviour of intermediaries, both regarding routes and loads. In any case, one cannot underestimate the impact of these materials, and the meaning that was given to them within the several indigenous communities.

As for the historical and stylistic developments of Greek vases, it is important to indicate that there are linguistic contributions involved, aspects of everyday life and culture, as well as mythological figurations. The entire range of vessels, satisfying different requirements, is thus varying in size and shape, depending on their function. On the one hand, there is a group destined for the preservation and transportation of liquids, such as the amphora, the *pelike*, the *stamnos*, or the *hydria*. In the formal group associable to banquets one distinguishes the krater (for mixing water and wine) from the *psykter* (contained ice for cooling), and the bowls, *kantharos*, *skyphos*, and *oinochoe* (in which the wine was poured). Other vessels were used for further purposes such as the *alabastron* and the *aryballos* (containing perfumes and fragrances), the *lekythos* (with oils for anointment or funerary offerings), the *aphiale* (for libations), the *lekanion* or *pyxis* (to store jewellery, cosmetics, toiletries and ointments) or larger vases for bathing water, as is the case with the *loutrophoros* or *lebes gamikos* (for bridal preparations<sup>7</sup>). The styles have evolved in conjunction with the production technology, which, in turn, is a declination of ancient Greece's very history, highlighting periods of expanding trade and contacts between regions, with a great interest, namely for the very archaic and orientalisating styles<sup>8</sup>.

In some later sources, individualized painters appear, associated with some particular feature: Polygnotus is credited for the suggestion of emotion and representation of space, and Agatharcos of Athens for the onset of perspective; Apollodorus would have invented the shading and use of mixed colours, and Zeuxis the principles of light and shade,

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<sup>7</sup> Pereira 2007, 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> Morais 2011, 49 f.

while Parrhasius became known by the subtlety of his line<sup>9</sup>. It is thus possible to identify different styles, certain workshops and perhaps some painters.

Hundreds of pieces with attribution of authorship still follow the Morelli method, by Sir John Beazley. Some painters signed their work: the word “painted” could be written before a name, or sometimes the potter used the verb “made” or “modelled”. In cases of anonymity, the vase is conventionally termed “the painter of”, followed by the name of the potter, as is the case of the celebrated painter Brygos, among others. If none of these processes applies, other solutions are to be used, the most common consisting of assigning the name of the finding place of a more famous vessel (e.g. “the painter of Lisbon” – so identified by Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira and a key contribution to the study of Greek vases in Portugal), of a theme that seems to have been preferential (“the painter of swings”), or the particularities of a style (the “red line painter”). Additional alternative classifications are based on a special treatment of a myth (“the painter of Achilles”) or simply on the name of a collector (e.g. Coghill), among other solutions.

Within the Corinthian style, which is unique, new and refined – with decoration and figurines of oriental influences, emerges the application of a new technique, with black figures<sup>10</sup>. The resumption of Athenian hegemony, which starts at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, coincides with the main productions of Attic black-figure decoration. They were drawn in profile but with eyes in a frontal position. Besides black, incisions are used and sometimes also reddish, purple and white traces (especially in the visible part of the female figures). The decorations with floral motifs acquire a secondary yet complementary function, since it is the representation of myths that plays a central role. Already during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, along with the black figures vessels that continue to be produced, especially in the case of traditional forms, such as the panathenaic amphoras, the new technique of reversed, red figures is introduced, possibly by the painter

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<sup>9</sup> Pereira 2007, 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> *Id., ibid.*, 16-17

Andokides<sup>11</sup>. Other authors also suggest Psiax or Nikosthenes<sup>12</sup>, whose production is discussed below. It is interesting to mention that, in opposition to the decline of this technique since the final years of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC (a phenomenon associable to the Peloponnesian War), one can witness the blossoming of this model in the Greek cities of southern Italy and Sicily, where different styles are distinguishable, among which the Lucanian, the Apulian, the Campanian, or the Sicilian. Figurative topics mainly focus on dramatic and mythological scenes, but also about on daily life.

In Portugal, both collectionism and archaeology obtained a modest number of vases in excellent conditions of preservation<sup>13</sup>. It was through private circumstances that António Bernardo da Costa Cabral (1803-1889), first Marquis of Tomar, ambassador to Rome and a major political figure of the Portuguese Liberalism, became in possession of the vase now in the ownership of Emília Marques Santiago, daughter of one of the authors of this paper.

### **3. A Nikosthenic vase?**

At first glance, the vessel that is referred to integrates a well-documented production. Created at an Athenian workshop and datable from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, almost all the “Nikosthenic” productions coming from reliable archaeological contexts also reveal an interesting geographical boundary, within the Etruscan area.

From the point of view of manufacturing, the reinterpretation or even pure copy of obvious forms of local *Bucchero* type pottery<sup>14</sup> is significant, thus reflecting both a purely commercial focus on the regional markets, and a clear understanding of local preferences<sup>15</sup>. Most of these amphoras come from Cerveteri, as opposed to other

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<sup>11</sup> Morais 2011, 50-55.

<sup>12</sup> Pereira 2007, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Pereira 1962; Pereira *et al.*, 2008; Arruda 2007, 135; Ferreira *et al.*, 2008; Morais 2011.

<sup>14</sup> Perkins 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Osborne, 1996.

forms, such as the four hundred small *kyathoi* whose exclusive market seems to have gravitated around Vulci and Orvieto. To put the issue differently, the Nikosthenes workshop in Athens created a specific amphoral form for the Etruscans of ancient Caere, which implies, inherently, an adequate knowledge of local demand, which in this particular case seems to have been almost insatiable for Greek novelties, a phenomenon counting with immediate precedents<sup>16</sup>.

About this intriguing dichotomy the issue of directionality emerges, though – that is, the extent to which Etruria dictated the Attic production, instead of subjecting to passive import<sup>17</sup>. Moreover, there is the paradox of black figures on Etruscan pottery itself, non-existent before the mid-6<sup>th</sup> century, whose relationship with Attic imports is also very much unclear, at least in cultural terms<sup>18</sup>.

Returning to Nikosthenes' amphoras, this “non-Greek” manufacture has raised academic curiosity for a long time, although one ought to recognize minor changes and sufficient refinement, as opposed to the original basic form, so there is no conceptual reason to deny its validity as an entirely Greek product<sup>19</sup>.

Among the remaining estate of Emília Marques Santiago, there is a perfectly conserved vase, which, at first glance, would fit in this production. Its decorative framework corresponds to a relatively common composition. Hermes, messenger of the gods, holding the *kerykeion* and with wings on his feet stands behind Zeus, who sits on an *okladia* in front of an Eileithyia (fig. 1). With very few exceptions, the figurative scenes in Greek pottery in fact refer to mythological environments and when this does not happen, there is a loosely heroic framework, and ritual portrayals such as sacrifices, processions and funerals. Nikosthenic exports in particular, however, often display banal sceneries that would have been appreciated by the Etruscans<sup>20</sup>, although this feature is not decisive.

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. the “Tyrrhenian” group, with recent revaluations; see Sampson 2009.

<sup>17</sup> Osborne 2001, 278.

<sup>18</sup> Paleothodoros 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Eisman, 1974, 43.

<sup>20</sup> Boardman 2001, 168; 236.

A first serious reluctance regarding the authenticity of the vase has to do with the transformation of the *theta* in a *tau* or a Latin T, which would be complicated in any case, and the second relates to the absence of a terminal sigma. Additionally, a formulation adding *epoiesen*, that is, “made” (the vessel), very characteristic of this production, although not indispensable, would not have seemed excessive at all. The word NIKOSTENE, written in this way (fig. 2), seems a rudimentary and modern Italianisation of the original Greek anthroponym, which at first glance seems astonishing, given the considerable investment in the creation of the piece.

Nikosthenes, moreover, would have been the only producer/painter who, pointing to the Etruscan market, used his name as a kind of “advertising”<sup>21</sup>, which makes the incoherent spelling even more suspicious. If the female figure on the opposite side actually represents Baucis, fetching a glass of wine for Zeus and Hermes, the incongruity becomes evident, as there is no justification for this Ovidian figure to appear on a Nikosthenic vase.

Without certainties about the piece’s precise route until Portuguese hands, any consideration of its origin would be abusive. The only evidence refers to a period prior to Costa Cabral’s final diplomatic mission in Rome, after the death of Pius IX and the succession of Leo XIII, that is, between 1878 and 1885. Geography and time approach the vase in question to a context emanating from Renaissance antiquarianism, which in fact had brought Greek pottery from the field of curiosity to that of Fine Arts<sup>22</sup>. It was partly the excitement around the sites of the bay of Naples, affected by the eruption of Vesuvius, which sparked a long process of imitation and pure copying, putting a number of allegedly Greek or Roman artefacts on the market. The 18<sup>th</sup> century had witnessed great frenzy around the discovery and collection of vases, precisely in Campania, and the publishing of large sets, of which Hamilton, Mazochius and Winckelmann are illus-

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<sup>21</sup> Boardman 2001, 129.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Lyons 2007.

trious precursors<sup>23</sup>. This interest had originated a major production of imitations, of which this Nikosthenic vessel may very well be a result. Thermoluminescence dating could fully dismiss any remaining hesitations. In any case, there is no doubt that the piece in question would have been conceived by a specialist, or at least by someone able to interpret Greek and Latinize the name Nikostenes, albeit with a touch of modernism. One should perhaps search some degree of intentionality in this all too apparent inaccuracy.

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<sup>23</sup> Mertens 2010, 20.

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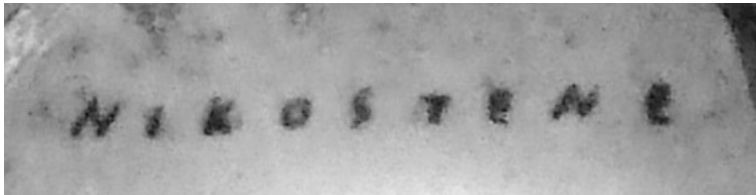


**Map:** general distribution of Greek pottery found in Portugal.

After Arruda 2007, 137.



**Fig. 1:** The vase from the Costa Cabral collection.



**Fig. 2:** "NIKOSTENE".

# Polytheism? – Henotheism! – (Monotheism)

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*Who knows the way of a god?*

Ebeling, 1953

## Aim

It is interesting to observe how the concepts of polytheism and monotheism keep raising discussions and questions. The aim of this essay is, once again, to discuss the problematic arising from these two terms. This, along with an introduction to the concept of henotheism, will be a tool to reanalyse Mesopotamian religion in order to categorize it without explaining it obstinately.

How are the concepts of polytheism and monotheism related? Are they two different aspects of religion or do they overlap? It is this question that the essay will look into. It will be shown how important the concept of henotheism is in this context. For this, some theoretical ideas and archaeological and written sources will be presented, which could provide a good guideline.

In a broader sense, this essay will try to appeal for more independence from narrow definitions towards which archaeology all too often tends to. In order to achieve it some word choices will be analysed more closely.

## Mesopotamian History and its consequences

The Mesopotamian religion was, without a doubt, conceived to cover all areas of human conflict. The *Enūma eliš* is a good example of a narrative that not only covers in its first part the cosmogony and theogony (the origin of the world and the gods) but also, in its second part, the anthropogenesis (the origin of humans); it is evidently a polysemic text, with many interpretations, in which all three aspects are entangled and inseparable.

This idea of entanglement, inseparability and polysemy can be found throughout Mesopotamian history. From the beginning, there is syncretism, interplay and symbiosis. This can be defined very shortly as *cultural osmosis*<sup>1</sup>. Originally this expression was used to explain Neolithisation, but it can also be applied to this case. It means that in neighbourhood relationships there are always reciprocal influences. This happens because the acceptance of certain cultural elements came originally from the neighbour. This is how the diffusion of cultural markers is explained through time.

In the second half of the fourth millennium BCE this phenomenon of syncretism can be seen in the relationship between the Semites in the North of Mesopotamia and the Sumerians in the South. Both founded, from this time on, a common cultural construct that included the religious part of their lives. Deities were set equal and had hardly any differences in their standings and spheres of action. In this respect, the identification between Sumerian and Semite deities such as An/Anu, Nanna/Sîn or Inanna/Ištar<sup>2</sup> (in Sumerian and Akkadian, respectively) are examples. This is a phenomenon that can be seen continually in Mesopotamian history and will be explained later, with some examples.

The following analysis will be done in two parallel but, in some way, overlapping levels: the personal piety and the official religion<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> «Osmose cultural»: Silva and Soares 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Grandpierre 2010, 382.

<sup>3</sup> Bottéro 1987, 1998; Grandpierre 2010; Lopéz and Sanmartín 1993.

### **Definition – A constant recurring problem**

Definition is always perceived differently from person to person. A dictionary can provide help to equalize it. Mostly, there is lack of exact definitions and so, loanwords are used, which are more likely to be misunderstood by the reader, in the same way as the writer did. An easy way to finding a solution for this problem is to give definitions of all the main terms which will be used. The reader is in this way prepared and can accept the given interpretation.

This is why it is problematic to talk about a *personal* piety. Archaeological and written sources do not provide any insight into a belief, which is different from one person to another. They mainly provide a general aspect to a belief system which differs from the official one and can be defined as being a *family* piety or a *group* piety. One example are altars, which are not found in every house and most probably belonged to a neighbourhood (e.g.: the altars of Ur, further in the text). This is why it can be spoken of as a *popular* piety. It does not mean that the entire *lower class* population thought in the same way and that personal development is lost in the masses. A personal connotation is still possible and not excluded through this definition of piety. In my opinion, the definition of *personal* is adequate to underline the idea of a belief system which differs from the official one. At the same time this delivers a better example to defend the introduction of the term henotheism. *Personal* piety will continue to be used in this work.

The word *piety* is also problematic because of its Christian connotations. This is exactly what should be avoided. In Archaeology this often leads to many problems. Interpretation must be independent from one's own ideas (the archaeologist) and not be influenced by one's own opinions. Terms that are used in more recent history (Christianism) can be used for earlier history, but must be differentiated. *Piety* is therefore, in tendency, a term belonging to Christian theology that includes aspects such as punishment and self-flagellation. Even though, in this essay, the term will be used anyway, explaining that it is a type of belief (in general).

## Essential definitions

Looking into a dictionary, we can find the following definitions<sup>4</sup>:

- Monotheism is the belief in only one god. It is honoured as being unique<sup>5</sup>.
- Polytheism is the belief in many gods. They stand in a pantheon in relation to each other and are honoured as equals<sup>6</sup>.
- Henotheism is the belief in one god without denying the existence of other gods. The gods, as in polytheism, stand in a pantheon, but one, as in monotheism, is exalted more than the others<sup>7</sup>.

## Personal piety – Theory: Introduction

In order to analyse personal piety I will use two models, which will be now explained in a general aspect.

Block presented in 1988 a tripartite scheme of the relationship between deity, mankind and land (**Fig. 1**)<sup>8</sup>. Each party has its privileges and responsibilities. The deity must protect the land and its citizens, the citizens have to honour the deity and take care of the land and the land must give the citizens economical security.

Fales used a similar schematic in 2010 to explain Assyrian religion. The relationship here is between the deity Aššur, the citizens and the king (**Fig. 2**)<sup>9</sup>. Aššur is honoured by the citizens; the citizens are led by the king; who then represents them in front of the deities. Lastly is the king, who is led by Aššur and represents him on earth.

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<sup>4</sup> Coulson *et al.* 1981.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, 547.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, 655.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*, 392.

<sup>8</sup> Block 1988.

<sup>9</sup> Fales 2010.

My idea is to combine both models in order to construct a more complex relationship model, trying to explain Mesopotamian religion in a broader sense while defining personal piety within it. The symbiotic relationship of citizens, land, king and deity (**Fig. 3**) can therefore be defined, with the king acting as an intermediate between the deity and the citizens/land; while bringing the deity closer to the citizens, he's seen as a representative of the deity and the land is used according to his orders, on behalf of the deity. This turns out to be problematic for the individual in the *lower class* population. Their connection to the deities is interrupted by the figure of the king and loses its purity and directness, in clear contradiction with the basic notion of religion. It should be near to the citizens and helpful to all. As a next step, personal piety should be observed more carefully.

### **Personal piety – Sources**

It's hard to find clear sources for personal piety. A few archaeological excavations have indications for this but written sources are still scarce in this area of investigation. Archaeological sources are to be interpreted cautiously. The following examples are from Tell Agrab, Khafajah, Tell Asmar (Ešunna) and Ur (**Fig. 4**). In all these cases appear isolated or low numbered shrines, chapels and altars, which lead to a labile proof of personal piety.

A small altar was found in Tell Agrab («small “altar” with a small circular offering table directly in front of it», **Fig. 5**)<sup>10</sup>. In Khafajah there are two phases of a possible chapel («... perhaps a private chapel»<sup>11</sup> or a temple<sup>12</sup>. The first one without an entrance («...no entrance...», **Fig. 6**)<sup>13</sup> which can be seen in the drawing of the second phase (**Fig. 7**). Tell Asmar/Ešnunna has a more complex altar («quadrantal “altar” ... ornamented with vertical panels and plastered with a whitish

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<sup>10</sup> Delougaz *et al.* 1967, 269.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Pollock 2008, 192.

<sup>13</sup> Delougaz *et al.* 1967, 11.

coating, perhaps of gypsum» (**Figs. 8 and 9**)<sup>14</sup>. At Ur, Leonard Woolley identified chapels and shrines. Interesting here is Woolley's comment, where he attributes shrines to lesser deities<sup>15</sup>, behind which could be an indication of personal piety of the *lower class* population.

Most of the given examples are whether unique or infrequent. The idea of personal piety is surely not represented as expected. A different aspect can be found here. Earlier in the text, personal piety and popular piety were distinguished. A single chapel in the middle of an entire neighbourhood (as in Ur) proves more to be more of a parallel cult to the official one, than that every household had a personal deity, which was honoured and provided with an appropriate installation in a single household.

Written sources have a different problematic: uncertain origin, a later recording, no clear writer or who the writer represents. Analysis of names, invocations or hymns can still provide a partial guideline, but it's important to always keep a critical view.

Many people had names based on deities and their blessing. For example evoking Ištar, the queen of Heavens: *Ištar-ummi*, meaning «Ištar is my mother», or *Ištar-šame-šarrāt*<sup>16</sup>. Invocations are very common, such as

«Šamaš, I call upon you, listen to me: [...] the spectre that inflicts and devours me, be detached from my body; I want to make him eat the bread from the funerary offering, I want to make him drink the water from the funerary offering, [...] That he eats something good, that he drinks something good; that he eats a little bread, that he drinks fresh water.»<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Id.*, 179.

<sup>15</sup> Woolley 2009, 190-191.

<sup>16</sup> Bottéro 1998, 92-93.

<sup>17</sup> Translated after Seux 1976, 421-422: «Šamaš, je t'ai appelé, écoute-moi: [...] le spectre qui m'est infligé et me dévore, qu'il soit détaché de mon corps; Je veux lui faire manger du pain d'offrande funéraire, je veux lui faire boire de l'eau d'offrande funéraire, [...] Qu'il mange quelque chose de bon, qu'il boive quelque chose de bon; qu'il mange un petit pain, qu'il boive de l'eau fraîche.»

The invocator wants to protect himself from the ghosts of ancestors. It is a direct appellation to Šamaš, the Sun-deity, without being disturbed by an intermediate. Hymns also show a henotheistic personal piety. The following examples belong to several hymns from the third and second millennia BCE.

To Enlil, from the third millennium BCE, in Sumerian:

«[...] Spontaneously the other gods bow down in front of him. And obey him without discussing his orders! He is the great and powerful Sovereign [...]»<sup>18</sup>

To Marduk, from the second millennium BCE, in Akkadian:

«[...] Lord Marduk, oh supreme God, with unsurpassable intelligence, [...] terrifying Lord, In the Assembly of Gods no one is equals to you!»<sup>19</sup>

To Šamaš, from the second millennium BCE, in Akkadian:

«[...] You graze together all living creatures: Up here and down there, the only Shepherd, it is you! [...]».<sup>20</sup>

As seen, these hymns address “elected” deities with a very similar content: they affirm the deity’s superiority towards the others, their great intelligence or their uniqueness. The latter aspect alone is a very important indicator of henotheism: the expressions «only Shepherd» and «unique Shepherd» are clearly to be distinguished – the *only* shepherd and the *unique* shepherd. It means he is *the* only one and *not one that is better than the others*.

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<sup>18</sup> After Bottéro 1987, 252: «[...] Spontanément les autres dieux se prosternent devant lui. Et obéissent sans discuter à ses ordres! Il est le grand et puissant Souverain [...]»

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*, 253: «[...] Seigneur Marduk, ó dieu suprême, à l’intelligence insurpassable, [...] Seigneur terrifiant, en l’Assemblée des dieux nuls ne t’égale!»

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*, *ibid.*: «[...] Tu pais ensemble tous les êtres vivants: Ici-haute et là-dessous, leur unique pasteur, c’est toi! [...]»

Other written sources are prayers and letters. The latter have an interesting structure, by which the sender clearly sees the deity he chose for its purpose as protector of the receiver.

### **Official Religion – Theory: Introduction**

Official religion is similar to personal piety. The difference lies in the reason why the henotheistic phenomenon is triggered. With personal piety, it was the unreachable character of the deities and the intermediate position of the king which took the individual to exalt one deity more than the others. When the king exalted one deity more than others, it can be explained as a politically motivated strategy. The king's function is to hold his territory together. Politics and religion, especially in the Mesopotamian case, walk hand in hand, supporting each other in order to show unity and sovereignty, even though conflicts emerged because of political struggles and balances of power.

In this context, the manipulation of belief plays a big role as an instrument of power. In Mesopotamian belief, the king was predestined for the exercise of power by the deities, which means he was born to be king. When he actually became ruler, this predestination was confirmed by the assumption of a new royal name. This name often included the name of *his* deity (e.g., *Aššur-našir-apli*, *Aššur-banû-apli*). This second part is best explained through the process of *Vergewisserung*<sup>21</sup>, «assurance». The exaltation of the deity is an analogy between the earthly and the godly world, both functioning in a similar way. The king, such as the uppermost deity on the pantheon, is positioned higher than the citizens and the land.

### **Official Religion – Historical Background and Sources<sup>22</sup>**

For a better understanding of the development of religion in Mesopotamia here is a brief historical background, followed by a theoretical framework.

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<sup>21</sup> Pongratz-Leisten 1999, 11-16.

<sup>22</sup> Main references: Bottéro 1987, 1998; Grandpierre 2010; Lopéz and Sanmartín 1993, Nissen 2012; Pollock 2008; Van De Mieroop 2007.

In the Late Obeid Period a direct form of religiousness existed. The house had a tripartite structure: administration, production and religion. So, religiousness was intrinsic in each house.

In the Late Uruk Period this religiousness took place mostly in temples, being now extrinsic to the house. The *lower class* population was now forced to find new forms of gaining direct access to their deities without an intermediate. This explains the growth of personal piety, presented earlier, in a developing hierarchical society. This social hierarchy and legitimisation of power of the elite strengthened the official religion, and therefore institutionalized it.

The Early Dynastic Period indicates a growing connection between politics and religion. There are fewer settlements, but those remaining increase in size. Every so-called *city-state* with its *satellite*-town has its own patron, each positioned at the top of the pantheon, such as Enki in Eridu, Inanna in Uruk or Nanna in Ur<sup>23</sup>. These are all forms of henotheism.

In the Akkad Period, Sargon unifies for the first time all the city-states, an important step for the further development of the process here presented. One of his successors, Naram-Sîn, deifies himself. However, this phenomenon of deification of the king does not last for long, peaking in the Ur III Period and disappearing afterwards.

Around 1750 BCE, Ḫammurabi holds sovereignty over a vast territory with Babylon as the capital in its centre. His difficulties in holding together politically such far ranging territory would not be increased by a strong personal piety of the *lower classes*. There are cases where the *ordinary* person was allowed to connect with the official highest deity, for example, during the Akîtu festival of the New Year, when the king showed himself publicly and the statue of the deity was revealed. Usurpers to the throne did this too, so that they could give continuity to the past<sup>24</sup>, manifested through the continuity of religion. This shows how then people did not exclude two realities, incompatible for us, as

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<sup>23</sup> Grandpierre 2010, 382. Other examples: Pollock 2008, 187.

<sup>24</sup> Kuhrt 1987, 22-55.

in the case of a usurper taking over the throne but legitimized through the preservation of the religious traditions.

In the *epos Enūma eliš*, Marduk is honoured with 50 names («And made Marduk's destiny highest; they themselves did obeisance»)<sup>25</sup> and named the ruler of all deities («And confirmed for him mastery of the gods of heaven and earth»)<sup>26</sup>. The names are very interesting because although the deities had different spheres of action and own characteristics, they could easily be unified into just one. The following incantation demonstrates this idea:

«I want to worship you, great deity! Invocation(s) through hand-lifting [*Handerhebung*] to Marduk: or with sacrifices or with incense basin you should carry (it) out. Invocation: Sîn is your divinity, Anu your *lordness*, Dagan your magnificence, Enlil your kingly dignity, Adad your strength, Ea, the wise, your ears, who holds the reed pen, Nabû, your ability, your leadership Ninurta, your force Nergal, the advice of your heart Nusku, your sublime Vizier, your dignified judgment is Šamaš, the shiny, who does [not(?)] let enmity be created, your weighty (!) name is Wise of the Gods, Marduk, your terrible spear, the unsparing lion... Invocation(s) through hand-lifting [*Handerhebung*] to Marduk: or with sacrifices or with incense basin you should carry (it) out.»<sup>27</sup>

A deity was chosen, in this case Marduk, to whom prayer should be made. At the same time other deities (Anu, Enlil, Adad, Ea...) were transformed into aspects of the *chosen* highest deity (Marduk).

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<sup>25</sup> Dalley 2008, 264.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Translated after Ebeling, E. *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* I/II (WVDOG 28, 1919; 34, 1923): Nr. 25. II. Column 15: «Deiner großen Gottheit will ich huldigen! Beschwörung(en) durch Handerhebung zu Marduk: entweder mit Opferzurüstung oder mit Räucherbecken sollst du (sie) ausführen. Beschwörung: Sin ist deine Göttlichkeit, Anu deine Fürstlichkeit, Dagan, deine Herrlichkeit, Enlil deine königliche Würde, Adad deine Stärke, Ea, der Weise, deine Ohren, der das Schreibrohr hält, Nabû, dein Können, deine Führerschaft Ninurta, deine Gewalt Nergal, der Rat deines Herzens Nusku, dein erhabner [Vezier], deine Richterwürde ist Šamaš, der glänzende, der Feind[schaft nicht(?)] entstehen läßt, dein gewichtiger (!) Name ist Weiser er Götter, Marduk, dein furchtbarer Speer der[scho]nungs[lose] Löwe... Beschwörung(en) durch Handerhebung zu Marduk. Ritual dafür: Entweder mit Opferzurüstung oder mit Räucherbecken sollst du (sie) ausführen.»

In Assyria it was Aššur who was chosen as the main deity. Aššur replaced Marduk especially, and radically, from Sennacherib's reign onwards, by the denial of his Babylonian counterparty. This is a strong monotheistic attempt (as explained earlier, the denial of other deities is, by definition, a sign of monotheism). *Enūma eliš* was rewritten in this period, replacing Marduk with Aššur<sup>28</sup>. The Assyrian capital had many temples; the one of Aššur was seen as the most important. He unified all other deities within himself and was therefore stronger than Marduk ever was. This can be seen as an attempt to honour just one deity.

A hymn from King Aššurbanipal to Aššur makes this obvious. Aššur is named «the omniscient», «the Illil of the gods», and it is stated that «(Even) a god does not comprehend [...] your [..., O Aššur; the meaning of your...] is not understood»<sup>29</sup>. This was a big step towards later monotheism and the unreachability of the transcendent deities.

## **Conclusion**

This essay debated the connection between monotheism and henotheism. They are clearly not two mutually exclusive *-theisms*. On the contrary, they seem to complement each other in the Mesopotamian case.

Monotheism is clearly seen as such only later, with Judaism, Christianity and Islam. However, the trends to its formation are much earlier, forming a *monotheistic process* where boundaries between the concepts analysed are blurred. Such ambiguity yet gives structure to this analysis and some details of the process can be seen. For this I will recapitulate the main points.

It was shown that written and archaeological sources are of a problematic nature. The evidence, which should support a clear definition,

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<sup>28</sup> Dalley 2008, 228.

<sup>29</sup> After Livingstone 1989, 4-5, lines 1-3 and 28. Additional consultation: Caramelo 2007, 166-168, also available at <http://www.fcsh.unl.pt/docentes/fcaramelo/Textos%2013.html>

is not firm enough. This is why only some fundamental elements of Mesopotamian religion can be defined, for now. Some areas, such as the history of civilization, politics and the history of mentality, are part of this.

The first is characterized by the earlier mentioned *cultural osmosis*. It is the continuous movement of cultural factors which allow mentality and line of thought to lead to antagonist structures (from our point of view).

The political field uses all possible instruments to rule. Religion is just one of them. Politics consciously makes use of tradition and innovation as two sides of the same coin (as described previously with the Akîtu festival). The last mentioned element is important, despite being often regarded as secondary. Archaeological sources promote *purer* evidence to how daily life was and common things were dealt with; especially about things not mentioned in written sources. Nevertheless the latter source should not be ignored in favour of *purist* archaeology. We can interpret facts from archaeological sources and conclude then the psychological processes; written sources add a lot to this. They mark the *Zeitgeist*, the mental construction, the urge to write. Eventually it is *mentality* which precedes and influences all areas.

This leads to an appeal to make a history of mentality in which archaeological sources are embedded. However, this should be done carefully because written sources are often used as guides to excavations and posterior interpretation (e.g., excavations guided by the Bible). Finally, the balance between both kinds of sources is the most important. This is how henotheism can be extracted from written sources. Finds in excavations can be, in this way, interpreted with a broad view. From the perspective of henotheism an analysis can be made towards monotheism or polytheism instead of having only these last two options. As a whole, Mesopotamian religion should not be divided into the two definitions: monotheism and polytheism. They promote pre-defined ideas and give weight to the moment instead of the process.

In this analysis, the indications show that we should move to the notion of henotheism in order to have a more accurate approach to the Mesopotamian mentality, by giving it, in a first step, enough space for a neutral viewpoint of the subject which in a second step can be interpreted in the appropriate context as being monotheistic, polytheistic or staying in the henotheistic sphere.

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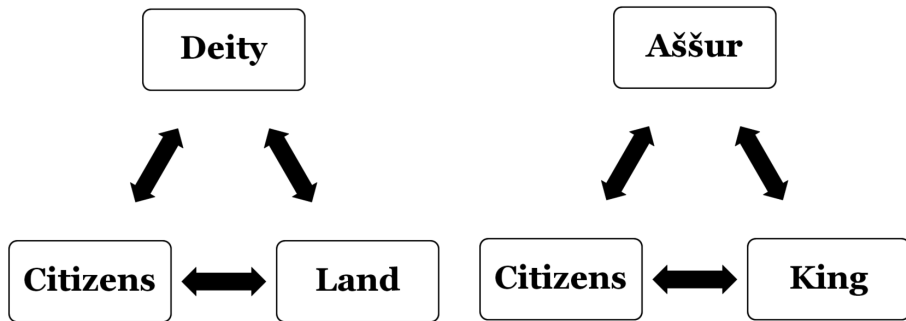
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**Fig. 1:** Scheme based on Block 1988.

**Fig. 2:** Scheme based on Fales 2010.

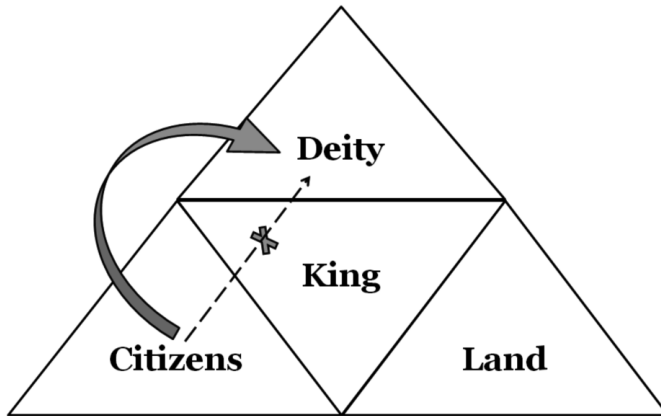


Fig. 3: Scheme based on both previous models.

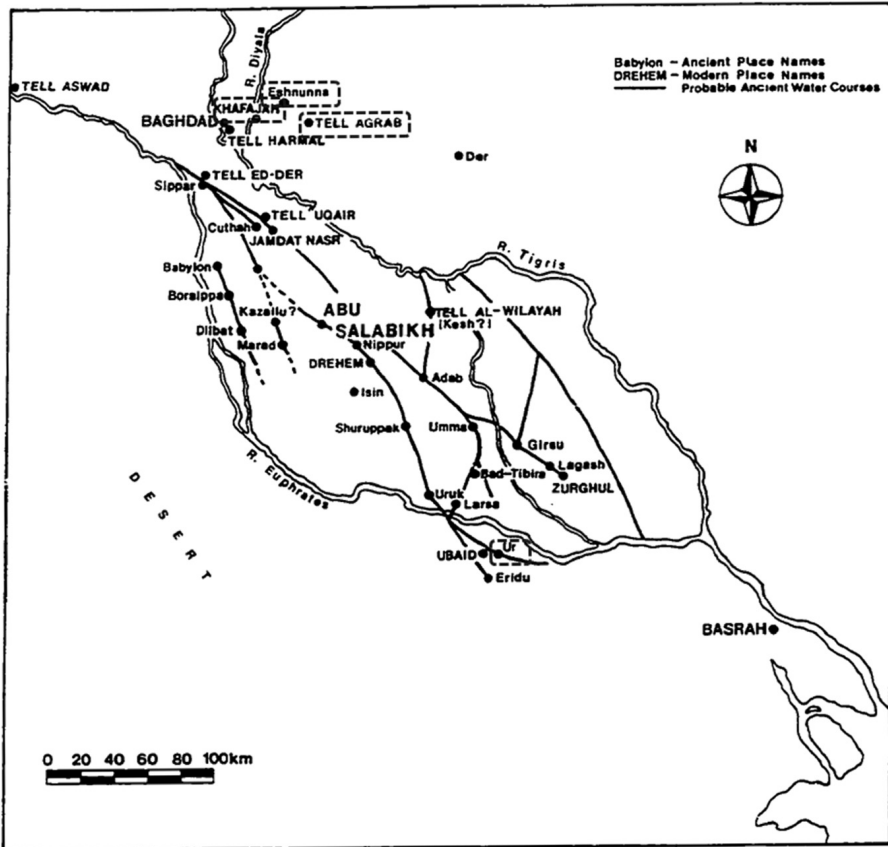
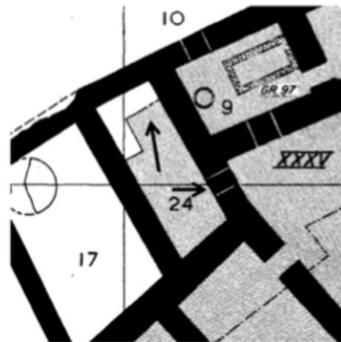


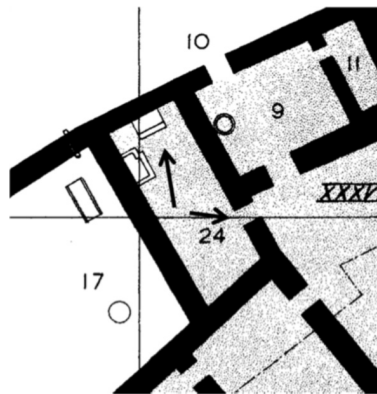
Fig. 4: Mesopotamia (Steele 1990, after Postgate 1983).  
Tell Agrab, Khafajah, Tell Asmar/Ešnunna and Ur are marked.



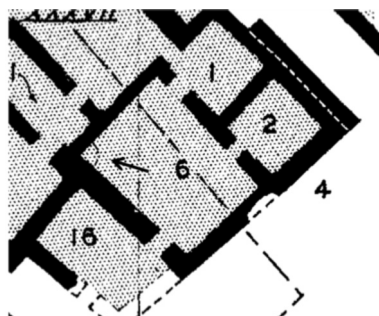
**Fig. 5**  
(Delougaz *et al.* 1967, Plate 50, detail).



**Fig. 6**  
(Delougaz *et al.* 1967, Plate 9, detail).



**Fig. 7** (Delougaz *et al.* 1967, Plate 10, detail).



**Figs. 8 and 9** (Delougaz *et al.* 1967, Plate 72A, Plate 28, detail).

# Reviews

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## Review

**Peter Fibiger BANG and Walter SCHEIDEL (eds.):**  
*The Oxford Handbook of the State in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean.*  
Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013  
555 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-518831-8

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The collection of handbooks published by the Oxford University Press is quickly growing and every year new books are being added to the series. This year is no exception and the scientific and academic community is presented with a new book, focused in pre-modern state formation process and structure, from III millennium B.C.E. until the birth of Islam. These roughly 4000 years of History encompasses the first known states of the world, although for practical issues the studies are geographically limited to the Mediterranean and the Near East. It thus excludes Central Asia, the Indian sub-continent and the Far East, which deserve a book (or more) of their own, due to their diversity and significance. These geographic limitations, which are the result of an editorial decision, are rightly justified by the editors in the Prologue.

Despite the above mentioned chronological and geographical framework, the number of chapters is a reflection of the large number of political entities and states that falls into the book's scope. Inside, the readers will find studies covering ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia,

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Anatolia, Israel and Iran, formerly called the Pre-Classical Civilizations, followed by several chapters covering the diverse political history of Ancient Greece, from the Minoan states to the Hellenistic empires after Alexander's death. The next section covers the Central Mediterranean powers, Carthage and Rome, being the latter divided into two chapters dedicated to Republican Rome and to the Roman Monarchic (Imperial) period. Finally, three more studies are presented, covering the Byzantine Empire, the Germanic successor states and the birth of the first Islamic empire, considering the transitional period that precedes the medieval state and marks the end of the ancient state.

For graduate students, as myself, and scholars alike, the first impression, after looking at the index, will probably be the striking length of the chronological frame. It's unusual that a book, other than a volume of a Universal History, encompasses such time span and diverse civilizations, combining different study fields that normally are only analysed independently, such as Egyptology and Assyriology, unless the aim of the publication is a comparative study. Taking this in account, the editors had the difficult task of guaranteeing some homogeneity to the book structure, especially since each chapter is written by a different author and study field.

Peter Bang, one of the book's editors, is the author of the Introduction (Part I), a 35-page length text that despite it may occasionally be perceived as a dense reading, is very useful for someone starting on the subject of the ancient state. Covering several theories applied for understanding the birth of the ancient state and its evolution, Bang provides the student reader a very useful body of theory, including contributions of sociologists, anthropologists, historians and political scientists, to understand the subjects in question.

This Part II is a very comprehensive analysis on the Near Eastern state, spanning some three thousand years of history and a geographical range that includes Egypt, Anatolia, Mesopotamia and Iran. This means that these seven chapters attempts to describe and explain the elements of almost ten different empires and city-state systems. Natu-

rally, each author would prefer to have more pages to better develop their chapters, but space constraints are a constant in broadband publications like this handbook series. Thus, it's expected that some of these chapters are more developed and straightforward than others, specially due to the need felt by some authors to spend a little more text in historical contextualization taking in account the better understanding of readers. This lead to some uneven chapters, reinforced by the lack or abundance of known historical sources, although such fact does not compromises the proposed goals of this book, especially from an introductory perspective.

For instance, J. Manning is the author that writes about the Egyptian state, but for a considerable part of his chapter, he felt the need to provide a historical introduction. This introduction took most of the chapter space and after it there are some few pages that summarize and point out the characteristics of the Egyptian state. It seems to be somewhat underdeveloped, especially considering some later chapters (i.e., Greece and Rome's), but compensating this is a neat textual structure and Egyptian state with 3000 years that presents long term characteristics and structures. To address Mesopotamia's diversity, two chapters are offered, one focusing the Ancient Near Eastern City-States and the other, the Imperial Mesopotamian States. The first, authored by S. Garfinkle, is a well-structured chapter, with considerable depth taking in account its relative small size, providing not only a chronological context, but specially a conceptual framework that students may appreciate by its structural methodology and coherence.

G. Barjamovic gives a general view of imperial dynamics in Mesopotamia over 2500 years, presenting the oscillation occurred in Mesopotamian history between political fragmentation and imperial centralization with the major Mesopotamian empires (Akkadian, Ur III, Hammurabi, Kassite, Assyrian and Babylonian), especially focusing in the Ur III and the Assyrian empire. From the student's point of view, this chapter is well structured and presents itself as a good introduction for the book's main subject, except for the com-

monly known Neo-Babylonian Empire period, which oddly is only briefly mentioned. This book includes some of the lead specialists on each field and T. Bryce is currently one of the most prolific scholars on the Hittite empire. In a very smooth and fluid style, Bryce describes the Hittite history and the successor states, commonly known as the Neo-Hittite kingdoms. The chapter is very focused on the Hittite kings and the relationship with the empire, based on the numerous clay sources already discovered. Within the smallest chapter in the book, dedicated to Jewish states, S. Schwartz was able to discuss some established ideas, such as the precocious Jewish nationalism, with a clear and direct speech while presenting, with a sober narrative, the importance that the Hasmonean kingdom represented as a regional power. Finally, condensed in one chapter are three major players in the Near Eastern history, the Achaemenids, the Parthians and the Sasanians. They are vividly presented by J. Wiesehöfer whose textual narrative reflects its passion over Iranian states history. First, he analyses each empire individually and then offers a comparative perspective, where he reinforces the idea of hegemonic and almost unsurpassed power shared by these empires.

Part III is focused on the Aegean, from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Empires. The importance given to Greeks states and state formation is a reflection of both the significance of Greek history and legacy, in its diverse forms of government, state constitution and cultural heritage for European modern history, and a natural result of a relatively larger number of sources available to the classical historians. Even though this part is much more geographically limited and spanning over a shorter period of time, it still includes five chapters that approach the theme in different perspectives, giving a deep understanding of the state in Greek history.

The first chapter of this part, written by J. Bennet, is a good example of how the archaeological research is paramount for Ancient History studies like the subject of this book. Taking on two different locations (Crete and mainland Greece, in the Bronze Age) the author

develops its study with a strong resort to archaeological evidence to try to fill the gap that the still undeciphered Cretan hieroglyphs and Linear A scripts represent for a clearer image of the origins of state formation in the Aegean of the early II millennium BCE. Not struggling so much with the scarcity of written sources, the following authors offer a very good perspective of the state development in Hellenic history, with complementary views without chapters overlapping, providing the reader a deep and cohesive analysis. A more conceptual view is given by M. H. Hansen with its chapter on Greek *poleis*, beginning with the word's meaning and then with a reconstruction of the *polis* organization and state activities, regulated by the community: defence, cult and finance. With the geographical expansion of Greek culture over the Mediterranean, I. Morris selects three cases of multicity states' formation: Athens, Sparta and Syracuse, to illustrate common characteristics and differences, between three distinct city-states (both economically and politically).

E. Mackil focused on the Greek phenomenon of *koinon*, a form of regional state comprised of multiple *poleis*, commonly translated as a federal state or league and most visible in mainland Greece and the Peloponnese, in the fourth through the second century BCE. Lastly, Alexander of Macedonia's legacy is considered and it's analysed the formation of the Hellenistic empires that followed the fall of the Achaemenid Empire and the death of Alexander, by J. Ma. The author focuses not only on the political institutions present in the several Hellenistic states, but also on their economic basis.

Beginning the fourth Part, our attention is once more shifted towards west, to the Central Mediterranean. Divided into three chapters, the readers have the opportunity to better understand the states of central Mediterranean, i.e., the two major powers of this region in the classical period: Carthage and Rome. Consisting on the history of these two great powers, Part IV is a reflection of how well we know, and how many sources we have at our disposal, Rome and Carthage. As a result, this part presents two successfully developed

chapters on the Roman state, spanning 75 pages, and a struggling 20-page chapter on Carthage, showing how much historians still have to go to bring Carthaginian historiography to deeper and more complex perspectives of Carthage.

W. Ameling is the responsible for the presentation of the Carthaginian state and in a quick read one can observe how structured this text is and the scarcity of textual historical sources is probably why Ameling opted for this style of writing. The severe dependency on Latin and Greek sources to understand Carthaginian state creates another difficulty. Nevertheless, Ameling presents the Carthaginian state, its institutions and functions, as well as the interaction of this city-state with its expanding territory, in a practical and direct form. The other two authors of this part, H. Mouritsen (Roman Republic) and P. F. Bang (Roman Monarchy), are certainly not confronted with such rarity of textual sources, and therefore were able to present much more complex and dense chapters, full of well-established relations and perspectives. For Mouritsen, the two structural characteristics of the Roman Republican Empire are its longevity, which spans through five centuries, and its «exceptional expansionism» (p. 3813), growing from a city-state to large territorial state, encompassing the Italian peninsula, as well as its ability to greatly increase its citizen body and population. In order to explain these issues and, ultimately, the gradual decline of the Republic and the emergence of the Monarchy, the author analyses not only the political bodies, but also the state's functions and the social dynamics that develop over those five centuries.

The following chapter covers the Roman Empire since the rise of Augustus to the fall of the western part of the empire, being the largest in this book and authored by one of the editors. Bang begins with the fundamental role of Augustus, unravelling the close relation of Roman monarchic longevity and a financial arrangement to support the growing Roman army. The central figure of the emperor and state's finances strengthened social and political cohesion of the Roman world, and thus Bang develops this relation and its implications, first by focusing on the military organization, and afterwards the impe-

rial court. Despite the importance of these central institutions for the Roman state to function and develop, Bang also shifts its perspective towards the decentralized institutions, the provincial elites, and the relation between central and local powers. This is especially significant due to above mentioned relation between the state's ability to guarantee its stability and the financial support of the military institutions, as provincial fiscal effectiveness is determinant to overall health of Roman Empire.

The book comes to closure, with the final fifth Part and its three chapters, covering several political entities that emerged from the end of Antiquity and the dawn of medieval times. The title, «Transformations of the Ancient State», reveals the editor's intentions to extend the book's scope beyond Antiquity, in strict sense, and still analyse successor states that continue to maintain diverse elements and characteristics of Ancient states. Not surprisingly, this includes the Byzantine state that greatly continued Eastern Roman traditions, and the Germanic states formed from the ruined West Roman Empire. The inclusion of the first Islamic empire is very interesting, since its original territory is external to Roman authority.

After a short historical introduction J. Haldon examines the Byzantine political and economic system, focusing on key aspects of the Byzantine state: urban society, military organization, state's economic role, political ideology and church. This chapter is not limited to the first centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire, but it goes on explaining how the state gradually failed and ultimately collapsed with the fourth crusade.

I. Wood takes on the Germanic successor states, in its variety, since its establishment still under the imperial authority, and the process of state building based on Roman political structures. Despite Roman continuities being a strong feature of Germanic states, some characteristics contrast with this statement, namely the military organization and the taxation system. The enforcement and guaranteeing of justice also shifts from central to local powers. In the conclusions the idea of a general common Germanic tradition is argued as well as the tradi-

tional view of successor kingdoms as small-scaled «run-down versions of the late empire» (p. 514).

The final chapter of this handbook is, as previously stated, about the first Islamic empire, the Umayyad Caliphate. C. F. Robinson introduces the uniqueness of this early Muslim empire with a graphic description of a hypothetic journey from west to east. A journeyman could travel from Cordoba to Merv under a single political entity, speaking only the Arabic, using the same currency and interacting using the same symbolic universe. The close relation between imperial construction and Islam is explained as the «state's function was thus to realize a religious plan, and Islam was the logic of rule (...)» (p. 521).

In conclusion, the handbook as a whole is very useful, for anyone researching the Ancient History or even just interested in such matters. Throughout the chapters the several states are analysed, their critical institutions and its dynamics are pointed out and explained. Obviously, there are some variations along the book, with richer and deeper chapters being followed by others with some limitations but, as stated above, those were essentially due to a rarity of textual sources. For the reader, this book presents itself as an excellent opportunity to explore 4000 years of history of a variety of political and cultural entities. This benefits both the student and the scholar, enabling the former to create a big picture of Ancient History in Mediterranean and Near East, and for the latter, to broaden its horizons beyond its field of expertise.

**Indrek Jürjo and Sergej Stadnikov (eds.):  
*Briefe aus dem Morgenland – Otto Friedrich von Richters Forschungsreise in den Jahren 1814-1816*  
(Hamburger Beiträge zur Geschichte des östlichen Europa 20). Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2013  
313 pp. ISBN 9783 8300 72898.**

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*Briefe aus dem Morgenland – Otto Friedrich von Richters Forschungsreise in den Jahren 1814-1816*, by historian Indrek Jürjo and Egyptologist Sergej Stadnikov, is written in very good German. All its chapters (*Biographische Einleitung, Briefe aus den Jahren 1814-1816, Abbildungen, Quellen- und Literaturverzeichnis, Register*), comprising 313 pages altogether, follow a logical structure and clear chronological order. It lies well within the scope of Oriental Studies (see below, *Some additional remarks*), containing a detailed introduction as well as exhaustive commentaries and notes which provide a historical overview of the life, research and travels across the Middle East (including Egypt and Sudan) of the famous Baltic-German Orientalist Otto Friedrich von Richter (1791-1816)<sup>1</sup>. Despite his short life (he sadly

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\* Senior Researcher. This review was written with the financial support of grants ETF8993, ETF8669 and PUT500.

<sup>1</sup> See also Stadnikov, S. 1991. "Otto Friedrich von Richter und Ägypten". *Altorientalische Forschungen* 18: 195-203; Jürjo, I., Stadnikov, S. 2007. "Briefe aus Ägypten. Otto Friedrich von Richters wissenschaftliche Reise in Ägypten und Unterubien im Jahre 1815" in *Propylaeum DOK Publikations Plattform Altertumswissenschaften*. Heidelberg: 1-75.  
[http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/86/1/Stadnikow\\_Juerjo\\_Propylaeum\\_Richter\\_Text.pdf](http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/86/1/Stadnikow_Juerjo_Propylaeum_Richter_Text.pdf);  
Stadnikov, S. 2003. "Otto Friedrich von Richters Forschungsreise in Unterubien im Jahre 1815: Auszüge aus dem Tagebuch". *Mitteilungen für Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte* 14: 125-161.

died at the age of 24) von Richter can be considered to have been an important researcher in Oriental studies, especially in Egyptology and Nubian studies. His analyses of Ancient Nubian civilization, history and culture were very important<sup>2</sup>.

Although this book mainly consists of von Richter's published letters that he composed during his voyage through the Levant between 1814 and 1816, plus accompanying commentaries by S. Stadnikov and I. Jürjo, it can also be classified as a monograph because the authors' joint commentaries and analytical remarks provide a very good synopsis of von Richter's biography, his voyages in the Middle East and his scientific research.

Firstly, in the *Biographische Einleitung* ("Biographic Introduction"), the authors cover the origins and childhood of von Richter in the town of Waimel, Livonia<sup>3</sup>. Moving on to his studies in several European universities, such as Moscow or Heidelberg, and his private studies in Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Stadnikov and Jürjo estimate that von Richter's learning in the field of Oriental Studies was very successful<sup>4</sup>. Richter learned ancient and modern Middle Eastern languages, cultures, history and religion, and became an expert in his field.

While attending Moscow University (summer 1808 – spring 1809) von Richter already showed extraordinary interest in the Middle East and in Ancient History and Oriental Languages (Latin, Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Persian, etc.)<sup>5</sup>

After spending one academic year in Moscow, von Richter decided to continue his studies in Europe at a prominent German university.

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<sup>2</sup> Von Richter, O. F. 1822. *Wallfahrten im Morgenlande: Aus seinen Tagebüchern und Briefen dargestellt von Johann Philipp Gustav Ewers*. Berlin.

<sup>3</sup> Modern Väimela in South-Estonia (Võru county).

<sup>4</sup> Stadnikov and Jürjo write: «Auf das Studium Otto von Richters zurückblickend, sehen wir den Bildungsweg eines begabten, fleißigen und zielbewußten jungen Orientalisten und auch romantischen Orientschwärmers. Zurück in die Heimat came er schon als Gelehrter, der die für seine späteren Forschungsreisen nötigen Kenntnisse der orientalischen Sprachen und Kultur besaß und die einschlägige europäische Fachliteratur gut kannte» (p. 56).

<sup>5</sup> «Zur Zeit seines Studiums in Moskau war Ottos Interesse für die Antike und den Orient schon klar geprägt» (p. 16).

It was for this reason that he chose Heidelberg, where he studied from autumn 1809 onwards. At the University of Heidelberg von Richter continued his research in Middle Eastern studies. Among other disciplines he learned Arabic<sup>6</sup> and successfully continued to study other languages such as Persian, Turkish and Latin (p. 26).

After Heidelberg, Richter moved to Vienna and studied there for two years (1811-1813). This period was very difficult for Europe due to the impact of the Napoleonic wars (1799-1815) which exhausted and partially depopulated the Western European countries.

At this time the Austrian Empire was in a rather complicated financial situation aggravated by the political and military crisis brought by war with France, which cost Vienna a lot of money. Moreover, the Austrian Empire was defeated several times by Napoleon's army and Vienna was even occupied by French troops in 1805 and 1809 (p. 33)<sup>7</sup>.

While Europe was engaged in war and destruction, von Richter began to study in Vienna where he met the famous Orientalist and diplomat Joseph Freiherr<sup>8</sup> von Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1856) (p. 34). Hammer-Purgstall became von Richter's teacher and mentor during his private studies in Vienna which lasted approximately two years (1811-1813). It is notable that, according to Jürjo and Stadnikov, Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall was probably the leading and most prominent scholar in Oriental Studies in the German cultural space (*Deutsche Orientalistik*) (p. 34) at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Additionally, Richter participated in various lectures and seminars at the University of Vienna. He learned Oriental languages and other disciplines, attending lectures on ancient numismatics by the famous Austrian numismatist Franz Neumann (1744-1816) in the *Wiener Münzkabinett* ("Coin Cabinet at Vienna") (p. 45).

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<sup>6</sup> O. F. von Richter wrote to his father in one of his letters (14<sup>th</sup> March 1810) that Arabic was especially interesting and fun for him. Unfortunately, however, books and other studying materials were very expensive (p. 26).

<sup>7</sup> On Napoleon Bonaparte and his wars see, for example, McLynn, F. 1997. *Napoleon. A Biography*. New York: Arcade Publishing.

<sup>8</sup> *Freiherr* was a title of the nobility in German-speaking countries such as Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and also in the Baltic region (Livonia and Estonia). *Freiherr* would be equivalent to the word "baron".

Upon his return from Germany and Austria back to Livonia (*Zurück nach Livland*, pp. 56-58) von Richter cut a fine figure as a very well educated and erudite Orientalist, having learned the Arab language, history and culture, as well as local Middle Eastern customs (see p. 56). For one whole year, from the summer of 1813 to the summer of 1814, von Richter remained in his home town of Waimel. Unfortunately, this interregnum could be described as an “obscure period” in von Richter’s life because we have almost no information on his activities at that time<sup>9</sup>. Fortunately, we do possess a modicum of information on this period in the form of two letters addressed to Hammer-Purgstall: one sent from Dorpat, dated 25<sup>th</sup> September (7<sup>th</sup> October)<sup>10</sup>, and the other from Waimel, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> June (25<sup>th</sup> June) 1814 (p. 56).

In 1814 von Richter began his famous voyage to the Middle East (*Die große Levante-Reise*) which turned out quite successful, especially in the field of Egyptology and Nubian studies. Richter gathered quite the impressive collection of oriental manuscripts, hieroglyphic texts and artefacts, including some Egyptian mummies, statuettes and scarabs. He also kept writing his notes and diary (*Reisetagebuch*). Together with another traveller, Sven Fredrik Lidman<sup>11</sup>, von Richter hoped to present the results of their joint research to the public in Europe and Russia upon their return, and then to continue this research afterwards.

Unfortunately, events then took an unexpected turn for the worse. On 31<sup>st</sup> August 1816 von Richter fell victim to a serious disease, most likely dysentery or cholera. He died in Izmir (modern Turkey) while making his return journey to Europe from his travels in the Middle East.

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<sup>9</sup> Stadnikov and Jürjo write: «Über das Jahr vom Sommer 1813 bis zum Sommer 1814, das Otto von Richter in der Heimat verbrachte, ist fast nichts bekannt» (p. 56).

<sup>10</sup> In 1918 Estonia underwent calendar reform, replacing the Julian calendar with the Gregorian, with the effect that 31<sup>st</sup> January 1918 was followed by 14<sup>th</sup> February 1918.

<sup>11</sup> Sven Erik Lidman (1784-1845) was a Swedish Orientalist, traveller and diplomat. He was Associate Professor of Arabic Languages at the University of Uppsala, becoming a preacher in Istanbul in 1811. Regarding Lidman, see pp. 81-82 in this book. See also Peterson, B. 1974. “Über Altertümer in Nubien. Sven Frederik Lidmans Reise im Jahre 1815”. *Orientalia Sueciana* 23: 45-47.

In this introductory chapter, Stadnikov and Jürjo also provide readers with a clear and detailed review of von Richter's scientific legacy. After his death in 1816 the Russian embassy sent his personal effects from Istanbul to Richter's father in Livonia. Richter's father, Otto Magnus von Richter (1755-1826), decided to donate his son's collections to Tartu University Library (*die Bibliothek der Dorpater Universität*) and Art Museum (*das Kunstmuseum der Dorpater Universität*). These included not only his coin collections, personal library, notes, manuscripts, diaries and annotations, but also Egyptian mummies – including mummies of children, a dog and an ibis – and other artefacts such as statuettes, scarabs (*scarabaeus*) and hieroglyphic texts (p. 66). At the end of this chapter the authors scrupulously present their written commentaries and analyses.

The second chapter is entitled *Briefe aus den Jahren 1814-1816* ("Letters from the years 1814-1816") and mainly consists of letters written by von Richter in German to his abovementioned father and his mother Anna Auguste Charlotte von Richter (née von Engelhardt, 1770-1823). In these letters Richter conveyed his impressions and reported his adventures and the results of his research on his trip to the Orient from 1814 to 1816. This section also contains profound commentaries and analyses from Stadnikov and Jürjo, forming the core of the book – a capacious chapter comprising of 175 of some of its strongest and most compelling pages.

This particular chapter consists of 33 of von Richter's letters to his parents regarding his travels in Russia, Ukraine and the Middle East (Smolensk, Kiev, Odessa, Nikolajef, Simferopol, Pera, Rhodes, Alexandria, Damascus, etc.), accompanied by very profound and detailed analytical commentaries by Jürjo and Stadnikov (see *Anmerkungen*, pp. 221-262). In these detailed commentaries (pp. 221-262) Jürjo and Stadnikov explain definitions, toponyms and describe geographical locations (in the Middle East, Russia, Estonia, Germany, Austria), historical events which took place during von Richter's lifetime and other events mentioned in his letters. They also give an informative and profound overview of various figures such as diplomats, scholars,

Orientalists, friends, colleagues, relatives and teachers of Otto von Richter, etc.

For instance, on the subject of ancient Edfu<sup>12</sup> (also well-known as *Idfu*) in Egypt, Stadnikov and Jürjo provide quite a lengthy commentary and historical introduction (pp. 242-244). The same goes for the Valley of the Kings (Arab. *Wādī al Mulūk*), visited by Richter in June 1815 (see pp. 250-251).

However, there are some small shortcomings regarding this book. For example, it lacks some cartographic material representing the Middle Eastern region at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which could provide readers with an overall picture of the physical, cultural and political geography of the times and places where von Richter travelled. Furthermore, a map could also have been included showing the relevant areas of Egypt and Nubia, elaborated with a short overview of Ancient Egypt and Nubian chronology, history and rulers. Additionally, the book has no proper summary or conclusion. It would also be very helpful to have it available in both German and English.

Unfortunately, Dr. Indrek Jürjo (1956-2009), one of the authors and compilers, died some years before the monograph was published. Hopefully Sergej Stadnikov, his colleague, will continue this research on the Baltic Egyptologists and Orientalists since he would be able to publish another monograph in the future which might ideally include materials concerning the history of the discipline.

In summary, we can consider this book on the life and activities of O. F. von Richter to be a significant accomplishment because he was a pioneer of Oriental Studies in Estonia. His collection became an important subject of research for many years. In my opinion, it is a great resource not only for Egyptologists who deal with Ancient Nubia and Egypt, and historians of Antiquity in general, but also for all scholars of the history of Orientalism, especially in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it also provides a better understanding of the scientific and

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<sup>12</sup> Re. Edfu, see Kurth, D. 1994. *Edfu: ein ägyptischer Tempel, gesehen mit den Augen der alten Ägypter*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. See also Kurth, D. (ed.) 1999. *Edfu: Bericht über drei Surveys, Materialien und Studien*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

cultural contributions of the Baltic-German people in the Baltic region during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Some Additional remarks: short Review of Oriental Studies in Estonia in the 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> centuries**

Although Estonia is a small European country with a population of only 1.3 million, there is a long tradition of Oriental Studies at the University of Tartu. In 1632 the first Estonian university was established in Dorpat<sup>13</sup> in the Swedish province of Livonia. It was called *Academia Gustaviana* (in German, *Universität Dorpat*, today's University of Tartu). Its founder was the Swedish king Gustav II Adolf<sup>14</sup>. Hebrew was initially taught there, followed by Arabic, Aramaic, Sanskrit and other Oriental languages.

In Tartu, the research and study of Persian language and literature only became possible in the 1800s, however by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Tartu University's Faculty of Theology had added the Akkadian language to its repertoire. The Sumerian language was also on offer by the time the 20<sup>th</sup> century began.

The foundations for Estonian Oriental Studies were established by Baltic Germans such as Otto Friedrich von Richter, Samuel Gottlieb Rudolph Henzi<sup>15</sup> (1794-1829), Alexander von Bulmerincq (1868-1938)<sup>16</sup>, Otto Emil Seesemann (1866-1945)<sup>17</sup> and many others.

Oriental Studies in Tartu developed various disciplines: Old Testament Studies, Sinology, Iranian Studies, Buddhology, Indology and, of course, Assyriology and Egyptology. Oriental Studies in Estonia

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<sup>13</sup> Modern Tartu.

<sup>14</sup> King of Sweden, between 1611 and 1632.

<sup>15</sup> See Hallik, M.; Klaassen, O.-M. 1999. "Unustatud orientalist professor Samuel Gottlieb Rudolf Henzi". *Ajalooline Ajakiri (The Estonian Historical Journal)* 2: 31-36; see also Hallik, M.; Klaassen, O.-M. 2002. *Keiserlik Tartu Ülikool (1802-1918) ja Orient. Eesti-Oriendi kultuurisuhete üldisel taustal*. Tartu: Tartu University Press.

<sup>16</sup> Bulmerincq was a very significant Orientalist in Tartu at the beginning of 20th century, as professor of Old Testament Studies and Semitic languages, including Akkadian.

<sup>17</sup> A very important theologian and Orientalist.

were for a long time closely connected to theology and Old Testament studies. This is the reason why Oriental Studies in Tartu maintains strong ties with its Faculty of Theology. The most prominent Orientalists in Estonia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were mostly theologians such as Professor Arthur Võõbus (1909-1988) and Professor Uku Masing<sup>18</sup> (1909-1985). The latter taught Ancient Near Eastern History, Religion, Akkadian, Hebrew, Sumerian and other Middle Eastern languages in Tartu. Moreover, he published many articles and translated the Sumerian *Lugalbanda* epic into the Estonian language<sup>19</sup>.

The Estonian Syrologist (specialist in Syriac language) and orientalist Arthur Võõbus was a student of von Bulmering at the Theological Faculty of the University of Tartu. Võõbus's doctoral thesis (defended there in 1943) focused on monasticism in Persia, Syria and Mesopotamia before the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The spectres of the Second World War and the occupation of Estonia by the Soviet Army in 1944 convinced Võõbus to flee from Estonia to Europe, and then finally to the U.S.A. From 1946 to 1948 he was active as professor at the Baltic University in Penneberg (near Hamburg) in Germany. Thereafter, Võõbus had the opportunity to work at the British Museum in London. In 1948-1977 he worked at the University of Chicago as Professor of New Testament Studies, publishing many books, reviews and articles<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Uku Masing was a significant Orientalist and Estonian theologian, linguist and polyglot who knew many languages (among them oriental languages such as Akkadian, Sumerian, Hebrew, Ethiopic, Syriac, Aramaic, Arabic, etc.). Masing published his research results not only in Estonian scientific journals, but also in prominent European scientific journals in German and English – although in the Soviet period it was very difficult to get permission to publish outside of the Soviet system – see, for example, Masing, U. 1936. “The Word of Yahweh”. *Acta et commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis (Dorpatensis)*. B. Humaniora XXXIX, Tartu: 1-60; Levin, I., Masing, U. (eds.) 1982. *Armenische Märchen*. Düsseldorf: Eugen Diederichs Verlag; Masing, U. 1974. “Akkadisches *miksu* in Osteuropa”. *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft im Alten Vorderasien*, J. Harmatta and G. Komoróczy (eds.), *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 22, 1974/1976: 521–526; Masing, U. 1976. “Some Remarks on the Mythology of the People of Catal Hüyük”. *Acta et commentationes Universitatis Tartuensis* 392 (Oriental Studies 3), Tartu 1976: 75-92.

<sup>19</sup> Annus, A.; Heltzer, M.; Kasemaa, K.; Masing, U.; Puhvel, J.; Sazonov, V.; Soosaar, S.-E.; Stadnikov, S.; Veede, R. 2005. *Muinasaja kirjanduse antoloogia*, Tartu: Varrak: 32-47.

<sup>20</sup> See about Võõbus, Kasemaa, K. 2007. “Arthur Vööbus – ein Forscher des christlichen Orients” in T. R. Kämmerer (ed.), *Studien zu Ritual und Sozialgeschichte im Alten Orient/Studies on Ritual and Society in the Ancient Near East. Tartuer Symposien 1998-2004*. Berlin, New York: De Gruyter: 147-151.

Another very important Estonian Orientalist of international renown in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries was the Indologist and Buddhologist Linnart Mäll (1938-2010). Firstly, Linnart Mäll studied history at the University of Tartu and, later, also in Moscow between 1964 and 1966 at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences at the USSR Academy of Sciences. Mäll also studied in Tartu with the Orientalist U. Masing and the Linguist and Orientalist Pent Nurmekund<sup>21</sup>, who established the Cabinet for Oriental Studies at the University of Tartu in 1955.

It was from this cabinet that Linnart Mäll established the Center for Oriental Studies in Tartu in 1994, and in 1988 he re-established the Estonian Oriental Society<sup>22</sup> which had been disbanded and forbidden during the Soviet Period. Mäll's sphere of research was quite wide and included Semiotics, Philosophy, Languages, the History and Cultures of India, Tibet, China (especially Buddhist Mahāyāna texts), Classical literature, the languages and culture of India, Buddhist mythology, classical Chinese texts and, finally, Tibetan Buddhist texts. He also researched the history and culture of small nations. Dr. Mäll translated many important Buddhist and other oriental texts from Sanskrit, Chinese, Tibetan, Pali and other oriental languages. He translated *Confucius*, *Bhagavadgita*, *Dhammapada* and other important Oriental classic texts<sup>23</sup> into Estonian.

Of course, only a few prominent Estonian Orientalists are mentioned here but there are others worthy of note including Arabist and Iranist Haljand Udam (1936-2005)<sup>24</sup>, the significant Estonian-

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<sup>21</sup> Dr. Pent Nurmekund (1906-1996), was an Estonian Orientalist, Linguist and polyglot who knew approximately 80 languages (among them Ancient Egyptian, Persian, Arabic, etc.).

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.eao.ee>, last visited 25-10-2014.

<sup>23</sup> See for example some of the latest publications of Linnart Mäll: 2008. "Terms Denoting Living Body and Body in General in Buddhist Texts" in M. L. G. Dietrich and T. Kulmar (eds.). *Body and Soul in the Conceptions of the Religions/Leib und Seele in der Konzeption der Religionen*. Münster: Ugarit Verlag, pp. 155-156; 2006. "Thus Began New Dharma". *Forschungen zur Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte* 40, pp. 181-185; 2005. *Studies in the Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita and the other Essays*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited.

<sup>24</sup> H. Udam defended his doctoral thesis "On the Special Semantic Aspects of the Persian Sufi Terminology" (1971) in Moscow. He was the first translator of the Qur'an into the Estonian language (published in 2007, after Udam's death). He also translated several books and works from the Arabic, Turkish, Farsi, Urdu and Tajik languages.

American Hittitologist and Indo-Europeanist *professor emeritus* Jaan Puhvel (b. 1932 etc)<sup>25</sup> who was a student of Georges Dumézil.

Because the author of this current review is an Assyriologist, he will add some words about Assyriology in Estonia. Although Akkadian and Sumerian have been taught here for over 100 years, the systematic study of Assyriology was only relatively recently established by professor Thomas Richard Kämmerer who has been at the University of Tartu since 1997 and has held the position of professor of Assyriology since 2003<sup>26</sup>. The first Estonian to defend his doctoral thesis in Assyriological studies was Dr. Amar Annus, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Theology<sup>27</sup>. Amar Annus has published many other works<sup>28</sup>. Here it would be remiss not to mention Dr. Peeter Espak's doctoral thesis "The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology"<sup>29</sup>, written in English, belonging to the field of Sumeriological studies and containing 284 pages, soon to be published in 2015 as a monograph in Germany by Harrassowitz Publishing House. This monograph contains a very thorough analysis of the ancient Sumerian and Akkadian god Enki (*Akk.* Ea) in the Sumerian religion and royal ideology. Espak's research deals with a great number of hypotheses and tackles some complex questions concerning the cult of Enki, his role in royal ideology and position in the pantheon, mythological and other texts dedicated to Enki (e.g., royal inscriptions) or in which he is mentioned.

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<sup>25</sup> See for example one of his main works – Puhvel, J. 1984– *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*. Berlin, New York, Amsterdam; Walter de Gruyter.

<sup>26</sup> See for example Kämmerer, Th. R. 1998. *Šimā milka. Induktion und Reception der mittelbabylonischen Dichtung von Ugarit, Emar und Tell el-Amarna* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Bd. 251). Münster: Ugarit-Verlag; Kämmerer, Th. R.; Metzler, K. 2012. *Das babylonische Weltschöpfungsepos Enūma eliš* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament, Bd. 375). Münster: Ugarit-Verlag.

<sup>27</sup> Amar Annus's doctoral thesis is "The God Ninurta in the Mythology of Ancient Mesopotamia" (2002) and was published in the *State Archives of Assyria Studies XIV*, The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project of University of Helsinki, Institute for Asian and African Studies, University of Helsinki. Dr. Amar Annus was supervised by the Finnish Prof. Dr. Simo Parpola and defended his thesis at the University of Helsinki, not in Tartu.

<sup>28</sup> See for example Annus, A. and Lenzi, A. 2010. *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi: The Standard Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer*. Helsinki: The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project.

<sup>29</sup> Espak, P. 2010. *The God Enki in Sumerian Royal Ideology and Mythology* (Dissertationes Theologiae Universitatis Tartuensis 19). Tartu: Tartu University Press.

In summary, it can be said that although O. F. von Richter was not as prominent or famous an Orientalist as, for example, Artrur Võõbus, he remains one of the pioneers of Oriental Studies in Estonia which, in my opinion, show much promise because, along with their long tradition, they have been developed with great success across many different disciplines.



# Abstracts

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# **Nebuchadnezzar, King of Assyria. Rewriting Ancient Mesopotamian History in Fiction**

Davide Nadali

## **Abstract**

The history of the ancient Orient has been widely used as source for inspiration of theatre and opera, focusing on figures as Semiramis and Nebuchadnezzar: but how was the ancient Near East perceived and represented before the actual archaeological discoveries? Bible and classical sources have been largely used for inspiration with the result that ancient Mesopotamian history has been rewritten changing and mixing up names, geographical places and historical events. The text deals with the composition of the libretto of the opera *Nabucco*, staged for the first time at Teatro alla Scala in Milan in 1842.

Keywords: Babylon, Assyria, Semiramis, Nebuchadnezzar, Bible.

## **Resumo**

A história do Antigo Oriente tem sido amplamente utilizada como fonte de inspiração para o teatro e a ópera, focando-se em figuras como Semíramis e Nabucodonosor. Mas de que modo era entendido e representado o Próximo Oriente antes das suas verdadeiras descobertas arqueológicas? A Bíblia e as fontes clássicas eram a principal inspiração. Daqui resultou que a história da antiga Mesopotâmia foi reescrita, com a alteração e mistura de nomes, lugares geográficos e acontecimentos históricos. Este artigo estuda a composição do *libretto* da ópera *Nabucco*, que esteve em cena pela primeira vez no *Teatro alla Scala de Milão*, em 1842.

Palavras-chave: Babilónia, Assíria, Semiramis, Nabucodonosor, Bíblia.

## Under the Sign of Orientalism: Travel Comradeship in *A Relíquia* by Eça de Queirós

José das Candeias Sales

### Abstract

After the Napoleonic campaign into Egypt (1798–1801), the «temptation of the Orient» hit the Western world, leaving eloquent expressions in its artistic manifestations. Eça de Queirós, in the path of many other European scholars, was not immune to this movement. He himself made the oriental journey and left of it abundant reminiscences in his literary production. The idea of travel comradeship present in *A Relíquia*, through the Portuguese character Teodorico and the German Topsisius, derives of a 1800's cultural habit well attested in the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century whereupon Eça himself participated. In Eça's critical plot, the literary game of contrasts between the two men and their worlds is much accentuated and, through several episodes and adventures, the author reveals his anti-German sentiment, an impression that he inherited from the French culture and mentality which he profoundly adopted.

Keywords: Orientalism, Eça de Queirós, literature, travels.

### Resumo

Depois da campanha napoleónica ao Egipto (1798-1801), a «tentação do Oriente» atingiu o mundo Ocidental, deixando expressões eloquentes nas suas manifestações artísticas. Eça de Queirós, no rasto de muitos estudiosos europeus, não ficou imune a este movimento. Ele próprio fez a viagem oriental, deixando na sua produção literária abundantes reminiscências sobre ela. A ideia de companheirismo de viagem n'*A Relíquia*, veiculada através do personagem português, Teodorico, e do alemão Topsisius, deriva de um hábito cultural de Oitocentos, bem atestado nas últimas décadas do século XIX, no qual o próprio Eça participou. No enredo crítico de Eça, o jogo literário de contrastes entre os dois homens e os seus mundos é muito acentuado.

Através de vários episódios e aventuras, o autor revela o seu sentimento anti-germânico, uma impressão que herdou profundamente da cultura e mentalidade francesa que adoptou.

Palavras-chave: Orientalismo, Eça de Queirós, literatura, viagens.

## **Brother Leão de São Tomás: the *Benedictina Lusitana* and the 17<sup>th</sup> century vision on the origins of Monasticism in Biblical Antiquity**

José Jorge Gonçalves

### **Abstract**

In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century is published in Coimbra, Portugal, the Benedictine chronicle of Brother Leão de São Tomás. The author starts the first volume of the work with a brief introduction about the origins of the monastic movement, trying to prove they can be found on the action of the prophets of the Old Testament. He introduces thus the horizons of Antiquity and the Middle East in his work, although analyzed under the biblical prism of a clergyman of the 1600's.

Keywords: 17<sup>th</sup> century, Order of Saint Benedict, Monasticism, Old Testament, Prophets.

### **Resumo**

Em meados do século XVII é publicada, em Coimbra, a crónica beneditina de Frei Leão de São Tomás. O autor inicia o primeiro tomo da obra com uma breve introdução sobre as origens do movimento monástico, tentando provar que elas podem ser encontradas na acção dos profetas do Antigo Testamento. Introduce, assim, no seu trabalho, os horizontes da Antiguidade e do Médio Oriente bíblico, embora analisados sob o prisma de um clérigo de Seiscentos.

Palavras-chave: Século XVII, Ordem de São Bento, Monaquismo, Antigo Testamento, Profetas.

## **Popular Art and Official Art: a possible and useful classification in Mesopotamian iconography?**

Laura Battini

### **Abstract**

This article aims to appreciate if the modern distinction between official («major») and popular («minor») arts correspond to ancient Mesopotamian concepts. Moreover, it checks if this distinction improves the perception of Mesopotamian art. It appears that none negative judgement affected objects executed in a linear style or considered today as “minor”. At the same time, none differentiated between artists and craftsmen, *ummanu* («master») is used for both. Nevertheless, the modern system of art classification can get new insights and enhance current knowledge of ancient art.

Keywords: popular art, official art, serialization, artistic exchanges, artistic genres.

### **Resumo**

Este artigo procura discernir se a distinção moderna entre uma arte oficial (“maior”) e uma arte popular (“menor”) corresponde aos conceitos vigentes na antiga Mesopotâmia. Também procura confirmar se esta distinção contribui de modo positivo para a percepção da arte mesopotâmica. Aparentemente, nenhum juízo negativo recaía sobre objectos executados num estilo linear ou considerados, hoje, como “menores”, não havendo, ao mesmo tempo, nenhum que diferenciava artistas de artesãos, ambos designados por *ummanu* (“mestre”). Todavia, o sistema de classificação artística moderno pode obter novas perspectivas aumentar o conhecimento actual sobre a arte Antiga.

Palavras-chave: arte popular, arte oficial, serialização, intercâmbios artísticos, géneros artísticos.

# The ambiguity of the public and the private spheres in the Athenian *polis* of the Tyrannicides and Pericles

Nuno Simões Rodrigues

## Abstract

In the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, the city-state of Athens lived two symptomatic events. In 514 BC, Harmodius and Aristogiton killed the tyrant Hippias, during the Panathenean Festival. According to Thucydides, Hipparchus – Hippias brother – sexually harassed Harmodius, who would have rejected him. Hipparchus would then have revenged himself and publicly humiliated Harmodius' sister. Consequently, the tyrant was killed and the act was understood as a rebellion against tyranny in Athens. In the middle of the fifth century BC, between 440 and 429 BC, Pericles maintained a love affair with a woman from Miletus, called Aspasia. That would be a relationship of a private nature; however, it entered in the public sphere from the moment that Aspasia was accused of influencing political decisions of Pericles, which caused him to be accused of having promoted the revolt of Samos in 440. The two cases cited are examples of events of the private life of individuals that, ultimately, had major consequences in public life. This paper aims to examine how this ambiguity between the two universes had revealed to be frequent in Classical Antiquity, particularly in Athens, and how the phenomenon was understood by the societies that experienced it.

Keywords: Tyrant-slayers, Harmodius, Aristogiton, Aspasia of Miletus, Pericles.

## Resumo

Nos séculos V e VI a.C., a cidade-estado de Atenas viveu dois acontecimentos sintomáticos. Em 514 a.C., Harmódio e Aristogiton mataram o tirano Hípias, durante o festival das Panateneias. De acordo com Tucídides, Hiparco, irmão de Hípias, teria assediado sexualmente Harmódio, que o rejeitou. Hiparco ter-se-ia vingado, humilhando publicamente a irmã de Harmódio. Como

consequência, o tirano foi morto, tendo o acto sido entendido como uma rebelião contra a própria tirania em Atenas. Em meados do século V a.C., entre 440 e 429, Péricles mantivera um caso amoroso com uma mulher de Mileto, chamada Aspásia. Esta relação de natureza privada teria, contudo, entrado na esfera pública a partir do momento em que Aspásia foi acusada de influenciar as decisões políticas de Péricles, que custaram a este acusações de ter instigado as revoltas em Samos, em 440. Os dois casos citados são exemplos de acontecimentos da vida privada de indivíduos que, em última instância, tiveram grandes consequências na vida pública. Este artigo pretende examinar como a ambiguidade entre estes dois universos se revelou frequente na Antiguidade Clássica, particularmente em Atenas, e o modo como o fenómeno foi entendido pelas sociedades que a experienciaram.

Palavras-chave: Tiranícidias, Harmódio, Aristogíton, Aspásia de Mileto, Péricles.

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<sup>3</sup> Wheatley 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Lalouette 1991.

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Lalouette, Claire. 1991. *Pharaons. Au royaume d'Égypte. Le temps des rois-dieux*. Paris: Fayard.

Wheatley, Pat. 2002. "Antigonus Monophthalmus in Babylonia, 310-308 B. C." *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 61 (1): 39-47.

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