

ALEXANDREA AD AEGYPTVM THE LEGACY OF MULTICULTURALISM IN ANTIQUITY

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Alexandria endures in our imagination as the first model of cultural interaction – of cosmopolitanism, to use both classical and contemporary terminology – and as the cultural and intellectual capital of the ancient world. The intermingling of races and beliefs, and the exchange of ideas, undoubtedly produced the knowledge that modern scholarship still celebrates.

This book is a testimony that the values embodied by Alexandria and its Library continue to inspire noble minded scholars whose pursuit for knowledge transcends boundaries and time. The breadth and scope of the papers presented do credit to the spirit of Alexandria – its multiculturalism, and its passion for science and scholarship. The book in our hands confirm that the multiculturalism of the Ancient World, rippling out from Alexandria to extend throughout the Hellenistic period and beyond, is as valid now as it was then – perhaps more so today, when globalization has given a new meaning to the internationalism envisioned by Alexander the Great centuries ago. Now, with the “clash of civilizations” dominating our discourse, it is pertinent to remember the lesson Alexandria ad Aegyptum taught us: that the interaction between cultures can only lead to the betterment of the human condition and carry us to heights unimagined.

Ismail Serageldin
Librarian of Alexandria

The excellent contributions gathered in this book dedicated to the city of books, Alexandria, are undoubtedly traced along the lines of Amr and John’s dialogue. Intolerance, which is borne almost always out of ignorance, threatens continuously the peaceful meeting and coexistence of peoples and cultures nowadays. Alexandria, its people and books remind us that the search for dialogue, the reflection on the forms of unity in diversity are at the same time our greatest heritage and the most dramatically pressing agenda.

Gabriele Cornelli
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PREFACE

It is December 22nd of the year 640 A.D.: Alexandria is sieged and captured by Emir Amr Ibn al-As, who, having resisted two attempts by Emperor Heraclius of Constantinople to recapture the city, sends Califa Omar the following words: “we have conquered the great city of the West!” And he keeps a promise: to make the city “accessible from all sides, like the house of a prostitute”, thus destroying its walls and doors. This conquest marks the destruction of whatever was left from the collection of parchments and the end of an extraordinary cultural experience that deeply branded centuries of Mediterranean culture, vividly described by Timon of Phlius (3rd century A.D.), who referred to it ironically as a place inhabited by “well nourished bookworms scribbling endlessly and waging a constant war of words with each other in the Muses’ birdcage”.

But during its conquest and the destruction of its collections, Alexandria reveals itself yet again as a city of varied, crossing cultures. The sage Ibn al-Qifti mentions in his *Ta’rikh al-Hukama (history of the sages)* a lengthy dialogue that would have taken place after the conquest, between the Emir Amr Ibn al-As and a well-known Aristotelian commentator, in all likelihood the Christian John Philoponus, also called John the Grammarian. The Emir, a highly intelligent and cultured man, engaged in sophisticated logical-theological debates about the trinity with John. John’s monophysitism brought them closer, although even a *light* trinity such as John’s was virtually unacceptable to the Emir: the latter, fiercely loyal to Islamic monotheism, would not easily accept John’s rather undogmatic arguments in favour of a real trinity. Not surprisingly, unity and multiplicity, the one and the multiples would have been these two men’s topic of discussion: they are in Alexandria, the city of difference and unity. The debate on trinity is a discussion about the possibility of the co-existence of unity and multiplicity. Therefore, what we might view as a sterile conversation about almost nothing turns out to be a reflection on life itself and the survival of a political project such as the project of Alexandria, always endangered by accusations of excessive openness (what a prostitute!) and by attempts to reduce this radical diversity to the common denominator of only one culture and the souls that shaped it throughout the centuries.

No other city had its fate marked to such an extent by books as Alexandria. Again a single book promoted dialogue between the two men: the *Pentateuch*. The dialogue between the two intellectuals did not, of course, save the Library – otherwise, such a dialogue could not have taken place. As such, the story about the conversation between the Christian grammarian and the Muslim Emir, while the outside world watched the destruction, is the proof that Alexandria’s legacy survived its books. In spite of the destruction, the intercultural and erudite dialogue proceeded, as a form of resistance to barbarity and agendas other than those concerning truth and beauty.

The excellent contributions gathered in this book dedicated to the city of books, Alexandria, are undoubtedly traced along the lines of Amr and John's dialogue. Intolerance, which is borne almost always out of ignorance, threatens continuously the peaceful meeting and coexistence of peoples and cultures nowadays. Alexandria, its people and books remind us that the search for dialogue, the reflection on the forms of unity in diversity are at the same time our greatest heritage and the most dramatically pressing agenda.

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MOVING FORWARD

The founding of Alexandria in 331 B.C.E. was a momentous event in the history of mankind. Alexander's dream was to create an international city, a space where people from all over the known world would live and work together for the development of the human mind. Alexandria therefore endures in our imagination as the first model of cultural interaction – of cosmopolitanism, to use both classical and contemporary terminology – and as the cultural and intellectual capital of the Ancient World.

The intermingling of races and beliefs, and the exchange of ideas, undoubtedly produced the knowledge that modern scholarship still celebrates. For centuries Alexandria ruled the Mediterranean not just through its wealth and military power, but also with its intellectual achievements which came to fruition at the ancient Library of Alexandria. It was there that scholars gathered from the four corners of the world to push the boundaries of human knowledge and unleash the human mind on myriad quests. To this day it symbolizes the noblest aspirations of the human mind, global ecumenism, and the greatest achievements of the intellect. In Science, Mathematics, Astronomy and the humanities, the mark of Alexandrian scholarship and discoveries is to be found everywhere.

The ancient Library of Alexandria was not just a repository of scrolls, valuable though those might have been. It was a centre of learning and of excellence, as we would today call it. It did not survive the turmoil of conflict and bigotry, or even the scars of time and natural disasters (for no physical remains exist), but its legacy lived on. Sixteen hundred years after its final collapse, the dream of its revival became a reality and it was resurrected, through international efforts, on the shores of the Mediterranean, just a stone's throw away from where its famed predecessor had stood. The new Library of Alexandria is a bold evocative building, but like its namesake, it is much more than a building and is not just a library. Born digital, it has risen to the challenges of the modern times and aspires to be a library for the new digital age. It is also, like the ancient Library, a centre of learning and dialogue, a space for intellectual debates (encouraging especially the youth), scholarship, and the arts, as well as a meeting place for North and South, East and West. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and conference halls, it is a vast cultural complex with its own orchestra, museums, permanent as well as temporary exhibitions, research centres and publications. As it celebrates its tenth anniversary this October, the new Library of Alexandria can look back with pride upon the large strides it has taken towards promoting culture, dialogue and scholarship, reassuring its ancestor that ideas never die, and that though men may expire and buildings may perish, great minds are immortal.

This conference, and its proceedings, are a testimony that the values embodied by Alexandria and its Library continue to inspire noble minded scholars whose pursuit for knowledge transcends boundaries and time. The breadth and scope of the papers presented do credit to the spirit of Alexandria – its multiculturalism, and its passion for science and scholarship. All this would not have been possible without the enlightened leadership of the first Ptolemies, who translated Alexander's dream in ways that may have exceeded his

expectations. The genius of the site, Alexander's choice, allowed the city to accumulate immense wealth through maritime trade, and this in turn allowed the Ptolemies to channel funds towards culture. It was they who laid the foundations of enlightenment, symbolized by the Pharos, the Museion and the Library. Under their aegis, scholarship and science – the product of foreign and local minds working together – made immense leaps in all areas. Callimachus, especially revered in the new Library of Alexandria, not only revolutionized poetry but also classified books according to author, title and subject, thereby establishing library science. Euclid's book continues to be taught to this day, a record that has yet to be broken! And Philo's early attempt at reconciling philosophy with religion set a tradition that also continues to engage philosophers and theologians. Indeed, Alexandria's importance in philosophy, Judaism and Christianity is a matter for deep scholarship, but this conference pays attention to the especial role Alexandria played in spreading the cult of Isis throughout the world, making her the most popular deity of ancient times. Cleopatra herself often assumed the role of Isis (thus providing a marvelous example of cultural interaction) during festivals and religious ceremonies. She was the last of the Ptolemies and the Hellenistic age came to an end with the asp bite that ended her life. Yet her magic, like that of the city which she ruled, lives on. The Hellenistic age may have officially ended with Octavian's victory, but it never died.

The proceedings in our hands confirm that the multiculturalism of the Ancient World, rippling out from Alexandria to extend throughout the Hellenistic period and beyond, is as valid now as it was then – perhaps more so today, when globalization has given a new meaning to the internationalism envisioned by Alexander the Great centuries ago. Now, with the «clash of civilizations» dominating our discourse, it is pertinent to remember the lesson *Alexandrea ad Aegyptum* taught us: that the interaction between cultures can only lead to the betterment of the human condition and carry us to heights unimagined.

September 2012

Ismail Serageldin
 Librarian of Alexandria

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We must acknowledge a vast team of specialists who generously accepted our challenge and contributed to this project with studies revolving around Classical Studies, Egyptology, Art History, Archaeology, Literature, Mathematics, among others. We are deeply indebted to all members of the team involved, especially to Dr. Ismail Serageldin, to Professor Gabriele Cornelli, to Professor Mostafa el-Abbadi and to Professor Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira, who gifted us with their priceless contributions. Not surprisingly, the multitude of perspectives provided by this multidisciplinary approach was easily harmonized in a coherent publication, which certainly manifests on itself the multidimensional character of Ancient Alexandria.

We have to acknowledge the collaboration of the curators of the Museums that helped us to publish the small collection of objects included in this book: Dr. Teresa Elena Cinquantaquattro and Dr. Stefania Saviano (*Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali – Soprintendenza Speciale per i beni archeologici di Napoli e Pompei*), Dr. Ruth Janson (Brooklyn Museum), Dr. Agnes Brand (*Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Köln*), Dr. Jonas Ryborg (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen), Dr. Sayed Hassan and Dr. Ghada Tarek (Cairo Egyptian Museum), Dr. Maria José Albuquerque (Museu Nacional de Arqueologia de Lisboa), Dr. Alexandre Lourenço (Reitoria da Universidade do Porto), Dr. Maria Rosa Figueiredo (Museu Calouste Gulbenkian) and, last but not the least, the Photographic Services of the British Museum. We also would like to acknowledge Professor Dominic Rathbone and Professor Roger Bagnall for the possibility to reproduce in this book the map of ancient Alexandria first published in *Egypt: From Alexander to the Copts*. We are also indebt with Dr. Julia Harvey and Dr. Cristina Pimentel who also contributed with excellent photographs by their own.

This publication is only possible thanks to the institutional and financial support of the *Centro de Investigação Transdisciplinar «Cultura, Espaço e Memória»* and *Centro de Estudos Clássicos e Humanísticos da Universidade de Coimbra*. We are deeply in debt to their directors and to their staff, namely to Paula Montes Leal for the generous and endless support that they dispensed us, and specially as to Dr. Gaspar Martins, who encouraged this project from the first moment. We also have benefited from the generous collaboration of Sara Rodrigues, who reviewed and uniformized the quotation notes, and Sara Melo dos Santos who reviewed some of the texts.

INTRODUCTION

The project of a collective work on multiculturalism in Ancient Alexandria was born more than a decade ago when the new *Bibliotheca Alexandrina* was founded. The idea of recreating the spirit of a long lost mythical institution of knowledge was on itself attractive enough to justify such a study. However, political events gave to this idea more than a commemorative character: multiculturalism is on the very core of problems that affects our global contemporary world. Thus, to examine the conditions of multiculturalism in Ancient Alexandria seemed an excellent way to reflect on the historical processes that shape identity and culture.

The editorial board of this book, gathering scientists from Portugal and Egypt aimed to provide a publication that could reflect the heterogeneity and multiculturalism of Ancient Alexandria by means of a multitude of perspectives which could only take form through a multidisciplinary approach. Thus, the primordial goal of the editorial board was to drive the attention of scholars to the epistemological need of a multidisciplinary approach to grasp such a complex object of study as it is the Alexandrian culture, multidimensional and multicultural in nature.

The studies compiled in this volume are presented in four sections. In each of these sections we tried, as much as possible, to keep a multidisciplinary perspective thus avoiding the traditional arrangement of the subjects in classical, egyptological or literary studies which so often creates on going difficulties to the perception of the Alexandrian Hellenism's specificities.

The first section is dedicated to the several stages of Alexandria's History, from its very foundation to the Roman occupation. The second section is specifically concerned with the multicultural identity of Alexandria and with its consequences in Art and Society. The third section is dedicated to the scholarly tradition of Alexandria that included Literature and Science, both from ancient Greek and Egyptian authors. The fourth section includes studies on the processes of change and revision of ancient traditions in a multicultural context. A concluding chapter presents a broader and integrative approach of the essential features of Alexandrian Hellenism.

However heterogeneous the studies compiled in this volume may be, this selection is far from being exhaustive and certainly many other aspects of the Alexandrian culture could be included. This volume is therefore a first attempt to achieve this ambitious purpose and we would expect that it could be followed by many other studies and publications.

In fact, few places in the world seem to have been so much rooted on a multicultural ground as Alexandria always did. From its own beginning, multiculturalism performed a pivotal role on its vitality in such a manner that the dialogue between the cultures of the Ancient World always figured as its natural vocation. The geographic location of the city, on Egyptian ground, propelled its role as a cross-road of Africa, Asia and Europe. Here, Hellenistic civilization seemed to find the most suitable ground to give rise to an open multicultural society which relied on its Museum as much as on its harbour, in such a way that

health and knowledge always seemed as two sides of a coin. We may in fact recognize in Ancient Alexandria all the features of a globalized culture.

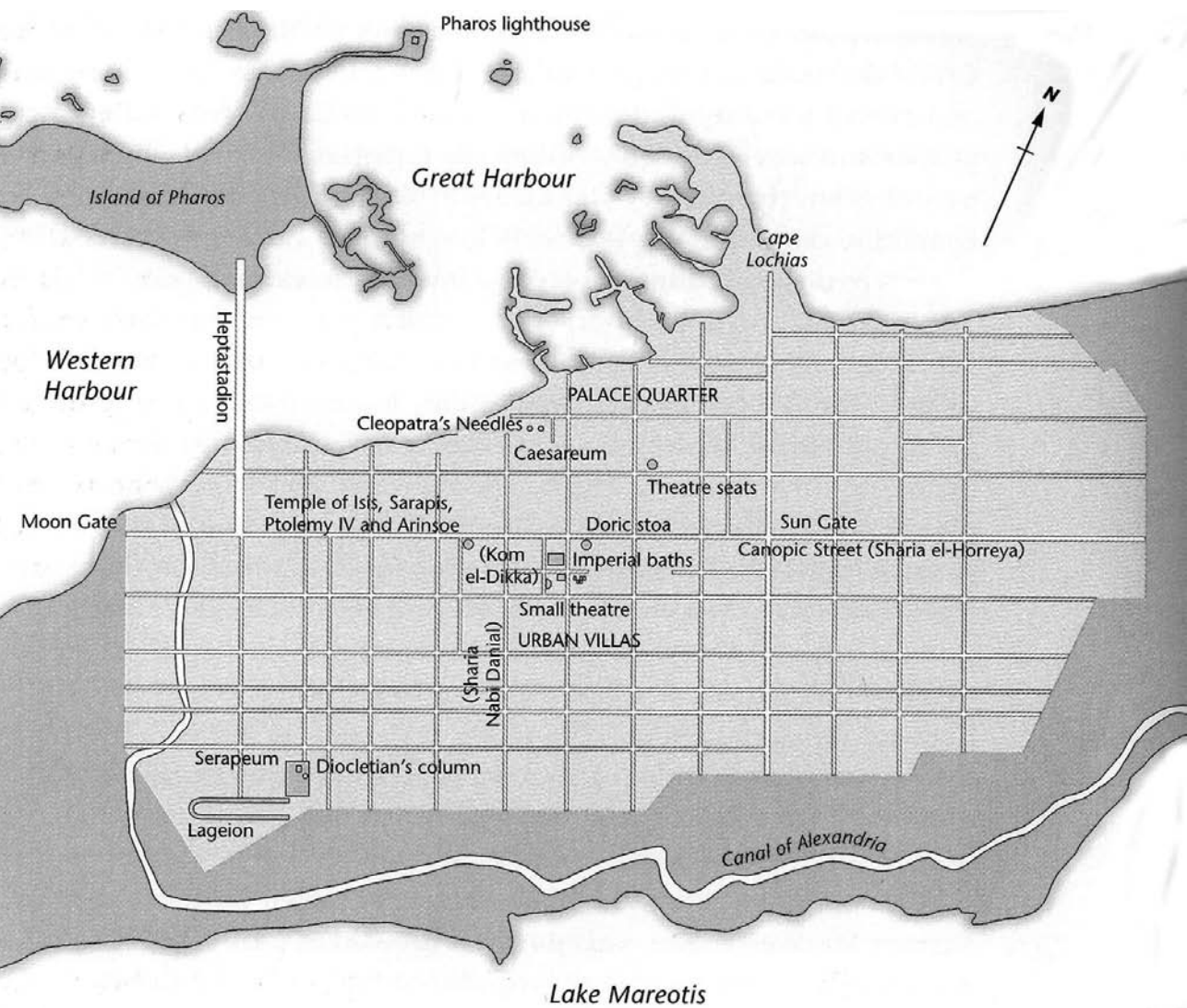
In spite of its tremendous success, Alexandrian multicultural civilization was short lived. Obviously it depended upon political factors that could not last under the highly centralized Roman domination. From then on, identity and citizenship became rigidly codified according to Roman one-sided rules which rapidly led to the transformation of Alexandria from a major cross-road of Antiquity to a dangerous melting pot of cultures imprisoned within its walls. Minorities were thus condemned to live their culture not within the open possibilities of the *politeuma* but within the rigid walls of the *ghetto*. From then on, the agony of Alexandria superbly reflects the decline of the multicultural Hellenistic civilization.

After a long period of decline, the rise of modern Alexandria reflected again the revitalization of the Mediterranean which prospered with the Suez Canal. More than two thousand years after its foundation by Alexander, in the beginning of the 20th century, the city found itself before its natural vocation as a cross-road of cultures: Egyptians, Turks, Jews, English and French rebuilt the city's long lost multicultural character. Although it succeeded to face two world wars, multiculturalism would be deeply challenged with the scars left by the effects of the Cold War in the political map of the Middle East. Furthermore, the cosmopolitan role of the city as a turntable between the three continents that border the Mediterranean, could not prosper in the context of a strangled sea that became a wall to divide the European Community from its African neighbours.

In the global world where we live in, we can recognize many of the cultural features that sprung in Ancient Alexandria. The primordial role performed by Science in the shape of a global community is one of the most striking features of our times. Equipped with the resources provided by contemporary technology, scientists meet at a global forum and share common humanistic and universal values, regardless of their nationality or religion. In a very concrete way, scientists of our times can see themselves as heirs of the Alexandrian universal spirit.

In our times it is true that the impact and acceptance of the global culture in local communities was frequently balanced with the growing of importance of religious traditions. As happened in Ancient Alexandria, religion performs an important role in the strengthening of local identity, especially when the meeting of civilizations becomes maculated by military operations. Now that a decade is completed after the foundation of the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina, we present this book as the reminder of the extraordinary relevance of the perennial multicultural civilization of Ancient Alexandria for the understanding our global heritage. In a way, with all its contradictions, our global world is perhaps the fully expression of the Universalist multicultural vision that rose in *Alexandrea ad Aegyptum*. Only today the challenges that arose in Alexandria become truly universal.

The Editors



The city of Alexandria (BAGNALL, RATHBONE, 2004:52)

PART I
ALEXANDRIA,
A CITY OF MANY FACES

ON THE TRAIL OF ALEXANDRIA'S FOUNDING

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Abstract: *This article tries to portray Alexandria's profile at the time of its foundation, using literary testimonies such as those of Herodotus – principally his descriptions of the territory where the new city came to be established – and other Hellenistic biographers, historians and geographers.*

To follow the trail of the Alexandria's founding by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C. is, above all, to consider what Herodotus, the greatest narrator of Egyptian wonders, can tell us about what this region was like about a hundred years before the event itself. Of all the regions of Egypt, none of them merited as much attention and interest on the part of the Greeks as did the Delta, given its accessibility and the continuing presence of colonies there¹. For some, as seems to be the case of the geographer Hecataeus of Miletus², Egypt was confined to the Delta³ and did not extend below the city of Cercasorus⁴. Herodotus repeat-

¹ Intense Greek commercial activity increased in the Delta beginning in the 8th century B.C. Naucratis, for example (cf. Str. 17.1.18), is a central case, founded at the Canopic river mouth during the period of Psammetichus I at the beginning of the 7th century B.C. by the Milesians. Hdt. 2.178-179 tells us that Amasis concentrated the innumerable Greeks dispersed around the Delta in Naucratis, which greatly expanded the city's commerce (cf. also 2.154).

² Cf. BROWN, 1965: 68.

³ Cf. Hdt. 2.15.1.

⁴ A little more than a dozen miles to the north of Cairo; cf. Ach. Tat. 4.11.3.

edly accentuates⁵ the character of the recent formation of this space. According to the author of the *Histories*, in the period of the Pharaoh Min (around 3200 B.C.),

*the whole of the Egypt, with the exception of the region of Thebes, was wetlands and nothing at the time emerged in the parts of the territory which today exist below (that is to say, to the north) of Lake Moeris, where we arrive from the sea after seven days of navigating upstream*⁶.

For those who observe well, Herodotus continues, it is enough to look with attention at the territory that the Greeks who arrived by ship confronted, to recognize it as land that extended Egypt, a kind of «gift of the Nile». In fact, Greek navigators knew that, until a certain distance off the Egyptian coast, the sea had a muddy bottom, which had to do with the sedimentation from the Nile⁷. Herodotus even concludes that the Egyptian coastline is projected further into the sea than in neighboring regions because of these same deposits⁸; and going even further, he points to the contrast between the soil of Egypt, black and crumbly, which is carried from Ethiopia by the Nile, and the red sand of Libya and Arabia, documenting this with physical proof. In addition to the geophysical testimony, Herodotus invokes the opinions of priests, in order to confirm that a good part of the coastal territory of Egypt, which before had been a gulf, was reclaimed from the sea because of the interference of the Nile⁹.

In Greek literature, the configuration and limits of the Delta are constantly referred to. In 2.17.2-3, Herodotus, making himself the spokesperson for Greek thinking, describes the route of the Nile, from the falls to the sea, as Egypt's central dividing line. From the city of Cercasorus, the region divides into three branches: to the east there is the so-called river mouth of Pelusium, to the west the Canopic river mouth, and a third which divides in half the space defined between the two, which is called Sebennytic¹⁰, not to mention other lesser branchings. In various instances, Greek tragedy envelops this geographic reality in a poetical aura. Aeschylus¹¹ speaks «of the Nile's river mouths of fine sand» and associates Canobus, a city of the extreme west of the Delta, with the myth of Io and his son Epaphus, born in Egypt¹². Euripides¹³ celebrates the one hundred river mouths of the Nile. Situated

⁵ Hdt. 2.15.2; 2.43.4; 2.144.2.

⁶ Hdt. 2.4.3.

⁷ Hdt. 2.5.

⁸ Hdt. 2.12.

⁹ Hdt. 2.10.

¹⁰ Hdt. 2.17.4-5.

¹¹ Aesch., *Suppliants* 4-5.

¹² Aesch., *Prometheus* 846-852; *Suppliants* 311-314.

¹³ Eur., *Bacchae* 406-408.

by Herodotus in the extreme west (seemingly in error) we find «the so-called tower of Perseus»¹⁴, the place where Andromeda was saved from a sea monster by the young hero Perseus, the theme to which Euripides dedicated a famous tragedy, *Andromeda* (412 B.C.). Unavoidable as well is Helen and Menelaus' mythical journey into Egypt; escaping with Paris – in Herodotus' version – Helen would have come into port at the Canopic river mouth, whose name as a matter of fact was taken from Canopus, Menelaus' helmsman who lost his life there. It was, according to legend, the priest of the temple of Herakles, guardian of this particular Nile river mouth, who was responsible for revealing the kidnapping, committed by the Trojan, to the Pharaoh Proteus, at the time residing in Memphis¹⁵. During his return from the Trojan War, Menelaus sailed in his turn as far as the Egyptian capital¹⁶ to rescue Helen, as well as the treasures they had brought there.

The sedimentation of the new lands of the Delta had a positive impact on the local populations since the fertility of the soil could compete with any other in the world, even with that which the inhabitants of Middle and Upper Egypt knew¹⁷. Herodotus describes agriculture in the Delta as a nearly automatic process, bordering on utopia; it is not even necessary to make furrows or plough the fields; it is enough to wait for the Nile to water the fields, sow the seed and let the animals themselves wander around burying them with their hoofs.

Therefore, in the second half of the 4th century B.C., when Alexander entered the Delta, the Macedonian invader was not landing on soil unfamiliar to the Greeks; this was simply the furtherance of Greek recognition of a place that they had known – and fantasized about – for around five centuries. The route that Alexander adopted during his incursion into Egypt is still debated and, above all, the moment and the significance of a visit that he would have made to the oracle of Ammon. Was this before or after the foundation of Alexandria? There are a variety of sources that place this consultation before the foundation of the city¹⁸, yet only Pseudo-Callisthenes claims directly that his objective was to hear the oracle about the establishment of a city that would use his name¹⁹. Other sources²⁰ place Alexander's visit to the oracle after the founding of Alexandria. It is still possible to conciliate the two suppositions with the argument that, to stoke the project after visiting the locale of the future city, Alexander would attempt to obtain the confirmation of the oracle. Arrian 3.1.5 describes Alexander's reaching Mareotis Lake, in a march along the Nile's

¹⁴ Hdt. 2.15.1; cf. Eur., *Helen* 768-769.

¹⁵ Hdt. 2.113-115.

¹⁶ Hdt. 2.119.

¹⁷ Hdt. 2.14.2.

¹⁸ D.S. 17.50-52; Cur. 4. 8.1; Just. 11.11.13; Ps.-Callisth. 1.30-31.

¹⁹ On the chronology relative to the hearing of the oracle and the foundation of Alexandria, *vide* FRASER, 1972: 3; BLOEDOW, 2004: 94-99.

²⁰ Arr. 3.3; Plu. 26-27; Str. 17.1.43.

Canopic river mouth. In his turn, Pseudo-Callisthenes²¹ 1.3.1 describes him marching to the location where the new city would be founded by another route, following a west-east itinerary. After referring to certain small indigenous communities, starting in Libya, on which the Macedonian king left his mark by founding small cities (as in the case of Paratonius), Alexander comes upon «the terrain where the city exists today». This is a vast plain that stretches out of sight, where there were already twelve villages. Strabo 17.1.6 adds: in the region nearby there was a lookout and protection against pirate attacks from the sea, known as Racotis. Perhaps, bringing together the two descriptions, we could imagine Racotis as the largest of the twelve hamlets known to exist in the area and in a certain way their administrative center.

It was the area between a place called Pandisia and the Nile's Canopic mouth, turned to the rising sun, and between Bendidion and Hormoupolis running south to north, where the king imagined Alexandria. The etymological argument that Pseudo-Callisthenes advances in favor of the toponym Hormoupolis, «the port city», against Hermoupolis, «city of Hermes», the god of commerce, alludes to the fundamental characteristic of the new city, its harbors («everything that arrives by the river anchors there», referring to just one of the city's ports, *vide infra*). Alexander's historian concludes that, from the moment that the city was founded there, the whole region inherited from the founder the name «region of the Alexandrians» (*chora alexandreon*).

Those characteristics which Herodotus paints in broad strokes as fitting the Delta's most salient features – that, in terms of coastal area, Egypt's territory is extensive 3.200 furlongs²² in length, flat, irrigated and muddy²³ – would certainly not have left the Macedonian invader indifferent. As such, it is not surprising that, with his already proven sharpness of mind, Alexander would have immediately understood, in covering the territory situated between the Mediterranean and Lake Mareotis, that «the area was by far the best place to found a city, and that this city would necessarily prosper»²⁴. To that Diodorus Siculus 1.50.3 adds, attesting to the future realization of a kind of hidden prediction in Alexander's project: «After Alexander founded by the sea the city that takes his name»²⁵, «all of the kings of

²¹ The sources for the foundation of Alexandria are, in addition to Ps.-Callisth., *Life and Deeds of Alexander of Macedonia* 1.31-32 (4th or 3rd B.C.; on the doubts raised by the identity of the author of this text, *vide Historia* 11.3 in WELLES, 1962: 272; FRASER I, 1972: 4): Arr., *Anabasis of Alexander* (2nd A.C.) 3.1-2; Plu. *Alex.* 26. 3-10 (1-2nd A.C.); D.S., 17.52 (1st B.C.); Str., 17.1.6-7 (1st B.C. - 1st A.C.); Curt., 4. 8.1-2 (1st B.C.).

²² This is a «macroscopic measure», in the words of LLOYD, FRASCHETTI, 1996: 238; in accordance with what we know today it corresponds to about 475 km. Str. 17.1.6 changes the measurement of the «base» of the Delta to 1,300 furlongs.

²³ Hdt. 2.7.1; 2.9.2; 2.6.1.

²⁴ Arr. 3.1.5. Arrian, praising the obvious quality of the place itself, delays the divine intervention; only after drawing up the city plans, setting its boundaries, resolving the question of temples, in his version, does Alexander make the sacrifice of appeasement. Thus, this is not an actual ceremonial part of the foundation.

²⁵ Sixteen Alexandrias were founded with the name of the famous conqueror, the Egyptian one being the most famous. Cf. Ps.-Callisth. 3.35, where twelve of these cities are listed, with the Egyptian Alexandria in first place. WELLES, 1962: 275 n. 17

Egypt after him made a great effort to develop it». In fact, during the period of the Ptolemies, Alexander's successors in the administration of Egypt, Alexandria became the new capital, after Memphis²⁶, and experienced particularly happy times.

In accordance with mythical tradition, that which attributes the foundation of cities to legendary heroes, the founding of Alexandria appears in many versions and is imbued with fantasy²⁷. The idea, however, is to point to the birth of a city destined to become, already in the Ancient World, a reference to which posterity continues to pay due respect; and to put its founder on the level of a true eponymous hero.

Plutarch²⁸, cautioning us about history's lack of verisimilitude («if what the Alexandrians say is certain, in accordance with the Heraclides' account») still cannot resist contextualizing the event by surrounding it with an aura of wonder. Two symbolic signs underline so many other fundamental aspects about the birth of the city: the choice of location and the promise of a prosperous future. According to Plutarch, Alexander was influenced in his choice of location from the «divine Homer»; the author of Chaeronea begins by indicating that Alexander had brought a copy of the *Iliad*²⁹ with him, as though it were a treasure, hidden in a coffer, which was part of Darius's legacy. Almost an «amulet», it seemed to contain promising powers. On the one hand the coffer, something that belonged to one of the most distinctive rulers of Persia, takes on the aura of an inheritance transferred from one monarch to another superior one; on the other hand, its content, the *Iliad*, was destined to guide, as though it were a manual on excellence (*arete*), the bearing of a hero, young but of

remembers that the idea of founding cities was a habit in Greece. The novelty was that it was an individual who was taking this initiative and giving the city his own name, as though it were an extension or memory of its founder. In the same way, Philip, Alexander's father, following the same principle, was the first important personality to promote this strategy, establishing the cities of Philippi (358 B.C.) and Philipopolis (342 B.C.). This is a form of political propaganda, useful in projects of expansion, followed by Alexander and by his successors (the period between 359-220 B.C. represented because of this practice a new era of colonization).

²⁶ WELLES, 1962: 273-274 n. 8 sums up the doubts as to the dating of this transference that made Alexandria the capital of Egypt throughout the Ptolemaic Dynasty. On the other hand, FRASER I, 1972: 36-37 calls our attention to the difficulty that exists, from the archeological and literary point of view, in following the urban evolution of the city through its successive transformations.

²⁷ SMITH, 1992: 136 considers the so-called «literature of foundations», highly disseminated during the Hellenistic epoch, in debt to the paradigmatic narrative of the foundation of Alexandria.

²⁸ Plu. *Alex.* 26.

²⁹ Cf. Plu. *Alex.* 8.2: «He also showed a natural inclination for literature, for pleasure in learning and was a great reader. He considered the *Iliad* – and this was the way he referred to it – as “a primer on the military art” and carried a copy with him, annotated by Aristotle, a copy known as «the coffer copy; he had it with him at all times, together with his knife, under his pillow, according to the evidence given by Onesicritus» (author of a treatise on *The Education of Alexander*, of which only few fragments are left; cf. CAVERO, MORILLO, HERMIDA, 2007: 34. He is a cynical philosopher who participated in the Macedonian expedition in Asia; the narrative, of which he is the author, follows, in a certain fashion, the standard of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*). The same love of Homer by Alexander is confirmed by Plu. *Moralia* 327f-328a. According to MOSSMAN, 1995: 211, Plutarch's source for the reference to this enthusiasm would have been precisely Onesicritus.

epic stature³⁰. Homer was a useful companion on Alexander's campaigns, responding to all contingencies. Therefore, after liberating Egypt from Persian rule and establishing Macedonian colonization (332 B.C.), Alexander proposes the foundation of «a city that would be large and highly populated», to which he would give his own name, in this way creating in the annexed territory a kind of «new capital» demarcating his authority. It was Homer who inspired his decision. Thus the new city would arise under the most traditional Greek sign. Initially guided by the suggestions of technicians who accompanied him, the king was preparing himself to define an area for his project, when he had a dream. Plutarch makes the ominous character of the occurrence explicit, in the best literary tradition³¹; following the norms of the convention, Alexander saw a man with venerable air and with completely white hair, who approached him and said: «There, in the middle of the choppy sea, you will find an island off the coast of Egypt, which is called Pharos»³². In the anonymity that Plutarch preserves, the shadow of an old man is visible, Homer or Ammon in the form of Homer, who recites two verses from the *Odyssey* which will point Alexander to the ideal place for the realization of his project; indicated is the island of Pharos, off the coast of the future Alexandria as its natural emblem. As soon as the sun was up, Alexander moved quickly, like an epic or tragic leader inspired by a prophetic dream, to verify the plausibility of the proposal, recognizing unhesitatingly «that the place offered magnificent conditions» and that «Homer, as well as being admirable in all ways, was also a fantastic architect». The first phase of the plan had been fulfilled, the location for the city's establishment, supported by superior advice, had been chosen.

Pseudo-Callisthenes transfers this sense of the marvelous, which sponsors the moment, to the aegis of Ammon, the Egyptian oracle expressly consulted by the king for the same reason³³. In a context that is clearly close to that which Plutarch describes, he narrated «the vision of Ammon, an old man with golden hair and sheep horns», who likewise advises him, sending him to Proteus' island, Pharos, the ideal terrain for the project. Even though in accord with the Homeric suggestion, Ammon's discourse is more complex, denoting the ambiguous tone of an oracle. Identifying himself with Phoebus Apollo, also often consulted in the act of founding a city, as the sun god of prophecies, Ammon recalls, as the established divinity of the territory in front of the island – and this information is quite relevant – that in the location of the future Alexandria, there would be a cult that would gain importance in the city known as Eon Plutonium³⁴, which means Sarapis, a god from the beyond, equivalent to the Hellenic Pluto; or, in the words of García Gual³⁵, in

³⁰ On the insistence with which Alexander is, by various authors (D.S. 17.1.4; 17.97.3; Arr. 1.11-12), compared to Achilles and other Homeric heroes, *vide* MOSSMAN, 1995: 209-229.

³¹ On the presence of the dream in Greek literary tradition, cf. MARQUES, 2006. *Odyssey* 4.354-355

³² *Odyssey* 4.354-355.

³³ Ps.-Callisth. I. 33.

³⁴ According to WELLES, 1962: 282, *Aion* is equivalent to «Eternity» and Plutonic, an adjective, to «of Pluto».

accordance with the sense of Eon (gr. *aion*, «always») a god of the totality and of eternity. Finally the mention, by Ammon, of the five hills that the god plowed is enigmatic; according to Gual, these could represent the five parts of Alexandria that the oracle consecrates as the center of the universe. We can see that Ammon does not limit himself to indicating an ideal geographical location; he instructs the king to consecrate the new city to guarantee its protection by the divinities. Later³⁵ Pseudo-Callisthenes returns to the theme of the oracle to confirm the fact that Alexander did indeed pay attention to Ammon's words, and describes the measures that, following their lead, he undertook. For the king, the most memorable part of the prophetic message was the mention of the five hills and of the god Sarapis³⁷. In the search that he now undertook, he found a venerated statue and a heroon on the summit of the hills that crowned the city to the South, which demonstrated the existence of cults in the region and which the Macedonian understood needed to be respected. In Sarapis, Alexander recognized the omniscient god, who he elected as protector of the city. To establish a cult, he ordered the construction of a large altar in front of the heroon – much later identified as «the great altar of Alexander – where he conducted an initial ritual sacrifice accompanied by a significant prayer: “That you are the god that protects this land and that you sail as well through the infinite universe, there is no doubt. So accept this sacrifice and be my protector in war”».

Yet the extraordinary events that guided the founder at this crucial moment of the city's consecration had still not come to an end. An eagle – a well-known symbol of power – flew low over the altar where offerings were accumulating snatching the innards of the victim only to deposit them on another altar. Rushing in that direction the king came upon an ancient complex made up of an old altar, a temple and a seated statue that, with his right hand, caressed a multiform animal³⁸ and, with his left, held a scepter; to the side an enormous sacred virgin was standing in profile. From the indigenous peoples he was informed that this had to do with an ancient cult to Zeus and Hera established by the Pharaoh Sesonchosis, or Senuseret (Sesostris), corresponding, in the Egyptian religion, to Sarapis and Isis. Found at the site as well, as an emblem of the sacred architecture of ancient Egypt, were «the obelisks, that are still today at the Sarapeion, outside the complex that exists there now»³⁹. The engraved inscription in hieroglyphics that was found on them consecrated the

³⁵ GUAL, 1988: 80.

³⁶ Ps.-Callisth. 1.33.

³⁷ WELLES, 1962: 272 emphasizes how, to ancient authors who took up the subject of Alexandria's foundation, the connection with the cult of Sarapis was generally misunderstood. Pseudo-Callisthenes is the exception, perhaps because he was actually a resident of Alexandria. On the relationship between Alexander and the cult of Sarapis in Alexandria, which seems doubtful, *vide* FRASER I, 1972: 246-250.

³⁸ This multiform animal corresponds to Cerberus, the dog with three heads who guarded the entrance to hell during the Hellenistic epoch associated with Sarapis.

³⁹ *Vide* GUAL, 1988: 86 n. 56 and the evidence included therein that these obelisks had been offered by the Pharaoh Senuseret to the god Sarapis.

territory to the protector god, Sarapis. As such, Pseudo-Callisthenes pushes back the consecration of the two ancient temples in the region, the Heroon and the Sarapeum, to the time of the founding. Bradford Welles⁴⁰ adds to this evidence the much later findings of John Malalas (6th A.D.) and of the *Suda s. v. Sarapis*, that testify to Alexander's construction of another temple to the same god, probably within the walls of the new city, conceived by the architect Parmenio and known as «Sarapeion Parmeniskos»⁴¹.

The task ahead was then to create the borders of the future urban space, a task that Alexander once again entrusted to the city planners that accompanied him, recommending that the layout of the terrain be respected. Diodorus Siculus⁴² excluded the fantastical element of tradition from this act of foundational planning. A team of architects was put to the task under the guidance of the sovereign himself: «After having preceded with the measuring of the terrain, and having traced out the principal streets in grid form, according to the best technique, he gave the city the name of Alexandria». With royal applause, Plutarch tells us⁴³, «as they had no chalk, they grabbed a bit of flour⁴⁴ and, in the black soil, designed a semi-circular area, whose interior circumference was divided by rays which parceled out the space in a regular way, suggesting the contour of a chlamys»⁴⁵. In the soil, which had the color identified as Egyptian earth⁴⁶, the Macedonian presence was registered in white, represented by the emblem of a warrior, the chlamys⁴⁷; the extent of the city was defined by two waterfronts, one being the Mediterranean to the north and the other Lake Mareotis to the south. It was in this symbolic context that another wondrous occurrence took place:

*A flock of innumerable birds of all types and sizes, coming from the river and the lake, swooped down like a cloud over the area and didn't leave a trace of flour. Alexander was perplexed, unable to understand what this presaged. For the soothsayers, however, the message was clear, that the city would be very prosperous and provide the right living conditions to attract people from all around*⁴⁸.

⁴⁰ WELLES, 1962: 285-286.

⁴¹ Cf. Ps.-Callisth. 1.33. On the temple of Sarapis in Alexandria, *vide* FRASER I, 1972: 27-38.

⁴² D.S. 17.52.2.

⁴³ Plu. *Alex.* 26.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ps.-Callisth. 1.32; Curt. 4.8.6 confirms that it was a Macedonian practice to outline the boundaries of cities to be founded with flour.

⁴⁵ Cf. D.S. 17.52.3.

⁴⁶ This is a persistent topic in reference to Egyptian soil; cf. Heliod., *Ethiopica* 2.26.5.

⁴⁷ The *chlamys*, a rounded mantle, was part of the Macedonian and Thessalian military uniform. Applied to the urban plan, the idea of a chlamys would represent, on the whole, a rectangular outline with one part enlarged and rounded to the south and another a bit narrower, «the colar», to the north; the two would be connected by two shorter and symmetrical sides. Cf. Str. 17.1.8; Pliny, *Natural History* 5.62.

⁴⁸ Plu., *Alex.* 26.

For Alexander's city a future of cosmopolitan abundance was inscribed in the large and mixed flock of birds that had found food in the new territory⁴⁹. Referring to this episode, Strabo⁵⁰ slightly alters the details in a way that seems worthy of our attention:

*When the architects were marking the perimeter of the city they ran out of chalk. In front of the king who had arrived, his subjects dispensed with a part of the rations of cereal that was meant for the workers, which allowed for the streets, many more than before, to also be mapped out*⁵¹.

This is how Alexandria was established, as a city that was carefully planned from its outset⁵². By voluntarily giving up a part of their rations, the army, or rather, the Macedonian people approve of their king's project and make the foundation of Alexandria into a cause of national interest. Arrian⁵³ repeats the same episode, which he feels to be credible, with some small changes. He includes the soldiers in the marking out of the city's borders, who give over their rations, but he omits the attack of the birds. Of the outline created through the collaboration of the king and his people, he only prophecies – through Aristander of Telmessus, a celebrated seer who is faithful to Alexander – «that the city will prosper in a variety of ways, especially with the fruits of the earth»⁵⁴.

Pseudo-Callisthenes⁵⁵ adds even another wondrous event of good omen that happened once the construction had begun to take on form: in the shipyards, the beasts of burden began to transport numerous materials. It was then that a tablet covered with characters, whose meaning is omitted, fell from the façade of a temple. What was truly revealing about this was that from under the debris a snake appeared, which, following Alexander's

⁴⁹ Cf. Amm. Marc. 22.16.7.

⁵⁰ Str. 17.1.6.

⁵¹ Strabo speaks of the ample width of the streets, «prepared for horses and wagons, above all two of them particularly wide» and perpendicular to each other, which constituted the large axes of the city (which later would be called «Canopic Street» and «Memorial Street»). This is certainly the how it was in Strabo's day, which possibly respected the original outline in general. A comparison between ancient Alexandria and that city which the visitor will find today is made by MARLOWE, 1971: 329-336.

⁵² In spite of the fact, according to some sources, that the foundation of the city was wrapped in legend, even so, since the birth of Alexandria is not lost in the distant past, the concrete steps that led to the choice of location and the urban design can be established with a certain plausibility.

⁵³ Arr. 3.2.1-2.

⁵⁴ Ancient sources limit themselves to mentioning the designation to «establish a large and prosperous city» (cf. Arr. 4.1.3; 4.24.7; 6.15.2; 6.21.5; 6.22.3; 7.21.7, who uses the same justification for the foundation by Alexander of other cities). However, the mention itself of a «prosperous» city associated with Alexandria contains a commercial expectation (cf. Vittr. II, pref. 4). Modern scholars favor valorizing military, economic and political objectives. Cf. Ps.-Callisth. 1.34, who gives Alexander, ready to invest great treasures in increasing the importance of Alexandria, the opportunity to proclaim: «This will be the capital of the whole civilized universe».

⁵⁵ Ps.-Callisth. 1.32.

orders, was sacrificed and paid homage to with a temple – as a tutelary divinity. At the same time many other vipers also appeared rapidly slithering towards the buildings under construction, multiplying the city's *agathoi daimones*. A promising city was being born under the best auspices, divine and human. Alexander presided over the inauguration of the city and the temple during the new moon in the month of *Tybi*, giving origin to a celebration, contemporaneous with the author of this story, in honor of the *agathos daimon*, the protecting serpent; and, obviously, it commemorated the inauguration of the city, that officially would have occurred in the first months of 331⁵⁶.

As to questions of urban nature, Aristotle's lessons, internalized by his student, continued to influence Alexander; as an eminently political act, the institution of a new city must take into account, in addition to the selection of its location, the anticipation of resources that will be necessary to make it an agreeable place to live in; defense, healthfulness, provisioning, demographic equilibrium and security are among the priorities.

Under the influence of this aura of fantasy, it is important not to forget the technicians, those that Alexander consulted and whose intervention was decisive, however marginalized by the power of omens. Among them is Dinocrates of Rhodes, who appears, with a certain insistence, as *the* architect of Alexandria⁵⁷ and, in general, as a technician of exceptional competence⁵⁸. Pseudo-Callisthenes⁵⁹ cites, along with their specific functions, the names of Cleomenes of Naucratis⁶⁰, Nomocrates of Rhodes and Crates of Olynthus, who were charged with the mission to direct the work of planning and constructing the new city. His first recommendation, to an Alexander who evaluated the available terrain with a broad vision, had to do with the vastness; to use all of that immense space seemed exaggerated to them and, in terms of urban management, hardly functional: to fill it with inhabitants, effectively assure the provisioning of the population and maintaining order, seemed like impossible tasks in this circumstance. On the contrary, they favored a smaller city with a controllable number of inhabitants. Convinced of the wisdom of these arguments, the king let himself be persuaded. The first consequence of this was to move the indigenous people that he encountered to the new urban perimeter, and those that lived further away, «up to thirty miles from the city», would comprise its suburban belt; to persuade the population

⁵⁶ On the antiquity of the *agathos daimon* cult in Alexandria, related traditionally to the foundation of the city, *vide* FRASER I, 1972: 209-211. The same author even records details of this celebration, in which the beasts of burden were crowned in homage to their contribution to the founding of the city.

⁵⁷ Vitruvius II pref. 4; Valerius Maximus 1.4.7; Pliny, *Natural History* 5.62; Str. 14.1. 23; Amm. Marc. 22.16.

⁵⁸ Vitruvius II pref. 1 *architectus cogitationibus et sollertia fretus*; Pliny 5.62 *architectus pluribus modis memorabili ingenio*; Amm. Marc. 22.16.7 *architecti sollertia Dinocratis*. Certain interesting suggestions about the material are given by RUNIA, 1989: 398-412.

⁵⁹ Ps.-Callisthenes 1.3.1.

⁶⁰ Cleomenes was a Greek from Naucratis, in the Delta, whom Alexander nominated to be responsible for the administration of Egypt after his departure for Persia.

to comply with his proposal, he provided them with land for free and, in order to create a sense of cohesion, he named them «Alexandrians»⁶¹. Once real consent was obtained, it was up to the urbanists to establish the limits within the vast space available. Pseudo-Callisthenes clarifies things: «They delimited the city's longitude from the Snake (Dracon) river, opposite the Taphosirion (Tomb of Osiris) sand bar, until the River of Good Fortune (Agathodaimon), next to Canopus, and, in latitude, from Bendidion until Euphorus and Melantius»⁶². Yet, Pseudo-Callisthenes indicates that Eurylichus and Melanthus had even more specific functions, as «supervisors of urban planning», organizing the residential neighborhoods which took their names; Numenius, «chief of the stonemasons», and Hipponomus, Numenius' brother, who advised the king to build the city on foundations of stone and give it water conduits and canals that fed into the sea. This system of canalization came to be known as «Hipponomus», thanks to his advice⁶³.

There were still other objective conditions that favored Alexander's plan. Practically virgin, the location of Alexandria presented itself to the eyes of the king as an ample bay to the west of the river mouths of the Nile, covered by the accumulated sediments from the flowing river, protected on the ocean side by Pharos island and, inland, by an elevation that ran parallel to the coast and separated it from Lake Mareotis. This locality, benefiting from various harbors, had the conditions to become a center of trade and a military base in the extreme West of Egypt. For this reason, established in the area between the ocean and the lake, the city was conceived as a fortress, surrounded by walls, «that stood out in size and were of prodigious solidity»⁶⁴. As a matter of fact, adds Diodorus Siculus, being situated between the lake and the ocean, the city could take advantage of a natural strategy of defense: «the points of access overland are narrow and very easy to control»⁶⁵.

According to Homeric and oracular criteria, we can give the island of Pharos⁶⁶ a certain priority in its contribution to Alexandria's physical conditions. Strabo⁶⁷ describes it as an oblong territory situated close to the coast so that it forms a harbor with two entrances.

⁶¹ Ps.-Callisth.1.31.

⁶² GUAL, 1988: 83 informs us that Alexandria's two canals, which, though altered, still exist, were called *Dracon* and *Agathodaimon*. And that Euphorus and Melanthius would be the names of two city zones. Fraser (I, 1972: 4-5) considers that these city boundaries would be inconceivable before the Roman epoch.

⁶³ Hipponomus, the name of the man who planned Alexandria's sewage system, signifies precisely «subterranean canal», which raises some doubt about whether or not he existed. MARLOWE, 1971: 335 tells us that, from its establishment, Alexandria benefited from the water supply that came from the Canopic river mouth of the Nile.

⁶⁴ D.S. 17.52.2-3; Arr. 3.1.5.

⁶⁵ Certainly Diodorus Siculus considers that the only foreseeable route for an invasion of Egypt would be from east, through the Sinai Desert. On this side Egypt was guarded from Pelusium, in the extreme northwest of the Delta. The Nile itself, with the network of canals into which it was divided, constituted a natural barrier of protection in the Egyptian north.

⁶⁶ Plu. *Alex.* 26, speaks of Pharos in the time of Alexander as still an island that in Plutarch's epoch was joined to the continent by a causeway, the Heptastadium.

⁶⁷ Str. 17.1.6. Cf. Plu. *Alex.* 26.

He goes on in more detail: as the shore creates an ample bay, terminating at each end in a promontory, the extensive island, which is positioned in the center of the bay, creates, at each end, an entrance to a sheltered harbor. Centrally positioned, a causeway connected the island to the continent – the *Heptastadium*, «passage of seven stages» – creating a divider between the two harbors. The opening on the eastern side, closer to the promontory that marked the end of the bay, the Lochias, is narrower and less navigable because of the rocks that have accumulated there; but it constitutes an important barrier of resistance against the ocean waves⁶⁸. On the other hand the western access to the bay, though not exactly easy, was comparatively more accessible, forming a harbor known as Eunostos⁶⁹ («Safe Return»). Strabo⁷⁰ speaks of even another harbor, this one artificial, that was more important than Eunostos, called Cibotos or «Box», which established via a canal a link between Mareotis Lake and the ocean. Fraser⁷¹ considers this harbor, because it was more secluded, to be the location where, in the time of the Ptolemies, the ship-building yards would be established; in addition it would become a fundamental point of access to an inland area of great commercial importance. This constitutes the group of harbors that served Alexandria. In its turn, Mareotis Lake had a relevant influence over Alexandria; according to Strabo⁷², it was located to the south, as though the city were positioned «between two oceans»; the waters of the Nile fed it through a network of canals more abundantly than the water that came from the sea. Because of its length and depth it could shelter a harbor that, in the words of the geographer, «was more active than the coastal one» (though we must bear in mind the reality of his time). Even more than ease of commerce, the double maritime front guaranteed pure air for the city, a process in which the Nile itself played a major part. With the summer floods, the river's water levels rose to those of the lake, which removed swampy accumulations and the health risks that these deposits threatened⁷³. Likewise, the annual breezes that blew in off the sea from the north countered the summer heat and guaranteed a more agreeable season for the Alexandrians.

As Pseudo-Callisthenes tells us⁷⁴, Alexander knew about the existence of the island from the continent, about which he had questioned the indigenous people of the area. He was informed that it was known as Pharos, in the past inhabited by Proteus and where

⁶⁸ This is, according to Strabo, the place where later the celebrated «lighthouse of Alexandria», one of the seven wonders of the world, was built. It was precisely the configuration of the coast which Strabo describes in detail – low and barred by rocks – which demanded the installation of a signal for those who came close by boat. On the lighthouse of Alexandria, *vide* FERREIRA & FERREIRA, 2009: 107-125.

⁶⁹ According to WARMINGTON, 1967: 26, this was the name of Ptolemy Soter's son-in-law and could have been attributed to it later because of the happy coincidence between the name and the configuration of the harbor.

⁷⁰ Str. 17.1.6.

⁷¹ I, 1972: 26

⁷² Str. 17.1.7; 17.1.13.

⁷³ For Aeschylus the waters of the Nile are «sacred and healthy», *Prometheus* 812; *Suppliants* 561.

⁷⁴ Ps.-Callisth. 1.32.

the tomb of the Pharaoh was to be found, an object profoundly venerated by the local populations⁷⁵. In addition to visiting the island personally and paying homage to the king buried there, Alexander also took on the project of restoring the time-ravaged site. With this generosity, which he wanted spent «rapidly», the Macedonian gained for his project the thankful protection of the hero, whom tradition had deified.

For Arrian⁷⁶ it was Alexander who took personal responsibility for the several essential stages of the foundation⁷⁷: the initial idea of building the city, its planning and even certain of the details of its construction, leaving out the specific intervention of the architects. In this way, he can be seen in line with the traditional pose attributed to founders, that they were present and involved in this original stage. Pseudo-Callisthenes⁷⁸, saying more or less the same thing, defines certain aspects of the sovereign's instructions. When the time came to create the foundations, Alexander divided the city into five sectors, designated by the first five letters of the Greek alphabet⁷⁹: «A for *Alexander*, B for *basileus* ("king"), G for *genos* ("lineage"), D for *Diós* ("of Zeus"), and E for *ektisen* ("he founded")»; in other words, «Alexander, king of the lineage of Zeus, was its founder»⁸⁰. He was also careful to recommend the direction the streets should take⁸¹, perpendicular to the coast, in order to take advantage of the coolness brought by the Etesian winds to improve the city's climate.

He needed then to consider the network of streets that constituted the civic heart of the new city⁸². Arrian⁸³ could be close to the truth when he says that, in addition to the walls, Alexander indicated where the agora should be constructed, and indicated which and how many temples should be built, some of them dedicated to Greek gods, another in honor of Isis, the Egyptian divinity⁸⁴ (*vide supra*). It seems to have fallen to the king to set

⁷⁵ Cf. *Odyssey* 4.399 ff.; Eur., *Helen*.

⁷⁶ Arr. 3.1.5.

⁷⁷ In a different version, Plu. 26 seems to distance royal intervention from the process when he affirms that while establishing the boundaries of the city «Alexander ordered the foremen to take charge of the construction while he left for the sanctuary of Ammon». D.S. 17.52.7 has the same opinion: «King Alexander charged some of his friends with the construction of Alexandria, organized everything that had to do with Egypt and returned to Syria with his army».

⁷⁸ Ps.-Callisth. 1.32.

⁷⁹ On these five city zones, *vide* MARLOWE, 1971: 336.

⁸⁰ GUAL, 1988: 84 underlines the fictional character of this aetiology.

⁸¹ D.S. 17.52.2.

⁸² Smith, 1992: 142, in considering the motives that led Alexander to found multiple cities, denies the tendency for monumental urban construction, though he accepts the effort to valorize the presence of Greek culture. Nevertheless, he refers to the polemic generated around a conscious policy of Hellenization undertaken by the Macedonian conqueror, which seems that it should be counterbalanced by a proposition to integrate, in a desirable linkage, with the local reality.

⁸³ Arr. 3.1.5.

⁸⁴ D.S. 1.50.3, certainly with the Alexandria of his day as a presence in his own memory, speaks of «magnificent palaces, docks and harbors» and other prominent monuments, as the city became progressively wealthier (cf. Str. 17.1.8, who even mentions «dedications», perhaps small temples, statues or other works of art). WELLES, 1962: 273 n. 8 accepts the construction of a first palace had been part of the project that Alexander established with Cleomenes of Naucratis, as a royal residence and

the boundaries of the city, which remained throughout its future development as the historical center. It is important to keep in mind the prudent words of Fraser about Alexandria's foundational stage:

The city's original plan, in other words, the one Alexander conceived, modified up to a certain point by Cleomenes and Ptolemy Soter, was completed in all probability before the end of the century (4th B.C.), but we cannot specify to what point the perimeter of the city as it was then defined differed from that which the following generations knew⁸⁵.

In the inscription transcribed by Pseudo-Callisthenes⁸⁶, not only did Sarapis proclaim himself protector of the city, he also anticipated the future deification of Alexander, forever connected to the place that dignified his name, with these words:

You, converted into a god, will, after death, be adored and will receive offerings from innumerable rulers; you will live in this city dead and not dead. Because your tomb will be the city you founded⁸⁷.

The god predicted, as an omen, what Alexander would become. Ptolemy, his general and successor in leading the destiny of Egypt, transferred the mortal remains of the king to Alexandria in a gold sarcophagus⁸⁸, where later they were interned in the area of the Palaces⁸⁹ and the royal tombs. Known as Sema, «the memorial»⁹⁰, Alexander's tomb remains in the heart of the city he founded, with those that brought Alexandria development, magnificence and eternity⁹¹. In the end, among all the cities to which he gave his name, the

administrative center (cf. D.S. 17.52.4). On the initial plan proposed by Arrian, *vide* FRASER I, 1972: 3- 4. On the temple to Isis in Alexandria, *vide* again FRASER I, 1972: 20-21.

⁸⁵ FRASER I, 1972: 36.

⁸⁶ Ps.-Callisth. 1.33.

⁸⁷ This is, to a certain extent, how it was carried, a process which would become conventional practice in the Hellenistic epoch for the foundation of cities: the establishment of a cult dedicated to the founder. Alexandria in Egypt constituted, from this perspective, an exceptional case in reference to Alexander, founder of various cities. Cf. SMITH, 1992: 136.

⁸⁸ On the conflicting versions in reference to the disinterment and transference of the Macedonian King to Alexandria, *vide* JONES, 1967: 35; ERSKINE, 2002: 163-179. Str. 17.1.8 attributes this initiative to Ptolemy I, who snatched the body from Perdiccas when he was transferring it from Babylonia and took it to Egypt, moved by the impetuous desire to make this country his kingdom. D.S. 18.26-28 tells us that Arrhidaeus spent two years organizing the transference of Alexander and that Ptolemy went to Syria to meet him, to accompany the body on its journey to Egypt. Pausanias 1.6.3; 1.7.1 said that Ptolemy I buried Alexander in Memphis and that it was only Ptolemy II who transferred it to Alexandria. Ps.-Callisth. 3.34 affirms that, in the beginning, the Macedonians intended to take the body of the king back to his native land; only later through the indications of the oracle of Zeus Babylon, did they bring him to Egypt, first to Memphis and later to Alexandria.

⁸⁹ Str. 17.1. 8.

⁹⁰ At first made of gold, the sarcophagus end up by being stolen and later, in the time of Ptolemy X, it was substituted for one of alabaster; cf. FRASER, I, 1972: 15.

⁹¹ On the cult of the founder which existed in Alexandria, *vide* FRASER I, 1972: 212.

Egyptian city was the one that most contributed to the immortality of the great conqueror⁹²: «Your name is immortal for having founded the highly celebrated city of Alexandria in Egypt».

⁹² Ps.-Callisth. 3. 24.

THE PTOLEMIES: AN UNLOVED AND UNKNOWN DYNASTY. CONTRIBUTIONS TO A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE AND APPROACH

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Abstract: *The fifteen Ptolemies that sat on the throne of Egypt between 305 B.C. (the date of assumption of basileia by Ptolemy I) and 30 B.C. (death of Cleopatra VII) are in most cases little known and, even in its most recognised bibliography, their work has been somewhat overlooked, unappreciated. Although boisterous and sometimes unloved, with the tumultuous and dissolute lives, their unbridled and unrepressed ambitions, the intrigues, the betrayals, the fratricides and the crimes that the members of this dynasty encouraged and practiced, the Ptolemies changed the Egyptian life in some aspects and were responsible for the last Pharaonic monuments which were left us, some of them still considered true masterpieces of Egyptian greatness. The Ptolemaic Period was indeed a paradoxical moment in the History of ancient Egypt, as it was with a genetically foreign dynasty (traditions, language, religion and culture) that the country, with its capital in Alexandria, met a considerable economic prosperity, a significant political and military power and an intense intellectual activity, and finally became part of the world and Mediterranean culture.*

The fifteen Ptolemies that succeeded to the throne of Egypt between 305 B.C. (date of assumption of *basileia* by Ptolemy I) and 30 B.C. (death of Cleopatra VII), after Alexander's death and the division of his empire, are, in most cases, very poorly understood by the public and even in the literature on the topic. Their work has been somewhat overlooked, little appreciated and undervalued.

Despite being undeniable that it was quite turbulent, frenetic and sometimes cruel, and so unloved, with its tumultuous and dissolute lives, the ruthless and unbridled ambitions, the innumerable intrigues and betrayals, the fratricides and the various crimes that its members promoted or practiced, this dynasty changed the Egyptian life in some aspects and was responsible for the last Pharaonic monuments which exist to this day, some of them still considered true masterpieces of Egyptian greatness, authentic *ex-libris* of the Nilotic civilization. In relation to this, it is enough to mention the divine temples of Horus in Edfu, of Isis in Philae, of Hor-Wer/ Sobek in Kom Ombo, of Khnum in Esna, of Hathor in Dendera and of Mandulis in Kalabsha. Although dating from a very recent period, these monuments are, for most part, a vital link to the earliest Pharaonic Egypt.

This list does not include, of course, other monuments, built or rebuilt under the supervision of the Ptolemies in Medamud, Heliopolis, Sebennyos, Karnak, Saqqara, Qasr el-Aguz, Kom Abu Billo, Behebeit el-Hagar, Tod, Xoïs, Koptos, Qaw el-Kebir, Dakka, Deir el-Medina, Dabod, Athribis, Armant, or Tanis.

The pictorial, iconographical and architectural grammar, which the Ptolemies produced and reproduced with expressive and explicit canonical images, affiliated these monuments in the tradition and centuries-old Egyptian native form of art of the Ptolemaic Period – supposedly a time of decadence – and make it one of the most sumptuous eras of ancient Egypt in terms of architectural constructions. Except for the Islamic buildings (of various Islamic periods), the last great monuments erected in Egyptian soil have the Ptolemaic seal.

The Ptolemaic Period was, in fact, a paradoxical moment in the history of ancient Egypt, not only due to its architecture, but also because it was in the hands of a genetically foreign dynasty (traditions, language, religion and culture) that the country, with its capital in Alexandria, met a considerable economic prosperity, a significant political and military power and an intense intellectual and artistic activity, and eventually achieved a prominent position in the world and Mediterranean culture¹.

Thus, as Joe G. Manning recently wrote, it is now necessary, in the name of a proper historical understanding, to rehabilitate the Ptolemaic era as one of the most successful long periods of Egyptian history².

In this sense, there are indeed two or three key ideas about this dynasty, somewhat emphasized or devalued by most researchers, which should be taken into account when approaching the Ptolemaic Period and this dynasty, founded by one of the *diadochoi* of Alexander the Great.

The first of these ideas can be expressed solely through the statement, easily proved by simply querying chronological lists and tables from the history of ancient Egypt, that the

¹ BONACASA, 1995: 67-79.

² MANNING, 2010: 31.

Ptolemaic state was the most durable of the Hellenistic states established after the death of Alexander and the subsequent fall of his empire. In other words, the Ptolomies were the lasting dynasty of Egyptian history³.

This simple conclusion is particularly overlooked by researchers and often unknown by Egyptologists, more focused on other periods of study. It is therefore extremely useful to compare the duration of some of the most important dynasties of Egyptian history:

Dynasty	Dates (B.C.)	Length
4th Dynasty	2613-2494	119 years
5th Dynasty	2494-2345	149 years
6th Dynasty	2345-2181	164 years
12th Dynasty	1985-1773	212 years
18th Dynasty	1550-1295	255 years
19th Dynasty	1295-1186	109 years
20th Dynasty	1186-1059	117 years
26th Dynasty (Saïtes)	656-525	131 years
27th Dynasty (First Persian Period)	525-404	121 years
31st Dynasty (Ptolomies)	305-30	275 years

Length of important Egyptian dynasties⁴

Indeed, the Ptolemaic Dynasty was the longest of all who reigned over the geographic space of ancient Egypt: 275 years (considering only the years between the *basileia* of Ptolemy I Soter and the death of Cleopatra VII). If we include in the score the years since the invasion / conquest of Egypt by Alexander (in 332 B.C.), when, however, technically, there was still no Lagid Dynasty ruling, this period of «Macedonian origin» would account for 302 years, which means more than three centuries. Neither the famous and often model 18th Dynasty, of the New Kingdom (with 255 years), nor the dynasty which marks the recovery of Pharaonic power in the Middle Kingdom, the 12th Dynasty (212 years) reached this length of time.

However, these were not three centuries of consistent history. Generally speaking, we can assume that each of the centuries of the Ptolemaic Dynasty denotes different «moments»: the 3rd century B.C. marked the implementation and affirmation of the Ptolemaic Dynasty; the 2nd century B.C. met repeated seditions, rebellions and revolutions in the capital, *chôra*, and the 1st century B.C. witnessed the direct intervention of Rome in the domestic affairs of Lagid Egypt.

³ MANNING, 2010: 31, 65.

⁴ MANNING, 2010: 67. The numeration of the dynasties is according to Manetho (except Dynasty 31). The length of reigns follows SHAW, 2000.

Nevertheless, the durability and stability of its territory, despite the inevitable vicissitudes and vagaries of the political dynasty, put the Ptolomies ahead of the other two dynasties regarded by Egyptologists as the largest of its period (the twelfth and eighteenth dynasties). Like those, also the Lagid Dynasty is also remembered by the intense activity of its monarchs, by the profound political reforms introduced in the country and by the territorial expansion⁵.

The Ptolemaic Dynasty, centred on the king, around whom revolved the entire organisation of the state (personnel monarchy) and to whom should succeed, in principle, his eldest son (hereditary monarchy), was not only the longest dynasty of the Hellenistic states that followed Alexander, and that generally fell during the 2nd century and first half of the 1st century B.C. before the Roman domination – and Egypt resisted until the end of the 1st century B.C. – as it was the longest one that politically dominated the country of the Two Lands over its history. The Egypt of the Ptolomies was the last of the Hellenistic kingdoms to lose its independence.

If we add to the notion of durability, the observation that the Ptolemaic Dynasty was the richest, the most prosperous and the most active of the Hellenistic kingdoms, then one can easily understand its importance within the Egyptian history.

A second idea that is worth considering and may also, for its value, aid in the «rehabilitation» of this historical period and of the Lagid Dynasty is that the Ptolemaic Period is one of the largest take-overs of all Antiquity. The Ptolemaic governing actually had profound consequences, of long duration, on the history of Egypt in a strict sense and also resulted in the formation of a legacy of the ancient Egypt to the West, in the broader sense⁶.

This take-over is noticeable and was indelible in many areas: in economy (by creating a true urban economy and monetary policy, based on state monopoly), in administration (with the establishment of administrative units that simplified perception of taxes and financial and economic exploitation – eg.: *nomoi* / *topoi* / *comoi*, directed respectively by nomarcs, toparchs and comarcs, aided by their respective secretaries (*basilikogrammateis*, *topogrammateis* and *komogrammateis*) and by the many officials who joined the central administration, as *dioiketes*, the epistolographer, the hypomnematographer, the arquidicasta, the epistrategos, the *nomos* strategos, and so on, in a rigid, large, but effective bureaucratic and administrative chain⁷), in culture and in science (with the founding of exclusive institutions in the capital of Alexandria, like the Museum and the Library, research and academic training centers, which generated the greatest figures of the human spirit in areas such as Medicine, Astronomy, Geography, Geometry, Mathematics, Physics, Literature, Textual Criticism, Philology, Grammar, Lexicography, and so on).

⁵ MANNING, 2010: 68-69.

⁶ MANNING, 2010: 32.

⁷ BERNAND, 1998: 202, 203; BURKHALTER, 1992: 190; PRÉAUX, 1939: 448-449.

The Museum, «temple of Muses», founded by Ptolemy I Soter, became forever associated with the development of science in the Hellenistic Period. Among its early directors were Demetrios of Phaleron (the «philosopher of power» behind the design of the Museum) and Straton of Lampsakos, disciples of Aristotle, defenders and promoters of the universal knowledge that his teacher proclaimed⁸. Demetrios of Phaleron was a member of the Peripatetic school and former governor of Athens (317-307 B.C.). Expelled from power in Athens, he took refuge at the court of Ptolemy I, to whom he became a dedicated adviser.

The ancient library of Alexandria was one of the most ambitious and exciting intellectual adventures of human history. Built by order of Ptolemy I Soter (305-285 / 283 B.C.), also with the direct collaboration of Demetrios of Phaleron (350-280 B.C.), who took to Alexandria the Aristotelian ambition of universal knowledge, the library intended to accommodate, by royal command, writings from all existing cultures. Among his most famous librarians, the Library was attended by distinguished men of genuine encyclopedic spirit, as Zenodoto of Ephesus, Apollonios of Rhodes, Eratosthenes of Cyrene, Aristophanes of Byzantium and Aristarchus of Samothrace. As central depot of ancient knowledge and Hellenistic producer of culture, it had the largest collection of books gathered so far (400,000 *volumina* or papyrus rolls, according to Callimachus of Cyrene). It became the largest centre of study and Greek culture⁹.

In the field of knowledge, the list of great intellectuals who lived, worked or passed through Alexandria is vast. Some continue to be among the greatest thinkers, scientists and technicians of all time: Euclid of Alexandria, Eratosthenes de Cyrene, Hipparchus of Nicaea, Aristarchus of Samos, Archimedes of Siracuse, Aristophanes of Bizantium, Apollonios of Rhodes, Apollonios of Perge, Straton of Lampsakos, Herophilos of Chalkedon, Erasistratos of Kos, Philetas of Kos, Callimachus of Cyrene, and so on¹⁰.

Almost all great scholars and artists from centuries III to I B.C., from Alexandria and from all over the Hellenistic world, were invited to the Library and passed by the *pros tou Aigypton* Ptolemaic Alexandria and their achievements have earned fame and appreciation for the city («city of all knowledge»), marking it, so to say, forever in the collective imagination as the world capital of knowledge («capital of the books», «capital of memory») and as an intellectual centre of the Hellenistic era, supplanting the classical Athens, with a key role in shaping the coming times¹¹. Knowledge meant power¹².

⁸ MOSSÉ, 1992: 83-92; BERNAND, 1996: 112-118; EL-ABBADI, 1998: 112.

⁹ BERNAND, 1996: 118-121; SERAGELDIN, 2002: 25; NEWMAN, 1997: 129-132; LEVET, 1997: 45-58; GÓMEZ ESPELOSÍN, PÉREZ LARGACHA, 1997: 74-91; GÓMEZ ESPELOSÍN, 1997a: 163-185; GÓMEZ ESPELOSÍN, 1997b: 63-81; ARGOU, 1998: 118-133; BING, 1998: 133-135; EL-ABBADI, 2002: 47-49.

¹⁰ SALES, 2006: 57-76; SALES, 2008: 60; MOSSÉ, 1992: 83-92; LALLOT, 1992: 93-99; JACOB, 1992: 100-112, 113-127.

¹¹ Alexandria, home of the king and his court (*aulè*) and of the central administration, where were shared all the hardships and all the glories of the Ptolemaic monarchy (BERNAND, 1996: 69, 72, 75).

¹² EMPEREUR, 2001: 40.

As Jacob and Polignac wrote, «au-delà de la singularité des œuvres et des talents, il y a une dimension collective du travail intellectuel alexandrin, où chaque nouvel auteur apporter ses propres améliorations, ses corrections, ses prolongements à l'oeuvre d'un prédécesseur...»¹³.

The cultural dynamics of cosmopolitan Alexandria and all the shiny and intense activity of its intellectuals was only possible, however, due to the «patronage» of voluntary and committed Ptolemies: the first Ptolemies (Ptolemy I, Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Ptolemy III Euergetes I) supported these scholars as pensioners of the state. Their intellectual activity was developed under patronage and under the Ptolemaic royal treasury¹⁴.

For this, the Ptolemaic kings used the ingenious mechanism of «financial control» that they had at their disposal: firstly, because they had direct access to mines and sources of raw materials, they coined currency in gold, silver and bronze, and put it in circulation around all the territory under imperial domination. Due to the gold mines of Nubia, the traditional «Gold Country» for the Egyptian, Ptolemaic Egypt held an enviable position in the international context of the Hellenistic Period, which allowed for the coinage to be based on gold. Their coinage in gold was indeed the most abundant and most sumptuous in the Hellenistic world (at least until the 6th century B.C.). This does not mean, however, that the Ptolemies did not make currency in other metals. The mines of silver and copper from Cyprus and Syria-Phoenicia also contributed for that. The main units used were the stater of gold, the silver tetradrachm and the obol of bronze. The standard coin was the silver tetradrachm which was equivalent, as its name indicates, to 4 drachms, or 24 obols. Besides these, there were the hemidrachms, the didrachms, the tridrachms, the pentadrachms, the octodrachms, the double octodrachms and the dekadrachms¹⁵.

Aiming to control the money supply in Egypt to establish an effective monetary and commercial imperialism, they, on the other hand, ensured attractive prices in the international market. This procedure was only made possible by the establishment of monopolies for many products made in Egypt or entering the capital Alexandria (wheat, papyrus, ivory, perfumes, textiles, art objects, so on.), through the privileged access they had to many raw materials and the strong economic and financial coercion exerted on Egyptian domestic economy.

Concomitantly, they forbade the circulation in the imperial territory of any currency other than the one they coined, demanding to all traders who came to Alexandria the currency exchange of any other money brought from abroad. Having adopted a standard lighter for their silver and bronze coins (weight Ptolemaic: 14, 25 g) and trivialized the Attic weight used in most commercial and financial transactions of the central-eastern Mediter-

¹³ JACOB, POLIGNAC, 1992: 19.

¹⁴ JACOB, POLIGNAC, 1992: 17.

¹⁵ SALES, 2005: 232, note 23; MØRKHOLM, 1991.

anean (17.20 g), they achieved a difference of 2.95 g in each currency (17.15% less metal per coin).

Ptolemy I Soter originally coined following the pattern of Rhodes and Phoenicia and later, ca. 312/310 B.C., adopted the one from Cyrene (14.25 g of silver). This was a deliberate move on the dissociation of Egypt from the rest of the Hellenistic world, with the aim of building an economic autarchy, then consolidated politically, in 305 B.C., with the adoption of the title *basileus*. Ptolemy III Euergetes I would eventually adopt the standard weight of Attica, after nearly 60 years of distinct practice¹⁶.

Giving their money a lower weight, the Ptolomies consummated a rupture in relation to other currencies in circulation in the area of the central-eastern Mediterranean and implemented a new and elaborate system, clearly in favor of the State¹⁷.

The Ptolemaic state, due to the series of held monopolies and its role as a leading exporter, played with the ratio of gold / silver coin, introducing an element of trust in local transactions, and ensuring all merchants that the Lagid state coin (lighter) had the same purchasing value of money delivered (heavier), despite the lower amount of metal it contained. In doing so they raised extraordinary amounts of metal and wealth in coinage and in foreign exchange transactions that paved the way to, among other things extraordinarily productive intellectual work in Alexandria. The intelligent taxation of the first Ptolemies, along with the overvaluation of mintage, undoubtedly represented a particularly successful case of funding for scientific and cultural research activities.

It should also be pointed out, since recent research has highlighted this matter, that the Ptolomies are among the most successful rulers of the long history of Egypt and that their government had, at various levels, profound effects on Egyptian and East-Mediterranean-history. A brief overview of three centuries of Lagid domination will allow us to see the important and multifaceted reigns of these kings, their successes and failures and their consequences.

The first of the Ptolemaic kings, the founder of the dynasty, Ptolemy I Soter I (305-285 / 283 B.C.), the only one of Alexander the Great's *diadochoi* to die of natural causes with over 80 years old, one of the generals responsible for Alexander's co-conquests and the remarkable extent of his empire, «the self-made man who became king only through his merit»¹⁸, defended, through his military successes, «their» satrapies (with a corresponding increase of the Lagid territories and possessions in Ionia, Lycia, Pamphylia, Cilicia, Cyprus, Phoenicia, Syria, Palestine and Cyrenaica)¹⁹. In 302-301 B.C., Ptolemy I seized Coele Syria; in 302 B.C., he attacked Jerusalem (302 B.C.); following the Battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.), he

¹⁶ MØRKHOLM, 1991: 233.

¹⁷ MØRKHOLM, 1991: 233.

¹⁸ BINGEN, 2007: 15, 27.

¹⁹ BAGNALL, 1976.

governed Coele Syria; in 295-294, reintegrated Cyprus in the Ptolemaic Empire and, in 285 B.C., he took leadership of the League of the Islands.

Ptolemy I was also responsible for the modernisation and rationalisation of the forms of organization inherited from the Egyptian pharaohs and the great Persian kings, as well as for the power and cohesion that the Lagid state achieved during his reign. When it comes to «Lagid thalassocracy in the eastern Mediterranean», his role and his political action are unavoidable. Ptolemy I was the first great diplomat, strategist, leader and administrator of the Ptolemaic dynasty, with intelligence, vision and a draft policy for the independence of Egypt²⁰.

In Egypt, Ptolemy I organized the country (combining the heritage of the local tradition with Hellenic rationalism), set the capital in Alexandria, the city founded by Alexander the Great, which gave it a considerable urban commercial and intellectual development, founded the city of the Ptolemies in Upper Egypt, that supplanted the millenary Memphis, confirmed the Lagid authority in southern Egypt, and introduced the worship of Sarapis (identified with Osiris-Apis) as the multicultural patron of Alexandria²¹.

The introduction of the cult of Sarapis in the capital city of the Ptolemies – «the masterpiece of statecraft», as Budge called it²² – responded to the need for intercultural harmonisation of the two most important groups of people in Alexandria and was an important factor in overcoming the antithesis of losers/winners, old/modern, native/foreign undertaken with the Greek occupation of Egypt that posed one of the biggest problems to political power, at the turn of the 4th century B.C..

Ptolemy I's *ex-nihilo* creation of a new god allowed him to regulate the complex ethnic and cultural society of Alexandria. This had a deep ideological meaning, especially for such a cosmopolitan city, characterised by its syncretism and its cultural-religious symbiosis²³.

His son, the «victorious king», the magnificent Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who rose to power at the age of 25, in 285 B.C., after an intelligent and voluntary abdication of his father²⁴, and who reigned until the age of 63 (246 B.C.), went hard on his father's policy, increasing the Lagid empire. With the aid of Apollonio, his assets *dioiketes* (finance minister), he organised the economy (establishing the royal monopolies), modernised agriculture (especially in the Fayum region) and restored the link between the Nile and the Red Sea (ca. 270-269 B.C.), and acted as protector and promoter of the arts and the letters (building the Museum and Library).

²⁰ BINGEN, 2007: 23, 24; SALES, 2005: 41.

²¹ MANNING, 2010: 106; STAMBAUGH, 1972.

²² BUDGE, 1902: 187.

²³ SALES, 2007: 377.

²⁴ During his last years in power (285-283 B.C.), Ptolemy I planned to crown his youngest son, Ptolemy II (son of his second wife, Berenike I), at the expense of his eldest son, Ptolemy Ceraunus (fruit of his marriage with Eurydike).

It was Ptolemy II who endowed Egypt with a judicial organisation that took into account the ethnic and cultural duality of the country: the courts for Hellenic immigrant (*dicasteres*) and autochthons (*laocrites*, «people's courts»), subject to royal justice, which the sovereign exercised alone or through their *chrématistai*. His reign was also marked by the implementation of a rigorous system of financial administration. Ptolemy II was a central figure in the history of the dynasty. Under his rule, Alexandria became the centre of the world and attained enormous intellectual prestige. It was during the reign of Ptolemy II that the Pharos of Alexandria (283 B.C.) opened; that the *Septuaginta* (the Greek translation of the Bible) was carried out; that the dynastic cult (worship of Greek) in honor of Ptolemy I was established; and that Manetho wrote a three-book history of Egypt in Greek (*Aegyptiaca*), divided in thirty dynasties, that modern Egyptology continues to use as a reference to the chronological history of the pharaohs. It does not seem surprising, then, that the second of the Ptolemies was considered the most prosperous and cultured Hellenistic king of his time²⁵.

The Ptolemaic empire reached its peak with Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 B.C.), Ptolemy II's son with his first wife, Arsinoë I. Having reached the throne at the age of 30, Ptolemy III united Cyrenaica and Egypt by marrying Berenike II, daughter of King Magas of Cyrene, and achieved several victories in Asia (Third Syrian War) against the neighbors Seleucids, which propelled the Lagid empire to its peak. He then became master of all western Asia.

In 241 B.C., the Lagid state was immensely rich and powerful, assuming the leadership of the Achaean League, and its borders extended to the Euphrates (246-241 B.C.). Owing, however, to a native Egyptian revolt against the Ptolemaic regime, Ptolemy III was forced to interrupt his eastern campaign.

The Lagide power faced its first problems with Ptolemy III: the administration could not gather the necessary income, given the reluctance of peasants and resorted to currency manipulation in order to remedy the situation, due to all the pressure groups. At the time of Ptolemy III, the Library of Alexandria had reached the impressive number of 490,000 *volumina*.

The first three Lagids, therefore, developed a major foreign policy (according to Polybius, Egypt became an impregnable bastion) and became powerful players in a new golden age in the Mediterranean, with Alexandria as the centre of the world economy this time. It was the deployment phase and affirmation of the Ptolemaic Dynasty in the international arena.

The power was, however, fleeting, for the human, military and leadership means were scarce, and the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 B.C.), pharaoh of «sinistre réputation auprès des historiens»²⁶, full of vices and personal and political flaws in the mouth of

²⁵ CHAUVEAU, 1992: 138.

²⁶ LEFEBVRE, 2009: 91.

Polybius, already showed the first signs of paralysis and decay²⁷. When Antiochus III of Syria (Fourth Syrian War, 219-217 B.C.) sought to retrieve Phoenicia and Palestine, the Lagid king responded with the unusual recruitment to the phalanx of the army of 20,000 Egyptian soldiers (*machimoi*), with which it resisted the Seleucid's pretensions (Battle of Raphia, 22nd June 217 B.C.). The right to bear arms to defend the country, allowed to the autochthons for the first time, brought unexpected and serious consequences (the «paradoxical effect»). Conscious of their strength, the Egyptians *machimoi* believed that they were no more to remain under the foreign power and started claiming more political and social participation²⁸.

Internal disturbances increased with the revolt of the Thebaid, in Upper Egypt (known as the dynastic schism of Horwennefer and Ankhwennefer, two Nubian princes, declared pharaohs between 206-200 and 200-186 B.C. respectively), and bad agricultural crops²⁹. The Lagid-Alexandrian power had to compromise with certain requirements of the autochthons of the South. Even the Egyptian priests of Thebes took advantage of the situation and supported the rebels against Alexandrian power³⁰. This shows how the Lagid power outside of Egypt was weakening.

The reign of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205-180 B.C.) – who came to power at the age of 5-6 and died at the age of 29 – was also marked by the intensification of social problems in the Delta and by uprisings in Alexandria, one of them in which the raged mob lynched Agathokles, the royal advisor who had seized power before the king's coming of age and murdered his mother, queen Arsinoe III.

Externally, in the Fifth Syrian War against Antiochos III (202-195 B.C.), the king of Egypt lost the territories of Coele, Syria, Gaza and Judah (202-201 B.C.) escaping him, while internally he eventually controlled the region of Thebes (199-198 B.C.), putting an end to the insurgent movement of Thebaid and restoring the Lagid authority in 186 B.C. While he could sustain «the time of the riots» (Rosetta Stone, line 20) of the secessionist movement for independence of Upper Egypt, Ptolemy V could not, however, prevent the dismemberment of his empire: with the permanent loss of both Syria and Palestine, the independent Lagid empire collapsed and fell into Rome's control.

Ptolomy V Epiphanes' reign was important for three other things: on the one hand, the king's marriage to Cleopatra I of Syria (at Raphia in the winter of 194-193 B.C.), thus introducing, for the first time, exogenous blood in the Lagid Royal House; secondly, for the first time in Egyptian history, the Lagid pharaoh was crowned directly by Egyptian priests,

²⁷ PRÉAUX, 1965: 364-375.

²⁸ SALES, 2010b: 158, 159.

²⁹ SALES, 2010a: 427.

³⁰ HÖLBL, 2001: 115; SALES, 2010a: 428 and 2010b: 160, 162; LLOYD, 1982: 33-55.

as shown in the official document, dated 27 March 196 B.C., recorded in Rosetta Stone³¹; finally, the Lagid lost numerous international territories (at the exception of Cyprus)³².

With the definitive loss of both Syria and Palestine, the independent Lagid Empire collapsed and fell into Roman control. With the repeated tumults, rebellions and revolutions in the capital and in the *chôra*, and the loss of territory conquered by the first three rulers of the dynasty, the 2nd century B.C. marks the end of the glorious era of the Lagid Dynasty. From that moment forward, Egypt was never able to regain the brilliance of the past. However, it tried to maintain its political independence.

The reigns of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180-164, 163-145 B.C.) and his brother Ptolemy VIII Euergetes II (170-163, 145-116 B.C.) were marked by open guerrillas and constant alternation of rulers in power, the progressive weakening of royal power, an increase in intrigues among the royal court members, the popular uprisings of the indigenous and the intervention of foreign powers in Egypt. In the Sixth Syrian War (171-168 B.C.), Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Cleopatra I's brother and therefore Ptolemy VI and Ptolemy VIII's uncle) crossed the Coele Syria (which the Lagide had definitely lost to the Seleucids in 145 B.C.), captured Antioch, robbed the Temple of Jerusalem and defeated the Ptolemaic army near Pelusion. In 163/162 B.C., Ptolemy VIII appeared before the Roman Senate in order to obtain the government of Cyprus. Ultimately, the degeneration and decay of the Lagid Dynasty accelerated: the Egyptian empire finally lost its unity. During his reign, Ptolemy VIII ordered the suspension of Alexandria's intellectual life, as well as a purge of the scholars in 144 B.C. Brutal action was taken against Jews settled in the city.

However, the period in which Ptolemy V and Cleopatra I's sons governed were marked by extensive constructions and decorations in the Egyptian temples of the Upper Egypt, which are still today the focus of attention of millions of tourists and a starting point for the virtual reconstruction of what many call the «times of ancient Pharaohs»³³.

The death of Ptolemy VIII triggered a series of joint kingdoms and endless quarrels between the dynastic queens Cleopatra II, Cleopatra III and the sons of Ptolemy VIII (Ptolemy IX Soter II, Ptolemy X Alexander I and Ptolemy XI Alexander II), which ended with the exile of Ptolemy X in Asia Minor and the murder of Ptolemy XI in 80 B.C. by Alexandrian rebels. Ptolemy XI Alexander II was the last king of the authentic Ptolemaic lineage. One of his testaments compromised the inheritance of his direct successors and made Rome the heir of his genealogic power³⁴. Some authors see this political will in favour

³¹ The trilingual text preserved in the Rosetta Stone is a copy of a decree issued by the Supreme Council of Priests, meeting at Memphis, giving an account of the measures taken and promulgated Ptolemy V Epiphanes on 27th March 196 B.C. (JOHNSON, 1986: 70-84).

³² In the Battle of Panion (212 B.C.), for example, Antiochus III the Great of Syria, attacked Egypt and took possession of Palestine (Coele Syria, Gaza and Judah) which, thus, fell into Ptolemaic control.

³³ Where the temples of Horus at Edfu, Hor-Wer / Sobek in Kom Ombo, and Isis in Philae are set.

³⁴ VAN'T DACK, 1989: 23, 156-161.

of Rome as Ptolemy X Alexander I's initiative and not Ptolemy XI Alexander II, but it seems that the document was forged in Rome to justify their increasing political meddling in Egypt's affairs.

With no heirs, the Egyptian throne passed to Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysus Aulete (80-58, 55-51 B.C.). He came to power after the assassination of Ptolemy XI, but at the time he was not accepted by Rome. In order to be recognised by the Roman Senate in 58 B.C., he had to spend large sums of money (most of which would go directly into the hands of Julius Caesar). The Romans voted for the transformation of Cyprus into a Roman province, seizing the island, which led to the suicide of the king of Cyprus, his brother (also named Ptolemy). This, in turn, triggered anger and popular pressure of the Alexandrians, forcing Ptolemy XII into exile in Rome (58-55 B.C.), while his daughter Berenice IV (from his marriage with Cleopatra VI Tryphena) came to power in Alexandria. It was only in 58 B.C., after 22 years of *de facto* government, and heavy bribery of Romans politicians, that Ptolemy XII was *de iure* considered *amicus et socius populi Romani*. After new commitments, loans and bribes, the Roman armies restored Ptolemy XII to the Egyptian throne (55-51 B.C.). Objectively, the Lagide monarchy became, then, a puppet in the hands of the Romans.

The «epilogue of Ptolemaics», between 51 and 30 B.C., with Cleopatra VII, Ptolemy XIII, Ptolemy XIV and Ptolemy XV, is the culmination of the disappearance of the Lagid Dynasty against Rome, the new power in the Mediterranean territory.

In his testament, Ptolemy XII determined a «co-regency» between Ptolemy XIII Philopator (aged 10) and his sister, the famous Cleopatra VII Thea Philopator (then 17). Julius Caesar entered Alexandria as the executioner of the testament (in pursuit of Pompey) and arbitrated the conflict between Ptolemy XII's children and Cleopatra VII's alliance with Ptolemy XIV.

Any alliance between Cleopatra VII and the «lords of Rome» (first Julius Caesar, until 44 B.C., and then Mark Antony, 41-30 B.C.), using all the means she had at her disposal, including her own personal charms, was the desperate attempt of a representative of the Royal House of the Ptolemies to maintain her political and territorial independence.

The Battle of Actium (September 2nd, 31 B.C.), Octavian's victorious entrance in Alexandria and Antony and Cleopatra VII's suicides were different moments of the same reality: they were the confirmation of the end of the imperial grandeur of the Ptolemies, the death of their aspiration to world domination. August 29th 30 B.C. can thus be considered the date that marks the final statement of the Ptolemaic empire.

Still, the way the Ptolemaic sovereigns of the 1st century B.C. acted, sometimes more indolent or more tenacious, more pragmatic or more ambitious, allowed for the durability of their dynasty in comparison with the other dynasties of the Hellenistic kingdoms. The Ptolemies' Egypt was, therefore, as has already been stated, the last of the Hellenistic kingdoms to lose its independence.

CONCLUSION

Ptolemaic Egypt occupies a prominent and privileged place in the history of ancient Egypt, not only because of its specific geographic and climatic conditions, which helped save many documents, but also due to the forms and rules of the bureaucratic and political, economic and financial and ideological-cultural management decided and implemented by the Ptolemies from the scheme set up by the previous centuries of pharaonic administration³⁵. The Ptolemies turned Egypt into a «family affair», giving the country original institutions. They operated under their new plans, which were substantially different from the ones practiced in classical Greece³⁶.

Instead of considering Egypt's Lagid Dynasty as a break with the glorious past of the land of the Pharaohs, we should rather consider the Ptolemaic Period as a part of the Egyptian history – and bright and glorious in many aspects³⁷. The Ptolemaic political power must be given credit for the way it established cultural institutions of reference in the city (especially the Museum and the Library) and also for the protection given to scientists, poets and philosophers.

The Ptolemies intelligently used their relationship with the local Egyptian tradition, namely with the local priests, always attempting to maintain and ensure their political domination over Egypt. Perhaps, that is why the Ptolemaic Dynasty lasted longer than any other sovereignty founded by the successors of Alexander the Great. Furthermore, although experiencing some internal unrest, the Ptolemies were able to do so with less violence than any of their Hellenistic counterparts³⁸.

Acknowledging and recognizing the «special features» of their performance over the three century-long dynasty is important if we were to reduce and, hopefully, eliminate the ignorance and contempt that surrounds the study of the Ptolemies and perhaps, it may even increase the appreciation of the Ptolemaic history, thus rehabilitating its, in many cases, unloved actors.

³⁵ WELLENDORF, 2008: 34.

³⁶ BERNAND, 1998: 199.

³⁷ MANNING, 2010: 33-34; SALES, 2005: 27-28.

³⁸ WELLENDORF, 2008: 34.

REPRESENTATIONS OF ALEXANDRIA IN CLASSICAL LATIN LITERATURE

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Abstract: *Our paper intends to focus on Alexandria after the Roman annexation: what traces of its splendour and glory do we find in classical Latin literature? What repercussions of the changes suffered after 30 B.C. called the attention of these authors? What did the Romans think of the inhabitants of Alexandria, and what relationship did they have with the history of that part of the world? Greek literature is rich in information on Egypt and Alexandria, but from this image of a magnificent city that the Greeks have left us, what do the Latin authors echo? What is made of its population, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, Jews, people coming from all parts of the world? The portrait we can trace is, of course, imperfect. To get as close as possible to Roman Egypt, we would have to rely on the information provided by Greek Literature, by Papyrology, Numismatics, Epigraphy, Archaeology, reading ostraka, etc. We will try, however, to list this information according to different thematic areas, such as: The description of the city; The wonders of Alexandria; The way the Alexandrians are seen and portrayed by the Roman authors; The history of Alexandria and its relations with Rome; What the Romans got from Egypt and Alexandria; What the Alexandrians got from the Romans; The attraction of Alexandria and Egypt among the Romans.*

When, on August 1 of the year 30 B.C., Octavian, having taken Alexandria, entered the city on foot, while engaged in casual conversation with one of the Museum's philosophers, his attitude was characteristic of the meticulousness with which, at this time, a certain

amount of political stage managing took place in order to build up the reputation and political power of public figures. Augustus' gesture had the appearance of a peaceful entry, a mission of somebody who was not coming to annex or subjugate the ancient and splendid land of the Pharaohs and the Ptolemies, and its capital *Alexandrea ad Aegyptum*, the magnificent city which Alexander, in the already distant days of 331 B.C., had dreamed of and ordered to be built. Defeated, Mark Anthony took his own life and Cleopatra VII, the seductive and stubborn queen of Egypt, proud of her ancestral lineage and with her ambitions thwarted, avoided, also by suicide, the unbearable humiliation of coming to join, alive, the triumphant procession, which, as she knew well, the winner of Actium was to celebrate in Rome. Octavian, certain that Egypt was irreversibly under Roman rule, goes on to attach it to the already vast territories of Rome, and gives it special administrative status, which will ensure control of what is now the largest source of income, in assets and in taxes, among all the provinces under the aegis of the *princeps*.

But what did that peaceful entry mean for Egypt and specifically for Alexandria? What happened afterwards to the city which was the second metropolis of the world, surpassed only by Rome? What destiny did the annexation trace for the province and its inhabitants? It is true that Rome was not an alien power in Egypt. Ever since, in the 3rd century B.C., King Ptolemy II sent an embassy to Rome, which the Romans reciprocated, the path was open for Rome to recognise itself the right, during the following two centuries, to intervene in the frequent dynastic conflicts or against external threats (whether upon request or by clauses set forth in the testaments of the kings of Egypt, or whether by Rome's own decision). Thus, Egypt was turned into a protectorate that very soon, because of its wealth and commercial potential, became an attractive target for men with imperial aspirations. A long series of diplomatic episodes and some bloody military conflicts, such as the war of Alexandria, which, a little more than two decades before the annexation of the province, Julius Caesar had taken on in order to restore Cleopatra on the Ptolemaic throne, had marked the history of the already declining Lagid Dynasty and contributed to the image that the Egyptian and Greek populations had of Rome – a negative image which allowed them to foresee that their impending destiny was the loss of autonomy and freedom.

In 30 B.C., therefore, Octavian lays the groundwork for the administration of Egypt and its capital city. He takes advantage of the complex bureaucratic structure with its strong hierarchies, inherited from the Ptolemaic Dynasty, and makes the adaptations that he deems necessary. In a word: what works, according to the pragmatic and efficient perspective of the Roman centralised power, remains; what does not work or does not serve the interests of the Romans, is cancelled and replaced. Important additions are made, such as the institution of the *praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti*, an *eques* who represents and answers only to the emperor, having vested in him extraordinary powers to ensure supervision of all political, economic, legal, social and even military functions. Octavian, who retains direct power over the new province, immediately takes precautions, aware of the danger

that the control of Egypt could represent for Rome, if somebody, put in charge of the administration of the province, plotted or headed a seditious movement or merely decided to oppose Rome, cutting off its grain supply, the base for the survival of the *plebs* and, thus, the guarantee of its remaining under control and away from riots and social unrest. Octavian Augustus was so certain that he needed to prevent members of the highest social strata from accessing Egypt, where they could conceive and execute plans of insurgency, that he forbade senators and knights of senatorial status to enter Egypt without the express and prior authorisation of the *princeps*.

Let us focus, then, on Alexandria after the Roman annexation: what traces of its splendour and glory do we find in classical Latin literature? What repercussions of the changes suffered after 30 B.C. called the attention of these authors? What did the Romans think of the inhabitants of Alexandria, and what relationship did they have with the history of that part of the world? Let us recall that Strabo (Book 17) gave us the most complete description of the capital of Egypt, a city he saw with his own eyes, and with which he felt fascinated, a few years after its annexation by Rome. Diodorus Siculus (17.52), who had also visited Alexandria, expresses, although more succinctly, the attraction that the city, so beautiful and organized, exerted on those who saw it. Other authors, such as Theocritus in the celebrated *Idyll XV*, show us the hustle and bustle of a city full of people, involved in religious ceremonies or other celebrations, in a vibration of life that still touches us today.

Greek literature is rich in information on Egypt and Alexandria, but from this image that the Greeks have left us, what do the Latin authors echo? What is made of the Museum, its two libraries – the principal and the one of the Serapeum – the royal palace, the *Sema*, the tomb of Alexander, the wide and perpendicular streets, the five districts named after the first five letters of the Greek alphabet, the two sea ports and the channel that brought the waters of the Nile, the tower of the island of Pharos which guided sailors and shone its light in a radius of fifty kilometres, and of the *heptastadion* which connected the island to the mainland? What is made of its population, Greeks, Egyptians, Syrians, Jews, people coming from all parts of the world, with their frequent conflicts but also with the inevitable crossing of cultures that was enriching for all?

The perspective of Latin authors is naturally consistent, in most cases, with what we would expect from people who belong, with more or less explicitly stated pride, to the nation that was victorious at Actium and had conquered the world, and who believed themselves to be the keepers of civilization in its purest and highest form. The portrait we can trace is, however, imperfect. To get as close as possible to Roman Egypt, we would have to rely on the information provided by Greek Literature, by Papyrology, Numismatics, Epigraphy, Archaeology, reading *ostraka*, etc. Let us try, however, to list this information according to different thematic areas.

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY

In Latin literature, as far as we know, only Ammianus Marcellinus (22.16), as late as the 4th century A.D., gives us a description of Alexandria, which he calls the «pearl» of all cities. He tells us of its numerous and magnificent constructions, built thanks to the generosity of Alexander and the art of the architect Dinocrates. He mentions its beautiful and great walls and the abundance announced at the time of its foundation by portents of future wealth. He reminds us of the mild climate, the healthy breezes and the invariably clear sky. He recalls the high tower called «Pharos», which, with gross anachronism, he attributes to Cleopatra, who, according to him, planned and built it in the port, to provide assistance to ships with its light, and thus put an end to the hitherto frequent shipwrecks. He celebrates the *heptastadion*, notable not only for its length but also for the speed with which it was constructed, according to him also by Cleopatra. He alludes to the temples with the high ceilings, such as the Serapeum, superb in its rooms filled with columns, with statues that appeared to be alive, and so decorated with works of art that after the Capitol in Rome there was, in his opinion, nothing more wonderful in the face of the earth. Finally, he speaks of the two libraries of the city, which were invaluable and in which had been deposited thanks to the efforts of the Ptolemies seven hundred thousand volumes, he then refers to the fire that consumed them during the war of Alexandria, when the city was sacked by Julius Caesar.

Ammianus also speaks of Canopus, a town twelve miles from Alexandria, situated in a pleasant and salubrious location, where everybody experienced the feeling of being away from worldly things. In the context of this extensive digression, which had begun with an overview of Egypt, its fauna and the major monuments, the administrative divisions and its special type of government by a *praefectus*, its cities, and the bizarre way of writing of the Egyptians, there are also references to the huge expanse of Alexandria, which was reached not gradually, as it happens with ordinary cities, but right from the outset. The historian also notes that at the time of emperor Aurelian, when conflicts between citizens became devastating battles, the city ended up, plagued by continuous internal unrest, having its walls in ruins and suffering the loss of a part of the city where many illustrious men lived from time immemorial. Of these, the historian evokes some names from ancient times, to affirm immediately afterwards that, in his time, in Alexandria there were still many who had distinguished themselves in the Arts, Geometry, Music, Astronomy, Mathematics, Divination, and above all, Medicine. At the end of this curious digression and before reminding us, rather simplistically, that in Antiquity the whole of Egypt was a monarchy allied with Rome, converted into a province under the rule of Octavian after the defeat of Anthony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium, Ammianus draws a sketch of the physical characteristics and character of the Egyptians, saying that they are almost all swarthy and have quite dark skin, looking a little sad, slender, dry, hot-headed, rebellious and very insistent when they complain about something. He also notes that they refused to pay taxes, and that they

endured physical punishment for not doing so. The worst tortures could not make them confess their crimes.

As a necessarily brief comment, we can say that what calls our attention in this excursus is what we read of the survival, however diminished but still evident, of the grandeur of yesterday, as well as the distrusting and xenophobic perspective of somebody who sees «the Other» as people in obstinate rebellion and infringement, people who do not fit the standards of civilization imposed by Rome to the world. Also significant is the default reading of the political regime under which Egypt lived throughout its history, as only the monarchy's alliance with Rome is evoked, and then the submission to Augustus after the resounding victory of Actium. In this view, Ammianus is the heir of all the Latin literary tradition that precedes him.

THE WONDERS OF ALEXANDRIA

Roman authors are not sparing in their praise of the beauty and grandeur of the capital of Egypt. Among others, the *Bellum Alexandrinum* (3.1) speaks of the «[V]rbs fertilissima et copiosissima». Cicero, in *De Lege Agraria* (2.43) uses three superlatives to describe Alexandria and Egypt: «[urbis] copiosissimae; opulentissimi [regni]; pulcherrimorum [agrorum]»¹. The lighthouse on the island of Pharos, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, also could not have left the Romans indifferent. Pliny (*NH* 36.83), for example, praises the «turris a rege facta in insula Pharo», and, with instructive zeal, tells us that the cost of the work rose to 800 talents. The royal palace, which had attracted the admiration of Theocritus, is the subject of description in Lucan (*BC* 10.111-126), who evokes, although with no direct knowledge, the wealth and grandeur of the building and its decoration. The mausoleum of Alexander, in the interior of which reposed the body of the city's founder, had been laid to rest, embalmed and anointed with honey (cf. Statius, *Silu.* 3.2.118), and which was also the tomb of the Ptolemies, is equally mentioned by several Latin authors, such as Lucan (*BC* 10.1-51).

Inevitably, the fabulous Library of Alexandria elicited references in classical Latin literature. Seneca, in a moralist tone, evokes the burning of the collection of more than forty thousand *uolumina* in 47 B.C., that is, during the war of Alexandria. He does not attach liability to Caesar, but, while acknowledging that it was *pulcherrimum regiae opulentiae monumentum* (*Tranq.* 9.5), he gives a verdict consistent with Stoic obedience which leads him to say that, if there are those who praise such magnificence, he himself does not see in it neither *cura* nor *elegantia*, but only a *studiosa luxuria*: so many books and so much wealth

¹ Cf. also *NH* 5.62-63: not stopping short of an encomium, Pliny does not fail to consider worthy of praise (*iure laudetur in litore Aegyptii maris Alexandria*) the capital of Egypt, whose boundaries and shape he briefly describes, also including a reference to the extent of the royal palace, which occupied one fifth of the city.

were just *in spectaculum*, meant as the ornament and ostentation of power. Vitruvius (7.4-5) speaks in a more detached tone and praises the intentions of the founder of the Library, who must have acted with *infinito zelo*, eager to expand the practice of reading and the knowledge of great works and to spread culture. Regarding the controversial issue of the burning of the Library, which some attribute to an involuntary act of Julius Caesar and others think that never even happened, the information actually found in Latin literature does not allow us to clarify the truth of the matter. Florus (2.13) sticks to the non-specific statement that Caesar, in order to repel the onslaught of the enemy, set fire to buildings (without saying which) near the place where he was in the city, as well as to the arsenal and the port, and then took refuge on the island of Pharos. This version derives directly from what Caesar himself had written (*BC* 3.111), which speaks of setting fire to the ships for defence purposes, but does not say whether the fire spread and consumed the Library. The omission is perhaps not surprising: if it indeed had happened in this way, Caesar, the general and man of culture, would not have a reason to be proud of the incident. To defend his image, he would have tried to conceal such misfortune. As we have seen, Ammianus Marcellinus (22.16.13) links the burning of the Library to the sack of the city carried out by Caesar, and refers to the destruction of seven hundred thousand volumes. This is also the number mentioned by Aulus Gellius (*NA* 7.17.3): this erudite man does not err in attributing the founding of the Library to the Ptolemies, and makes a point of mentioning that the fire occurred during the sack of Alexandria in the war started by Caesar, but that there was no express order to ignite it, immediately adding the hypothesis that the auxiliary soldiers were the ones to do so.

The natural characteristics that made Alexandria a city ideally suited to occupy the place of prominence it held also did not escape the attention of the Latin writers. As good Romans, aware of the strategic importance of geographic location, they often referred to the fact that Alexandria was closed up and naturally defended against attacks and enemy incursions. The *Bellum Alexandrinum* speaks of this favourable location using the word *claustrum* (26.2) to refer to the advantage of the city being guarded by the island of Pharos from the side of the sea, and by Pelusium from the side of the land².

THE ALEXANDRIANS: TREACHEROUS, INDOMITABLE, CONFRONTATIONAL, AMBITIOUS, INSOLENT AND PROFLIGATE

This is the image of the Alexandrians in particular, and the Egyptians in general, that emerges from Latin literature and comes from texts even prior to the annexation. The

² The same word is used, and with exactly the same intention, by Liv. 45.11.5; Luc., *BC* 10.509; Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.82; and Suet., *Vesp.* 7.2.

author of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* describes them as *aptissimi ad prodicionem* (cf. 7.3), calls them *fallaces* and *temerarii* (7.2) – repeating the adjective *fallax* in 24.1 (*fallacem gentem*) – people who always think in one way and act in another (24.1: *semperque alia cogitantem alia simulantem*). Seneca (*Breu.* 13.7) underlines the *perfidia* that characterised the Alexandrians, evident in the brutal and treacherous murder of Pompey³.

Cicero, for example, in the *Pro Rabirio Postumo* (34-36) speaks of the insolence of the Alexandrians, and criticises their *os* and the *audacia* with which they now assert what they have just denied. He disparages their lying, impertinence, and the constant *prestigia* and *fallaciae*, which they use and abuse⁴.

A passage by Frontinus (1.1.5), from his chapter *De occultandis consiliis*, is significant. Here he recounts that Caesar, while preparing the war of Alexandria, suspicious of its inhabitants but wanting to appear aloof and disinterested, and while inspecting the city and its defences, surrendered to *licentioribus conuiuiis*, to riotous banquets, pretending he was captivated by the charms of the city and that he had allowed himself to take on the habits and lifestyle of its inhabitants – attached to the *deliciae* Ovid speaks of (*Tristia* 1.2.80) and the *otia laeta* which Valerius Flaccus celebrates (5.422). Frontinus then turns to attack the Alexandrians, seen as a people abandoned to the most common pleasures⁵.

Viewed with surprise and some irony or disgust, the Romans also refer to the incestuous relations, which, they said, were common in Egypt. Seneca speaks (*Apoc.* 8.2-3) of incest between siblings, obviously alluding to royal marriages, but generalising the practice to the entire city of Alexandria.

There are also various statements about the confrontational and hot-tempered character of the Alexandrians. One example is what is said of the Egyptians, and applies to the natives of Alexandria, in the *Historia Augusta* (*Tyranni Triginta* 22): they were people who put the state at serious risk for minor things.

To lighten up the dark colours of this portrait, there are, however, authors who do not hide certain qualities and skills of the Alexandrians. A doubt remains, nevertheless, whether such praise does not often serve above all for the aggrandisement of those who won and dominated over them. In the *Bellum Alexandrinum* (3.1; 13.2; 16.5) it is said that they are *homines ingeniosi atque acutissimi*, possessed of such *naturalis sollertia* that they were able to reproduce everything they saw the Romans doing, and then imagine *sponte sua* many attack and defence mechanisms, as well as how to distinguish themselves in the war at sea. The characterisation we get in the *Historia Augusta* (*Quadrigae Tyrannorum* 9.8) is of an industrious and hard-working people. An alleged letter of Hadrian is reproduced here, which speaks of Alexandria as a thriving city, rich and fertile, where nobody

³ Cf. also *B. Al.* 24.3; *Prop.* 3.11.33; *Sen., Ad Marc.* 20.4.

⁴ Cf. also *Sen., Ad Helu.* 19.6; *Quint.* 1.2.7; *Suet., Vesp.* 19.2.

⁵ Cf. *Juv.* 6.82-84 and, on Canopus, *Prop.* 3.39; *Sen., Epist.* 51.3; *Juv.* 15.46.

can live idle: some blow glass, others work in the confection of paper, all are skilled weavers of linen, the most skilled among all nations. Everybody works, even the disabled and the eunuchs. After this apparently flattering description, criticism creeps in, in the statement that the only god of the Alexandrians, whether they be Christian, Jew or Gentile, is money.

THE HISTORY OF ALEXANDRIA AND ITS RELATIONS WITH ROME

We have to make reference, on the one hand, to the period before the annexation, and on the other, to the events and circumstances after 30 B.C. Prior to this date most significant are the passages on the several interventions of Rome in Ptolemaic politics, as well as on the foundation of Alexandria by Alexander the Great, following a dream he had after returning from the temple of Ammon at Siwa, where he was recognised as a son of the god. Latin authors such as Quintus Curtius (4.8.5-6) repeat the episode where Alexander marked the borders of the city (using flour), and they tell how birds came to eat some of this flour. Alexander was struck, because he read in what had happened a negative omen, but soon the seers managed to deflect this disastrous interpretation; the behaviour of the birds meant, on the contrary, something very auspicious: the future greatness of the city, rich in grain and resources that would ensure the welfare of natives and foreigners, and attract people from all parts of the world.

There is a plethora of references to the time, in the year 55 B.C., when Aulus Gabinius, proconsul of Asia, took on the mission of restoring Ptolemy XIII Auletes to the throne of Egypt. Having achieved this objective, Gabinius left one legion in Alexandria, to protect the king. The troops soon became accustomed to the softness and *licentia* of local habits, settled with Egyptian women and had children, lost their nerve and the discipline that guaranteed the strength of the Roman army. Still, five hundred knights from this legion came to join the army that Pompey gathered for the civil war⁶.

As it would be expected, there are also several references to the flight of Pompey to Egypt, after Pharsalus, and the reasons that led him to choose the Ptolemaic court and Alexandria as a place of refuge. Keeping in mind the favours that the Egyptian king owed him⁷, Pompey thought that he would be safe there, counting on a debt of gratitude that proved nonexistent. Of course, there are numerous echoes of the death of Pompey, a shameful act perpetrated at the behest of a treacherous and ungrateful king. There are also

⁶ Cf. Caes., *BC* 3.4.4; 103.3-5; 110-112. About the background of this episode, see Cic., *Ad Familiares* 1.5a.3-4; 1.5b.1; 1.7.4; *Harusp. Resp.* 34; *Pro Caelio* 23; 51; *Ad Att.* 2.16.2; *Ad Quint.* 2.2.3.

⁷ Caes., *BC* 3.103.3: *pro hospitio atque amicitia*. Cf. also Vell. 2.53.1-2.

echoes of the outraged reaction of Julius Caesar in Alexandria, when the head of Pompey was brought to him⁸.

About the war of Alexandria, when Julius Caesar, in the city for several months, undertook the struggle with the objective of restoring as sovereign on the throne those who Ptolemy XII had appointed in his will as his heirs and successors, we can read two works which are most informative: the *Bellum Alexandrinum*, by an unknown author, and Julius Caesar's own *Bellum Ciuile*. But there are several authors who refer to this war episode. With regard to the will of Ptolemy, some find in it reason enough for Caesar's military action and justification for the support given, at that time, to Cleopatra. But everything changes when we come to the connection between Mark Anthony and Cleopatra and his intention, much to the delight of the queen, to make Alexandria the capital of the empire. It would be impossible to list here all the passages where we find the condemnation of the triumvir and his royal concubine, the joy and exaltation of Octavian after the victory at the battle of Actium, as well as references to the triumph, which the future Augustus celebrated in Rome, in the year 29 B.C.⁹, in which, at the absence of Cleopatra as a living prisoner, he paraded an effigy of the queen with the two asps that had brought about her death.

WHAT THE ROMANS GOT FROM EGYPT AND ALEXANDRIA

There are many echoes of what the annexation of Egypt and the knowledge and use of its assets and resources meant for Rome. If we go through the medical works of Scribonius Largus or Celsus, or Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, or the compilation of cookery recipes by Apicius, we will find a huge number of remedies and recipes which contain products coming from the fauna and flora of Alexandria¹⁰. From other references we perceive the great intensity of the trade, which brought from Alexandria to Rome types of food that were considered delicacies¹¹. From the capital of Egypt also came flowers and ornamental plants, which beautified Rome or added refinement to banquets and gatherings¹².

Alexandria is also assumed to be a place whose climate is extremely beneficial to health. As a treatment for tuberculosis, Celsus (3.22.8) recommends a change of scenery –

⁸ Cf. Caes., *BC* 3.106.4. The perspective of Lucan is different (as it is known, he is hostile to Caesar). According to *BC* 9.1035 ff., the tears of Caesar were hiding his immense joy at seeing his enemy assassinated.

⁹ Cf. Prop. 2.1.30-34; Suet., *Aug.* 22.1; Serv., *In Vergilii Aeneidos libros* 8.714. Caesar also celebrated a triumph over Alexandria (cf. Vell. 2.56.1-2; Suet., *Iul.* 37.1).

¹⁰ Larg., *Compositiones* 24; 72; 74; 231; Cels. 5.19.17; 24.1; 26.23; 27.1; Apic., *De Re Coquinaria* 3.4.3; 4.1.3; 10.1.6-8; Col., *RR* 11.3.48; Plin., *NH* 21.183; 22.34-36.

¹¹ Plin., *NH* 14.102; 15.70; 32.150; Mart. 13.122; Juv. 13.85. About Alexandrian products used in the adulteration of other products, cf. Plin., *NH* 12.27-29 and 20.200-201.

¹² Cf. Plin., *NH* 21.47; Stat., *Silu.* 2.1.161; 6.87; Mart. 6.80.

the possibility considered most advantageous being a journey to Alexandria. That is exactly what Seneca did, who spent six years with his maternal aunt and her husband, so that the mild climate, constant throughout the year, would help restore his ailing health (*Ad Helu.* 12.19).

From Alexandria to Rome also came slaves, who were sold in the markets of the capital along with many other goods brought from there. Many of these servants were renowned for their artistic skills¹³. In the houses of wealthy Romans (who had varying degrees of culture), there were Alexandrian slaves who played musical instruments, sang, acted, or served at the table, like the *pueri* at the banquet in the house of Trimalchion (*Sat.* 31.3; 68.3). Others were purchased for sexual purposes. Alexandrian slaves were supposed to excel in these favours because of their lust, as well as their learned jokes and studied words (cf. Statius, *Silu.* 2.1.73-75; 5.5.66-69).

But it was not just the slaves who came to give a touch of Alexandrian luxury and refinement (or depravity) to the Roman *domus*. In condemnation of the ostentation and luxury that dominated his time, Seneca (*Epist.* 86.5-7) affirms that nobody worth his salt could do without Alexandrian marble for the decoration of his home. More than houses, it was Rome that embellished itself with what came from Alexandria. Obelisks, the Ptolemaic royal treasure, and numerous works of art were brought for the decoration of the *Urbs*¹⁴. And for the *uenationes*, exotic animals were also brought to Rome, coming, not exclusively, but in great abundance from North Africa¹⁵.

The immense wealth of Alexandria came to Rome transported in the *naues alexandrinae*, which Seneca describes for us (*Epist.* 77.1), when he sees them arriving at Puteoli. They carried mail correspondence, passengers, merchandise, and above all, the grain that sustained the city. One third of the grain supply for Rome was secured with shipments from Egypt, concentrated in large silos in Alexandria and then transported to Puteoli or the port of Ostia. If the ships did not arrive, it would mean hunger, and so it is no wonder that people joined in celebration to see them enter the port. It is also not surprising that so many precautions were taken, as we have already mentioned, for the control of Egypt not to pass to the hands of those who could misuse it, especially given the possibility of blocking the grain supply to Rome. Suffice it to say that even Vespasian thought of doing just that. Having received the news of the defeat of the army of Vitellius and the massacre at the city of Cremona when he was in Egypt coming from Judaea, Vespasian rushed towards Alexandria and pondered on suspending the supply of grain that would feed the troops of Vitellius, stationed in Rome, as a way to hasten the defeat of his opponent (Tacitus, *Hist.* 3.48).

¹³ Cf. Stat., *Silu.* 2.1.73-75; Tac., *Ann.* 14.60; S.H.A., *Ver.* 8.11.

¹⁴ Cf., for example, Cic., *In Verrem, actio* 2.5, 145; Plin., *NH* 35.131-2; 36.67; 69; Suet., *Aug.* 41.1; 71.1; *Cl.* 20.3; S.H.A., *Ver.* 5.1-3.

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., Cic., *In Verrem, actio* 2.5.145; Plin., *NH* 35.131-2; 36.67; 69; Suet., *Aug.* 41.1; 71.1; *Cl.* 20.3; S.H.A., *Ver.* 5.1-3.

Besides grain, Rome received – and controlled exclusively – the production and trade of papyrus (cf., e.g., Pliny, *NH* 13.68-73).

Egypt also became a place advantageous and conducive to business, not only for members of the imperial household, but also for many of those who belonged to the privileged social strata, such as Seneca (*Epist.* 77).

Finally, we must recall the heavy taxes that fell on all activities – agricultural, industrial, administrative – and almost every circumstance of life, heavily taxed to benefit the coffers of Rome. A careful record of everything one had and produced was a document necessary for the tax authorities, which took charge of collecting all dues. In this respect, the Egyptians would not have found the change of government very strange: the difference, compared to the times of the Ptolemies, was only one: before 30 B.C. the taxes that crushed the population went to the royal coffers of Alexandria; after the annexation they went directly to Rome. This was a burden that never appealed to the Alexandrians and led to many revolts.

WHAT THE ALEXANDRIANS GOT FROM THE ROMANS

Given what we read in Latin authors, we are almost tempted to believe that the Romans brought few beneficial changes to Alexandria, and that impression seems to be confirmed when we read about the hatred the Alexandrians felt for their new masters and the law that was imposed on them. We cannot say that the hatred was mutual, but rather that the Romans had an attitude of distrust, disgust and surprise towards the Egyptians: because of some habits, their own form of writing, the zoolatry, and other aspects of their religion. Moreover, it is not surprising that there are not many references to the benefits that the emperors effectively brought to Egypt, such as the silting of the land for farming, and even the fact that they instituted games and continued to put up public buildings and temples, where they posed with the clothes and attributes of the Pharaohs or the Egyptian gods. This was, after all, the compensation that the Roman state gave to the provinces it annexed. And this kind of information is not to be sought in literary texts, but in the data provided by archaeology and epigraphy.

However, in literature there is some information, which deserves to be reflected upon. One example will suffice. Suetonius (*Aug.* 98.2) tells the following story: close to the end of his life, Augustus was walking at the shore of the Bay of Puteoli, when sailors and passengers from an Alexandrian ship which had just docked went towards him, dressed in white, crowned with flowers and burning incense. They wished him the greatest happiness, and addressed him the most laudatory praise. They assured him that it was thanks to him that they were alive, that they could sail, and enjoyed full freedom and the right to their property. Augustus was extremely flattered by the tribute, and gave forty gold coins to each

member of his entourage to spend, entirely, in the purchase of Alexandrian goods. We do not want (and indeed are not able) to say if this story is true or not, but, running the risk of looking at antiquity through the prism of political propaganda, which causes and justifies everything, this whole episode seems to expose one of those moments when a supposedly spontaneous outpour of support is enacted. Augustus, even though he did not have long to live, was fully aware of what these gestures mean in terms of power consolidation and public image enhancement. It should be added here that Augustus supposedly said that his desire was that the Romans used the Greek *pallium* and the Alexandrians the Roman toga. Nothing is more eloquent on the lines of fusion between the two people, although one of them is subjugated and the other is the conqueror. The complex process of Romanisation advanced in this way.

THE ATTRACTION OF ALEXANDRIA AND EGYPT AMONG THE ROMANS

There is quite a lot of information that reveals the attraction that Alexandria and Egypt exerted on the Romans, particularly those who loved culture - and this despite all the distrust and xenophobia that prevailed in Rome for this strange people with the most unusual habits.

The desire to go to (or settle in) Alexandria is documented for several important characters of Roman history, and most concretely for the emperors. Of these, there were those who went to Egypt primarily for political reasons and those who also had the desire to see the monuments and culture of the *prouincia*, as did Hadrian: a man of culture and with insatiable intellectual curiosity, he went to Egypt, sailed up and down the Nile (S.H.A., *Hadr.* 14.5; 20.1-2), saw what was most important to visit, and then commemorated the beauty and fascination of these places in his magnificent *uilla* of Tibur, where we can still admire the Garden of Canopus and the temple of Serapis.

In the texts consulted one final point calls our attention: the use of religion for political ends, when the *princeps* worshipped Egyptian gods, using visits to the temples for political propaganda among the local population.

Let us have a look at an episode where Vespasian was the protagonist. While in Alexandria and before heading to Rome to take over the empire, Vespasian wished to consult Serapis to know if imperial power was guaranteed for him. He left his whole entourage behind to enter alone in the temple of the god, and, when he turned back after having prayed at length, it seemed to him that he saw the freedman Basilides offering him, after the manner of the Egyptians, verbenas, wreaths, and cakes. When he revealed this wondrous event, everybody assured him that Basilides could not possibly be there, because he was far away and in the grips of rheumatism, unable to move. This is the version of Suetonius (*Vesp.* 7.2), who adds that soon afterwards Vespasian received the news that Vitellius' troops had been

defeated in Cremona, and Vitellius himself had been killed in Rome. As far as propagandistic manipulation goes, there could not be a finer possible staging. Vespasian wants to go alone - witnesses could be bothersome if they declared they had seen nothing. The portent conferred divine confirmation on Vespasian as predestined to govern the empire. On the other hand, that it was an Alexandrian freedman to appear to Vespasian, and with all the insignia of honour peculiar to this province, showed a divine ordinance that Egypt should remain subservient to Roman power, and to this particular emperor.

The same episode is reported by Tacitus in the *Historiae* (4.82). He too (both authors would undoubtedly have had a reason to underline this) notes that Vespasian ordered everybody to leave the temple and entered it alone. Concentrated in his prayer, he saw on his back one of the notables of Egypt, Basilides, who, he was aware, was sick and away from Alexandria. Still - to give greater credibility to the miracle, the sceptics would say - he later asked everyone if they had seen him in the temple or in the city, and he ordered cavalry soldiers to make sure that Basilides was eighty miles (and that was many days) away. Obviously, the portent was interpreted as a sign of power being attributed to Vespasian and being sanctioned by the deities, given the etymology of the name Basilides (from the Greek *basileus*, king).

Tacitus (*Hist.* 4.81) and Suetonius (*Vesp.* 7.2) also coincide in the telling of other prodigies, in which the gods strive to reveal their support of Vespasian and the supernatural gifts that distinguish him. This is the case of the cure of a blind man and a cripple, also in Alexandria - the land fertile in wonders and whose people, says Tacitus, are *dedita superstitionibus* more than all others. The blind man and the cripple went to Vespasian, ensuring him that, in dreams, the god Serapis had told them that Vespasian would be able to heal them, if he put a little of his saliva on the eyelids of the blind man, and stepped with his foot on the defective leg of the cripple. In a stroke that lends psychological credibility to the behaviour of Vespasian, both authors refer to the first reaction he had, which was to refuse, even laughing at the suggestion. Eventually, however, he yielded, and the miracle took place to confirm the destiny of the first Flavian emperor. The reader cannot but notice some details of this episode, such as Tacitus' reference to the fact that the astonishing healings happened in the presence of a crowd. Once again, religion served as the basis for political ascent and to garner the support of the masses.

One figure of the Julio-Claudian imperial family was linked to Alexandria and Egypt in a way which we deem driven more by cultural rather than political reasons. We speak of Germanicus. In the year 19, Tacitus tells us that he decided to enter Egypt *cognoscendae antiquitatis* (*Ann.* 2.59), although invoking as a pretext issues relating to the management of the province. With the opening of the silos he made the price of grain drop, thus gratifying and appeasing the people in a time of hunger and scarcity. In Alexandria he led a life very pleasing to the people: he went without an escort, wore clothes and shoes in the Greek way - an attitude that can be interpreted as a result of both his intention to become agree-

able to the Alexandrians and his wish to go as unnoticed as possible. Germanicus knew that he had entered Egypt without the consent of Tiberius. And when Tiberius found out about it, he complained of the affront to the Senate (Suetonius, *Tib.* 52.2) and severely criticised Germanicus for the indignity of wearing the *pallium*, when he was meant to wear exclusively the toga, and, above all, for having infringed the *instituta* of Augustus. Tiberius' animosity against his adopted son grew bigger every day. Unaware of the criticisms hanging over him, Germanicus went through Egypt, as was his desire, visiting the most beautiful or historically important places. He departed from Canopus and went up the Nile. He saw Thebes, admired the hieroglyphics on the monuments, wanted to have the script deciphered for him, visited the Colossus of Memnon, the pyramids, the artificial lakes that received the waters of the Nile, the island of Elephantine, Syene (which is now the beautiful Aswan). In a word, a journey in which we imagine his awe at the wonders which still impress us so much today. Tacitus does not mention, however, an episode which took place during this trip, when Germanicus visited Memphis. The temple of the Apis bull, which he naturally wanted to visit, was located here. Whoever went to this temple used to feed the bull and gather, from the animal's reaction, positive or adverse omens. The bull turned his snout away from Germanicus, and refused to eat the food that he was giving him in his hand. The account is from Pliny (*NH* 8.185), who notes that the bad omen was confirmed shortly afterwards by the death of Germanicus, which by all accounts seems to have been ordered by Tiberius. Tacitus, who in the *Annales* comes clearly in favour of Germanicus and paints with dark colours the character of Tiberius, as an underhanded and cruel despot, suppresses this episode, as he would not have wanted to recall that in Egypt the gods could just as much ordain emperors as announce a tragic destiny. So we are left with the benevolent image of a Germanicus who is generous, educated, awake to what is most beautiful in the world, willing to break the toughest rules to satisfy his intellectual curiosity. For the reader he becomes, thus, a kind of symbol for everybody who is left enchanted by the mystery and grandeur of the Egyptian civilisation.

AMIMETOBIΟΥ, THE ONE «OF THE INIMITABLE LIFE»: CLEOPATRA AS A METAPHOR FOR ALEXANDRIA IN PLUTARCH

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Abstract: *In Life of Antony, Plutarch builds one of the most relevant portraits of Cleopatra VII. However, Plutarch is far from being impartial, as one would expect in a «Historian». Quite the opposite. Plutarch defines the last Lagid Queen as an Alexandrian metaphor. At the same time, she represents the perception that the Greco-Roman mentality in the first centuries of our Era had of the Egyptian city: luxurious, lustful, lazy, exotic, exuberant, deceitful and tricky, as well as sapient.*

In a Book originally published in the 1970s and more recently re-edited, E. W. Said recuperates the theme of Orientalism in western culture, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries¹. One of the salient elements stressed by the author is the frequent metaphorisation of the East as a woman whose personality is defined by sensuality and licentiousness as practically innate features.

Following a similar hermeneutical approach, in an article published in 1986, L. Lowe identifies those characteristics as the model used by the famous French novelist G. Flaubert to compose the character of Salammbô in his homonymous novel. Lowe explains how the representation of the East as the cultural opposite of the West in Flaubert's novel is feminised and eroticised so that the Orient becomes a feminine object of devotion². In Flaubert,

¹ SAID, 2003: 187-188.

² LOWE, 1986: 44-45.

Salammbô the Carthaginian is therefore a metonymy of the eastern world as Rome is a metonymy of the West. The cultural and historical alterity of Carthage as Orient is thus materialised in Salammbô's sexual alterity as a woman³.

However, the method identified by Said does not originate in Romanticism⁴. In a parallel exegesis, the character of Dido in the *Aeneid* is commonly said to evoke that of Cleopatra VII Philopator⁵. In fact, although the character does suggest a metonymy of Carthage⁶, the way Vergil defines her – as an obstacle to the success of Aeneas' mission, a symbol of the Orient, a fatal woman – seems to be based especially on the composition of the last Lagid queen of Egypt, who was protagonist to the most relevant political event of her time and who for that same reason came to be remembered in the *Aeneid*⁷. A more detailed analysis suggests that, in her coeval political context, Cleopatra is more than just a symbol of Egypt, of the whole East, and of what it represents for Rome. As a matter of fact, when, in the pre-Actium context, Octavian declares war on the queen, not only does he turn the attention of the Roman public opinion from Mark Antony, who was in fact his real target and whom he wanted to use for the benefit of his own political agenda, but he uses Cleopatra again as a metonymy of what the East signified for the western Roman power. It was therefore a skilled political maneuver sustained by the efficient Roman propaganda machine.

This coincides with what we can read in Plutarch. In fact, as I see it, in *Life of Antony* Plutarch uses the same artifice, or the same technique, to compose the personality of Cleopatra VII. In Plutarch's text, the queen of Egypt becomes mostly a metonymy, this time a metonymy of the city of Alexandria, since the Greek author describes her through the same essential characteristics that define the Orient in the Roman imaginary, of which the Greco-Egyptian city then becomes the paradigm. This «rule» is confirmed in the way the writer from Chaeronea composes the personality of the female descendant of the Lagids. From his viewpoint, both sensuality and licentiousness become key features in the queen's definition. The following passage can be read as an illustration of exactly that:

Such, then, was the nature of Antony, where now as a crowning evil his love for Cleopatra supervened, roused and drove to frenzy many of the passions that were still hidden and quiescent in him, and dissipated and destroyed whatever good and saving qualities still offered resistance. And he was taken captive in this manner. As he was getting ready for the Parthian war, he sent to Cleopatra, ordering her to meet him in Cilicia in order to make answer to the charges made against her of raising and giving to Cassius much money for the war. But Dellius, Antony's messenger, when he saw how Cleopatra looked, and noticed her

³ LOWE, 1986: 46.

⁴ See also ADLER, LÉCOSSE, 2010; MENON, 2006; BILLINGHURST, 2004; DIJKSTRA, 1988.

⁵ See e.g. ROCHA PEREIRA, 2002: 260; PELLING, 1994: 17-18, 220; GRIFFIN, 1999: 194; OGLE, 1925: 261-270.

⁶ See e.g. ROCHA PEREIRA, 2002: 270.

⁷ Verg. *Aen.* 8.650-704.

subtlety and cleverness in conversation, at once perceived that Antony would not so much as think of doing such a woman any harm, but that she would have the greatest influence with him. He therefore resorted to flattery and tried to induce the Egyptian to go to Cilicia «decked out in fine array» (as Homer would say), and not to be afraid of Antony, who was the most agreeable and humane of commanders. She was persuaded by Dellius, and judging by the proofs which she had had before this of the effect of her beauty upon Caius Caesar and Gnaeus the son of Pompey, she had hopes that she would more easily bring Antony to her feet. For Caesar and Pompey had known her when she was still a girl and inexperienced in affairs, but she was going to visit Antony at the very time when women have the most brilliant beauty and are at the acme of intellectual power⁸.

In Plutarch, the perspective of analysis and of synthesis is also defined through an androcentric, or maybe even a Greco-Roman-centric, axis for which being a woman and being Eastern is a dichotomy which «invents the East as the feminine counterpart to a masculine West»⁹. As happens in the 19th century, this rhetoric of difference is achieved through the *topos* of sexual or gender differentiation, sexuality becoming a privileged field of reference.

These are expressed in *Life of Antony*, in passages such as «where now as a crowning evil his love for Cleopatra supervened, roused and drove to frenzy many of the passions that were still hidden and quiescent in him, and dissipated and destroyed whatever good and saving qualities still offered resistance»¹⁰.

Plutarch is careful to mention that Antony first met Cleopatra when she was a mature woman, in the prime of her womanhood, when her splendour, her charm and her powers of persuasion were at their strongest. With this, the author clearly signals the tribune's weakness before the sensuality of the Oriental queen¹¹. Indeed, the episode where the arrival of the queen's barge to Cydnus is described is particularly significant as an expression of that erotic sensuality. Note how Plutarch resorts to a Hellenic-inspired typology (we should remember that Cleopatra was of Greek origin), though he emphasizes those elements of the scenery that are more directly relevant to the orientalising quality of the context:

She herself reclined beneath a canopy spangled with gold, adorned like Venus in a painting, while boys like Loves in paintings stood on either side and fanned her. Likewise also the fairest of her serving-maidens, attired like Nereïds and Graces, were stationed, some at the rudder-sweeps, and others at the reefing-ropes. Wondrous odours from countless incense-

⁸ Plu. *Ant.* 25.

⁹ LOWE, 1986: 45.

¹⁰ Plu. *Ant.* 25.

¹¹ Plu. *Ant.* 25. However, Plutarch notes that men's fascination for her resided not in her beauty but rather in other characteristics such as her voice; see Plu. *Ant.* 27.

*offerings diffused themselves along the river-banks. Of the inhabitants, some accompanied her on either bank of the river from its very mouth, while others went down from the city to behold the sight. The throng in the market-place gradually streamed away, until at last Antony himself, seated on his tribunal, was left alone. And a rumour spread on every hand that Venus was come to revel with Bacchus for the good of Asia*¹².

The visual nature of the description, deliberately highlighted through comparisons with painting, and the predominance of musical images which convey an orientalising atmosphere do, in fact, promote the Levantine character of the protagonist, who embodies all the categories implied in the concept, notably that of lust¹³.

The Cydnus barge episode is also a metaphor for a certain opulence which, like lust, is associated with the construction of the western image of the East, including lust and luxury in the same category. The scene is indeed prepared on the basis of the shadow of wealth and luxury as reference points. For example, Plutarch describes how Cleopatra prepared riches and adornments to welcome Antony¹⁴. The author also mentions the luxury patent in most of Antony and Cleopatra's fleet¹⁵. The luxury of this regal atmosphere is also highlighted in the description of the tomb's contents and generally in the death scenario prepared by Cleopatra as an allegory of, and a corollary to, the queen's life in her lover's company:

*and she [Cleopatra] herself, now that she had a tomb and monument built surpassingly lofty and beautiful, which she had erected near the temple of Isis, collected there the most valuable of the royal treasures, gold, silver, emeralds, pearls, ebony, ivory, and cinnamon; and besides all this she put there great quantities of torch-wood and tow, so that Caesar was anxious about the reason, and fearing lest the woman might become desperate and burn up and destroy this wealth, kept sending on to her vague hopes of kindly treatment from him, at the same time that he advanced with his army against the city*¹⁶.

Indeed, Cleopatra's riches reflect those of the Orient¹⁷. Those are the elements that afford an inimitable atmosphere and a way of life that is foreign to the Roman, or even the Greek, character, as may be understood through M. H. da Rocha Pereira's synthesis of Roman mentality¹⁸. The so called *synodos ton Amimetobion* has its origin in that somewhat

¹² Plu. *Ant.* 26.

¹³ Cf. PARKER, 2002: 40-95.

¹⁴ Plu. *Ant.* 25-26.

¹⁵ Plu. *Ant.* 61. It should also be noted that the tradition, or myth, according to which Cleopatra used to drink pearls dissolved in vinegar seems to convey exactly the same idea of luxury and excess. Cf. B. L. ULLMAN, 1957: 193-201.

¹⁶ Plu. *Ant.* 74; cf. 25; 85.

¹⁷ Plu. *Ant.* 78. On this, see e.g. the descriptions of Babylon in Hdt. 1.

¹⁸ ROCHA PEREIRA, 2002: 332-429.

unbridled context¹⁹. Actually, though, excess is not the only central motif in these descriptions. To it there can be added futility, defined through a life of leisure, puerility and carelessness, precisely the type of life that led Antony and Cleopatra's contemporaries, and Plutarch, to describe the couple as «the Inimitable Livers»²⁰. As Plutarch writes,

*[t]here, indulging in the sports and diversions of a young man of leisure, he squandered and spent upon pleasures that which Antiphon calls the most costly outlay, namely, time. For they had an association called The Inimitable Livers, and every day they feasted one another, making their expenditures of incredible profusion*²¹.

Following this conceptualisation, however, the Greek author makes a point of stressing the general's very Roman rustic character in contrast with the queen of Egypt's oriental sophistication, thus emphasising this quality of Cleopatra's²².

The Alexandrian banquets, as described by Plutarch in the tribune's biography, also emerge as metaphors for luxury and moral decline with the guests being interested only in eating, drinking, and presents. Alexandria is presented as an idle town, given over to impious merrymaking and festivities *sine dignitate*²³. The following passage affords a clear example of that:

*Antony sent, therefore, and invited her to supper; but she thought it meet that he should rather come to her. At once, then, wishing to display his complacency and friendly feelings, Antony obeyed and went. He found there a preparation that beggared description, but was most amazed at the multitude of lights. For, as we are told, so many of these were let down and displayed on all sides at once, and they were arranged and ordered with so many inclinations and adjustments to each other in the form of rectangles and circles, that few sights were so beautiful or so worthy to be seen as this*²⁴.

Clearly, the sumptuousness of the banquet as it is described has the same symbology. In fact, the text finds an echo in a similar passage in Petronius' *Satyricon*²⁵, the purpose

¹⁹ Plu. *Ant.* 28; 71.

²⁰ Perhaps this club, as noted by PELLING, 1994: 195, had the religious meaning of the dionysiac *thiasos* type. In fact, the word *synodos* suggests a religious connotation.

²¹ Plu. *Ant.* 28.

²² Plu. *Ant.* 27: «On the following day Antony feasted her in his turn, and was ambitious to surpass her splendour and elegance, but in both regards he was left behind, and vanquished in these very points, and was first to rail at the meagerness and rusticity of his own arrangements. Cleopatra observed in the jests of Antony much of the soldier and the common man, and adopted this manner also towards him, without restraint now, and boldly». On the rustic character of the Roman, see the legend of Cincinnatus in Liv. 3.26.7-11 and ROCHA PEREIRA, 2002: 399.

²³ Plu. *Ant.* 26; 71. On the concepts of *cum* and *sine dignitate*, see ROCHA PEREIRA, 2002: 388-397.

²⁴ Plu. *Ant.* 26; cf. 27-28.

²⁵ Petr. *Sat.* 28-40.

being to accentuate the eastern ambience and give it a pejorative barbarian character. Note how the East is depreciated in Petronius' text²⁶. In a different passage, the contrast is drawn through a description of the splendid banquet representing the idea of decadence, in a Bacchic antagonism with, at that moment, silent Alexandria:

*During this night, it is said, about the middle of it, while the city was quiet and depressed through fear and expectation of what was coming, suddenly certain harmonious sounds from all sorts of instruments were heard, and the shouting of a throng, accompanied by cries of Bacchic revelry and satyric leapings, as if a troop of revellers, making a great tumult, were going forth from the city; and their course seemed to lie about through the middle of the city toward the outer gate which faced the enemy, at which point the tumult became loudest and then dashed out*²⁷.

Again, the description emphasises the theme of excess. Similarly, the *Synapothanoumenon*, or Society of Partners in Death, can be seen as continuous with the principle presented before – Epicurean on the one hand, Stoic on the other: indulging in pleasures that lead to death, to moral decline, to the total loss of dignity, albeit with no less luxury²⁸.

Plutarch also mentions the *games and childish follies*²⁹, in which the courtesans, including the queen and the tribune, indulged, and he goes so far as identifying what, from a Roman viewpoint, would be masculine, not feminine, functions as attributes of the Egyptian queen, thereby stressing eastern alterity by association with the female universe³⁰. The most significant of these functions is the active exercise of politics, which corresponds by definition to the very statute of a queen³¹ and consolidates the identification with the Herakles and Omphale myth, which we shall mention again later.

This, then, is a synthesis of the Oriental mode of existence, inevitably associated with Alexandria, a city that was seen as the capital of political degeneration at the time, a threat to Roman hegemony, having therefore an extremely negative image. One of the most significant descriptions of that perception of the city can be read in *Life of Antony* 29:

But Cleopatra, distributing her flattery, not into the four forms of which Plato speaks, but into many, and ever contributing some fresh delight and charm to Antony's hours of seriousness or mirth, kept him in constant tutelage, and released him neither night nor day. She played at dice with him, drank with him, hunted with him, and watched him as he exercised

²⁶ See e.g. RODRIGUES, 2004: 77-95.

²⁷ Plu. *Ant.* 75.

²⁸ Plu. *Ant.* 71; PELLING, 1994: 295.

²⁹ Plu. *Ant.* 26; 28-29; 71.

³⁰ Plu. *Ant.* 29-30.

³¹ Plu. *Ant.* 76.

*himself in arms; and when by night he would station himself at the doors or windows of the common folk and scoff at those within, she would go with him on his round of mad follies, wearing the garb of a serving maiden. For Antony also would try to array himself like a servant. Therefore he always reaped a harvest of abuse, and often of blows, before coming back home; though most people suspected who he was. However, the Alexandrians took delight in their graceful and cultivated way; they liked him, and said that he used the tragic mask with the Romans, but the comic mask with them*³².

What we have here is a portrait of a courtesan life identified with the orientalising *modus uiuendi*, utterly inadequate to the personality of the *mores romani*³³.

Those heedless frivolities lead Antony to be dominated by passion³⁴, losing his self-control, his moderation – which is one of the cardinal Platonic virtues (*sophrosyne*)³⁵ –, and behaving in an immoderate manner.

What we see in Plutarch's description is, in fact, a negative conversion, that is, the degeneration of a good soldier into an individual contaminated with eastern vices, in consonance with the world he now moves in, with Cleopatra as its major figure. As a lover wounded by Eros' weapons, Antony becomes weak and debilitated, struck by the most terrible plague, torpid and neutralised by the force of those influences³⁶. In an extraordinary rhetoric sleight of hand, even the name of the slave in the suicide episode is chosen for its symbolic resonances: Eros, homonymous with the divine and tragic forces that contribute to the destruction of the Roman general³⁷.

The tribune's intoxication – for Antony drowns in wine his inability to manage the passion he feels for the queen³⁸ – is also symbolic of eastern leisure/immoderation, manifest in such luxuries and behaviours as the Romans consider unbridled. Plutarch's text mentions the *tekhnitai Dionyson*³⁹, possibly a group or a community associated with Dionysos the god and who spent most of their lives partying or going to the theatre. The fact that his blind passion for Cleopatra interferes with Antony's political duties is also a sign of that intromission, showing utter disrespect for public life⁴⁰.

³² Plu. *Ant.* 29.

³³ Note that Suet. *Nero* 21, e.g., uses the same artifice to stain the image of the emperor, and Caligula's biography by the same author generally follows that same tendency.

³⁴ Plu. *Ant.* 36.

³⁵ Plat. *Rep.* 427e.

³⁶ Plu. *Ant.* 36-37.

³⁷ Plu. *Ant.* 76. For some Roman currents other than the Stoic and expressed e.g. in Verg. *Aen.* 6, suicide was condemnable, which seems to have contributed to the decline of Antony's image. Other interpretations may view the general's decision to take his own life as a last act of dignity.

³⁸ Plu. *Ant.* 51; 59.

³⁹ Plu. *Ant.* 57.

⁴⁰ Plu. *Ant.* 58.

Another element associated with luxury is effeminate sexuality (which should not be understood as what we now call homosexuality, since practices of a homosexual nature are not necessarily of an effeminate type; in Antiquity, while the former were not even an issue, the latter were disliked by society, since they were associated with sexually passive behaviour). This factor was particularly related to the Dionysian environment, also an object of criticism pejoratively judged by Greco-Roman society⁴¹. In Plutarch, Antony is presented as playing effeminate roles, precisely in a context of Dionysian cultural practices⁴².

This composition clearly suggests the myth of Herakles and the queen of Lydia, in which there is an inversion of social and anthropological roles, with Herakles, the male hero, having a feminine role, and Omphale, the female character, performing the masculine part⁴³. The issue here was obviously the construction of an image whereby the queen of Egypt, a woman, was in most aspects set above Antony, the man.

The theme was sufficiently well-known in Antiquity and Antony significantly identifies himself as a descendant of Herakles⁴⁴. On the other hand, the hero of the Twelve Labours was commonly associated with Dionysian performances⁴⁵. Plutarch's text goes as far as suggesting that Antony might have cross-dressed, transvestitism being a practice with Bacchian resonances⁴⁶.

However, by identifying Marc Antony as the husband of two wives, Octavia and Cleopatra, as Plutarch does in his biography of the Roman tribune, the author again presents the character in connection with degenerated Orientalism, which represents the opposite of what the Romans believed in⁴⁷. It should however be noted that polygamy was particularly important for the Pharaohs, the Egyptian royalty in the apogee of Nilotic civilization, and decisively marked its physiognomy. In contrast, Augustus' family laws, which partly included a regulation of sexual practices, were extremely severe⁴⁸.

Another trait the Romans seemed to associate to Cleopatra as a suggestion of her Oriental otherness is her character as a magician or a sorcerer. It is important to note that in Greco-Roman literature witches and sorcerers are often depicted as characters from beyond frontiers, that is, as «others»⁴⁹. To cite some examples, there is Medea, from Tessalia – recreated in *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, an Alexandrian intellectual; Circe, of Ea, an

⁴¹ On this see WILLIAMS, 2010; WILLIAMS, 1995: 517-539; VEYNE, 1982: 26-33; see also Euripides, *Bacchae*, a play that represents Dionysos as an effeminate entity.

⁴² Plu. *Ant.* 53, 58.

⁴³ Apollod. *Bibliotheca* 2.6.3; Ov. *Her.* 9.55; D.S. 4.31.

⁴⁴ According to Plutarch, the *Antonii* claimed to be descendants of Herakles through Anton. See Plu. *Ant.* 4; 36; 60; 76; see also RODRIGUES, 1999: 217-259.

⁴⁵ E.g. KUZNETSOVA, 1998.

⁴⁶ Plu. *Ant.* 29.

⁴⁷ Plu. *Ant.* 91; cf. SCOTT, 1933: 7-49.

⁴⁸ See e.g. TEIXEIRA, 2007: 361-366.

⁴⁹ The theme is also present in Josephus; see RODRIGUES, 1999: 217-259.

island lost in the middle of the Homeric ocean, which in itself constitutes an extended metaphor for alterity and strangeness; Lucan's *effera Erictho*, another especially terrifying Thessalian witch; and also Apuleius' sorcerers⁵⁰.

Plutarch seems to follow that line of characterization, apparent, for instance, in his referring Cleopatra simply as *Aigyptia*⁵¹. The author repeatedly suggests that the queen kept the Roman tribune under her spell and poisoned him with herbs, causing him to lose his self-control⁵². In a different passage, her experiments, undertaken with the intent to procure the most effective deadly poison are presented as a witch's maneuvers in the search of a powerful potion⁵³. Created by Theocritus the Alexandrian, Simaetha is another witch whose behavior has parallels with that of Cleopatra⁵⁴. A taste for the esoteric is associated with the East and, in this particular case, with Alexandria. Also the queen's dissimulations are coherent with the image of a sorcerer, since her charm weapons include cunning, pretence and manipulation⁵⁵. Cleopatra decides to pretend that she is lovesick for the Roman tribune, going so far as to lose weight through a diet in order to deceive her lover into the belief that she was consumed by passion:

She therefore pretended to be passionately in love with Antony herself, and reduced her body by slender diet; she put on a look of rapture when Antony drew near, and one of faintness and melancholy when he went away. She would contrive to be often seen in tears, and then would quickly wipe the tears away and try to hide them, as if she would not have Antony notice them. And she practised these arts while Antony was intending to go up from Syria to join the Medæ⁵⁶.

Thus, there is also seduction of an erotic type (similar to the seduction Jason and Ulysses are objects of in their relationship with their respective female partners) to which men can hardly resist. In fact, what really defines Antony as an anti-hero in this context is precisely the fact that he is not strong enough to be able to resist the charms of Cleopatra the magician. Here the disguises, dissimulations and masks generally present in the Plutarchean text seem to somehow come together⁵⁷.

⁵⁰ A. R. Arg.; *Od.* 10; *Luc. Fars.* 6.508, 640, 725, 826; *Apul. Met.* passim.

⁵¹ *Plu. Ant.* 25. In spite of being the queen of Egypt, Cleopatra was not an Egyptian. The image of Egyptians was from Antiquity commonly identified with a mastery of the esoteric; therefore besides ascribing barbarism to the queen other connotations were also mobilized. In *Verg. Aen.* 8.688, the same reference is used when she is referred as *Aegyptia coniunx*.

⁵² E.g. *Plu. Ant.* 60; 72.

⁵³ *Plu. Ant.* 71.

⁵⁴ *Theocr. Id.* 2; *Plu. Ant.* 60. On this see SILVA, 2008. One wonders whether Cleopatra's character in Plutarch is not indebted to Theocritus' Simaetha.

⁵⁵ *Plu. Ant.* 53; 76.

⁵⁶ *Plu. Ant.* 53.

⁵⁷ *Plu. Ant.* 29; 53.

Poisons, a domain in which Cleopatra seems to move with ease, can also be seen as an Oriental *topos*. In Latin historiography, for example, Germanicus, the son of Antonia and Tiberius' rival, is poisoned after making a trip to the East⁵⁸. The case of Circe can again be mentioned: in her *Odyssey* episode, «potions» and «filters» are centrally important⁵⁹.

Such command and control of the esoteric also gives the character an image of *crudelitas*, also not without Eastern connotations, while it depicts Cleopatra as an autonomous and enterprising woman. The queen's cruel disposition can perhaps be compared with that of other oriental female monarchs celebrated in Herodotus⁶⁰. Here one can find characters of queens which often have active, autonomous roles. And what greater autonomy could there be than the exercise of power in the domain of the political. That in itself would be enough to explain the treason evoked and perpetrated by the queen of Egypt⁶¹, including her forever in the company of the odious in the Greco-Roman imaginary (and again quoting the *Aeneid*, we are reminded of the traitors' place in the economy of Vergil's poem)⁶². It is that same autonomy that enables Cleopatra, a cunning woman, to exert her alluring power and fulfill her otherwise unattainable aims⁶³.

One last aspect should now be mentioned concerning this metonymic characterization of Cleopatra in her relationship to the Orient as a whole and, more specifically, with Alexandria. If the previously listed elements (luxury, idleness, magic or deceit) can be considered to be negative qualities, now the character's definition includes a positive element, i.e., her erudition. The queen is presented as a woman who valorizes knowledge and literature, which, as is easily understood, also reflects the image of Alexandria. Cleopatra as an erudite woman is clearly perceptible in the passage where Plutarch mentions the fact that the queen could speak seven different languages:

For her beauty, as we are told, was in itself not altogether incomparable, nor such as to strike those who saw her; but converse with her had an irresistible charm, and her presence, combined with the persuasiveness of her discourse and the character which was somehow diffused about her behaviour towards others, had something stimulating about it. There was sweetness also in the tones of her voice; and her tongue, like an instrument of many strings, she could readily turn to whatever language she pleased, so that in her interviews with Barbarians she very seldom had need of an interpreter, but made her replies to most of them herself and unassisted, whether they were Ethiopians, Troglodytes, Hebrews, Arabians, Syrians, Medes or Parthians. Nay, it is said that she knew the speech of many other peoples also,

⁵⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 2.47-88.

⁵⁹ *Od.* 10. The character of Martha the Syrian prophetess, in Plu. *Mari.* 17, may be said to share some of these features.

⁶⁰ Plu. *Ant.* 77. In Hdt. 7-9, about queen Artemisia of Halicarnassus and queen Amestris, the reader becomes acquainted with the former's power and the latter's cruelty.

⁶¹ Plu. *Ant.* 73; 76.

⁶² Verg. *Aen.* 6.608-622.

⁶³ Plu. *Ant.* 53.

*although the kings of Egypt before her had not even made an effort to learn the native language, and some actually gave up their Macedonian dialect*⁶⁴.

This character description, however, is far from being innocent since the author makes a point of mentioning Cleopatra's mellifluous speech, strongly suggesting a deceitful, manipulative woman.

Lust and licentiousness, luxury and idleness, magic and superstition, cruelty and deceitfulness – and also envy⁶⁵: these are the main features of Cleopatra's portrait in Plutarch. To them we can add erudition/knowledge, which are the exception to the negative tenor of the character's construction and possibly the only positive traits identifiable in the last queen of Egypt⁶⁶. Simultaneously, those are the same items that concur to form an image of Alexandria, itself a metonymy of the Orient, in the Roman mind frame that constructs and reflects it. It is certainly in the Other that alterity is better defined and gains stronger consistency⁶⁷. By adding the character of Mark Antony, the figure that in Plutarch's text almost blends for a moment with the figure of his partner Cleopatra, as if nonexistent except in connection with her, the concept of the Orient as deviant is emphasized. If in those parts women are magicians, witches, impostors, if they are lustful, idle, luxurious, cruel, cunning, too erudite, often in control of events, then men are effeminate, weak, subordinate, permissive and less wise. The same description applies to the kings or even the despots of the East: everything a Roman man should not be; everything a Roman woman is not supposed to be⁶⁸. In contrast to it, one can read the passage where Antony, dressed in his armour, humiliates himself, submissively presenting one of the bravest soldiers of his army to the queen, as though she were the one to whom he had a duty to report: «Then, exalted by his victory, he went into the palace, kissed Cleopatra, all armed as he was, and presented to her the one of his soldiers who had fought most spiritedly»⁶⁹. A final comparison seems to be especially pertinent here: Cleopatra and Helen, both seen as *femmes fatales* in western tradition, both connected with eastern cities – Alexandria and Troy. Both

⁶⁴ Plu. *Ant.* 27.

⁶⁵ Plu. *Ant.* 57.

⁶⁶ It is of course positive from our point of view, not necessarily from Plutarch's or any other Ancient author's. In fact, rhetorically, even this feature can be presented as negative feature in the queen's character, especially when compared with Antony's.

⁶⁷ Cf. HARTOG, 1991.

⁶⁸ As an example of what was expected from the Roman matron, see the famous Epitaph for Claudia (Rome, 2nd century B.C.; *ILLRP* 973=*ILS* 8403=*CLE* 52=*CIL* 12.1211=*CIL* VI.15346; SHELTON, 1988, 45.1 ES: «Stranger, I have only a few words to say. Stop and read them. – This is the unlovely tomb of a lovely woman. Her parents named her Claudia. She loved her husband with all of her heart. She bore two sons; one of these she leaves on earth, the other she has already placed under the earth. She was charming in speech, yet pleasant and proper in manner. She managed the household well. She spun wool. I have spoken. Go on your way».

⁶⁹ Plu. *Ant.* 74.

Cleopatra and Helen emerge as female figures that lead men to perdition, e.g., Antony, Achilles, Paris, and Hector. As queens, both are portrayed as the cause of wars that lead to the destruction of those who engage in them⁷⁰. Consequently, it might not be inadequate to give the last queen of Egypt the epithet of «Cleopatra of Alexandria».

In conclusion, Plutarch's Cleopatra represents aspects of an undesired Orientalism and can in fact be read as a portrait of a whole city, Alexandria, itself the image of a whole culture and a whole civilization.

⁷⁰ Plu. *Ant.* 56; 62.

PART II
THE MULTICULTURAL
EXPERIENCE
IN ALEXANDRIAN
ARTS AND SOCIETY

ALEXANDRIA'S REVOLUTIONARY ROLE IN NORTH-SOUTH NAVIGATION AND TRADE

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Abstract: *The establishing of a direct connection in Antiquity between Egypt and India was a difficult and protracted process. Apart from unsubstantiated hypotheses, it went through four major stages: 1 – During the third and second millennia B.C. Egypt, directed its marine activities in the south to East Africa, which culminated in the expedition of Queen Hatshepsut to «Punt». 2 – The rise of Arabian kingdoms in south Arabia (Yemen) ca. 1000 B.C., and their caravan trade across the Arabian Peninsula. Due to their unique geographical location, they controlled transit trade between Egypt, India and East Africa. 3 – In the latter part of the 4th century B.C., the global enterprise of Alexander brought about drastic changes. The realization of India's fabulous commercial possibilities encouraged Alexandrian navigators to increase their profit from the exchange trade with India. 4 – The situation was further upset by the rise of Rome as the dominant power in the Mediterranean in the 2nd century B.C. In response to the new changes and in order to further increase their profit, Alexandrian navigators realized that their only chance lay in by-passing the Arabian ports and in sailing directly across the ocean to India. This was achieved in 118–116 B.C. by discovering the Monsoon wind and their system. Gradually, Alexandrian navigators enjoyed an unrivaled dominance in the Red and Indian seas.*

The establishing of a direct connection in Antiquity between Egypt and India was a difficult and protracted process. In this paper, I shall try to present a brief analysis of Egypt's historical experience. The earliest traceable relations between India and West Asia were first

evident in the Gulf area and in Mesopotamia. Indian objects and Indian influences infiltrated from Mesopotamia by land through the hands of several intermediaries to other West-Asian countries including Egypt¹.

On the other hand, we have records of a long chain of sea voyages and expeditions that set out in Antiquity from the Egyptian coast on the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean, yet the range and ultimate destination of those voyages have repeatedly been disputed. For example the German geographer Heinrich Quiring, once argued in 1952 that there existed in the past a persistent legend of a Gold Island in the East Indies and that expeditions were being sent out until early in the 16th century to find the magical golden island. He then suggests that in order to identify the Golden Island, we must shift our viewpoint back to ancient Egypt. After surveying Egyptian records of the journey to Punt, he suddenly attributes to Herodotus that those voyages set out from the Red Sea in long ships for the Indies. Quiring next asserts *in the whole circumference of the Indian Ocean, Sumatra is the only island for which gold mining is demonstrable*. He finally concludes that the Ramessides of the 12th century B.C. in search for gold, were chiefly responsible for those expeditions; he also adds that after the death of Ramses III (ca. 1166 B.C.) the Egyptian decline began to set in.... soon after, this relationship was broken, probably 1090 B.C.².

More recently in 1975, another geographer, George Carter noted in a supporting paper «quiring shifts from Punt-in-Africa to Punt-in-the East-Indies. If Punt referred to the distant gold yielding land, it could have been both, or perhaps first one and then the other. The subject has long been debated»³. We shall have occasion to consider the location of Punt later on.

The above hypothesis appears to be rather speculative and cannot be fully substantiated on available historical evidence as the direct sea voyage between Egypt and India during the third and second millennia B.C. was fraught with many uncertainties and unknown dangers, e.g.: a) unexplored sea routes b) total ignorance of the prevailing wind-system over the Indian Ocean, not to speak of the Pacific. The Monsoon winds can become too violent for sailing ships c) at times, the hazards of piracy constituted a serious menace to navigation. The overcoming of these obstacles was gradually achieved, one step after another. We can trace the following three major stages in the development of Egyptian activities and trade in the Indian Ocean:

1. In the first place, during the third and second millennia B.C., Pharaonic Egypt seems to have directed its commercial marine activities towards the western side of the Indian Ocean, namely East Africa; this activity appears to have started at the time of the Old

¹ RATNAGAR, 2001: 43-54; GADD, 1971: 132-3.

² QUIRING, 1952: 93-5.

³ CARTER, 1975: 1-10.

Kingdom around the middle of the third millennium B.C. and was maintained throughout ancient history. The climax of Egyptian activities in this direction was undoubtedly the great naval expedition of Queen Hatshepsut to Punt and several other East African locations (ca. 1500 B.C.). The description as illustrated by the text and scenes of the Deir-el-Bahari Temple in Luxor, impresses upon us the magnitude of the expedition and its wide-ranging field of operation⁴. An indication of the magnitude of such expeditions can be found in the great *Papyrus Harris*⁵, composed later on by Ramses IV, on his accession to the throne (1166 B.C.) in memory of his father Ramses III and his achievements. Among the great deeds of Ramses III is recorded a naval expedition to Punt composed of 10,000 men. In a sense, it was a military force capable of confronting any opposition, a formation such as Hatshepsut may have used for her expedition. Another point worth mentioning is the duration of the voyage. On two earlier occasions in the 6th Dynasty and again in the 12th Dynasty, we are told that the round journey to Punt, required three years⁶. This lengthy journey implies either a long sojourn at the destination or several stops on the way, a customary practice among merchants in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

In view of the long-standing controversy around the location of Punt between Africa and Asia, I would like to consider a text that I believe should settle the question once and for all. It is a partly damaged inscription addressed to King Psamtek of the 7th century B.C. that records a startling climatic observation on conditions in the land of Punt that to my mind, has not been sufficiently taken note of. It reads as follows:

... a great marvel took place in thy reign, such as has not been seen or heard of ; the heavens rained upon the mount of Punt, rain being scanty in the fields of the south... in this month the rainfall took place at a time when rain was out of season even in the north land, thy mother Neith of the temple of Sais came to thee to conduct to thee the Nile, giving life to your men⁷.

This is so far, the earliest known observation recording the Monsoon rain upon the mountains of Punt. The fact that this text explicitly states that the flooding of the Nile in summer was caused by rain on Punt, proves beyond any doubt that Punt could only be in East Africa; it could not be anywhere else in Asia, neither east nor west. In view of this evidence, I find it unacceptable, without conclusive evidence, to shift earlier Egyptian expeditions from East Africa to the Indies in the Pacific⁸. Yet it is conceivable that smaller naval units could have sailed east from the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, hugging the coast as far as

⁴ BREASTED, 1905: 187 (vol. II) ff.

⁵ BREASTED, 1905: 15-412 (vol. IV).

⁶ Cf. CARTER, 1975: 2.

⁷ PETRIE, GRIFFITH, MURRAY, 1888: 107-8.

⁸ As argued by QUIRING, 1952 and CARTER, 1975.

India. Unfortunately we have no clear indication that it was a regular practice until the end of the second millennium B.C.

2. Secondly, around the year one thousand B.C. major changes took place in both the Eastern Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. The Eastern Mediterranean suffered a commotion of several migrating peoples both by land and sea. In consequence, several older kingdoms fell and new ones emerged. Egypt had its share of suffering a succession of neighbouring foreign domination. In the western Indian Ocean, South Arabia, Yemen of today, emerged rather suddenly as a leading trading centre. This development was the direct result of discovering the peculiar faculty of the camel of being able to subsist without food and drink up to four days. Consequently, South Arabians were able to establish their caravan trade across the Arabian Peninsula and thereby became a chief participant in the valuable north-south trade between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Enhanced further by their unique geographical location in command of the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, they were able to impose their own terms on the other principal participants in that trade: India, Egypt and East Africa. Thus no ship, Indian or Egyptian was allowed to sail north or south beyond the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb without the approval of the Arab authorities. As an alternative, the various parties were required to bring their respective wares and products to the Arabian ports and markets where they could conduct their exchange and business, to the profit of Arabia Felix (Eudaemon Arabia) as it came to be known. This arrangement however, allowed – perhaps for the first time – closer encounter and direct dealing between Indian and Egyptian merchants and sailors.

3. This situation continued for several centuries and each party maintained its role without any known violation until the 4th century B.C., when the global campaign of Alexander the Great, brought about drastic changes. For the first time, India became directly and better known to the Mediterranean people. As a result of the geographical explorations initiated by Alexander and maintained by his immediate successors, India in particular attracted the attention of Hellenistic scholars, most eminent among them were Eratosthenes and his colleagues of the Alexandria school⁹. With the combined better knowledge of the land of India and better realization of its fabulous commercial possibilities, Alexandrian sailors and merchants in Egypt tried to continuously increase their profit from the exchange trade with India in order to satisfy the ever-increasing demand in the Mediterranean market. Thus in the then prevailing conditions in the Indian Ocean, Alexandrian merchants controlled the sea-borne trade up and down the Red Sea while Nabataeans and South Arabians controlled the over-land caravan trade across the Arabian Desert whereas Indian and Arabian merchants strictly kept to themselves complete control of traf-

⁹ Strb. 1.2.1.

fic in the Indian Ocean. This delicate balance was maintained and jealously guarded till the middle of the 2nd century B.C. by the South Arabians who profited and prospered by being the main entrepôt centre for the north-south trade.

This commercial set up is very clearly reflected in two pertinent statements, the one by Diodorus Siculus (mid-1st century B.C.) when he speaks of «The prosperous islands near Eudaemon Arabia which were visited by sailors from every port and especially from Potana, the city which Alexander founded on the river Indus»¹⁰. The other statement is of a later date (around A.D. 40) in the so-called *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* by an unknown author. It reads as follows: «The port of Eudaemon Arabia (Aden) was once before a full fledged city, when vessels from India did not go to Egypt, and those of Egypt did not dare sail to places further on, but came only this far»¹¹. Any attempts by Alexandrian ships to sail beyond the port of Eudaemon Arabia were strongly discouraged, if they did sail, it was by laboriously hugging the coast and in the words of the *Periplus* «sailing round the bays»¹².

4. This situation however was upset by a drastic change in the balance of power in the Mediterranean basin. The prominent position of South Arabia in the Indian Ocean was more than counterbalanced by the unforeseen rise of Rome as a dominant power in the Mediterranean after her victory over Carthage in 202 B.C.¹³. It was then that Rome adopted a policy of expansion and supremacy in the Eastern Mediterranean, while the island of Rhodes had been enjoying a central role in trade and navigation, and had maintained close friendly relations with all trading centers in the region. Rome however, looked with disfavour upon the prosperity of independent Rhodes. Not wishing to resort to the use of force against that powerful distant island, Rome launched what can be called a policy of economic blockade, by inducing or coercing other countries to transfer their route and agencies from Rhodes to the nearby poor island of Delos. Under growing Roman pressure, Alexandrian merchants gradually moved their ware-houses and agencies in accordance with the wish of Rome. There is ample evidence from the 2nd century B.C. testifying to the close trade connection between Alexandria and Delos. Significant in this respect is a dedicatory inscription set up in Delos by «The chiefs of the union of Alexandrian merchants»¹⁴.

In the direction of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, there was another development. With the growing awareness in Rome of the possibilities of the north-south trade in incense, spices, aromatics, precious stones, gold, ivory, ebony, medical herbs and later on silk, Roman businessmen sought to invest more in this line of trade through Alexandria.

¹⁰ D.S. 3.47.9.

¹¹ *Periplus*, 1989: 26 lines 26-32.

¹² *Periplus*, 1989: 57. Also see editor's introduction and comm (p. 71-2).

¹³ For points discussed in this section in greater detail, see EL-ABBADI, 1993: 22-37.

¹⁴ DURRBACH, 1922: 108 (127-116 B.C.).

Consequently, more Roman capital was pumped into the Alexandrian market. Accumulating evidence substantiate this point.

A papyrus of the mid-2nd century B.C. reveals the formation in Alexandria of a multinational company for the importation of aromata from «the incense-bearing land» (Punt). The papyrus is a maritime loan contract in which the various parties (1 creditor, 1 banker, 5 debtors and 5 guarantors) belong to at least 7 different civic affiliations: Rome, Carthage, Messalia, Elea, Thesalonica and Macedonia. It is significant that the Roman, named Gnaeus was the banker through whose bank the transaction was made¹⁵.

Other inscriptions from Delos of the second half of the 2nd century B.C. indicate that Romans and Italians were already firmly established in Alexandria in no small numbers. In one example, a dedication was made by «Italians at Alexandria» (*Alexandreae Italici*)¹⁶. In another, we find Roman ship-owners and merchants dedicating to Apollo and expressing their gratitude to King Ptolemy VIII and to a certain Lochos who was a high ranking official at the royal court in Alexandria «on the occasion of the King's recovery of his throne in Alexandria»¹⁷. The occasion referred to in the dedication was that the King was expelled from Alexandria during a civil war (132-127 B.C.) and was reinstated by the intervention of the Roman senate.

The presence of this class of Romans and Italians was not confined to Alexandria since we meet them traversing the whole of Egypt up to the island of Philae, near Aswan. A small group of Latin inscriptions attest to this fact; they are written by four Roman citizens, three of them wrote down the date of their visit according to the Roman calendar (August 26th, 116 B.C.)¹⁸. The date 116 B.C. of these Latin inscriptions is of special interest because it coincides with an event of a global significance, namely the discovery of the Monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean by Alexandrian navigators. The story of the discovery was first recorded by Poseidonius (ca.130-51 B.C.) and was later on recorded by Strabo (36 B.C.-22 A.D.)¹⁹. We are told that a shipwrecked Indian sailor was found half dead by Egyptian coast guards of the Red Sea and brought to King Ptolemy VIII. To gain favour, the Indian sailor promised to guide any of the King's navigators on a direct sea voyage to India. The King immediately assigned an adventurous seaman in his service, Eudoxus of Cyzicus with the mission. Poseidonius mentions two direct journeys to India undertaken by Eudoxus, the first in 118 B.C. guided by the Indian sailor, it proved a success and Eudoxus brought back a cargo of aromatics and precious stones. The second, under the sole guidance of Eudoxus occurred in 116 B.C., when the King had just died and his wife Queen Cleopatra III was still reigning.

¹⁵ PREISIGKE, 1913-22.

¹⁶ DURRBACH, 1922: 107.

¹⁷ DURRBACH, 1922: 105-106 (127 B.C.).

¹⁸ ROCCATI, 1977a: 838-9; and *Supplementum Graecum* 28.1485. Also see D.S. 1.83.8-9.

¹⁹ Strb. 2.3.4-5.

Although Strabo disbelieved the entire story of Eudoxus, modern scholarship has accepted the historicity of the facts of Eudoxus' two voyages²⁰. They fit in with the international situation at the time. The enormous increase in the demand for Oriental and Southern goods in the Mediterranean market whetted the appetite of Alexandrian merchants to increase their share in the north-south trade. They also realized that their only chance lay in bypassing the Arabian ports and in sailing off directly across the ocean to the rich Indian market. Such an undertaking could not be attained without the substantial and powerful support of the Romans who were more than ready for the opportunity. It was not surprising therefore that Ptolemy VIII and his wife, both friends of Rome, demonstrated personal zeal and involvement in the project. The expertise of an Indian pilot with a thorough knowledge of the secret of the Monsoon winds would therefore be very much in demand.

The discovery of the Monsoon winds and their use for navigation by Alexandrian sailors had a very marked effect on the Egyptian scene. Not long after Eudoxus a new important office was created for the first time in the Egyptian administration, that of «Commander of the Red and Indian Seas», probably under Ptolemy XII in the first half of the 1st century B.C. The creation of such an office implies that the utilization of the Monsoon led to a marked increase in the regular commercial transactions with India. The new office was needed to ensure the safety of navigation engaged in that trade. Also, the fact that Rome decided in 56 B.C. to send a permanent Roman force to Alexandria to ensure the safety of King Ptolemy XII against any uprising by the population, confirms the magnitude of Roman capital invested in that trade.

The importance that Rome attached to that line of trade is confirmed still further, even after Augustus conquered and made Egypt a Roman province in 30 B.C. Soon after, in 26 B.C. Augustus commissioned his prefect in Egypt, Aelius Gallus to invade south Arabia by land. This land onslaught brought about considerable damage to the Sabaeans as far south as the city of Ma'reb, but did not completely cripple the commercial activity of the Arabian ports on the ocean²¹. Not satisfied with this result, Augustus later on in A.D. 1, launched another devastating naval attack²², that resulted, in the words of the *Periplus* «in sacking the port of Eudaemon Arabia (Aden) which declined into a mere village after having been a full-fledged city (polis)»²³.

Now that the port of Eudaemon Arabia was out of action, Alexandrian navigators of the Roman period enjoyed unrivalled dominance in the Red and Indian seas, a fact that rendered Egypt the main link between India and the Mediterranean.

²⁰ THIEL, 1966, *passim*; OTTO, BENGTON, 1938: 1-22.

²¹ Str. 16.4.23-24.

²² Plin. *Historia Naturalis*, 4.32.160; 12.30.55.

²³ *Periplus*, 26; Commentaries: 160.

COSMOPOLITAN TRENDS IN THE ARTS OF PTOLEMAIC ALEXANDRIA

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Abstract: *Among all the Alexandrias, Alexandria of Egypt enjoyed the quality of universality. Despite the glory achieved by the city for more than a thousand years, only a few monuments from that city remain, which do not match the glory and the greatness of its past. Nevertheless these remains are expressive of diversity in different fields. In the light of recent archaeological discoveries, we realize that fusion in Alexandrian art began with the time of the first two Ptolemies. One would tend to think of Ptolemaic Alexandria as a city that incorporated Egyptian and Greek traditions in both physical and cultural aspects of its life. New artistic motives were created to express the intellectual and artistic richness of the different cultures that resided in Alexandria and were influenced by the city's heterogeneous and cosmopolitan society. This paper is tracking the archaeological evidence on the universal trends in ancient Alexandrian art through an investigation of some monuments.*

Although Alexander the Great had never saw a single building in the new city which he ordered to be founded on the northern coast of Egypt, the building project was undertaken by the first two Ptolemies who succeeded the great conqueror on the throne of Egypt. Few decades after its construction, Alexandria proved to have become the metropolis of the Mediterranean. Due to its harbours and lighthouse, it played the role of a main trading centre and enjoyed a flourishing economy. The Ptolemies tended to make their capital city a place of attraction not only for merchants and businessmen but also for men of letters and

thoughts as well as skilled artists. Various ethnic groups from the then known world flocked into the city seeking its luxurious life and its new intellectual and artistic attractions. The Alexandrian scholarship through the Museum and its universal library had extended its influence on the mentality of the Alexandrian society as well as the other societies throughout the Hellenistic world. Such a society that hosted people of different races, religious ideas, languages, traditions and historical backgrounds was able to contribute to the human attitudes of life. Those factors had no doubt given Alexandrian life a concept of cosmopolitanism.

Tangible evidences of such an impressively leading society are unfortunately very few and do not match the glory and the greatness of Alexandria's past. Yet, the available archaeological remains can give us an idea about the nature of the artistic production of Ptolemaic Alexandria.

The main essences of Alexandria's multiculturalism, according to the majority of its inhabitants, were the two prominent civilizations of Egypt and Greece. Part of the Ptolemaic interior policy was to bridge the gap between the two traditions. To achieve this target, a new architectural and iconographic program was created. Such a program would have combined elements that can be accepted and appreciated by both races.

For the Ptolemies, Alexandria was intended to be a Greek city in its administrative, political and physical forms. They patronized the building of Greek temples for Greek deities and for themselves after the establishment of their dynastic ruler cult¹. Greek artists were among those who, encouraged by the rulers, migrated to Alexandria and began to produce their arts. Temples were built on the conventional Greek style using, not marble, but the available building material which were mainly limestone from Mex quarries (a suburb of Alexandria) or Granite from Aswan. The recently discovered limestone Boubasteion² which is fully Greek in its architectural design and the artifacts it yielded, and the famous Serapeum at the district of Rhacotis are testimonies of Greek architecture and taste. The majority of the architectural remains in both materials that are found sporadically in the city indicate the existence of the three main architectural orders known in Greek architecture.

On the other hand, outside Alexandria and the other Greek cities, the Ptolemies subsidized the building of new temples dedicated to the Egyptian gods in the typical Pharaonic architectural style. They also patronized the restoration, enlargement and the embellishment of some old temples in different cities of the Nile valley³. To declare their loyalty to

¹ FRASER, 1972: I, 213-46.

² This temple has been partially uncovered in a rescue excavation by the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquities inside the premises of the Central Security Forces of Alexandria in Ismail Fahmy Street at Kom El-Dikka, to the south of Foad Street, an area which was part of the ancient city's downtown. Excavation reports has not yet been published but the foundation deposits, coins and the style of the uncovered marble and terracotta statuettes (more than 500 pieces) date the temple to the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes.

³ Examples are at Dendera, Edfu, Kom Ombo, Philae and others. For a full discussion of the Ptolemaic policy towards the Egyptian temples and priests see: HÖLBL, 2001: 77 ff.

the Egyptian pantheon, they themselves were depicted on the walls of those temples as Pharaohs offering and paying homage to the deities of the temples in a manner similar to what the native kings were used to.

The duality can clearly be attested in the royal portraits not only in temple reliefs but also in free standing monumental sculptures⁴. The basalt bust of Ptolemy I in the British Museum is one good example⁵. It shows the king wearing the Pharaonic *nemes*-headdress and the *uraeus*. The wide smile, the fleshy facial features and the highly raised ears are characteristics of the portraits of Pharaohs of the 30th Dynasty. In spite of the Egyptian idealistic facial features, the naturalistic finishing of the surface and the raised eyebrows indicate a Ptolemaic dating. The Louvre has one striking example of a Greek style portrait of the same king⁶. The marble head is slightly turned to the left with emphasized neck bones. The rendering of the facial features indicates the king's mature age. The round eyes, articulated lips and the large protruding chin are similar to the coin portraits of Soter⁷. The twin granite statues of Philadelphus and Arsinoe II in the Vatican Museum⁸, identified only by inscriptions, show how obscure and general the representation of the royal couple is. The fleshy faces, single-arc eyebrows, full lips and the idealistic smile, are features typical to the royal portraits of the 30th Dynasty⁹. The entire execution of the two statues is pure Egyptian; garments are the traditional Pharaonic *shendyt*-kilt and the transparent tight female dress. The frontal posture of the body with the advanced left leg and the clenched hands holding something in the fist, part of the dress as in the Vatican Arsinoe or *ankh*-sign as in the basalt statue of Cleopatra VII in the Hermitage Museum¹⁰, are direct indications for their Egyptian style free from any Greek element. The queen wears the Egyptian wig adorned with a double *uraeus*, an Egyptian attribute referring to the queen's epithet as mistress of the Two Lands. On the faïence *oinochoe* decorated in relief known as the queens' vases¹¹, and on the coins of Arsinoe II which represent the queen in a pure Greek style, this double *uraeus* has been translated into a double *cornucopia*, a Ptolemaic invention which

⁴ It is worthy of mentioning here that the portraits of the Egyptian high officials and priests followed the same development of the Egyptian style royal portraiture. STANWICK, 2002: 67.

⁵ Inv. EA 1641. BUDGE, 1914: 23, pl. 52; ASHTON, 2001a: 40-41, no. 3.

⁶ Musée du Louvre Ma 849: KYRIELEIS, 1975: 12, 41, 126, 165, A 1, pl. 2; SMITH, 1988: 90, 111, 164, no. 46, pl. 34, 1-3.

⁷ For other examples of pure Greek style Ptolemaic portraits see: ASHTON, 2001b: 8-11; STANWICK, 2002: 221-36, nos. 213-82.

⁸ Vatican Museo Gregoriano Egizio, respectively nos. 22681. 22682. JOSEPHSON, 1997a: 43-44, pl. 13c; ARNOLD, 1999: 342, no. 72; STANWICK, 2002: 66-67, nos. A3, A4.

⁹ JOSEPHSON, 1997a: 8, 13, 26, 35, 43, l. 3b.

¹⁰ St. Petersburg, Hermitage Museum, inv. 3936. identified as Arsinoe II by BOTHMER 1960: 192; This identification proved to be incorrect because of the triple *uraeus*, exclusively an attribute of the last queen in the dynasty of the Lagids as well as the down turned corners of the mouth and narrow eyes which are typical to Cleopatra's portraits on her coins, see: ASHTON, 2001a: 160-61, no.160.

¹¹ THOMPSON, 1973: passim; ASHTON, 2003: passim.

¹² The other queen who carried the double *cornucopia* in her portraits was Cleopatra VII who was known for her attempt to imitate Arsinoe II. The basalt statue in the Hermitage Museum is one clear example. See *supra* n. 10.

became an exclusive attribute of Arsinoe II¹². Other Pharaonic *regalia* are invariably represented in the Egyptian style portraits of the Ptolemies such as the *uraeus*, the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt, the back pillars sometimes inscribed in hieroglyphs. One would be sure that an Egyptian native sculptor was in charge for the execution of such statues¹³. The majestic appearance and the divine atmosphere following the native Egyptian norms and the understanding of the Egyptian religious ideology emphasizes the legitimacy of the new rulers and expresses continuity in Dynastic kingship.

The duality of Ptolemaic official artistic styles, Greek for Alexandria and the other Greek cities in Egypt, namely Naucratis and Ptolemais, and Egyptian for the rest of the country is supposed to have been dominating Ptolemaic arts at least up till year 217 B.C.¹⁴. In this year the Raphia battle took place and the Egyptian fighters proved to have been strong enough to achieve victory¹⁵. This seemed to have been a turning point in the Ptolemaic policy towards the Egyptians. Inter-marriage between the Greeks and the Egyptians

had increasingly been accepted. The offspring of such a social change was a new generation whose artists had the aptitude of mingling different elements from both traditions. Hence a new style emerged based on the Egyptian approach incorporated with Greek ideas. Greek hair and faces with individualizing features coherent to the subject's personality are the main characteristics of the new style.

Examples of this mixed style portraits are very numerous and are dated from the reign of Ptolemy IV to the end of the Ptolemaic rule. Their geographical distribution is so wide that they cover the entire country including Alexandria. The collection of the



Fig. 1: Head of Ptolemy VI, Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria (photo by the author).

¹³ For other examples of pure Egyptian style portraits see: BOTHMER, 1960: passim; ASHTON, 2001a: 42-43, no. 5; 54-55, no. 20; 56, no. 22; ASHTON, 2001b: 84-88, nos. 5-11; STANWICK, 2002: nos. A3-A42.

¹⁴ The study of Ibrahim Noshy published in 1937 has been one of the first studies to discuss this duality. Noshy insisted on the idea that the Greek and Egyptian styles went in two parallel lines with no interfusion or mingling between the two traditions: NOSHY, 1937: passim.

¹⁵ ROSTOVITZEFF, 1955: 559-61; FRASER, 1972: I, 60-61.

¹⁶ Inv. 3357, from Canopus, a suburb of Alexandria.

Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria has a grey granite head (Fig. 1)¹⁶ attributed to Ptolemy VI¹⁷. The head was part of a colossal statue supported by a back pillar in the Pharaonic style which shows the king wearing the *nemes*-headdress with a *uraeus*. The facial features are similar to Philometor's coins. The hair, unknown in the native Pharaonic iconography, is rendered in a naturalistic way over the forehead. The eyes which were inlaid (inlay is now missing) have the almond shape which is sometimes called «the Ptolemaic eyes» because of resemblance with many other portraits of members of the Lagid family.

This sequence of duality was evident until the last two decades of the past century¹⁸ when a series of underwater discoveries took place by two great French expeditions jointly with the SCA¹⁹, in areas around the citadel of Qaitbay, the coasts of the former Pharos Island and in the Eastern harbour and the suburb towns of Canopus and Herakleion. These two extensive excavations resulted in the discovery of hundreds of granite blocks from huge buildings and a considerable number of Greco-Egyptian style Ptolemaic royal portraits which had once stood at the entrance of the eastern harbour of Alexandria. Studies of the fruits of these discoveries led to a dramatic change in two previously established ideas. The first is related to the period when the shift from the purely Egyptian representations of the Ptolemies to the new trend of incorporating Greek elements took place. The second is the idea of the full separation between Greek and Egyptian styles in royal portraits between Alexandria and the other Greek cities on the one hand and the other parts of Egypt on the other. In other words, the concept of Alexandria as having been a purely Hellenic city has been reconsidered if not changed.

Very indicative in this concern is the colossal statue which stands now in front of the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Fig. 2)²⁰. This statue was part of a group of Ptolemaic royal couples which had once stood in front of the great Pharos lighthouse of Alexandria²¹. It rep-

¹⁷ Some attributed this head to Ptolemy IV: BRECCIA, 1926: 59-60, no.12, l. 26, 2; ADRIANI, 1938: 103; For its attribution to Ptolemy VI see: KYRIELEIS, 1975: 59-62, F2; KISS, 1976: 294; SMITH, 1988: 170, no. 72; GRIMM, 1998: 116-17, fig. 117 a-b; ASHTON, 2001a: 53-54, no. 19; ASHTON, 2001b: 88, no. 15; STANWICK, 2002: 107-108, no. B7.

¹⁸ LAWRENCE, 1927: 67 ff.; BIEBER, 1961: 4; SCHLUMBERGER, 1970: passim; MARTIN *et al.*, 1970: 339.

¹⁹ The first was the expedition of the Centre d'études alexandrines (CeAlex) led by Jean-Yves Empereur who concentrated his efforts in the area around the citadel of Qaitbay, the coasts of the former Pharos Island. The second was that of the European Institute of Underwater Antiquities led by Frank Goddio who explored the Eastern harbour as well as the suburb towns of Canopus and Herakleion.

²⁰ Discovered in the 1990s by the expedition of the CeAlex, salvaged and restored by the same team in October 1995. Erected in its current place in 2001.

²¹ Of this group of Ptolemaic couples, a queen wearing the knotted garment of Isis and with a corkscrew hair style with a *uraeus* and diadem has been recovered earlier in the 1960s by the Egyptian scuba diver Kamel Abu El-Saadat. FROST, 1975: 126, fig. 1. It was incorrectly identified as Isis Pharia, until the new discoveries, which have salvaged the statue's Hathoric crown, proved that it is a Ptolemaic queen. Because of the eroded facial features, arguments for its dating and identification went the same as those for the Ptolemy of the Bibliotheca, some dated it to the early Ptolemaic Period: GRIMAL, 1996: 567; EMPEREUR, 1998a: 94; CORTIGGIANI, 1998: 39-40, fig. 10. Others dated it to the mid 2nd century B.C.: ASHTON, 2001a: 58, no. 24b; ASHTON, 2001b: 110, no. 56; STANWICK, 2002: 116, no. c27.

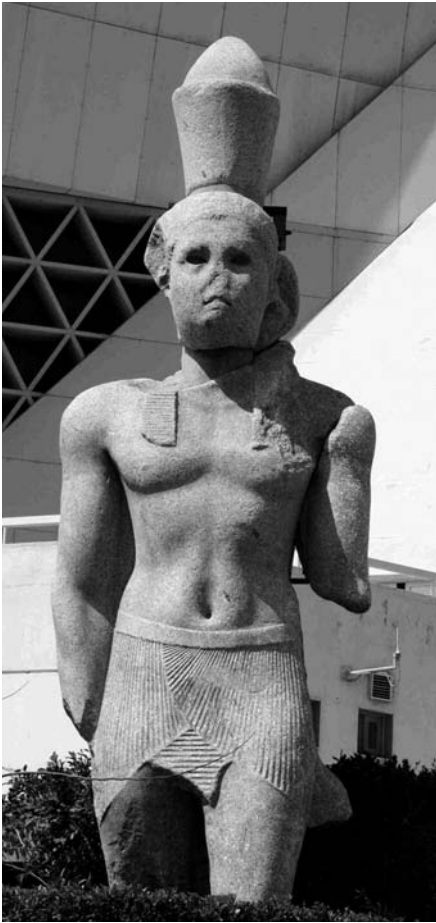


Fig. 2: Statue of Ptolemy II?, Alexandria (photo by the author).

resents a frontally standing Ptolemy with the left leg advanced in the conventional Egyptian style. He wears a ribbed *nemes*-headdress with the double crown and the *shendyt*. A mixture of Greek elements is clearly visible such as the royal diadem and the inlayed eyes (now missing) and a row of locks of hair which appear under the *nemes*. According to stylistic criteria, Empereur, the discoverer²², Grimal, Cortigiani, Yoyotte and Kiss dated the statue back to the first half of the 3rd century²³. Others dated it to the mid-2nd century²⁴. Guimier-Sorbets emphasizes the earlier date for the statue according to her study of the base and its ornaments, she interprets it as a posthumous figure of Ptolemy I executed during the reign of Ptolemy II and erected there on the occasion of the deification of Soter and his queen Berenice as *Theoi Soteroi*²⁵.

This statue together with others of the same group indicate clearly that the Ptolemies have chosen Egyptian material and style for their statues which were to be erected at the entrance of the great harbour of their capital. By this choice, they emphasized the idea that they are the successors of the Pharaohs, the legitimate rulers of a civilization that inspired the Greeks at their early beginnings. Choosing this particular location for their colossals meant that they were the patron deities for the city and its harbour, saviours of mariners and protec-

tors of navigation, as one would infer from the inscription on the famous lighthouse of Alexandria²⁶. Even though the concept of a protecting deity for the city and the harbour is a Greek one, the choice of the king and his queen to be those deities expresses an Egyptian direct cultural influence. For the Egyptians, the king is the founder and controller of stability and prosperity of the country. Worship has to be carried out in his name. The Egyptian

²² EMPEREUR, 1996: 967-968, figs. 4-6; EMPEREUR, 1998a: 76-77; EMPEREUR, 1998b: 103, 307, no. 64.

²³ GRIMAL, 1996: 568-570; CORTIGIANI, 1998: 35-40, 103, fig. 9; YOYOTTE, 1998a: 204, no. 18; KISS, 1998: 173.

²⁴ ASHTON, 2001a: 58, no. 24a; ASHTON, 2001b: 92, no. 20; STANWICK, 2002: 115=16, no. c22.

²⁵ GUIMIER-SORBETS, 2007: 163-176.

²⁶ FRASER, 1972: I, 18 ff.; II, notes 104-124.

priests must support the throne on which seats the new Horus, the successor of Osiris. Ruler cult of the pharaohs was a principal part of the Egyptian religion, a phenomenon that had not been known in Greece or Macedon. It was natural then for such «cult» statues to appear in Egyptian attire which is not void from Greek elements that express the particularity of the Lagids as Hellenistic dynasts ruling a powerful kingdom.

One last example is very important in this concern, the basalt statue of Hor son of Hor, priest of Thoth during the late Ptolemaic Period (Fig. 3)²⁷. It is one of a series of male statuary type characterized by the fringed mantle which is usually worn over a sleeved tunic²⁸. The statue is in the Egyptian conventional striding posture with the right hand sticking to the body and the other bent at the elbow and turned forward holding something in its clenched fists. The facial features seem to express the true features of the subject. The curved lines bordering the area between the nostrils, the mouth and the chin together with the receding curved hair borders over the forehead express the serious and pensive moods which are characteristics of the veristic Alexandrian style. Inscriptions on the back pillar indicate Hor's priestly office²⁹. The importance of this statue lies in its provenance at Kom El-Dikka in Alexandria.

Recent excavations at the area proved that part of it was occupied by the Boubasteion³⁰ which was an early Ptolemaic religious centre. Excavations of the Polish expedition in the vicinity of the Boubasteion indicate that during the Ptolemaic Period the area was a Greek residential district³¹. The importance of this area was gradually increasing to the extent that in late Roman times it became part of the city's centre³².

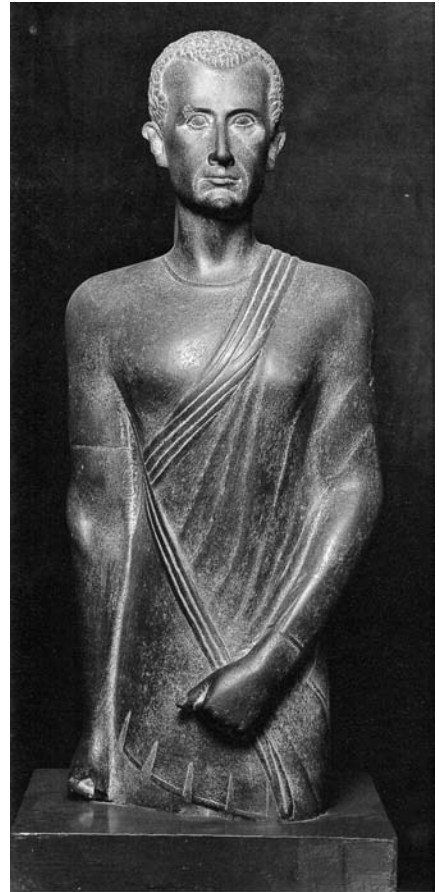


Fig. 3: Statue of Hor son of Hor, Cairo Egyptian Museum.

²⁷ Egyptian Museum at Cairo, JE 38310, CG 697.

²⁸ For other examples in this series see: ASHTON, 2001a: 178-92, nos. 187, 189-91.

²⁹ BORCHHARDT, 1930: 39-40, pl. 128; GRAINDOR, 1939: 138, no. 74; BOTHMER, 1960: 170-73; GRIMM, JOHANNES, 1975: 19, no. 16; ASHTON, 2001a: 182-83, no. 190.

³⁰ See *supra* n. 2.

³¹ KUBIAK, 1967: 47-80.

³² MAJCHEREK, 2003: 25-34; MCKENZIE, 2003: 35-63.

In the light of the great number of huge granite architectural elements which were located submerged in the area around the citadel of Qaitbay, former location of the Pharos lighthouse, and the discovery of early Ptolemaic mixed style sculptures not only royal portraits but also portraits of individuals, and the presence of some early Ptolemaic sculptures in the pure Egyptian style inside Alexandria in addition to some literary testimonies of the presence of Egyptian elements in the famous boat-palace of Ptolemy IV, *Thalamegos*³³, one would tend to think of Ptolemaic Alexandria as a city that incorporated Egyptian and Greek traditions in both physical and cultural aspects of its life.

The strong Egyptian tradition and its prominent appearance in Ptolemaic arts was one of the reasons which led some scholars of the 19th century to believe that Alexandria, unlike the other Hellenistic centres, had not any opportunity to introduce its own artistic creations³⁴. During the 20th centuries, systematic rescue excavations at the city and its environs yielded plenty of plastic arts. Such works of art responded positively to Theodor Schreiber who was the first to speak of an Alexandrian school of art using the much disputed term of *Pan-Alexandrianism*³⁵. Schreiber's concluded that Alexandria was the place of origin for many of the known Hellenistic artistic trends. Since then, the concept of the Alexandrian contribution to Hellenistic art was a subject of an endless series of discussions and disputations³⁶.

There is no doubt that the Greek artists at Alexandria worked under the auspices of the kings to introduce arts on the official level according to the norms of fourth century masters. In the same mainstream of Hellenistic sculpture, Alexandrian sculptors had their own contributions; they managed to mix the Praxitelean softness and S-curved bodies with the Lysippan small heads and smart bodies in addition to the penetration into the personality of their subjects expressing particularly their pensive moods³⁷. Two main features are attributed with considerable evidences to Alexandrian artists; *Sfumato*, which is a technique that makes the sculpted human face looks distant from the viewer as if there is a barrier of transparent smoke between them. *Morbidezza* is a feature complementing the *sfumato*, it is a way of rendering the surfaces so smoothly and tenderly with delicate features that give the viewer the feeling of high ranked personality with austere beauty. As an example of these two features, to mention but one, is the head of the most famous queen of Egypt, Cleopatra VII in Berlin³⁸. The simple melon-coiffure, with some short curls border-

³³ Kallixeinos of Rhodes, *Peri Alexandreias*, *Apud* Athenaios, *Deipnosophistae* 5. 204-206. For a scholarly study and reconstruction see: PFROMMER, 1999: 93-124.

³⁴ BRUNN, 1889: vol. 1, 595; OVERBECK, 1882: vol. 2, 199; MITCHELL, 1883: 606.

³⁵ SCHREIBER, 1885: 380-400.

³⁶ For a detailed discussion of Schreiber's theory and the scholarly responses to it, see: STEWART, 1996: 231-246.

³⁷ ADRIANI, 1948: 14-19. Others see in these features a general Hellenistic trend that dominated the early 3rd century works, see: POLLITT, 1986: 250. About the supposed visit of Lysippos to Egypt and his relation to the early Alexandrian art, see: DÖRIG, 1995: 299-304.

³⁸ Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung 1976.10.

ing the forehead with the plain diadem are expressing the aristocratic unreachable simplicity. The very smooth turn of the head to the right with a far reaching look are all indications of an Alexandrian workshop³⁹.

Hellenistic centres witnessed the diffusion of a new trend of plastic art that represented different types of ordinary persons who were not occupying any important posts or religious offices or any other social importance, they were, very simply, people from the street. These new representations are generally termed «genre figures». The term comprises figures of deformed people, drunken persons, aged men and women, simple workers like peasants and fishermen, slave children, and individuals with features of various different ethnic origins. This genre is generally supposed to have been used for decoration and secular purposes expressing daily life far from any religious context.

It is, again, Schreiber's initiative that the origin of genre figures must be ascribed to Alexandria, a theory which could partially be based upon the cosmopolitan nature of the Alexandrian society which could have its impact on representations of multiple ethnic groups which resided in the city⁴⁰. Himmelmann, even though totally convinced with Alexandria as home of a new realistic tendency in Hellenistic arts, yet he sees that Hellenistic types were strongly affected by regional particularities in their socio-political context⁴¹. However, new approaches to the problem introduced some reasonable solutions for this problem.

Alexandrian terracotta and bronze figurines comprised a countless number of genre figures as well as few examples of marble monumental pieces. The latter is a category of sculptures of which certain types can be attributed, with a degree of certainty, to Alexandria. The marble statue of an old drunken woman in the Munich Glyptothek is one good example for the Alexandrian genre⁴². The statue is nearly 1 metre high representing a seated old woman. She wears a long and wide garment which is fastened with pins at the shoulders. The garment reminds us with the description of Theokritos (*Idyll XV, The Women at the Adonis Festival*) of the festivity dress of Praxinoa when she was preparing herself to attend the Adonis festival in Alexandria together with her friend Gorgo. The woman embraces by her two hands a large wine jug known as *lagynos*, while her head is raised up indicating her drunken mood. The text of Eratosthenes, quoted in Athenaios (*Deipnosophistae*, 276a) gives us a clue to the interpretation of this statue. It speaks about the festival known as the *Lagynophoria*, created by Ptolemy IV in honour of Arsinoe III. During this festival, people could come to the palace and sit on rush stools holding their own *lag-*

³⁹ FITTSCHEN, 1983: Pl. XXIX, nos. 5-6; SMITH, 1988: No. 68; BIANCHI, 1988: 187-88, no. 77; MORENO, 1994: 730; GRIMM, 1998: fig. 125.

⁴⁰ SCHREIBER, 1885: 380- 400.

⁴¹ HIMMELMANN, 1983: 21.

⁴² A Roman copy of a Hellenistic original datable to the third-second centuries B.C. Munich, Glyptothek, inv. 437, another copy of the same original is in Musei Capitolini, inv. MC 299/S.



Fig. 4a: Statue of a farmer, Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria (photo by S. Ashour).



Fig. 4b: Back side of Fig. 4a (photo by S. Ashour).

ynoi and drink and eat as much as they can⁴³. In the light of the previously mentioned literary texts, the Alexandrian origin of such a statue becomes unquestionable.

The Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria possesses a number of stone sculptures representing different types of labourers and craftsmen which are closely related to our subject. A torso of a nearly life size marble statue depicts a man in a moving or working pose (Fig. 4a)⁴⁴. The upper part is muscled, strongly constructed in a leaning forward posture. The man is dressed in *exomis* which is a knee-length dress belted at the waist and fastened at the left shoulder leaving the right part of the chest exposed⁴⁵. A wide piece of textile atop the

⁴³ POLLITT, 1986: 143, fig. 154.

⁴⁴ Inv. 26034. First published by: BONACASA, 1960: 170 ff.; ASHOUR, 2007: 745-46, no. 319.

⁴⁵ The *exomis* is well described in Theocritus' *Idyll* 21, where he describes a fisherman with strong muscles and an *exomis* covering his chest. It seems that this kind of garments was usually worn by labourers in Ptolemaic Egypt.



Fig. 5a: Statue of a farmer, Greco-Roman Museum of Alexandria (photo by S. Ashour).



Fig. 5b: Left back side of Fig. 5a (photo by S. Ashour).

back (Fig. 4b) seems to have been a pad for a heavy load that the man was carrying. Of the same type of walking farmers usually carrying a load on their backs there is another example (Figs. 5a)⁴⁶; the statue wears the same *exomis* and carries a basket which is suspended with a thick rope across the chest (Fig. 5b). The movement is accentuated by the leaning of the body to the right, the open legs, and the rigid right knee. The muscled chest with protruding breasts is the same as Fig. 4 and is a naturalistic expression of hard labour. The publisher dates both statues, according to the style of drapery, to the late Hellenistic Period. In the absence of parallels, these two statues were compared to some similar representations in a statue of Odysseos from the Antikythera shipwreck⁴⁷ and the most interesting Triptole-

⁴⁶ Inv. 23924, white marble. First published by: BONACASA, 1960: 170 ff.; ADRIANI, 1972: 141, no. 3, tav. 25, 3.

⁴⁷ RIDGEWAY, 2000: 59; 73, pl. 25; ASHOUR, 2007: 874, fig. 430.



Fig. 6a: Statue of a shepherd, Port Saïd Museum (photo by S. Ashour).

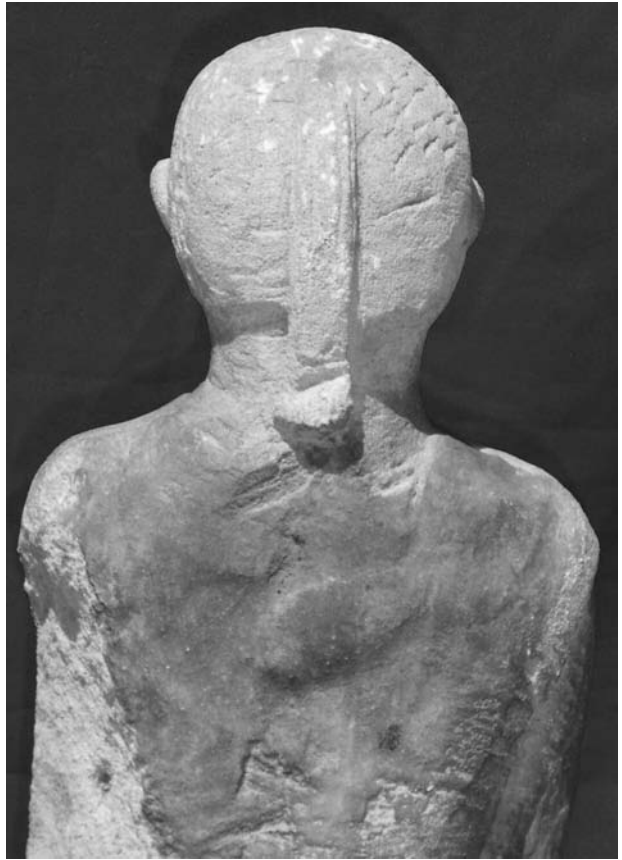


Fig. 6b: Head's back of Fig. 6a (photo by S. Ashour).

mos on the famous Tazza Farnese, Fig. 7⁴⁸. Various other examples of men wearing the *exomis* and carrying baskets either on their backs or in hands were found in Egypt⁴⁹. Publishers and other specialists assumed that the type is derived from an Alexandrian original dated to the early Ptolemaic Period with nothing serious to challenge their assumption⁵⁰.

Yet, another statue of limestone represents a different unique type of male genre figures (Fig. 6a)⁵¹. The man is rigidly standing with advanced left leg, a posture that reminds

⁴⁸ MORENO, 1994: II, 706-11. For arguments on the type see also *Idem*, I, 345-50, figs. 437-43.

⁴⁹ For a farmer in Faïence see: HIMMELMANN, 1980: taf. 20-23. Another in marble: LAUBSCHER, 1982: 110, no. 22c, taf. 16.2. For arguments on the type see also: MORENO, 1994: I, 345-50, figs. 437-43; II 706-11.

⁵⁰ For some replicas see: LAUBSCHER, 1982: 25, no. 23a taf. 17.1; BONACASA, 1960: tav. LII, LIII; ASHOUR, 2007: 832, 875, no. 404.

⁵¹ Port Saïd Museum, Inv. P. 31, formerly in the Greco-Roman Museum Inv. 23831. First published by: ASHOUR, 2007: 747-48; 875-76, no. 320.

us with the Egyptian striding figures of dynastic times. This Egyptianizing attire is emphasized by the high protruding ears, the plain linear eyebrows, almond eyes and the obscure facial features without any definite expression. Another unique feature is the presence of a short support at the back of the head (Fig. 6b) which seems to be a reminiscent of the Egyptian conventional back-pillar. However, Egyptian features are mingled with Greek ones; the man wears, not the *exomis*, but a long sleeved tunic and short necked boots. He carries in his left hand



Fig. 6c: Goat at the right side of Fig. 6a (photo by S. Ashour).

a basket of fruits. The shape of the basket is different from common types usually depicted with farmers and fishermen. The man holds in his right hand a halter of a goat which appears at his right side jumping in a movement full of joy and vitality (Fig. 6c). The fore hides of the goat are bent and its head is raised up in a lively Greek style. The different shape of the basket and the presence of the goat make one think of a shepherd rather than a farmer. The publisher believes that the contrast between the static pose of the farmer and the dynamic movement of the goat is understandable if we look at the native dynastic prototypes on the one hand and the Hellenistic goat motive in other works of art on the other⁵².

However, the previously mentioned examples testify for the particularity of Alexandrian genre figures. The modification of some Egyptian prototypes into Hellenized forms sides for the Alexandrian origin of certain types⁵³. They confirm the idea of the Egyptian

⁵² Full comparative discussions and interpretations in: ASHOUR, 2007: 876.

⁵³ In his dissertation on representations of officials and craftsmen in Egypt during Ptolemaic and Roman times, Sobhy Ashour compares many of the genre sculptures in the round with the reliefs of the pronaos of the tomb of Petosiris where the earliest scenes of agriculture works, shepherds and vintage production appeared. The tomb is located in the cemetery of Hermopolis Magna known as Tuna Al-Gebel in Middle Egypt. Its date is still disputable but on grounds of stylistic analyses, the Naos reliefs are preferably dated to the late 5th century B.C. while the pronaos is believed to have been a 4th century addition that took place during the early years of Ptolemaic presence in Egypt. What is completely evident about the reliefs of the pronaos is that they were executed by a team of sculptors including both Greek and Egyptian masters who introduced an amalgam of elements inspired by both traditions. ASHOUR, 2007: 834 ff.

origin of representations of farmers, shepherds, fishermen and other workers who formed the core of the society and could have been seen in the streets of Alexandria and the *Chora* by artists living in the city and reading the poems of Theocritus.

One last masterpiece which sheds light on other universal horizons of Alexandrian art is to be discussed here, the Tazza Farnese (Fig. 7)⁵⁴. It is a Sardonyx cameo carved on its exterior with an aegis decorated with the head of the Gorgon Medusa, a familiar decorative figure which appears very frequently on Greco-Roman utensils and works of art. The scene on the inside of the bowl depicts a bearded god sitting on a tree trunk holding a *cornucopia* in his left hand. At the lower centre, a female figure reclines on a sphinx wearing a dress characterized by the Isis knot between the breasts. In her upraised right hand she holds what seem to be sheaves of grain. In the centre of the scene, strides a beardless male figure with a seed bag hanged to his left wrist, and holds in his left hand an object which is interpreted as a plow. On the right side of the scene recline two female figures, the lower one holds a *phiale* in her left hand and the upper one rests her right hand on a *cornucopia* while

touching her hair with the left hand. At the top of the scene, two male figures fly across the sky, one holds a long piece of textile, most probably a mantle, which billows out over his head, while the other blows a horn or a shell.

Since its first publication, the Tazza Farnese became the subject of great controversies among scholars. Many and different interpretations for its iconography emerged: The publisher's interpretation of the main scene was that it represents the Egyptian triad of Osiris, Isis and Horus, and the female pair represents Ancherroe and Memphis, daughters of the Nile and personifications of its main branches, while the male pair represents Shu and Tefnut, the air and water. This interpretation has been revised and



Fig. 7: Drawing of the interior scene of the Tazza Farnese, after Fürtwängler 1900: II, 256. Downloaded August 2011 from <<http://digit.ub.uni-heidelberg.de>>.

⁵⁴ Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, inv. Mann, 27611. First published by: VISCONTI, 1790: III, 63-75, tav. C1.

modified in 1900 by Fürtwängler⁵⁵ who thought that the seated principal deity is the Nile and the female figure reclining on the sphinx is Euthenia, the personification of prosperity and abundance who was known as the consort of the Nile. As for the youth with the plow, Fürtwängler identified him as a combination of Horus and Triptolemus. In the Greek Eleusinian myths, Triptolemus was the youth selected by Demeter to be taught how to cultivate the land and was sent back to earth to transfer this knowledge to mankind. The maiden with the *phiale* personifies the flooding of the Nile, while her companion holding the *cornucopia* refers to agricultural abundance. For Merkelbach⁵⁶, in spite of his historical interpretation for the main figures, the two female figures are Satet and Anuket, goddesses of the first cataract of the Nile. Nicole Dacos returned to Visconti's identification of the two female figures as Memphis and Anchirroe, daughters of Nilus and personifications of its principal branches⁵⁷, while La Rocca identifies them as Herse (dew and moisture) and Arousa (cultivated fields)⁵⁸. Bastet identified the old bearded man with Hades or Hades-Dionysus or Osiris-Sarapis, and saw the woman reclining on the sphinx as Isis-Demeter and the youth who strides between them as Triptolemus⁵⁹. He emphasizes that the reclining female pair are the *Horae*, seasons, specifically the seasons of flood and growth, and that the two flying males are personifications of the Etesian Winds.

Royal insignia led some scholars to combine the divine character of the main personifications with some historical figures. Charbonneaux⁶⁰, Bastet⁶¹ and Merkelbach⁶² have proposed that the principal figures are portraits of Ptolemaic royalty. They convincingly argued that the Ptolemaic Dynasty tried to perpetuate the traditional concept of divine power bestowed upon them as heirs of the Pharaohs through such an amalgamation of Egyptian and Greek deities. Charbonneaux's identifications is Ptolemy VI as Horus, Cleopatra I as Isis and Ptolemy V as Osiris. Moreno detected resemblance with royal portraits of Cleopatra III, her husband Ptolemy VIII and their son Ptolemy X⁶³. Thompson sees the vessel to have been commissioned by Octavian in order to celebrate his triumph in Aktium in the twenties of the 1st century B.C.⁶⁴ John Pollini has the same opinion as Thompson and identifies the main males as Saturnus and Gallus or Genius Galliarum⁶⁵.

⁵⁵ FÜRTWÄNGLER, 1900: II, 253-56.

⁵⁶ MERKELBACH, 1973: 116-27.

⁵⁷ DACOS, 1973: 69-72.

⁵⁸ LA ROCCA, 1984: 95-100.

⁵⁹ BASTET, 1962: 1-24.

⁶⁰ CHARBONNEAUX, 1958: 85-103.

⁶¹ BASTET, 1962: 1-24.

⁶² MERKELBACH, 1973: 116-27.

⁶³ MORENO, 1994: II, 706-11.

⁶⁴ THOMPSON, 1978: 119-20.

⁶⁵ POLLINI, 1992: 283-300.

Another scope of interpretations for the scene of the Tazza Farnese was also investigated; Merkelbach was the first to attempt to read it as an astronomical allegory of the constellations related to the inundation of the Nile. Although he is of the idea that the figures represent certain Egyptian deities, he thinks that each of these deities represent a constellation in the celestial sphere. He sees all these constellations centered around one principal figure, Horus who represents Orion. Accordingly, Merkelbach argues that the scene of the Tazza is a visual expression of what Eratosthenes, in his poem «Hesiodus», had alluded to as an *Interpratio Aegyptiaca* of the myth of Orion⁶⁶. The figures in the scene, according to this astronomical interpretation are Sothis for Visconti's Isis (the Greek Canis Major), Triptolemus for Visconti's Horus, (the Greek Orion), Shu and Tefnut for the Etesian Winds, the sphinx is Osiris for the Egyptian sphere and Eridanus for the Greek, the Memphis and Anchirroe of Visconti are Satis and Anuket in the Egyptian sphere and Hyades and Pleiades in the *sphaera graeca*. Finally, Nilus is Sarapis for the Egyptians and Leo for the Greeks. In spite of his interpretation for the figures as representing purely Egyptian deities, Merkelbach saw the connection with the Greek tradition in the symbolic number of 7 figures. The triad and the female and male pairs, as corresponding to the general patterns of the group of constellations that are arranged around Orion in the Greek astronomical sphere which is known to both Egyptians and Greeks and accords with the Egyptian astrological planetary Decans. It is worthy of mentioning that the Egyptians reckoned the seasons by the heliacal risings of 36 stars 10 by 10 days, hence were called the Decans. The inundation season begins with the rising of Sothis, the star of Isis and at the same time, Orion begins his annual rising⁶⁷.

Dwyer agrees with the astrological interpretation of Merkelbach. He is of the opinion that the figure of Isis is similar to the iconography of the constellation of Virgo. He also attempted to associate the attributes which appear in the scene with the four physical elements in the Stoic cosmology, namely: fire (Leading wind = Shu), air (following wind = Tephnut), earth (corn-field, rhyton) and water (bowl). Additionally, he sees that the scene is an allegory of creation according to the Hermetic tractate known as the *Poimandres*. The inundation of the Nile has been interpreted as a type or archetype of creation, corresponding to the creation of time, the planets, the elements and the human life. For him, the Tazza Farnese is not only an astrological map but also an illustration of certain philosophic texts⁶⁸.

All the previously mentioned interpretations relate the scene to an allegory of the Nile and fertility of the Egyptian soil, symbolized respectively by the seated principal figure, Isis or Euthenia and the sphinx. Certain emphasis has been put on the inundation of the Nile

⁶⁶ MERKELBACH, 1963: 469-526.

⁶⁷ PARKER, 1971: 15; VON BOMHARD, 2000: 137-45.

⁶⁸ DWYER, 1992: 255-82.

and the season which brings it, the maiden with the *phiale*, as well as the winds that cause it, the Etesian Winds. The latter, in this respect, is more likely to be the summer monsoons as a more accurate identification for the two male figures flying from a north-easterly direction. The major difference between the Etesian and the Monsoons is that the first are the annual dry winds (Greek *ετησέαι*, derived from *ετησίεις*, annual; *έτος*, year) that blow during summer and are correlated with the summer monsoons. The Monsoons are the seasonal winds which blow from the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea bringing heavy rainfall to the area from which the Nile emerges.

Nearchus, the admiral of Alexander the Great, was the earliest geographer to observe that the summer raining winds cause the Indus to flood and suggested that the same winds are the cause of the Nile flood. In an article published in 2000, M. El-Abbadi asserts that the causes of the Nile flood were clearly known to the Egyptian priests as early as the 7th century B.C., while this remained a mystery for the Greeks until the time of the Indian expedition of Alexander the Great led by Nearchus about whose observations we are told by Arrian (*Anabasis Alexandria*: VIII, *Indica*, VI). Abbadi also refers to another companion and historian of Alexander, Callisthenes who said, according to Abbadi's translation: «the rising of the Nile resulted from rains in summer in the southernmost parts»⁶⁹. The discovery of the Monsoons took place in the second half of the 2nd century B.C. by Alexandrian scientists⁷⁰.

Visconti dated the work to the Hellenistic Period and emphasized that Alexandria is its city of provenance. Other scholars who tended to interpret the scene as representing royal portraits tried to date the Tazza according to certain political and historical circumstances such as Thompson who dated the work at the twenties of the 1st century B.C. and related it to the Augustan Golden Age⁷¹. La Rocca dates it two decades earlier and suggests that only the figure of Isis is a portrait and should be identified as Cleopatra VII, who ordered the Tazza to be made in order to commemorate the victory of Marcus Antonius in 34 B.C.⁷². Charbonneaux identified the sphinx as Ptolemy V, the woman as Cleopatra I, and the youth as Ptolemy VI. Hence Charbonneaux's dating is between the death of Epiphanes 180 B.C. and that of Cleopatra I in 176 B.C.⁷³.

Bastet was the first to try to date the Tazza on stylistic basis. He started with the Medusa carved on the exterior and dated it to ca. 100 B.C. due to the baroque appearance of the Gorgon's hair and the pathetic expression which have parallels of the same date⁷⁴. Some other features on the *tondo* scene such as the folds of the *Hymation* of Nilus and the

⁶⁹ ABBADI, 2000: 53-58.

⁷⁰ See this volume: ABBADI – *Alexandria's Revolutionary Role in North-South Navigation and Trade*.

⁷¹ THOMPSON, 1978: 112-22.

⁷² LA ROCCA, 1984: 95-100.

⁷³ CHARBONNEAUX, 1958: 85-103.

⁷⁴ BASTET, 1962: 1-24.

body structure of the monsoons point to this date. If this date is correct and if we accept the idea of interpreting the figures as portraits of the Ptolemaic family in the guise of gods, the author of this article is inclined to support the identification of Moreno who sees them as Ptolemy VIII (died in 116), Cleopatra III and their son Ptolemy X who ruled jointly with his mother after 107 B.C.⁷⁵ In this respect, some attention should be paid to the style of Horus/Triptolemus. The youth has a moustache, according to the extant repertoire of royal Ptolemaic portraits; it was not until the reign of Ptolemy X that the kings were represented with moustaches. The corkscrew hair style of the queen is typical of a late 2nd century date. Portraits of Cleopatra III are distinguished by locks of hair at the sides which are always shorter than the rest of her hair. It is Cleopatra III who was often represented as Isis-Demeter holding a *cornucopia*, or/and sheaves of grain and wearing a dress with the Isis knot. The nude breasts of both the queen and the seasons are characteristic of the late second and early first centuries B.C.

Although there has been much debate as to the Tazza Farnese's date and to the interpretation of its iconography, almost all scholars have assumed that it was a product of a skillful gem carver in the Ptolemaic court⁷⁶. This artist must have been quite aware of what is going on in the halls and galleries of the Museum and the Library. It may not be far fetching if we assume that this masterpiece was made in celebration of the discovery of the Monsoons, noted above, which apparently took place during the reign of Ptolemy VIII. Such an important discovery might have motivated the artist to celebrate and express the newly completed global vision, based on scientific basis, of the fertility of the Egyptian soil. The summer monsoons (the flying male pair) regularly cause the Nile (the seated king in the attire of the Nile) to flood. The flood season is followed by the harvest (the female pair) when people enjoy its fruits (the reclining queen in the attire of Isis-Demeter) after a hard labor in cultivating the land (sphinx) using the skills they were taught by the gods (Triptolemos)⁷⁷. Such a message would never be understood or appreciated in a normal level of audience, but only the well educated class who possesses a taste of intellectuality and an ability to discuss and interpret the syncretistic nature of the figures and the sophisticated expressions that lie in the composition of the scene in such precious a work of art. On the other hand, Alexandrian artists of the court recognized that their products should convene with this scientific and cultural milieu and become a medium for expressing the Alexandrian supremacy and scholarship.

⁷⁵ MORENO, 1994: II, 706-11.

⁷⁶ POLLITT, 1986: 259.

⁷⁷ In the repertoire of Harpocrates' iconography, not a single example, to my knowledge, is attested for a combination with Triptolemos. Moreover, Harpocrates had never been represented with moustache. Accordingly, the figure in the Tazza Farnese must be interpreted as Triptolemos. This interpretation seems suitable if we take into consideration that the reclining queen carries the grain sheaves which are direct attributes of Demeter as well as the *cornucopia* carried by the seated figure, Nilus.

THE POLYVALENT NATURE OF THE ALEXANDRIAN ELITE *HYPOGEA*: A CASE STUDY IN THE GRECO-EGYPTIAN CULTURAL INTERACTION IN THE HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN PERIODS

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Abstract: *Alexandria, the capital of Egypt during the Hellenistic and Roman periods is often hailed as the ancient cosmopolitan center of Mediterranean par excellence. Since the foundation of the city by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C., several traditions – along with their representatives, mainly Greek and Egyptian – coexisted and interacted with each other, resulting in the most advanced – by any definition – multicultural society. Underground tombs, known also as Hypogea, constitute the most well preserved archaeological discipline of material remains, which reflects such phenomenon. There are several structures of extensive architecture and decoration, which can shed light on funerary customs, religion, arts, and more importantly, the multicultural identity of their «inhabitants», as developed during a period of more than six centuries. Within this context, Greek-ness and Egypt-ness seem not represent absolute ethnic values, but rather gradually become flexible characterizations dependent on the context in which coexist and interact with each other.*

Alexandrian Necropolis owes its name¹ – City of the Dead – to its extensive size, monumentality as well as function, aspects falling outside the customary Greek funerary context especially in relation to the world of the living. It is comprised by an extensive network of

¹ The term «necropolis» is mentioned by Strabo who visited the western cemeteries of the city (XVII.1.10).

underground corridors, rooms and galleries – catacombs – of great variety, all corresponding to Alexandria's multicultural character and social diversity. Monumental funerary structures, also known as *hypogea* for the Alexandrian elite, represent not only the most distinct feature of the Alexandrian Necropolis, but also the most well preserved type of the ancient city's material evidence. Due to their monumental architecture and extensive decoration, consisting of both Greek and Egyptian elements, they can trigger fruitful discussion on various topics, such as art, architecture, religion, funerary customs, as well as social status and cultural identity of the Alexandrian society. In this text several cases are examined representing greatly the inconsistency in tombs' architecture, decoration and funerary practices, while corresponding to different aspects and periods of Alexandria's social and cultural history.

In any case, Alexandrian *hypogea* had a common functional characteristic; they represented both the last residence of the dead and, at the same time, a meeting point between the world of the living and that of the dead – a relationship preserved through extensive funerary and post-funerary rites. Even though both Greek and Egyptian funerary practices and styles were applied, the epithet Alexandrian should also be introduced since varying elements from the aforementioned multicultural structures were used in order to fulfill the diverse needs of the cosmopolitan Alexandrian society over time and place.

THE ORIGINS OF THE ALEXANDRIAN *HYPOGEA* RECONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF NEW EVIDENCE

Most scholars have emphasized the Greek character of these tombs, which reflects the Hellenic identity of their inhabitants and displays their elite social class. Pagenstecher established the «Oikos» model for Alexandrian tombs².

He emphasised their Macedonian origin, reflected in the sequence of rooms from vestibule to the main burial chamber, and assumed that their structural type derived from the form of houses in Northern Greece and elsewhere. Concerning the court of the Alexandrian structures, Pagenstecher suggested that their only function was to host visitors and to provide the inner part with fresh air and light. Adriani, on the other hand, rejected the Macedonian origin of Alexandrian structures based on several differences, and claimed, among others, that Macedonian tombs' character is more introverted, as result of their covering by a tumulus and lack of court, and more «individual» when compared to the more «collective» Alexandrian *hypogea*. He also pointed out that these were covered with soil and were left abandoned until the time to reuse them would come. Alexandrian tombs, on the

² PAGENSTECHER, 1919.

contrary, were open to the deceased's family, friends and priests as reflected by the court with the altar, benches and funerary offering tables in the inner chambers such as those found at Mustapha Kamel necropolis³. He also, though, suggested an origin from Greek houses⁴.

Yet, the origin of these new structural elements and functions has never been discussed in detail concerning their relation to the Egyptian tradition. Adriani did not accept any kind of relation and identified these unique elements as «eastern» in general⁵.

The first to examine the possibility of Egyptian influence in the Alexandrian elite *hypogea* was El-Atta, who suggested that the Alexandrian peristyle *hypogea* are comparable to noble tombs from the Late Period (25th and 26th Dynasties) necropolis of Assasif in Thebes⁶. In his paper, he discussed in general terms the similarities between the Sidi Gaber Tomb and the Antoniadis Tomb, and Egyptian tombs from the Old Kingdom to 3rd century B.C. Among other things, he compared the Ptolemaic *hypogea* to the tomb of Thyi from the Valley of the Queens and the tomb of Ramosi, a high official from Thebes, both dated to the New Kingdom. An aspect similar to the Alexandrian *hypogea* is the court with rooms opened at three sides. In New Kingdom tombs, the court consists of a hall, sometimes a hypostyle, while in Alexandria the court is open to the air. Finally, both cases are rock-cut structures⁷.

A much more elaborate hypothesis concerning the relation between Alexandrian tombs and the Egyptian funerary tradition was offered by Daszewski. The latter assumed that several structural and functional elements mentioned by many scholars would have been more comprehensible if were seen through the prism of the Egyptian funerary tradition, namely; the adoption of an underground complex with emphasis on the structure's axis, the peristyle, pseudo-peristyle or without peristyle courts and the sequence of rooms ending to a niche. Hence for Daszewski, the Hellenistic *hypogea* of Alexandria seem to have been an *Interpretatio Graeca* of the old funerary traditions developed in the syncretic atmosphere of the Ptolemaic capital⁸.

Daszewski's point of view offered a whole new perspective concerning the origins and nature of Alexandrian *hypogea*, but his argument needs further elaboration. He compared Alexandrian tombs to a specific group of Egyptian Theban tombs in Assasif (Fig. 1), and this was not done directly, but through an intermediate discussion on the *hypogea* of Marina el-Alamein. In addition, there is a chronological break to his discussion i.e. between

³ ADRIANI, 1936: 75; 1966: 31.

⁴ ADRIANI, 1966: 76, 169-171.

⁵ ADRIANI, 1966: 169. This picture is preserved until today, for instance in the monumental work of Venit on Alexandrian tombs (2002), who remains close to the models of Pagenstecher and Adriani.

⁶ EL-ATTA, 1992: 17-18.

⁷ EL-ATTA, 1992: 15.

⁸ DASZEWSKI, 1994: 57-59.

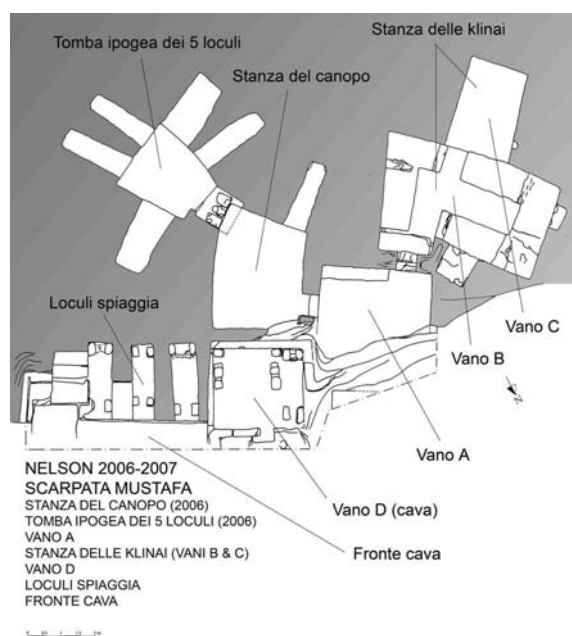


Fig. 1: Plan of the Mustapha Section in the Nelson Island. After Paolo Gallo, Turin University.

later⁹. In the Mustapha Section of the excavation a collective tomb was uncovered consisting of three subsequent rooms (Fig. 1). At the innermost one, the main burial chamber, mummies were discovered dating to the 30th Dynasty or slightly later at the last quarter of the 4th century B.C. The mummies were placed in *loculi* cut into the three walls of the room. Another section was discovered in 2007 laying to the right of the Egyptian funerary complex. This though was a *kline*-room in the Greek-Macedonian style, similar to those found in Alexandrian tombs as for example in the case of the late-4th century/early-3rd century B.C. funerary structure of Hypogeum A in Shatby (Fig. 2). Having said this, it needs to be mentioned that Gallo found a coin of Ptolemy I. The appealing evidence could, thus, raise more questions concerning the origin of Alexandrian tombs. In our case a comparison to Hypogeum A in Shatby, point out striking similarities as a sequence of rectangular-shaped spaces (the Alexandrian tomb is better shaped) ultimately lead to a burial chamber with radiate-like arrangement.

The necropolis at Nelson Island is therefore a unique example of underground gallery with *loculi* for Egyptian, dating just a few decades before the construction of the Alexandrian necropolis (or even at its very beginning). After the *kline*-room discovery, it could be

the 26th Dynasty (about 525 B.C.) and the early stage of the Alexandrian tombs, while the several stages in the development of the latter that may correspond to the gradual process of their assimilation have been largely neglected. We need to look in further detail at the several types of Egyptian influence in Alexandrian tombs, not necessarily in relation to a specific group of Egyptian tombs, but to the broader Egyptian religious tradition as well.

In 2006 the excavations carried out by the University of Turin at the suburb of Nelson Island in Alexandria brought some new evidence to light concerning the influence of Egyptian funerary tradition on the Alexandrian *hypogea*: an Egyptian necropolis dating to the 30th Dynasty (380-343 B.C.) or slightly

⁹ For a detailed description of the Nelson Island necropolis see GALLO, 2009: 48-54.

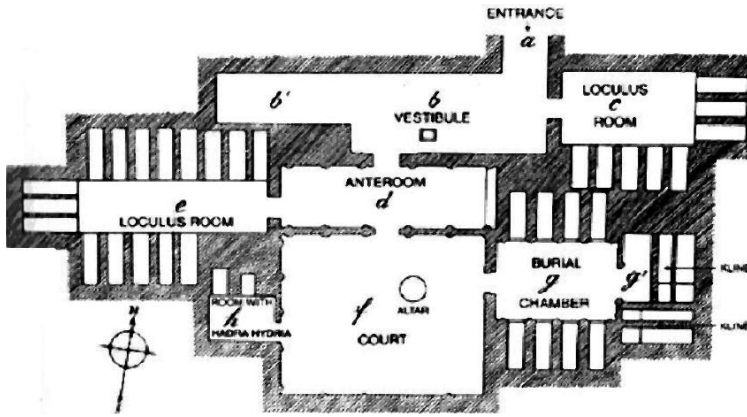


Fig. 2: Necropolis of Shatby. Plan of Hypogeum A.

argued that not only the model of underground *loculi* tombs was available in the surrounding area of Alexandria, but also that the Greeks were aware of such structures having a first-hand experience already from the period of Alexander the Great. Nonetheless, the room's exact use and timespan of use are still unclear. However, the similarity of the Nelson Island *kline*-room to the *kline*-room of the Alexandrian *Hypogeum* A and the fact that it is almost attached to an underground tomb, would entail a funerary use.

THE MUSTAPHA KAMEL¹⁰ TOMB I: A FUNERARY MANSION DEDICATED TO HEYDAY OF HELLENISM IN *AEGYPTO*¹¹

Several tombs of the 3rd century B.C. reflect a monumental Greek style, while Egyptian elements become visible in the form of direct adoptions or adaptations to Hellenised versions. The most representative example is Mustapha Kamel Tomb I. The tomb is situated in the Eastern necropolis and dates to the middle of the 3rd century B.C. onwards – almost a century after the arrival of the first Greeks in Alexandria. It consists of a rock-cut underground structure with a court and three side-rooms with *loculi*. The latter were covered either with a closing slab representing a funerary stele, or with a funerary *kline* as in the case of the central burial at the south façade (Fig. 3).

In terms of architectural decoration, the tomb reflects a profound Hellenic character.

¹⁰ This is an elite funerary complex, situated in the eastern cemeteries of Alexandria, dating from the mid 3rd century B.C. and beyond. Adriani found six collective tombs, of which only three survive today. All of them have similarities of scale and construction. Tomb I will be discussed in this article. For detailed description of the whole complex see ADRIANI, 1936.

¹¹ The latin expression *in Aegypto* is used in this text in order to emphasize the provenance of those people, who belong to the 2nd or even 3rd generation of Greeks in Egypt.



Fig. 3: The South façade of the Mustapha Kamel Tomb I.

The use of Doric rhythm in funerary monumental structures is reminiscent of several architectural features in Macedonian tombs such as those of Rhomeos and «Phillip II» in Vergina as well as in other areas¹². Nevertheless, there are also various elements not related to the Greek funerary tradition. Such a discussion should begin with the pseudo-peristyle court itself. In Alexandria, courts host several rituals and visitors, as implied by the altar and the water supply. In Greece, on the contrary, courts are not attested in tombs because they would not have been of any use. In Alexandrian tombs, visitors would follow the rituals, which could take place in the court related to funerary or post funerary rites, as implied by altar in the middle of it.

In Mustapha Kamel Tomb I, the court's south façade is at the focal point. It is arranged in a tripartite opening (doors), symbolically guarded by six sphinxes. Above the doorframes provision was made for rectangular openings the most central of which is covered by a wall-painting made in an illusion-effect manner over the rock-cut *kline* and standing aligned with the altar. It depicts five of the tomb's inhabitants each of them in a libation act. Their Macedonian origin and elite status are manifested in the painting's style. Men are represented as equestrians dressed in the typical Macedonian fashion while this is even more

¹² For a reconstruction of the Rhomeos and Philip II Tombs façades see DROUGOU, SAATSOGLOU-PALIADELI, 1999: 47, fig. 60 and 63, fig. 87.

emphasized by the depiction of the *causia*, the traditional Macedonian hat. Female figures, on the other hand, follow the style of the Greek-origin Alexandrian elite of the Hellenistic Period represented also in other types of evidence such as terracotta figurines¹³. Nevertheless, these figures are displayed within a «cornice» composed by Greek, Egyptian and Egyptianising elements.

Multi-doorway façades and illusionistic elements have been featured in the Egyptian temple and funerary architecture since the third millennium B.C. and throughout the Pharaonic, Ptolemaic and Roman periods¹⁴. In both Egyptian structures and Mustapha Kamel Tomb I, doorways give access to the focal point of the structure, which in the case of Alexandria is the *kline* at the centre of the wall. The reason for such an arrangement is to bring the cult interest out in the court, while the inner part retains a more «private» sacred character. In the Egyptian tombs the purpose of openings in the form of niches, doors and the like apart from being primary functional was also symbolic i.e. as mental passages through which the deceased might have returned to the world of the living. A similar interpretation however could be suggested for certain architectural features found in the Alexandrian tombs under discussion. Last but not least, the Egyptian influence is also indicated by the Egyptianising style of the doorframes themselves each one conceived as a Hellenised translation of a heavy monumental Egyptian doorframe, with an equally heavy lintel. At any rate, these elements indicate how complex, sophisticated and eclectic the assimilation of Greek and Egyptian elements can be in the context of Hellenistic Period elite tombs reflecting evidently the varying sociopolitical, economic, religious and cultural endeavors of the Alexandrian society in the Hellenistic Period.

The case of Mustapha Pasha tombs concerns Greek elites of Alexandria that are proud to promote their origin, identity and current elite social status, but at the same time they belong to a generation born, raised and eventually dying in Egypt. Compared to their «compatriots» in the «old» Greek world, the Greeks buried in Alexandrian *hypogea* such as those at Mustapha Kamel Necropolis, had their own – local – cultural language as this was formed by the interaction between the Greek and Egyptian art and architecture¹⁵, religion¹⁶ and royal ideology¹⁷. In other words, they were Greek Alexandrians or Greeks from Egypt.

¹³ See BRECCIA, 1930: plates I–XV.

¹⁴ See ARNOLD, 1999: 149–152. An early example is the chapel of tomb of Meresankh III in Giza (4th Dynasty), where statues of her are situated at the back wall. See SMITH, 1958: 55, fig. 101. A characteristic example of the Roman period is the Taffeh Temple dating to the Augustan Period.

¹⁵ See MCKENZIE, 2007: 80–95.

¹⁶ Such as Sarapis, Isis, Harpocrates. A terracotta statuette of the latter was found in Mustapha necropolis and it is considered to be the earliest of its kind, that has been discovered in Alexandria. See ADRIANI, 1936: 154, fig. 75.

¹⁷ Both Greek and Egyptian royal statues have been discovered in the Serapeum of the Ptolemaic Period, the most important sanctuary of the city. Interestingly some of the Egyptian statues were dedicated by Greek elites, such as the statue base of Arsinoe, dedicated, by Thestor son of Satyros (in situ. TKACZOW, 1993, no. 37). For further discussion see SAVVOPOULOS, 2010.

THE ANFUSHI NECROPOLIS: AN ELITE EGYPTIAN-ALEXANDRIAN OPTION FOR A BLESSED AFTERLIFE¹⁸

Major political, cultural and social developments occurred in Alexandria during the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. The Ptolemaic Empire seems to have entered a rather turbulent period partly due to the continuous wars among the Hellenistic kingdoms and partly to the various intramural conflicts among members of the Ptolemaic family. Meanwhile, the Greco-Egyptian interaction – both physical¹⁹ and cultural – reached unprecedented levels. The different ethnic groups went through an intensive course of cross-cultural exchange and interaction, sometimes even fusing the cores of their funerary customs. Hence, Greeks were gradually initiated deeply into Egyptian practices and customs, while Egyptians could now climb up the social ladder often acquire positions of high esteem in state administration and the army after though they had been through an intensive Hellenization process in terms of lifestyle, name and education. This process often resulted in composite cultural expressions and people with double names and flexible identities.

Anfushi II represents a parallel world to the «Hellenic» version of Alexandrian tombs, which seems to have emerged from the 2nd century B.C. onwards. It shows an Egyptian version of Alexandrian elite funerals within though the Alexandrian context of Greco-Egyptian interaction. This means that the tomb apart from being a place where the world of the living and that of the dead closely engaged, also served another important role: it was the proper place for the mummified body to be preserved and resurrected, according to the Egyptian tradition²⁰. Such functional capacities are new in Alexandria, and are reflected in tomb structure. In spite of the Egyptian funerary and religious atmosphere however, hieroglyphs are missing from the walls.

As in the case of the Mustapha Kamel necropolis, the cemetery consists of monumental underground burial units arranged around an open-air court. Yet, in Anfushi tomb II a quite different atmosphere becomes apparent already from the moment one begins descending the stairs from the ground level to the underground court. On the first landing

¹⁸ Anfushi necropolis is situated on the Pharos Island, southeast of the Ras el Tin Palace, dating to the 2nd-1st centuries B.C. Five underground elite tombs are preserved today, which are distinctive for their extensive references to Egyptian tradition – unfortunately in a terrible state – indicating Egyptian funerary practices. According to Botti, mummies were found at the site. Moreover, several Greek decorative elements can be detected in the decoration, implying the cosmopolitan character of Alexandrian society in the late Hellenistic city. The most distinctive representatives of the complex are Tombs I, II and V. For a detailed description see ADRIANI, 1952: 52-128.

¹⁹ There was advance physical interaction in between Greeks and Egyptian of the low and middle level classes, already since the middle of the 3rd century B.C. (FRASER, 1972: 71-72, and 75-76), which continued in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. (LA'DA, 2003: 166-167; GOUDRIAAN, 1988: 118).

²⁰ Traces of mummies were discovered in Anfushi as well as in the neighbour necropolis of Ras el Tin. See BOTTI, 1902: 14; BRECCIA, 1914: 9; 1921: 67; ADRIANI, 1952: 54.

of the stairs there is the following Egyptian-style wall scene (Fig. 4). The dead man, dressed as Egyptian priest, is depicted between Horus – the falcon-headed god – and a Pharaonic couple (or possibly a Ptolemaic royal couple²¹) with the latter offering him a jar. On the second landing, however, it is the dead man, accompanied again by Horus, which stands in front of the enthroned Osiris and offers him a jar. Hence, entering the tomb one realises that he is passing from the kingdom of the Ptolemies and realm of the living, to the kingdom of Osiris and the realm of the dead.

Two monumental gates at the courtyard, each guarded by two sphinxes²², lead to the vestibule of each burial unit. Each gate carries an Egyptian style segmental pediment. Entering to the burial unit Rooms 1 and 2, the visitors stand in the vestibule of the tomb, which preserves elaborate wall decoration, in two different phases and two different styles (Fig. 5). The walls' lower part is decorated with a painted imitation of alabaster orthostats. In the



Fig. 4: Anfushi II. The Upper landing of the stairs.



Fig. 5: Anfushi II. Rooms 1 and 2, towards the *naiskos* on the back wall of the burial chamber.

upper half two different phases can be detected; the earliest one, imitating Greek style isodomic blocks, was later covered by an Egyptian-style wall decoration of three checkerboard-style horizontal bands. The latter were constituted by three rows of black and white

²¹ Adriani identified the male figure as Osiris (1952: 64) even though he lacks all the typical Osiris' attributes such as the atef crown, while Botti as a king (1902: 13). It seems that Botti's assumption is safer, since the male figure does not preserved any of the characteristic attributes of Osiris, which are attested in the Egyptian funerary art. Instead, the discovery of several Ptolemaic statues in Pharaonic dress such as those found in the Pharos lighthouse water area, indicate that it was common for the Ptolemies and their queens to be displayed in Pharaonic and Isis dress respectively. See catalogues of ASHTON, 2001b and STANWICK, 2002.

imitations of tiles separated by narrow yellow-blue horizontal bands imitating alabaster. Egyptian *pschent*-crown, *hemhemet*-headdress and feather-crowns are depicted on white large tiles set within the middle checkerboard zone of the wall. Yellow octagons and small black squares were apparently decorating the ceiling vault of the room²³. It can thus be ascertained that the decoration of the tomb's inner-structure adheres to the Egyptian conception of the realm of the dead; the realm where Osiris is the king and whose crowns are depicted on the wall²⁴.

From the anteroom, an elaborate Egyptian style doorframe leads us to the burial chamber. It is composed by segmental pediment, papyriform column and an Egyptian broken lintel, typical feature of the Egyptian temple architecture²⁵. In front of the posts that form the uprights of the doorframe, two high bases, painted to imitate alabaster, supported sphinxes with their heads turned toward the vestibule (Room 1). The bases were probably added during the redecoration of the room in Egyptian style²⁶. As in the anteroom, the burial chamber's walls are also decorated with the Egyptian checkerboard motif interrupted by larger tiles with painted Egyptian crowns. The Egyptian double *naiskos* carved on the chamber's back wall apart from alluding, admittedly rather convincingly, to additional spaces laying beyond the innermost – sacred – area of the tomb, it also pointed to where the dead was supposed to spend his afterlife and where the realm of the dead, ruled by Osiris, was located²⁷.

The only actual Greek-style decorative element is the «Trellis and Tapestry» painted decoration of the vaulted room once decorated with multi-figure scenes from Greek mythology as well²⁸. Even though it does not seem to have been involved in the main funer-

²² They are preserved only in the archaeological records.

²³ For detailed description see VENIT 2002: 82. Zones of tiles in Anfushi Tombs could be characterised as archaising. Such decoration is attested both in religious and funerary structures of Egypt, since the 12th Dynasty like in the case of the funerary chapel of Amenemhat in Beni Hassan, which interiors seemed to imitate elite houses. See in detail SMITH, 1958: 93-94, fig. 165. According to Venit the Alexandrian tiles imitate Egyptian palatial decoration (2002: 75) such as those of the palace of Amenhotep III at Malkata (HAYES, 1959: 245-257), the palace of Akhenaten at Amarna (HAYES, 1959: 290) the Palace of Ramses II at Qantir (Ibid: 332-338), and the palace of Ramses III in Medinet Habu and Tel el Yahudieh (Ibid: 367).

²⁴ Kákosy further states that the popularity of the crowns in funerary structures and terracotta figurines in the Hellenistic and Roman periods is probably due to the emphasis on the royal aspect of Osiris, the prototype of the deceased, characteristic of that era (1983: 56-60).

²⁵ Doorways of Egyptian temples are often adorned with a broken lintel for symbolic and practical reasons, for example in order the statue of the god, sometimes on a sacred boat, to be carried out to the public during the annual celebration. Accordingly, the use of the broken lintel in Alexandrian tombs can be interpreted as a funerary version of the same concept concerning the resurrection of the dead and his communication with the world of the living. For discussion on the Broken lintel see LARKIN, 1994; VENIT, 2002: 94.

²⁶ ADRIANI, 1966: 193; VENIT, 2002: 82.

²⁷ This idea is further confirmed in Anfushi V, room 4 where a similar elaborate *naiskos* is depicted on the wall, this time serving as slab for a loculus that used to host a mummy. See ADRIANI, 1952: pl. XXXVIII, fig. 2.

²⁸ Adriani (1952: 72-79; 111-112) interpreted these scenes as Dionysiac, which would be unique among Alexandrian tombs. However, the poor preservation of those scenes does not allow such interpretations.

ary practice, the character of which remains largely Egyptian, it enhances the burial expenditure and indicates that the deceased was member of a cosmopolitan elite with Greek inspirations.

We should also be aware of the fact that the cemetery was situated in a district where the vast majority of the population was Egyptian. In addition, Anfushi II represents the only case of a Ptolemaic Alexandrian tomb with Egyptian-style scenes, such as the priest depicted in the wall painting of the stairs leading to the court. A comparison with other types of material evidence indicates the important role of Egyptian priesthood throughout the Ptolemaic Period²⁹. Priests had quite an active role both in royal and in religious matters in Alexandria. Therefore, the special Egyptian character of Anfushi Tomb II might have been in accordance to the Egyptian origin of the tomb's owners of which, at least, one was of priestly status. Be that as it may, the fact that a Royal couple is depicted in the same wall scene suggests that the deceased were people of high status whilst an assumption that these were actually involved in royal affairs is rather attractive. The fact that Greek names were inscribed on the walls and grave goods of the tomb does not in itself argue for the Greek provenance of the tomb's owners. As has already been mentioned above Egyptians desiring to ascent socially in the Ptolemaic state machinery were required to pass through a Hellenization process in terms of their name, education and several aspects of public life. In their private life however they could have preserved their Egyptian identity and name relatively intact³⁰.

Gabbari's today lost Ghirgis Tomb represents a more composite/balanced version of bilingual visual vocabulary in the late-Ptolemaic *hypogea* (Fig. 6). A funerary *kline* and a *naiskos* are carved on the back wall of the chamber tomb. On both the left and right sides of the *naiskos* there is an Egyptian-style zone with small square tiles. As in Anfushi II,

²⁹ Three statues of the *Naophoros* priest type have been discovered in the Serapeum, dating to the 3rd century B.C. They belong to Memphite high priests of Ptah, indicating the important role of the Memphis priesthood in the royal house of Alexandria, throughout the Ptolemaic Period. Two statues are dedicated to Pshenptah (Greco-Roman Museum 17533, 17534), while the third one belongs to Petobastis (Greco-Roman museum 27806). Priests of Memphis contributed considerably to the formation and development of the Ptolemaic ideology, the connection of the Ptolemaic family with the Egyptian religion, notably in the cases of Arsinoe II and Berenike II, who are also represented in the Serapeum of Alexandria, while they served as advisors at the royal court. Later during Ptolemaic Period, it was the priesthood of Memphis that supported the recovery of the Alexandrian royal house after the rebellion in Thebes, while there must even have been intermarriage with members of the royal court (HÖLBL, 2001: 222). Also, the statue of Hor son of Hor, priest of Thoth during the reign of Cleopatra VII, was found in the city centre. In contrast to other statues of priests, the statue of Hor represents a totally different case. The priest is depicted with Greek style portrait characteristics and Egyptian style dress, while the rendering is also in Egyptian style. It seems that the statue aimed to promote both aspects of Egyptian identity combined with partially Greek lifestyle, and elite social status, and not exclusively the priestly identity of Hor. For Hor see BORCHHARDT, 1930: 39-40, pl. 128; POULSEN, 1938: 31; GRAINDOR, 1939: 138, no. 74; SNIJDER, 1939: 262-269; BOTHMER, 1960: 170-173; GRIMM *et al.*, 1975: 19, no. 16; BIANCHI, 1988: 55-56; TKACZOW, 1993, no. 179; WALKER, HIGGS, 2001: 182-183, no. 190.

³⁰ For the process of Hellenisation of the Egyptian elites see LA'DA, 2003: 166-167. Also for the case of people with double names see CLARYSSE, 1985, 57-66.



Fig. 6: The Back wall of the burial chamber with the *kline*, the *naiskos* and the armature carved on the wall.

Girghis' Tomb provides evidence for the deceased's profession and his travel to the afterlife. An armature, probably of the deceased, depicted on either side of the *naiskos* makes it very tempting to assume that he may have been a military of rather elevated status implied also by the tomb's general appearance. If we had a picture of the transition to the afterlife, we would have been able to assume that the dead, like in Anfushi, have to pass through the gates en route to resurrection: a series of archi-

tecturally defined passages given symbolic meaning as evocations of the path of the deceased toward resurrection.

In symbolic terms, the deceased should have presented himself in front of the gates to the other world as a military man. This was the chosen image from his life to represent him in his liminal stage between the world of the living and the underworld. After his transition, there was no further need for the armature, so it was left behind. In this case, the actual structure of the tomb still partially belongs to the world of the living: there is space for including elements concerning the lifetime of the dead. The most sacred area, the new house of the dead, is implied to be behind the *naiskos* at the back wall, as illusionistically represented by the «double»-style *naiskos*. The funerary bed in front of the *naiskos* must have represented the liminal stage of the deceased, between the world of the living and that of the dead; his last stop before getting in. This could be the moment of the *prothesis* rite during the funeral. In addition, it can also imply the point of timeless rest for the dead on (in fact, in) his final *kline*.

The dead in Ghirgis' tombs might share similar multicultural identity with those of Anfushi. He can be a Hellenised Egyptian Alexandrian, but it could represent also the opposite a Greek or even mixed Alexandrian that attended an Egyptian style funeral. Yet emphasis was placed on the promotion of an elite social status, the prestigious profession of the deceased as well as religious and funerary preferences. Thus, it may be supposed that the deceased possibly was a Hellenised Egyptian of relatively high rank in the Ptolemaic army³¹. Literary sources are often quite illuminating on such cases. Nonetheless, an opposite

³¹ See ADRIANI, 1952: 52-128.

assumption could also stand: he may have been a Greek Alexandrian initiated into the Egyptian religion. Both assumptions however are placed in a common frame: at least from the middle Ptolemaic Period onwards, the correspondence between style and ethnic identity is not clear-cut. Consequently, the scholar of Alexandrian funerary customs should be rather flexible in interpreting identity within the polyvalent nature of the Alexandrian multicultural society.

LIVING AS ALEXANDRIAN, DYING AS AN EGYPTIAN, FACING THE ROMAN: REFLECTIONS OF ADVANCED MULTICULTURALISM IN THE ELITE HYPOGEA OF ROMAN ALEXANDRIA

The end of political independence for Alexandria and Egypt did not mark the end of the cultural developments initiated in the Hellenistic Period. Instead, cultural interaction seems to have been more intense than ever, resulting in a quite advanced level of multiculturalism. After hundreds of years of ethnic and cultural encounters, the Romans faced a very complicated social situation in an already deeply integrated community. They tried, however, to make social distinctions based on ethnic criteria. At the top of the Roman social order in Egypt were those who held Roman citizenship. Then followed the *Astoi*, in other words the inhabitants of the three major «Hellenic» cities of Egypt i.e. Alexandria, Naucratis and Ptolemais. These cities had a more Greek character than the rest of the Egyptian *chora*, even if their population was composite. It worths noting that among them, Alexandrian citizens seemed to have had the highest prestige³².

In Roman Alexandria Egyptian funerary customs were widely applied, indicating the desire of the dead to achieve a blessed afterlife according to the Egyptian tradition. Nevertheless, a funerary program is rarely represented in the traditional Egyptian idiom while a combination of Greek and Egyptian themes and forms, either in juxtaposition or in more hybrid forms is usually favored³³.

Several Roman funerary slabs resemble a conclusive and rather composite version of Alexandrian *loculi* slabs and funerary *stelae*, composed by the Egyptian *naiskos*, as known from Anfushi and Ras el Tin necropoleis³, and the *stele*-style slabs with self-presentation, known already from the 4th century B.C., for instance, at the Soldier's tomb³⁴. Returning to

³² LA'DA, 2003: 168-174.

³³ Apart from the examples examined in this paper see the cases of Trigrane Tomb, Stagni Tomb, Persephone Tombs in the Hall of Caracalla. See VENIT, 1997: 701-729; 1999: 641-649; 2002: 145-167; GUIMIER-SORBETS, 1999: 180-182; 2003: 533-575, 589-631; GUIMIER-SORBETS, SEIF EL DIN, 1997: 355-410; 2001: 129-136.

³⁴ See BLANCHE-BROWN, 1957.



Fig. 7: *The Gabbari Stele*. Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum 3215.

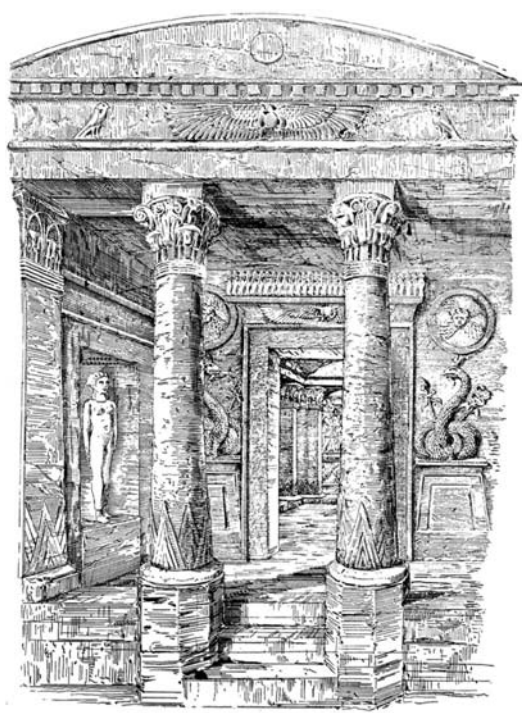


Fig. 8: *Kom el-Shogafa*. The façade of the Main Tomb. Rowe 1942, Pl. V.

the Egyptian *naiskos*-style slab this is intended to host the image of the dead, usually depicted in a Greek-style dress, in accordance to their public lifestyle, education and cultural identity. Still, it is important to sustain our interpretation within the Egyptian religious environment. A Greek-Alexandrian style deceased could choose to follow such a religious life, and moreover such a manner of funerary practice that could result in a proper afterlife according to the Egyptian tradition as it was perceived in Alexandria since the Ptolemaic Period. Therefore, Alexandrians are depicted within their new, afterlife house, the realm of the dead, architecturally represented with an Egyptian chapel. A characteristic example of this picture is the so-called Gabbari Stele, dating to the 1st century A.D. (Fig. 7)³⁵. The image of the dead clearly reflects a Greek-Alexandrian public lifestyle, Greek education and so forth. Yet, this Greek-Alexandrian figure is displayed within an Egyptian «cornice» – an Egyptian style *naiskos* – which clearly indicates that this elite Alexandrian followed the Egyptian funerary tradition, in order to achieve the desired afterlife³⁶.

³⁵ Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum 3215. See PAGENSTECHER, 1919: 123, fig. 73; PENSABENE, 1983, no. 9, pl. XI, 2.

³⁶ Similar examples have been found in Abusir el-Meleq, where figure-shaped coffin lids present the dead in Greek dress, while mummified. As in Alexandria, it was the image of the deceased with which he would pass into the realm of the dead, and this image was a matter of choice in terms of available options of portraying the dead. See RIGGS, 2006: 139-174.



Figs. 9 and 10: *Kom el-Shogafa*. The Male and female statues in the *pronaos* of the Main Tomb.

Regarding the elite *hypogea* of the Roman Period, the Main Tomb at *Kom el-Shogafa* is the most notable representing a category on its own. It is the most well-preserved and luxurious tomb in ancient Alexandria. It is also the most monumental funerary structure in Alexandria illustrating in the best way the development of the tomb-funerary temple idea, as this had begun been attested in the Hellenistic Period, into a funerary mansion with distinctive Egyptian architectural and decorative elements. The façade of the tomb is shaped in the form of an Egyptian *naos* i.e. with two columns between two pilasters-form *antae* (Fig. 9). The whole decorative program of the façade is explicitly Egyptian. The two pilasters are carved with papyrus at their feet and crowned with anta capitals in the Egyptian composite form. The columns rise from disc bases and follow the scheme of the pilasters. They carry a heavy impost block and an architrave with a plain epistyle, a torus moulding, a continuous frieze centered on a winged sun-disc that is flanked by Horus-Falcons and capped by a row of dentils, and a segmental pediment with a disc centred in the tympanum. Still, it could be identified as Egyptian only within the Alexandrian context. Hieroglyphs are lacking as usual, while several Hellenistic and Roman elements have been inserted in various areas of the inner structure.

Moving into the *pronaos*, in front of the façade, the «visitor» stands between two statues, which are placed in niches in Egyptian style on the two lateral walls (Figs. 10 and 11).



Fig. 11: *Kom el-Shogafa*. The central wall scene of the burial chamber. Rowe 1942, Pl. V, Fig. 1.



Fig. 12: *Kom el-Shogafa*. The central sarcophagus of the burial chamber. Rowe 1942, Pl. V, Fig. 2.

out the different social strata of the middle class. Therefore, the role of such tomb images, whether presented in statues or wall scenes, was part of various rituals such as the Opening-of-the-mouth ceremony³⁹. After the performance of the ceremony the mummy, or statue, would have been «able» to eat, breathe, see, hear and enjoy the offerings and provisions brought to them by the priests and officials, in other words to sustain the Ka (living spirit). In the case of the Main Tomb the ritual would have obtained a distinctive Alexandrian form. Unfortunately, there has been no evidence, so far, that could add more to our knowledge on the ritual. Given the possibility that the Alexandrian statues functioned like Ka-statues there might have been an added poignancy. By emerging from their niches/false doors they greet the living accompanied by the recently departed. Hence, the entire design of the *pronaos* becomes liminal scene. Last but not least, the reason for the portrait-body

These statues represent two of the tomb's owners, combining an Egyptian-style body with naturalistic individual portrait characteristics. According to these characteristics, they date to the Flavian Period, most probably from Vespasian's reign (69-79 A.D.)³⁷. Since the Old Kingdom statues of the deceased pharaoh are attested in funerary complexes such as the statue group of Menkaure (Mycerinus) and his queen from the Valley Temple in Giza³⁸. The surprising similarity of the dresses the Alexandrian and Giza statues' are in has indicated that the *Kom el-Shogafa* statues are dressed in the archaic Egyptian fashion. Gradually, the practice spread down into society while by the era of the Middle Kingdom it was widespread through-

³⁷ VENIT, 2002: 129.

³⁸ See in detail SMITH, 1958: 59.

³⁹ DAVID, 1999: 154.

combination has been extensively discussed in similar cases outside Alexandria such as the Fayum portraits as well as other provincial burials of the Roman Period. The use of naturalistic portraits has been interpreted from a funerary point of view as choice of the dead in order for them to enter the process after death in such an image⁴⁰, while reflecting, at the same time, a higher elite status promoting their education and Roman lifestyle. Similarly, the Alexandrian portraits promote the high social status of the dead – and their relatives – in Alexandria, following the trends of the Roman Period⁴¹.

The back wall of the ante-room forms the façade of the burial chamber, which opens into the chamber through an Egyptian style doorway. The doorframe is bound by a torus moulding and supports a cavetto cornice decorated with a winged sun disc and crowned with a frieze of rampant *uraei*-cobras; those at the centre are presented frontally, whereas those at either side turn slightly outward. The doorway is flanked at each side by an Agathos Daimon, standing on an Egyptian style basis, representing the guardian of burial chamber's entrance. Each wears the *pschent*-crown, but it also supports a Thyrsus and Kerykeion in its coils.

The burial chamber hosts three niches in cruciform arrangement, which contain typical Roman stone sarcophagi with garlands and masks, while the upper part of the niches is decorated with an Egyptian style scene (Figs. 11-13). The back wall of the central niche presents the funeral of Osiris, who is laid on his royal lion-shaped bed, surmounted by Thoth, Horus and Anubis in the role of the priest. This scene is quite a typical theme

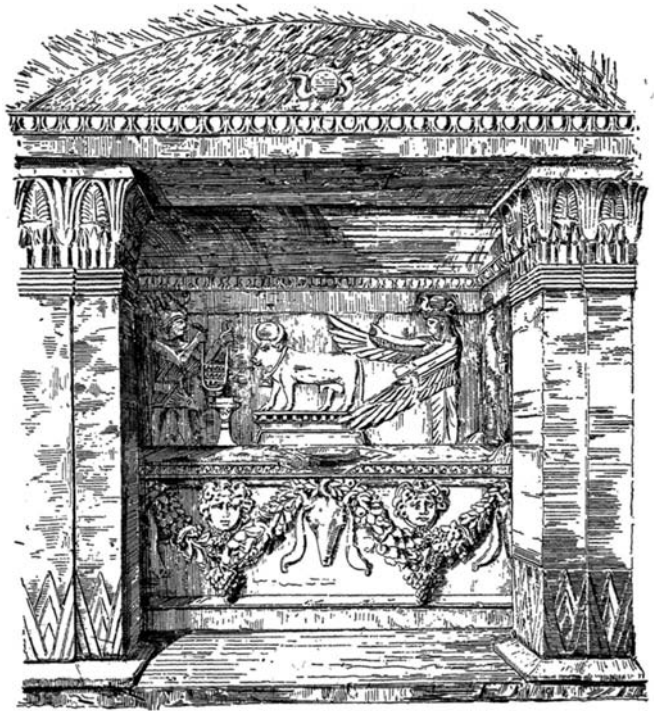


Fig. 13: *Kom el-Shogafa*. The right niche of the burial chamber. Rowe 1942, Pl. V, Pl. VIII.

⁴⁰ RIGGS, 2006: 174.

⁴¹ More portraits in sculpture have been discovered in Western Necropolis: a female bust in white marble (Greco-Roman Museum no. 3516), which was found in Kom el-Shogafa; a bust of a young male also in white marble (Greco-Roman Museum no. 3339); and another bust of a youth male in plaster, which was found over a sarcophagus along with another one. All of them date to the 2nd century A.D. For the two male busts see BRECCIA, 1922: 182-183; for the female bust, *ibid*: 192-192.

throughout the history of Egyptian funerary tradition, and also in Alexandria⁴². Interestingly, scholars have observed «mistakes» in the scene such as the depiction of three Canopic jars instead of four. Yet, by the time the Main Tomb was designed, the use of Canopic jars had long disappeared from the canonical panoply of funerary equipment, since are absent from the Egyptian burials already since the Late Period onwards. What is being represented here is not a detailed picture of a canonical Pharaonic Egyptian burial, but rather an evocation of the same by means of the appointment of the vignettes with elements that are reminiscent of the Pharaonic funerary ambience. In other words, the importance lays on the meaning of the narrative rather than the pictorial detail, while the central theme remains the same. If nothing else, such scenes imply a more punctual approach as well as a deeper penetration of the Alexandrian society into the Egyptian funerary tradition. This becomes clearer in the less projected scenes on the lateral walls of the three niches⁴³.

On the back walls of each of the two lateral niches, an imagined scene of a Pharaoh venerating the Apis-bull is presented. Apis stands on a podium, while Isis, on the right, embraces the god with her open-winged arms. The bull figure seems to represent a statue on a base, like this discovered in the Alexandrian Serapeum, rather than an actual bull⁴⁴. Taking into account the exceptional monumentality and precise dating of the tomb, the participation of «Pharaohs» in the scenes can lead us to a series of questions. Who were the owners of the most monumental tomb that has been preserved in Alexandria? What could their role have been in the public life of Alexandria? Would it be possible that the wall scenes on the back walls of the two lateral niches to represent the Roman Period Alexandrian cult of Apis? Is there a political-ideological symbolism behind these scenes?

Indeed, the monumentality and high quality of the architectural and sculptural decoration indicate that these people were of the highest social status. The depiction of pharaohs and the statue forms of the Apis-bull could be examined in relation to Roman acts of ideology and socio-political propaganda. During his visit to Egypt, Vespasian, whose reign corresponds with the date of the tomb, participated in rites for the Apis-bull in Alexandria⁴⁵. If the tomb's residents were indeed of the highest social rank, they should have

⁴² For a Pharaonic parallel see the tomb of Sennedjem, dating to the 19th Dynasty. SMITH, 1958: 220, fig. 373.

⁴³ In the six lateral scenes of the niches are related to the various stages of the process of qualification of the dead for rebirth after death. These scenes bring a series of further thoughts concerning funerary beliefs in Alexandria. Among other things, it is the most detailed case with a detailed reference to Egyptian style rituals, known mostly from the Egyptian chora. They are often reproduced on the surface of mummies or on panels of funerary stelae, like the one from Saqqara, now in the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (no. 33): the dead is presented between two mummified divinities that are ready to start mummifying him with bands of linen. The position at the areas of the tomb that were less visible for the audience (relatives and other non-priestly people, who would stand in the Pronaos) is related to their strictly funerary function, dealing with the process after death exclusively, and having no actual message to transfer onto the visitors of the tombs.

⁴⁴ See BOTTI, 1987: 120; 1898: 319-320; BRECCIA, 1914: 99, fig. 23; 1922: 115, 142; KATER-SIBBES, VERMASEREN, 1978: 25, no. 89, TKACZOW, 1993, no. 161; ASHTON, 2005: 9.

⁴⁵ According to Venit, the Pharaoh of the Main Tomb represents Vespasian (2002: 143).

been involved in Roman Alexandria's public affairs such as the relation with the Emperor. Of course, for Alexandria and Egypt, the idea of royal authority was often manifested in the Pharaonic image since the Ptolemaic Period and continued to be preserved in temples of the *chora* in the Roman Period⁴⁶. Therefore, these Pharaonic figures might have conveyed propagandistic ideological and socio-political messages related to, but not only, the desire of the Main Tomb's owners (and possibly of their relatives too) to forge a relationship with the Roman «pharaohs» of Egypt in order to display their own high status in Alexandrian society. The two images of Anubis – one with a snake tail – depicting him as guard on the back side of the entrance wall dressed in a typical Roman military costume, thus corroborating in a way the Roman elements of the tomb, concerns not only the owners of the tomb, but also Egyptian gods that could participate in the funerary program.

HELLENIZATION, EGYPTIANIZATION AND ROMANIZATION TOWARDS *ALEXANDRIANIZATION*

The above brief case study attempted to show that during the Hellenistic and Roman Periods there was a continuous process of incorporating and adaptating Greek, Egyptian and Roman cultural elements into the life and afterlife of Alexandria. The overall picture corresponds well to the concept of acculturation, in terms of cultural change, emerging as the outcome of the contact between different cultures and people. It becomes also clear that this process of change is multidimensional and multidirectional, in the words of Naerebout, multidimensional because «it regards both observable (dress, language use, food etc) and unobservable (beliefs, values, attitudes, feelings) characteristics», and multidirectional because «the changes occur on all sides: all parties involved in the contact are affected»⁴⁷. This process could be further illustrated with more specific terminology concerning our case study in an attempt to make the Alexandrian multiculturalism rise to prominence even further.

Hence, *Alexandrianization* could be described as the process of perception and further adaptation of Greek, Egyptian and Roman cultural elements in the life of Alexandria, within the cultural, political and social context of the city, as it was developed during the Hellenistic and Roman Periods. In other words, Alexandrianization could refer to the process of Greco-Egyptian interaction from an «Alexandrian» point of view. What is, therefore, implied by the term Alexandrianization is a continuous process and not so much a specific moment, task or outcome.

⁴⁶ ASHTON, 2005: 8-10.

⁴⁷ NAEREBOUT, 2005: 542.



Fig. 14: *Kom el-Shogafa*. The images of Anubis in Roman military dress. Rowe 1942, Pl. V, Pl. X, figs 1 and 2.

Therefore, the most basic concept of Alexandrianization concerning the perception and adaptation of the idea of the tomb structure, at least the elite one, is both as last residence of the dead and as a funerary temple, and a meeting place of the living with the dead. This must have been an inspiration originally deriving from the Egyptian tradition that was later adapted on the needs of the Greek Alexandrians such as those buried in Shatby tomb A and Mustapha Pasha tomb I.

In the late Ptolemaic Period, Alexandrianization facilitated a wider gamut of funerary needs. The Egyptian mummification was applied whereas the Egyptian religious elements became dominant in terms of funerary religion and more visually detectable in the tombs' architecture and decoration as opposed to earlier examples. However, Egyptian funerary practices were applied within an Alexandrian context, acknowledging the Greek aspect of the city and regardless if these were applied on burials of Egyptian, Greek or mixed Alexandrians.

The bicultural character of the Late Ptolemaic elite *hypogea* display the composite and flexible «texture» of the multicultural Alexandrian «dress», including messages about the profession and social status, religious preferences, and lifestyle. Direct messages about ethnic identity are missing, since after the long process of Greco-Egyptian interaction and the great socio-political developments of the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C., boundaries between the different ethnic and social groups of Alexandria seemed no longer impenetrable. Within this flexible

picture, Egyptian funerary tradition represents the common ground for a large part of the late Ptolemaic Period elite in Alexandria, which might have consisted of Greeks, mixed, Hellenised or Egyptians. Besides, all the aforementioned ethnic distinctions seem to have lost their actual meaning since, within this context at least, they had all become Alexandrians. Of course the proportion of Greek or Egyptian people, structures and customs varied enormously. It is from this period onwards though that these terms will depend on each other as far as their meaning is concerned within this advanced Greco-Egyptian interaction.

During the Roman Period the Egyptian funerary elements become more popular by means of the systematic Alexandrianization of the Egyptian funerary repertoire. On the one hand, there is a much wider repertoire of Egyptian elements in terms of content, styles and combination with Greek elements such as juxtaposition and/or the merging of styles and themes, while Roman aspects were also gradually adapting in the Alexandrian cultural *modus vivendi*. Hence, it seems to be clear that after three centuries or more of cross-cultural interaction, both Greek and Egyptian repertoires were considered as integral components of the Alexandrian cultural expression. In sum although terms like «Greek» and «Egyptian» could well be referring to ethnically distinct groups, in certain contexts they often merged and permitted the «Alexandrian» to emerge. It seems clear now that the long course of Greco-Egyptian interaction in Alexandria was culminated by the emergence of the «Alexandrian identity». The latter had its own hybrid cultural language and expressive means making sometimes the search for Greek or Egyptian *comparanda* a rather unnecessary process.

IDENTITY AND COSMOPOLITISM: THE JEWISH *POLITEUMA* OF ALEXANDRIA

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Abstract: *Taking into account the well-known process of ethnic, cultural and linguistic fusion which constitutes the basis for the huge development of the city of Alexandria (and is in itself an impressive legacy of Alexander's empire), it becomes important to understand up to what point would it be possible for a certain group to safeguard a distinctive identity – at a cultural, religious, and political level – within a space deeply marked by cosmopolitanism and by the confluence of different sensibilities. The Macedonian and Greek communities, which were closer to the governing elite, would find a suitable formula of orienting their behaviour by using rules that derived from a common political and cultural identity – the so-called concept of politikoi nomoi. The Jewish community, which was as well important in the city, managed also to obtain, according to literary tradition, significant advantages from Alexander and the Ptolemies, especially the right to «live according to their ancestral laws». In this process of identitarian affirmation, a determinant role must have been played by the translation of the Torah by the Septuaginta, because it enabled the sacred text with the possibility of reaching a position comparable to the Greek nomoi, thus contributing to the establishment of a legal koine, which, even without ceasing to respect royal authority, would be central in daily life and in dealing with private conflicts.*

FROM ALEXANDER TO ALEXANDRIA

Any discussion about Alexandria cannot avoid a reference, even if short, to the charismatic personality that launched the bases for the foundation of a city, which, like its mentor and creator, would embody the spirit of an entire period¹. In fact, although Alexander was still in his early thirties when he died (356-323), he managed to conquer, in only a few years, an impressive empire. His brilliant military skills together with an outstanding political sagacity elevated him, still in life, to the heights of *deification*, and this process of legendary amplification was continued by later writers and historians, as well as by popular tradition, thus making it more difficult to distinguish between historical factuality and mere ideological exploitation in what respects his personality and deeds. Actually, Alexander marked not only the end of a cycle, but he also created the conditions that would lead the ancient world to the Hellenistic epoch. Politically, this period was less exposed to unbalances and changes than were the Archaic and Classical ages. Part of the explanation may reside in the fact the Hellenistic Period was characterized by the domain over vast territories with a huge population, thus suffering less the pernicious effects of frontier struggles and of an excessive divisionism. At any rate, the main reason is to be found in the centralization of political (and often also economic) power in the hands of the monarch, on whom depended the whole administrative structure, which constituted anyway one of the most remarkable aspects of this period, resulting from the combination of the monarchic Macedonian experience with a long lasting Asiatic and Egyptian tradition. Moreover, even if from a cultural and linguistic perspective the Greek matrix (clearly preferred by the ruling elite) dominates the Hellenistic Period, it cannot be understood without other cultural and ethnic influxes, whose fusion will result in the existence of a civilization which was «common» (*koiné*) and transversal to the «inhabited world» (*oikoumene*) – in a clear rupture with the traditional opposition between Greeks and Barbarians, which until then dominated Greece and the way the non-Greek «otherness» was seen².

At any rate, even if it is certain that the role played by Alexander was determinant to start this revolution of the ancient world, the crystallization of the main traits of the Hellenistic society would occur only during the time of the Diadochi – the generals that served under his orders and involved themselves in struggle after Alexander's death, in a dispute

¹ On the foundation of Alexandria, see SILVA, in this same volume, *supra*. All the dates mentioned along this paper are prior to the Christian era. I would like to express my gratitude to Nuno Simões Rodrigues, for suggestions and helpful criticism concerning an earlier version of this paper, although he cannot be held responsible for the final perspectives here expressed.

² This cosmopolitanism characteristic of the biggest Hellenistic cities will increase a lot the mobility of ideas, persons and goods. Thereby, the formation of a list of «wonders» or of «things that caused admiration» (*thaumata*) cannot be dissociated from the conscience that there were «things deserving to be admired» (*theamata*) in distant lands, which were nevertheless a part of that «globalized» world visited by curious travellers, avid of new sensations. On this, see CLAYTON; PRICE, 1988: 4-5; on the specific case of the lighthouse from Alexandria, see LEÃO; MANTAS, 2009, a work which inspires some of the observations made in this part of the analysis.

that would last for several decades. The inevitable fragmentation of Alexander's former empire originated the kingdoms of Egypt, Macedonia, Asia, and later that of Pergamum also, which, from a political perspective, were organized as hereditary monarchies. Although the position of the king met variants in what concerned the way his sovereignty was exerted, it is undeniable that this kind of political regime had turned into a historical necessity, because only a strong and stable centralized power could keep the cohesion of vast territories, with many ethnic, cultural and geographic differences.

In what respects the global space of Hellas, most of the former poleis continued to exist along the Hellenistic age, at least as urban spaces, although without the autonomy and liberty of movements of which they had enjoyed during the Archaic and Classic Periods, especially in terms of external policy. Because the essence of the Hellenistic state depended on the person of the monarch and on the group of collaborators directly working with him, the structure of the polis ended up by being a strange body within this new reality. Even though, it could not simply be eliminated, because of the symbolic importance it had in the past history of Greece. The poleis managed thereby to keep the same constitutional apparatus of the past (popular assembly, council, courts, annually elected magistrates), but were now dependent on the will of the king, whose orders had to be obeyed, whether transmitted by letter, by royal regulation (*diagramma*) or by royal ordinance (*prostagma*). Formally, the image of autonomy was therefore kept, as long as there was also the preoccupation of moulding the decrees of the polis according to the instructions of the monarch, which were thus turned into binding law³. Up to a certain point, this situation constituted a fiction tacitly accepted by both parties, because both could extract benefits from it.

Another feature distinctive of the Hellenistic Period and of the strategy adopted by Alexander was the founding of new cities, sometimes with a demographic concentration that would be unthinkable to the classic poleis. The most emblematic of those new establishments was certainly Alexandria, a city that would substitute Memphis as the capital of reign of Egypt, under the Ptolemies⁴. This dynasty was initiated by Ptolemy, a distinguished general under Alexander and one of the firsts to understand how unrealistic was the project of trying simply to replace the former emperor by another person. Instead of that, he chose to reinforce the stability of the reign of Egypt, an objective that went in accord with the preoccupation of legitimating his power as sovereign, because, besides the military power, Ptolemy had no other secure basis to validate that domain. Accordingly the connection to

³ At any rate, the payment of a tribute and the acceptance of the presence of royal garrisons, among other charges supported by each individual polis, were an unequivocal sign of their dependence towards the power of the sovereign. On this question, see LEÃO, 2009a: 170-173.

⁴ In Antiquity, were founded almost twenty cities with the name Alexandria (cf. Stephanus of Byzantium, *s.v.* a *Alexandreiai*). The one under analysis, however, built according to a plan of Deinocrates of Rhodes, in the Nile Delta, would become the most important of them all, to the point of this period being also frequently named after it. For a collection of the sources dealing with the cities founded by Alexander, see HECKEL; YARDLEY, 2004: 303-310.

Alexander and to the idea of success associated with the emperor would meet in perfection that desideratum. One of the first signs of this strategy may be found in the fact that Ptolemy literally abducted the body of Alexander, when it passed by Egypt in the way from Babylonia to Macedonia. The corpse started by being kept in Memphis, but when the capital was moved to Alexandria, it followed the same destination and was finally placed in a golden sarcophagus⁵.

Identical motivation may explain, at least in part, the erection of the two most emblematic monuments of the new capital: the Museum (or shrine to the Muses) and the Library⁶. Although the details concerning its construction are scanty and subject to many doubts, it is usually accepted that the decision to build them was made by Ptolemy I Soter, and that his son (Ptolemy II Philadelphus) undertook the noble task of expanding them. Both the Museum and the Library represent, already in Antiquity, a vivid illustration of the cosmopolitan spirit of the new Hellenistic cities. Their creation has also been understood as an expression of the Peripatetic influx over this golden period for the science, but it also matches a long lasting tradition of cultural sponsorship, deeply rooted already in the tyrannies of the Archaic and Classical Periods, which the new monarchs intended to cultivate as well⁷. Besides that, in the case of the Ptolemies those monuments contributed moreover, as stated before, to the objective of reinforcing the connection with Alexander and of legitimating the domain of a Greek matrix (and thereby foreigner) in a cultural context as exuberant as that of the ancient Egypt.

Despite the importance of those emblematic constructions, the city of Alexandria constituted also a notable ethnic mosaic, where three communities were particularly important: the indigenous Egyptians, the Macedonians and Greeks in general (culturally and politically dominants), and the Jews. Even if it is correct to state that the authority of the pharaoh worked as a centripetal force, fundamental to keep the whole bulk together, there was nevertheless a high risk of disaggregation (or at least of conflict), especially on the part of those who were more passionate in keeping their religious and cultural roots, as happened with the Jews. It is thereby the aim of this paper to discuss, in the next section, the way the cosmopolitanism characteristic of the Hellenistic Period (and of Alexandria in particular) managed to deal with the demands of a strong and deeply rooted identitarian consciousness.

THE JEWISH *POLITEUMA* OF ALEXANDRIA

The notice of contacts between the Greek world and the Jews goes back to a very distant time in the past, as can be inferred from Hebrew names (as Japheth and Javan) remi-

⁵ Later substituted by a coffin in glass. On the strategy adopted by Ptolemy to legitimate his power, see ERSKINE, 1995.

⁶ On this question, see the analysis made by Maria Helena da Rocha Pereira, in this same volume, *infra*.

⁷ See PARKER, 1998; LEÃO, 2009b: 518-519.

niscent of Greek mythical names (Iapetos and Ion), and from the fact that king David himself employed, in a period as distant as the 10th century, Greek mercenaries from Crete. On the other side, remains of pottery found in Samaria suggest the existence of commercial contacts with Greece already in the 8th century. The traditional Athenian emblem of the owl was discovered in Jewish coins minted in the 5th century and, during the Persian invasion, Jewish mercenaries were among the Persian troops that invaded Greece, in 480, under the orders of Xerxes⁸. One of the earliest significant allusions to the Jews, in Greek literature, occurs in a short reference in the *Histories* of Herodotus (2.104.2-3), concerning the circumcision, a practice that the Syrians of Palestine (i.e. the Jews) had adopted from the Egyptians⁹.

According to Josephus (*Against Apion*, 1.176-182), Clearchus of Soli, a former pupil of Aristotle, related in his first book *On Sleep* that the master had had a meeting with a Jew in Asia Minor. The story is usually considered to be apocryphal, but the fact that the Peripatetic Clearchus found the notice worth of record is an indicator of the high opinion held on the Jews (as well as on the Indians) as a people inclined to the philosophical reasoning. An approach identically positive is made by Theophrastus, who succeeded Aristotle as the head of the Lyceum and whose testimony (quoted by Porphyry, *On Abstinence*, 2.26) has the undeniable merit of being the earliest source, outside the *Bible*, to describe the Jewish sacrifices¹⁰. Among those earliest accounts on Jews made by non-Jews, the largest testimony derives from the work *History of Egypt* written by Hecataeus of Abdera, in a long passage quoted by Diodorus of Sicily (*Historical Library*, 40.3). Even if it has some mistakes (as stating that Moses had founded Jerusalem and established the sacred Temple) and manifests some criticism towards the zealous character of the Jews, as a social characteristic deriving from the harsh experience of exile, Hecataeus presents nonetheless a quite positive image of the Jews¹¹, with whom he might have been in direct contact by the time he visited Egypt.

With the reference to Hecataeus of Abdera (who lived ca. 360-290), one arrives into a period comprised between the campaigns of Alexander and the beginnings of the dynasty of the Ptolemies, an epoch that shall open a new and gleaming chapter in the history of Jews, especially in what concerns their establishment in Egypt. Josephus (*Against Apion*, 1.186-204) ascribes to this same Hecataeus a treaty *On the Jews*, but its author is, most

⁸ Cf. Flavius Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.172-173, who derives this information from a Greek poet named Choerilus. See FELDMAN, REINHOLD, 1996.

⁹ For other parallelisms between the Semitic world and Greek literature, from the Homeric Poems down to Xenophon, see the detailed systematization of RODRIGUES, 2005.

¹⁰ Even if he also registers several mistakes, like stating that sacrifices were made during the night or that humans were used as sacrificial victims.

¹¹ Cf. 40.3.4: «as a result of their own expulsion [from Egypt, Moses] introduced an intolerant mode of life, hostile to foreigners».

probably, a Jew that might have composed this work around the middle of the 2nd century¹². Despite those limitations, one of the passages of Pseudo-Hecataeus quoted by Josephus is quite illustrative of the importance attributed to the respect of traditional regulations among Jews – a feature that Alexander was wise enough to respect, similarly to what he did with other conquered populations, like the Persians. It is thereby pertinent to evoke this episode as an introduction to the question of the privileges that might have been received by the Jews who decided to move to Alexandria:

Then Hecataeus indicates in turn our attitude toward the laws (nomoi), that we choose to suffer anything rather than transgress them, and consider this to be noble. For this reason, he says, though they are verbally abused by their neighbors and by all those who arrive from abroad, as well as being insolently treated on a regular basis by the Persian kings and satraps, they cannot be shifted from their conviction; on the contrary, defenseless they face on behalf of these both tortures and the most terrible of all deaths rather than deny their ancestral ways (ta patria). He also provides several evidences of this strong-mindedness in relation to the laws (nomoi). He says that when Alexander was on one occasion in Babylon and had decided to clear the temple of Bel which had collapsed, he ordered all his soldiers alike to transport the soil; only the Judeans did not comply, but endured severe beating and paid heavy fines, until the king pardoned them and granted them an amnesty¹³.

The presence of Jewish troops serving under Alexander is not surprising, because, as discussed before, already in the 5th century it was possible to find mercenaries with that same origin among the Persian army¹⁴. On the other side, the idea that the Macedonian leader might have shown understanding towards the interdictions dictated by Jewish laws (even facing the risk of some loss of authority¹⁵) finds a possible parallel in the way Alexander knew how to respect former enemies, either because he was convinced that this was the best way of acting or by mere political pragmatism. In fact, after having conquered Persia, he decided to adopt some aspects of the Persian protocol, even when he had to face the incomprehension of his fellow Macedonians¹⁶. Thus, despite not being wholly improbable

¹² For more details on the «discovery» of the Jews by Greek authors, see FELDMAN; REINHOLD, 1996: 1-14, esp. 10, in what respects the case of the Pseudo-Hecataeus now under analysis.

¹³ Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.190-192. Translated by MASON, 2007: 110-112. The Greek words transliterated between brackets are my addition. The same is valuable to other passages quoted in translation throughout the paper.

¹⁴ HENGEL, 1989: 187 and n. 1, says that there is no reason to doubt that Jewish mercenaries served under Alexander, although he considers unhistorical the tradition stating that the Macedonian monarch gave *isopoliteia* (equal civic rights) to the Judean militaries that decided to establish in Alexandria.

¹⁵ MASON, 2007: 112 n. 650, comments that the punishment of those disobeying soldiers «seems unnaturally light».

¹⁶ It is particularly meaningful the ritual of *proskynesis* («prostration»), which Alexander started to demand as a sign of respect towards himself, but was interpreted by many of his companions as an indication of growing megalomania. On the way Alexander's behaviour evolved from the image of a leader of a pan-Hellenic colligation against the Barbarians into a strategy of favouring the inclusion of the defeated into the new budding order, see LEÃO, 2005.

from a historical perspective, this detail reinforces a series of many others transmitted by tradition, which tended to present Alexander as a great benefactor of Judean identity.

The sources go to the point of suggesting that this support may have been influenced by divine intervention. In fact, tradition states that the first visit of Alexander to Jerusalem (in 332) was preceded by moments of great tension, because the high priest had decided, in a first moment, to remain faithful to Darius, a choice that led the Macedonians to march against Jerusalem. The vivid memory of this episode was preserved in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities* (11.304-346), in terms whose historicity is, to say the least, highly suspect. Actually, the epiphany of Alexander in Jerusalem has too many points of contact with another experience of divine inspiration – a fact that cannot be ruled out as simple coincidence – lived during the first part of the year 331: the famous pilgrimage of the Macedonian king to the sanctuary of Amon, in the oasis of Siwah (Libya), undertaken in a time when he had already chosen the place where the new capital of Egypt should be established¹⁷. Several details adduced when Alexander visits the temple of Jerusalem – like bringing the Book of Daniel before him (a book which was in reality written only around 164), where the prediction was made that a Greek would overcome the Persian empire – strongly suggest that the episode reflects probably a later Jewish tradition, where are detected the same signs of legendary amplification in what respects the deeds of the Macedonian leader. Nonetheless, it is still pertinent for the objectives of this analysis to evoke the final part of the narrative, where are mentioned the putative privileges granted by Alexander to the Jews:

And, when the Book of Daniel was shown to him, in which he had declared that one of the Greeks would destroy the empire of the Persians, he believed himself to be the one indicated; and in his joy he dismissed the multitude for the time being, but on the following day he summoned them again and told them to ask for any gifts which they might desire. When the high priest asked that they might observe their country's laws (patrioi nomoi) and in the seventh year be exempt from tribute, he granted all this. Then they begged that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media also to have their own laws (idioi nomoi), and he gladly promised to do as they asked. And, when he said to the people that if any wished to join his army while still adhering to the customs of their country (ethe patria), he was ready to take them, many eagerly accepted service with him¹⁸.

Leaving aside the question of the highly suspect historicity of this report, which moves back to the time of Alexander decisions that were, in fact, taken much later¹⁹, the essence of

¹⁷ For an analysis of Josephus' report, by comparing aspects of the expedition to Jerusalem with the visit to the sanctuary of Amon, see MODRZEJEWSKI, 1995: 50-55.

¹⁸ Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 11.337-339. The translation is taken from MARCUS, 1958: 477-479.

¹⁹ MODRZEJEWSKI, 1995: 55, says that Josephus is simply «anticipating by some 130 years the step actually taken by Antiochus III about 200 B.C., when he established the status of Jerusalem in the Seleucid empire».

the political and ideological meaning of the measures here mentioned may nevertheless be valid. In reality, from a political perspective, this report shows that Judea was able to keep, throughout the Hellenistic Period, a position comparable to the one it had during the Persian domination: the capacity to act as a ethnic and religious entity, organized around the priesthood power, whose centre was the sacred Temple at Jerusalem. From an ideological viewpoint, the account illustrates the bases for the interrelations that were to be established between the Hellenistic sovereigns and the Jews: the first would distribute benefits and accept to respect the Mosaic law, while the latter would guarantee fidelity to the monarch and the readiness to fight under his command. There was however an important evolution concerning the inner legal nature of the *Torah*: in the past, it worked for the Jews as a law issued by the central power, binding by itself; but now it was presented as the «ancestral law» (*patrios nomos*) of the Jews, whose validity had to be confirmed by the new rulers. This way the *Torah* ended up by becoming closer to the juridical statute of the *patrioi nomoi* used by the Greeks of the Asian cities freed by Alexander from the Persian yoke. This possible parallelism between the legal situation of the Jews and that of the Greeks is a question that demands further inquiry, taking as reference the Jewish *politeuma* of Alexandria, which represents an elucidative example of the way the Jews from the Diaspora could organize themselves into stable communities, from a social, political and legal standpoint.

According to Pseudo-Hecataeus²⁰, not long after the battle of Gaza (312), the group of Jews who came to Egypt following the Macedonian conquest brought with them the *Torah*. Ezekias, the high priest who accompanied them from Judaea, gathered a group of friends, possibly during the *Sabbath*, and read them the whole text, in Hebrew. Still according to Pseudo-Hecataeus, «he had their settlement (*katoikesis*) and the constitution written (*politeia gegrammene*)»²¹. The passage is awkward and ambivalent, because the context does not make clear whether the terms *katoikesis* and *politeia* should be understood as being applied to the past history of the Jews or to the very moment when this group established in Alexandria²². Independent from the way this passage is interpreted, it remains a fact that the Jewish community felt very soon the need of having a Greek translation of the *Torah*, due perhaps to the circumstance that the process of *Hellenization* had been so quick that, a few decades after their establishment in Alexandria, most of the Jews were no longer able to

²⁰ Quoted by Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.186-189.

²¹ Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.189. Translated by MASON, 2007: 110.

²² HENGEL, 1989: 192-193, is also ambivalent in the way he interprets this *politeia gegrammene*, which he tends to identify with a royal decree allowing the Jews to establish in Alexandria with a special statute of ethnic minority. HEGERMANN, 1989: 160, states that the passage expressly mentions «a short royal decree, the contents of which would be comparable to the letter from Antiochus III to Zeuxis». However, the suggestion that the text was read from the (Hebrew) original may imply, on the contrary, that it was the *Torah* and that the *politeia* in question was the constitution of the Judean nation. On the other hand, the idea that Ezekias «had been closely in touch with us» (*synthes hemin genomenos*) may be an indication that the high priest was acquainted with the Greeks and with their habits. On the interpretation of this crooked passage and on its connection to the translation of the *Septuaginta*, see also MODRZEJEWSKI, 1995: 99-104; MASON, 2007: 110, n. 636.

understand the Hebrew. The first version of the *Torah* to Greek is the famous translation by the *Septuaginta*, and this is not the time to discuss thoroughly in what conditions it may have been put into practice. For the purposes of this work it is enough to recall two possible explanations for the making of the translation: first, the aforementioned hypothesis that it was motivated by the insufficient linguistic proficiency in Hebrew of the Jews attending the Synagogue in Alexandria; second, the tradition that it was the successor of Ptolemy I Soter (therefore Ptolemy II Philadelphus) who, around the year 270, had decided to have the *Torah* translated into Greek, in order to enrich the collections of the Library²³. According to the same tradition, Demetrius of Phalerum, a former Athenian statesman, was assigned the role of supervising the task²⁴. It is not implausible that both reasons may have played a complementary role, and therefore that a practical need of the Jewish community had met the monarch's desire to improve the capacity of the Library (thus widening the access to a text to which part of his subjects attributed a capital importance).

This tradition is, in fact, recorded in a document known as the *Letter of Aristeas*, supposedly written by a courtier, but whose author is most probably a Jew. According to this testimony, the Jewish community and the king himself were so satisfied with the work of the translators that they decided that it should be considered a paradigmatic text and remain unchanged in the future. For the purposes of this analysis, and despite the great importance of the exegetic questions raised by the *Bible* of the *Septuaginta*, it is the reaction of the Jews and the way the Jewish community is represented that has a more direct interest. Let us evoke then a paraphrase of the *Letter of Aristeas* provided by Josephus:

Now, when the Law (nomos) had been transcribed and the work of translation brought to an end in seventy-two days, Demetrius assembled all the Jews at the same place where the laws (nomoi) had been rendered, and in the presence of the translators read them aloud. Thereupon the people expressed their approval of the elders who had interpreted the Law (nomos), and also praised Demetrius for conceiving the idea through which he had become the originator of great benefits to them, and they urged him as well to give their leaders the Law (nomos) to read; and all of them, including the priest and the eldest of the translators and the chief officers (proestekotes) of the community (politeuma), requested that, since the translation had been so successfully completed, it should remain as it was and not be altered²⁵.

From a political and legal standpoint, this text provides some precious information. The juridical nature of the *Torah* is insistently underlined by the terms used in Greek to

²³ See FELDMAN, REINHOLD, 1996: 17-22, esp. 18-19.

²⁴ As is remarked by MODRZEJEWSKI, 1995: 100, this attribution to Demetrius is rather awkward, because he «had been unwise enough to favor the succession of the king's eldest son in preference to Philadelphus», falling into disgrace when Philadelphus was made king.

²⁵ *Jewish Antiquities*, 12.107-108. Translation by MARCUS, 1957: 53-55.

mention it (*nomos/nomoi*); on the other side, the Jewish community is given the name *politeuma*. In the above mentioned passage of Pseudo-Hecataeus on the coming of Ezekias to Alexandria, it was the word *katoikesis* that had been used, a term that, together with the variant *katoikia*, is the one generally employed to define a colony of outsiders in a particular site²⁶. This kind of organizations implied some capacity of self-government, but not necessarily the civic rights characteristic of a city²⁷. *Politeuma* is a word that may also be used to name generically any urban settlement and its inhabitants, although it classifies more in particular a community of alien settlers (even if not specifically Jews), with privileges up to a certain point comparable to civic rights. Another distinctive aspect that deserves being mentioned is that those ethnic groups are regularly characterized by the fact of having as well a strong religious identity.

In order to establish *politeumata* and *katoikiai* it would be certainly necessary to have an official authorization. Maybe the above mentioned *politeia gegrammene* in the passage of Pseudo-Hecataeus about Ezekias could have corresponded to this foundational document, despite the difficulties concerning the interpretation of this expression. On the other side, even if the tradition of the benefits granted by Alexander to the Jews is certainly magnified and at least in part anachronistic, it may nevertheless reflect the essence of the conditions given to the first Jewish settlers of Alexandria²⁸: the right of living according to their ancestral laws or customs (*patrioi nomoi*, *idioi nomoi*, *ethe patria*) and of applying those same traditional laws among the persons who voluntarily consider them as binding rules – as long as they did not enter in conflict with the royal authority. Even without including among these concessions the right of full citizenship (as happened with the Greek and Macedonian communities), this was undoubtedly an intelligent way of promoting mobility and attracting active populations. It also favoured social peace, because *politeumata* like the one existing in Alexandria had the legal capacity of appointing magistrates and of creating their own grid of courts and schools, where the norms of the Mosaic Law could be applied and taught²⁹. This reality is, in fact, clearly underlined by another passage in Josephus:

²⁶ On the terminology used in the sources to refer to those relatively autonomous communities, see HEGERMANN, 1989: 158-161, whose arguments are adopted at this point. On the use of the term *politeuma* in political theorization since the time of Aristotle and Isocrates, but with particular incidence throughout the Hellenistic Period, see GAMBETTI, 2009: 43-52. The same author states (p. 48-49) that the Jewish *politeuma* of Alexandria was certainly military in origin, and that this circumstance may have granted its members a distinct and superior status by comparison to the rest of the Jewish community, which constituted the *plethos* of Alexandria in broad sense.

²⁷ Nevertheless sometimes the *politeumata* could develop into cities. There were other designations to name communities of aliens, like *laos*, *synodos* and *synagoge* (although the last two are later in time).

²⁸ See *supra* commentary on Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, 11.337-339.

²⁹ HEGERMANN, 1989: 161, accepts that some Jewish colonists may have acquired, as a personal reward, the status of full citizenship, but he sustains (as most scholars also do) that the Jews as a community never got that right. In the future, this situation would be the cause of enormous tensions with the Greek community, as happened when, already in Roman times, Augustus decided to apply taxes to all non-citizens. He would reduce as well the rights of the Jewish *politeuma* of Alexandria. On this, see RODRIGUES, 2007a: 337.

*In Egypt, for example, territory has been set apart for a Jewish settlement (katoikia), and in Alexandria a great part of the city (polis) has been allocated to this nation (ethnos). And an ethnarch (ethnarches) of their own has been installed, who governs the people (ethnos) and adjudicates suits (kriseis) and supervises contracts (symbolaia) and ordinances (prostagmata), just as if he were the head (archon) of a sovereign state (politeia autoteles)*³⁰.

Therefore, the governing structure was initially almost monarchic, but maybe it did not last long, because the paraphrase of the Letter of Aristeeas, previously discussed, refers to a group of «chief officers (*proestekotes*) of the community (*politeuma*)», and not to a single person who concentrated in himself all the authority. It is also not improbable that the governing organic of the *politeuma* may had been suffering a growing Greek influence, as happened with the language and with some more practical procedures, like those involving for example Jewish litigants and Greek judges³¹. In reality and although after having followed a very different path, the Greeks of Alexandria and of other Hellenistic cities had reached a group of regulations understood as «common laws» or «civic laws» (*politikoi nomoi*), which remitted not to an archetypical text (as happened with the Jewish *Torah*), but to a tradition common to several poleis, which formed a juridical structure globally identified with the Greek legal experience. The recognition of the binding validity of those traditional determinations (which fell into the broad concept of *patrioi nomoi*) ended up by being one of the most efficient solutions found by the Ptolemies to attract to Egypt many aliens and to stimulate the mobility without putting at risk the social peace and the authority of the monarch. In effect, the several Egyptian, Greek and Jewish *nomoi*, to which legal validity was granted, had to be harmonized with the authority of the monarch, who had the ultimate word in the administration of justice, through his regulations (*diagrammata*) and ordinances (*prostagmata*). But just as the *politikoi nomoi* provided the Greek community with the juridical framework necessary to the political organization and to the resolution of conflicts, so did the *Torah* in what respects the Jewish *politeuma* – and this is why the work of the *Septuaginta* became so crucial. As time went by and as a natural result of this confluence of multiple political traditions, it should be expected the emergence of a common legal substrate, comparable in its origins and objectives to the process verified in other domains characteristic of this period. Thereby, just as it happened with the linguistic and cultural *koine*, the Hellenistic age (and especially Alexandria) favoured also the development of a legal *koine*, responsible as well for the success of the Ptolemies³². It was thus found

³⁰ *Jewish Antiquities*, 14.117. Translation by MARCUS, 1957: 509.

³¹ This is the situation of a certain Dositheos, a Jew of Egyptian origin, who had sued a Jewish woman; their case was judged by a group of Greek magistrates, in a court of Crocodilopolis. On this case, see MODRZEJEWSKI, 1995: 108-109.

³² On the characteristics of this legal *koine*, see MODRZEJEWSKI, 1995: 107-112.

an acute procedure of harmonizing the cosmopolitanism originated by the new political and social reality with the necessity to keep a strong identitarian matrix; it was thereby secured a space for the affirmation of the individual, in an universe marked by the unifying confluence of multiple sensibilities.

FESTIVE ALEXANDRIA – MOBILITY, LEISURE, AND ART IN THE HELLENISTIC AGE

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Abstract: *The development of a culture of mobility and leisure, principally motivated by the architectural and artistic enhancement of religious sites, can be traced back to the Hellenistic Age. That development becomes clear in the affirmation of periegetic literature as well as in the emergence of lists and accounts of the Seven Wonders, texts which combine the function of travel guides with notes on history, mythology, religion, and art. Other literary works testify to that process. This paper aims to discuss Theocritus' Idyll XV and Herodas' Mime IV as sources that illustrate the close relationship between religion and art, and its role in the development of the experience of tourism and leisure in Hellenistic Greece, especially as concerns women. In the last part of the paper the sculpture of a boy and a goose, mentioned in Herodas' poem, will be analysed.*

One of the most famous and interesting poems in the Theocritian *corpus* is the one that takes us to cosmopolitan Alexandria in the beginning of the 3rd century B.C., through the spontaneous dialogue between two women – women of the people, albeit affluent and enjoying relatively high social status¹ – who, like the poet, originally come from Syracuse

¹ Besides mentioning several women servants (Eunoea, Phrygia, Eutyichis), the passage where Gorgo notices Praxinoa's tunic, which had cost a fortune (lines 34-38), is also illustrative of that. The two women seem to be defending their higher social status when, inside the palace, a stranger tells them to be quiet and, feeling vexed, they mention both their Corinthian origins and the Dorian way of talking (lines 91-93). According to J. Rowlandson, a study by W. Clarysse published in 1998 confirms that in the early Ptolemaic Period the identity and the accent associated with one of the ancient Greek cities, or with Mace-

(line 90), and who go out to participate in the festival in honour of Adonis. The dramatic date of *Idyll XV*, also known as «The Syracusan Women» or «The Women at the Adonia», is probably 272 B.C.² during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe II, a time when the cult of Adonis in Alexandria included magnificent celebrations promoted by the queen herself, as the poem illustrates³.

The well-known dialogue between the two Syracusan friends, performed in April 2005 by the Instituto de Estudos Clássicos of the University of Coimbra's Thiasos theatre group, under Carla Braz and Carlos Martins de Jesus very successful stage direction⁴, may be considered one of the most significant testimonies of the experience of leisure and even of what we might call «religious tourism» in the Hellenistic Age. In fact, the first group of characters constituted by Gorgo, Praxinoa and their servants have to face some difficulties in dealing with the crowd of spectators who seem to be watching a military parade (lines 5-6, 51-53); however, their destination is Ptolemy's palace, where, according to what Gorgo had heard, «a fine show» (line 24) in honour of Adonis can be enjoyed⁵. After they get through the mob the reader finds the two women inside the royal house admiring and, with an attitude of irreverence and disrespect also characteristic of contemporary tourists, making comments in a loud voice on the magnificent tapestries (line 78 *ta poikila*, line 83 *enyphanta*) that represent Adonis, the youth loved by the gods (lines 78-86). But soon does the most anticipated moment of the celebrations begin: a recital by a famous Argive woman singer who performs the song about Aphrodite and Adonis's love, his death and subsequent resurrection (lines 100-144)⁶.

The two women's brief excursion comes to its end when practical-minded Gorgo, worried about her husband's dinner, announces that it is time for her to go back home (lines 147-148). Although they appear to be more autonomous than the Athenian women of the Classical Period, the two housewives, who live in Hellenistic Alexandria, are perfectly aware of their gender roles and tasks: Praxinoa was wise enough to leave her son at home for fear that it might not be safe for a child to be outside on the bustling city streets (lines 40-42, 55) and although she could not resist her friend's invitation she does not wish to stay out too long. Before going back, Praxinoa complains about her husband, accusing him of creating

donia, were considered signs of high social status. Only after the 2nd century B.C. did the elite start to generally identify with the city of Alexandria («Town and Country in Ptolemaic Egypt», in ERSKINE 2003: 253). Whitehorne 1995 analyses in detail the elements that help the readers understand both Gorgo and Praxinoa's economic power and their social status. Cf. DUBOIS, 2007: 50-51.

² GOW, 1965b: 265, cf. MONTEIL, 1968: 143-144.

³ For an analysis of the political context, as well as the allusions to Ptolemy and most especially to Arsinoe, see GRIFFITHS, 1981. As concerns the Adonis cult rituals and the documental value of Theocritus' *Idyll XV*, see REED, 2000: 319-351.

⁴ See JESUS, FERREIRA, 2010: 96-97.

⁵ Quotations from Theocritus' *Idyll XV* are transcribed from A. S. F. Gow's translation (1965a: 108-121).

⁶ On the nature of the cult and the songs in honour of Adonis, see MONTEIL, 1968: 144-145; G. LAMBIN, 1992: 345-347; BURKERT, 1985: 176-177.

obstacles to her going out with her girl friend, of his not being able to choose a good home (lines 8-10) and of lacking the ability to manage it (lines 15-17). Such complaints are echoed by Gorgo, whose husband she defines as a foolish spendthrift (lines 18-20). We understand that Praxinoa is free to manage the family budget and does not have to ask permission to leave the house, but her household management decisions are quite sensible⁷.

In sum, in *Idyll XV* Theocritus composes a picturesque portrait of the young and lively city of Alexandria, of its multiethnic people and especially of the two housewives, who enjoy their modest leisure, seeming much freer than the female characters portrayed in Aristophanes' theatre⁸.

Of the festivities watched by Gorgo and Praxinoa, the first to be mentioned is the military parade, implicit in the reference to the presence of a large number of soldiers outside on the streets (lines 5-6) and the exhibition of the king's war horses (lines 51-53)⁹. Military parades, which still take place in official commemorations of both democratic and autocratic States, had a long tradition in ancient Greece. An example, dating back to the Archaic Age, is Sappho's famous fragment 16 Lobel-Pag, in which the poet from Lesbos reflects on the variety of human tastes, to conclude with a contrast emphasizing female beauty between the disciplined, refulgent march of the Lydian chariots and armed infantry and the lovely walk and bright sparkle of a maiden named Anactoria (lines 17-20).

In the second part of their outing, the tapestries exhibited in Ptolemy's palace catch the protagonists' attention. Their motifs can be deduced from Praxinoa's description, in which the following passage can be read (lines 80-86):

*Lady Athena, what workers they must have been that made them, and what artists that drew the lines so true! The figures stand and turn so naturally they're alive not woven. What a clever thing is man! And look at him; how marvellous he is, lying in his silver chair with the first down spreading from the temples, thrice-loved Adonis, loved even in death*¹⁰.

According to the catalogue published in 1981 in vol. 1 of *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC)*, compiled by Brigitte Servais-Soyez, the representation of

⁷ WHITEHORNE, 1995 shows that the items Gorgo and Praxinoa ask their respective husbands to buy for them (lines 15-20) were to be used for dyeing textiles, a domestic chore that was women's responsibility in the Greek world.

⁸ Whereas some authors such as POMEROY, 1975: 148 and FANTHAM *et al.*, 1994: 141 consider that Theocritus' poem can illustrate the evolution of women's social status in the Hellenistic Age, others, like GRIFFITHS, 1981: 253-259, maintain that, on the contrary, Gorgo and Praxinoa's character and behavior are a rather traditional representation of the female gender. Cf. WHITEHORNE, 1995 and note 7.

⁹ GOW, 1965b: 268, 281-282 dismisses this reading, considering that the horses are not part of a procession but they are being taken to the hippodrome, where the quadriga races will be taking place. Cf. LEGRAND, 1946: 123 («Chevaux de parade plutôt que de guerre»), MONTEIL, 1968: 154 n. ad 51.

¹⁰ The song performed by the Argive woman in honor of Adonis (lines 100-144 of *Idyll XV*) also mentions the motifs represented in the tapestries. For an interpretation of that passage, see GOW, 1965b: 286-289.

Adonis in Greek iconography goes back to the 5th century B.C. and Aphrodite's passion for the youth can be counted among the favourite themes found in the oldest Greek monuments. However, the first representations of Adonis's death date back to the Hellenistic Age and are present in Etruscan and Roman monuments and works of art.¹¹ Centuries later both themes, together with the representation of Aphrodite trying to keep the young man from hunting or sorrowing over his dying body will be amply portrayed in western art, especially in Renaissance and Baroque painting, most probably through the influence of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (10.519-559, 708-739)¹².

The public exhibition of works of art – sculpture, painting, or tapestry as in Theocritus' poem – is not a new practice in the Hellenistic Age. The main Greek sanctuaries, with their temples and treasures, ostentatiously decorated with spoils of war and large quantities of votive offerings, boasting famous statues of the divinities such as Pheidias' statue of Zeus at Olympia (ca. 430 B.C.) or statues of victorious athletes, had become not only valued pilgrimage destinations but also important tourist attractions¹³. In Athens, during the second quarter of the 5th century B.C., the *Stoa Poikile* or Painted Porch, which is mostly known through literary sources, was built for political, religious and social purposes, although it served also as a public art gallery¹⁴, for it was decorated inside with paintings by Polygnotos of Thasos, Micon of Athens, and Panaenus, brother of Pheidias, depicting the Battle of Marathon, the Taking of Troy as well as the famous motif of the battles between Greeks and Amazons¹⁵.

However, it is in the Hellenistic Age that mobility motivated by the desire to see monuments, works of art and other wonders «with one's own eyes» (*autopsia*) becomes a common practice¹⁶. As Gorgo says to convince her friend to go out with her, «[w]hat you've seen you can talk about, when you've seen it and another hasn't» (line 25).

¹¹ SERVAIS-SOYEZ, 1981: 229. See, e.g., the Etruscan funerary monument, made of clay, decorated with dying Adonis (3rd/2nd cent. B.C., Vatican, Museo Gregoriano, LIMC n. 33) and the Roman fresco in the so-called House of Adonis, Pompeii, representing the wounded youth leaning on Venus (1st cent. A.D., Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, LIMC n. 35, reproduced also in GOW, 1965b: Plate XI).

¹² On the reception of the Adonis theme in European art, see REID, 1993, 25-40; DOMMERMUTH-GUDRICH, 2004: 26-31; DE RYNCK, 2009: 338-339.

¹³ See the numerous examples cited by CASSON, 1994: 238-252 in his chapter «Museums».

¹⁴ Although not really a novelty, spaces both public and private (such as porches) dedicated to hosting and exhibiting works of art, especially paintings, as well as the building of collections became more common since the Hellenistic Age, notably among the Romans (*pinacothecae*), as can be read in different sources (e.g. Petronius, *Satyricon* 83.1-7; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 35.84, 114, 126, 132, 139). See VAN BUREN, 1938: 70-81; LEHMANN, 1945: 259-269; BERGMANN, 1995: 79-120, esp. 98-102.

¹⁵ The identification of the fourth theme, supposedly the Battle of Oenoe, fought between Athenians and Lacedaemonians, on which there is not much information available, has been an object of discussion. Of the famous building, situated in the Athenian Agora, there remain but the foundations and some fragments of the paintings, mentioned in Plutarch, *Cimon* 4.5-6; Arrianus, *Anabasis* 7.13.5; Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.15.1-3; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.1.5; *The Suda*, s.v. *Poikile*; see RODRIGUES, 2007a: 336-337.

¹⁶ For travelling and the tourism experience in the Hellenistic world, see CHAMOUX, 1981: 394-403; ANDRÉ, BASLEZ, 1993: 43-76, especially; CASSON, 1994: 227-329.

Theocritus' poem distinguishes itself precisely because it develops the concept thoroughly. Upon arriving at the royal palace, Gorgo and Praxinoa do not view the tapestries as elements included in the festival organized in homage of Adonis, but rather emphasize their high level of artistic execution, the perfection of the traces, the accuracy of the figures and their movements. Theocritus is therefore interested in the aesthetic effect of the pieces on the visitors, who admire them more as works of art than as objects of cult¹⁷.

Idyll XV includes a number of sources that illustrate the close relationship between the three concepts discussed in this essay – mobility, leisure, and art. Those sources include references to the beauty and reputation of Praxiteles' statue of Aphrodite, circa 350 B.C., which probably made Cnidus one of the most visited cities in the Hellenistic Age¹⁸, and also periegetic literature, notably the *Description of Greece* written by Heraclides Creticus in the 3rd century B.C.¹⁹, and also the lists and accounts of the Seven Wonders, such as the opus-cule supposedly authored by Philo of Byzantium²⁰. Given the variety of those sources, my analysis will be focused on yet another testimony which has a number of affinities with Theocritus' *Idyll XV*: the *Mime IV* of Herodas, who apparently also pursued his writing career during the first half of the 3rd century B.C.²¹.

In Herodas' poem there is also a dialogue between two women of the people, two mothers, Kynno and Kokkale²², who are heading to a sanctuary of Asklepios, possibly, as some scholars have claimed, the one situated in the island of Kos²³, much missed and praised in line 2, with the aim of offering a sacrifice (the immolation of a cock) and making a thank-offering²⁴, in gratitude for the cure performed by the god (lines 11-19). Their offerings are modest for, as opposed to Gorgo and Praxinoa, the two Herodas characters are women of humble means (lines 14-18), but their low level of education proves to be no hin-

¹⁷ On this complex issue, see BURTON, 1995, ZANKER 2004: 82-86, and PLATT, 2010, especially 201-208.

¹⁸ See RODRIGUES, 2007b: 61-71.

¹⁹ GARZÓN DÍAZ, 2008: 193.

²⁰ FERREIRA, 2009.

²¹ Considering the references to the children of Praxiteles, the sculptor (lines 23, 25-26) and to Apelles the painter (lines 72-78), CUNNINGHAM (1966: 117-118, 1971: 128) suggests that Herodas' poem may have been written between ca. 280 and 265 B.C. Cf. WALDSTEIN, 1892: 135. As for the possible sources common to both texts, supposedly based on the verses of Epicharmus, the comic poet, and on Sophron's mimes (both Sicilian poets of the 5th century B.C.), see SKINNER, 2001: 204-205.

²² Neither the speeches identification nor the protagonists' names have been established with certainty. CUNNINGHAM, 1971: 127 claims that the second woman is called Phile and that Kokkale is the name of one of the slaves. In this respect, we follow KNOX, 1922 and NAIRN, LALOY, 1928.

²³ CHAMOUX, 1981: 424-425; ESPOSITO, 2010: 276.

²⁴ The word used by the poet is *pinax* (pl. *pinakes*), which can mean both a votive tablet with inscriptions on it and a painted wooden panel. Sacrificing a cock was quite a common practice in the cult of Asklepios (cf. Plato, *Phaedo* 118). The scenery imagined by Herodas, a sacred space filled with votive offerings both inside and outside the temple, is plausible and it does indeed match the findings of archaeological excavations of the sanctuaries built in honour of the god of Medicine (Epidauros, Athens, Corinth, Kos), where pilgrims used to leave numerous gifts. See DIGNAS, 2007: 163-177, especially p. 168-169.

dance to their appreciating the images they find in the sacred precinct, just like the two Syracusan Women.

As they wait outside for the temple door to open, Kokkale expresses her wonder at the beautiful votive offerings, some of them made by famous sculptors like Kephisodotos and Thimarchos, Praxiteles' sons. Kokkale is delighted with the representation of a little girl looking at an apple, of an old man, of a little boy strangling a goose's neck, and she is especially fascinated by a characteristic common to all the pieces exhibited: realism. As Kokkale herself exclaims: «Why, one would say the sculpture would talk, that is if it were not stone when one gets close. *La!* in time men will be able to put life into stones» (lines 32-34)²⁵.

However the sanctuary boasts other wonders which Kynno, the other woman friend, knows quite well. As soon as the temple door opens and as the two women wait for the priest to complete the sacrifice, they use their time to contemplate the pictures inside the temple. Again, Kokkale is much attracted to the pictures' realism as her friend explains that all that wealth is the work of a great master of truth, the famous Apelles (line 72), born in Asia Minor, and who supposedly was Alexander the Great's favourite painter²⁶.

Both in the first part of the poem, when the two friends admire the statues outside, and later when they comment on the pictures exhibited inside, what catches the attention and provokes delight in the pious visitors is the close similitude between the works and reality. In Theocritus' *Idyll XV* the very same aspect is praised by Praxinoa when she describes the Adonis tapestries (lines 81-83)²⁷. As is widely recognized, realism is one of the

²⁵ Quotations from Herodas' *Mime IV* are taken from A. D. Knox's translation (1922: 166-173).

²⁶ Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 7.125. Apelles was born in Colophon, being awarded also the citizenship of Ephesus, where he studied and to where he often returned. He died in Kos towards the end of the 4th century or the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. Pliny the Elder, who is one of the main sources on the artist (cf. *Nat.* 35.79-97), situates the *floruit* in the 112nd Olympiads (c. 332-329 B.C., *Nat.* 35.79). Among the artist's many talents, the author emphasizes the «grace» (*uenustas/charis*, *Nat.* 35.79) of his paintings as a specific trait of his work as well as his ability to portray his figures with an outstanding level of verisimilitude (*Imagines adeo similitudinis indiscretae pinxit*, *Nat.* 35.88; cf. 35.94, 95). Apelles's works, like those of other painters, did not survive, and therefore we can rely only on literary testimonies. Besides those by Herodas, Pliny the Elder, Plutarch (*Aratus* 13.1), Claudius Aelianus (*Varia Historia* 12.34), and the *Palatine Anthology* (16.178-182, about the famous *Anadyomene* or *Aphrodite rising from the sea*), amongst others, a special mention must be made of Lucian of Samosata (*Calumniae non temere credendum* 2-5), whose description of a painting entitled *Calumny* did inspire a number of Renaissance painters such as Sandro Botticelli (*La calumnia*, 1495; Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi), and other later artists. On this aspect, see LYDAKIS, 2004: 157-171; concerning the work of Apelles, notably his portrait of Alexander the Great, see ROBERTSON, 1981: 179-180; POLLITT, 1986: 22-23, 1990: 158-163 (sources).

²⁷ From the literary viewpoint, GOLDHILL, 1994: 222-223 and SKINNER, 2001 claim that both poems share the same motif, probably dating back to the original sources, particularly Sophron, i.e., describing and commenting on works of art – Ekphrasis being a favorite process among Hellenistic poets albeit with a long tradition in Greek literature dating back to the Homeric Poems – by female protagonists who are housewives playing the role of critical spectators and making sophisticated aesthetic judgments for the entertainment and delight of an educated public. SKINNER, 2001 sees the use of this literary motif as a possibly parodic allusion to the ekphrastic verses of women poets of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C., notably Erinna, Anyte and Nossis. In his analysis of Skinner's arguments, GOLDHILL, 2007: 8-15 rejects her hypothesis that there might have existed a «feminine ekphrastic tradition» in Hellenistic poetry which would have provided the model for the female «art critics» portrayed by Theocritus and Herodas. Cf. BURTON, 1995; ZANKER, 2004: 82-83; DUBOIS, 2007: 47-54; PLATT, 2010: 205.

basic characteristics of art in the Hellenistic Age, present also in literary production as both poems illustrate or even mean to demonstrate, for the way how the two protagonists, two curious and lively women of the people, talk and behave could not be an inch closer to their the daily, familiar register, in spite of the erudite character of the texts that compose them²⁸.

Therefore, if the dominant note in the art of the period is realism, Herodas' poem provides some hints as to what the age's favourite themes might have been. In fact, Kokkale particularly notices the depiction of children both in statue thank-offerings and in the paintings inside the temple. The theme is in fact documented in Greek art since the Bronze Age²⁹, although it seems to have gained a special vitality during the Hellenistic Age judging by the statuettes and sculptures that have survived, which were often Roman copies of Greek originals. Rather than a testimony of the development of children's status in the social and political domains³⁰, this should be regarded principally as a manifestation of the artists' taste in this period with their depiction of hitherto less valued themes such as childhood and old age, which have such a prominent place in Herodas' poem (cf. lines 27-28, 30-31, 59-62). It is nonetheless clear that children's anatomy, gestures and postures are now being represented with much accuracy and attention to detail³¹, as is illustrated by the famous statue of Sleeping Eros depicting a young winged child. Several marble copies of it have survived, as has one in bronze, which is exhibited at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art and is considered to be the best example of this type of theme³².

One of the votive offerings commented on by Herodas' character – the statue of a boy strangling a goose's neck (line 31) – seems in fact to illustrate a theme that was probably quite popular during the Hellenistic Age and of which there are numerous literary examples and art pieces. In an article published in 1885, Ernest A. Gardner identified fifty-two pieces which he divided into six main types. So now after our brief excursion to Alexandria and our visit to the temple of Asklepios, the last part of this essay will consist of an analysis of five Roman marble copies of a Greek original which may have been the one mentioned in Herodas' poem.

If we consider Kokkale's comment: «Ah, in the Fates' name, see how the boy is strangling the goose» (lines 30-31), of the several different existing statues the one that seems to

²⁸ Cf. LEGRAND, 1946: 117; ESPOSITO, 2010: 277. For an analysis of the contrast between the interest in «real life» and the forms of erudite expression of Hellenistic literature translated for instance in the choice of common people characters who use a sophisticated language, see HUNTER, 2003: 477-493.

²⁹ A discussion of this can be found in my article «Crianças na arte grega. Representações sociais e convenções artísticas», in SOARES, CALERO SECALL, FIALHO, 2011: 59-91. Among the most important books on the theme are KLEIN, 1932; HIRSCH-DYCZEK, 1983; NEILS, OAKLEY, 2003; COHEN, RUTTER, 2007.

³⁰ This was discussed by GOLDEN, 1997: 176-191.

³¹ For the representation of children in Hellenistic art, see ROBERTSON, 1981: 203-204; POLLITT, 1986: 128-130; FOWLER, 1989: 50-52, 126-127; BEAUMONT, 2003: 78-81.

better correspond to her description shows a male child probably aged between two and five, standing naked and playing or fighting with a strong goose that reacts violently. Positioned in front of the bird, the child holds it forcibly by the back, as can be deduced from their postures and semi-open mouths (the boy leans back, supporting himself on his flexed legs while the animal has a slightly raised chest) and, from a technical point of view, the group has a pyramidal shape. In accordance with Hellenistic aesthetics the artist captured the instant when the child is ready to strangle the bird, which seems to match the liveliness and the dynamism much admired by Kokkale in the votive offering the two friends saw at the temple of Asklepios.

The five Roman statues I shall now proceed to describe belong to the Louvre Museum, to the Glyptothek, in Munich, to the Vatican and Capitoline Museums, and to the National Museum of Rome. The pieces are between 84 and 93 cm of height and have been extensively restored³³.

The Paris, Munich and Vatican pieces were discovered in the late 18th century at the Villa Quintiliana, situated near the Appian Way in Rome, and are quite similar. Although clearly featuring the same theme, the other two pieces have more obvious differences, particularly in what concerns the child's attitude, which is clearly less aggressive, and the position of the bird's neck, which is contorted in the opposite direction to the little boy's face. The identification of the animal as a goose is in fact somewhat problematic, especially as concerns the National Museum of Rome's copy, in which the bird rather looks like a swan. Ernest A. Gardner³⁴ rightly observes that in this type of depiction the identification of the bird as a goose must be understood *latu sensu* for, as in the case discussed, it often looks more like a swan, or even, as is the case of yet other representations, like a duck. Considering the place where they were found, the fact that the five sculptures have more or less obvious differences, which gives the set an important degree of diversity, suggests that they may

³² The Metropolitan Museum of Art (43.11.4). There is a discussion about whether this 85,24 cm sculpture is a 3rd century B.C. Hellenistic original or a Roman copy of the beginning of the 1st century A.D. See BEAZLEY, ASHMOLE, 1966: 84, figs. 183 and 184; ROBERTSON, 1981: 202-203, fig. 287; POLLITT, 1986: 129-130, fig. 135; RICHTER, 1987: 177, fig. 238; BEAUMONT, 2003: 81, fig. 20; SORABELLA, 2007: 353-370; «Statue of Eros sleeping [Greek or Roman] (43.11.4)», in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-: <<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/43.11.4>> (1/09/2011).

³³ Paris, Musée du Louvre (Ma 40; alt.: 92,7 cm); see <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Child_goose_Louvre_Ma40_n2.jpg> (1/09/2011); Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlung und Glyptothek (268; alt.: 84 cm); see SMITH, 1991: 136, fig. 170; BEARD and HENDERSON, 2001: 143, fig. 98b; BEAUMONT, 2003: 79, fig. 15; <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Child_goose_Glyptothek_Munich_268.jpg> (1/09/2011); Vatican, Museo Pio-Clementino, Galleria dei Candelabri (2655); see <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Child_goose_Vatican_Inv2655.jpg> (1/09/2011); Rome, Musei Capitolini, Palazzo Nuovo (238; alt.: 85 cm); see HIRSCH-DYCZEK, 1983: 35, fig. 43; POLLITT, 1986: 128, fig. 132; FOWLER, 1989: 14, fig. 10; BEARD, HENDERSON, 2001: 143, fig. 98a; <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/rosscads/4140714085/>> (1/09/2011); Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Altemps (8565bis); see <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Child_goose_Altemps_Inv8565bis.jpg> (1/09/2011).

³⁴ GARDNER, 1885: 3.

have been part of the decoration of a larger monument such as a fountain³⁵, although there is no indication that they belonged to the sanctuary of Asklepios.

The association of the votive offering that caused Kokkale's exclamation with the Greek original that seems to have inspired the Roman copies is by no means consensual as is true also of the identification of the animal mentioned in Herodas' text. In the passage quoted, the poet uses the name *chenalopex*, which has been understood by many authors as a reference to the so-called Egyptian Goose (*Alopochen aegyptiacus*)³⁶. Assuming that the interpretation is correct, the description, according to a contemporary guide, refers to a robust bird which is normally between 63 and 73 cm in length (from the tip of the beak to the end of the tail), slightly larger than Ruddy Shelduck (*Tadorna ferruginea*), which it sometimes tends to be mistaken for. Although its dimensions are smaller than those of other species of geese (for example, the Greylag Goose, *Anser anser*, which are between 74 and 84 cm in length³⁷), this in itself does not seem to support, as has been proposed, the identification of the work mentioned in Herodas' poem with a statue of which there is a Roman copy in Vienna (Austria) representing a much younger boy sitting on the floor, his right arm raised as if he were trying to call someone, and his left arm leaning on the back of a small goose³⁸.

Representing children with animals, especially birds such as doves, ducks and geese, which were kept as pets in Greece and in Rome³⁹, is a frequent practice in Greek art, notably in vase painting and in the funerary sculpture of Classical Athens⁴⁰. However, unlike these works, that depict the child peacefully coexisting with the pet, the statue of the boy and the goose is striking due to the (un)balance of forces at play. How old might the boy in fact be? As was mentioned before, the forms, masterfully portrayed by the artist, seem to indicate an extremely young child; the goose's height is in fact similar to the little boy's, and it is quite evident that the bird is offering some resistance. Could it be that more than a mere depiction of an everyday situation – a mischievous child, almost a baby, playing with his pet⁴¹ – this confrontation might have a symbolic or even a religious meaning that could explain the presence of a sculptured group like this in a sanctuary dedicated to the god of medicine? Or could it be, as has also been suggested, a parody of the athletic scenes which

³⁵ Cf. GARDNER, 1885: 14.

³⁶ Cf. THOMPSON, 1936: 330-331; POLLARD, 1977: 644 and n. 8.

³⁷ Data collected from SVENSSON, GRANT, 2003: 40-47; ARNOTT, 2000: 18, writes (ad line 31), «the Egyptian goose is in fact larger than most other geese».

³⁸ Kunsthistorisches Museum, Antikensammlung. This is a 55 cm replica of a Greek original that was a decorative piece in the vestibule of the Ephesus gymnasium. See POLLITT, 1986: 128-129, 140-141, fig. 133; FOWLER, 1989: 51-52, fig. 36; LAISNÉ, 1995: 177. See also ZANKER, 2004: 40, 103-105 for a different interpretation.

³⁹ Cf. GARDNER, 1885: 11.

⁴⁰ See KLEIN, 1932: 10-13; LAZEMBY, 1949: 299-307; RIDGWAY, 2006: 646, n. 11 compiles a significant number of references on the representation of children or youths with birds.

⁴¹ Cf. GARDNER, 1885: 10; BEAZLEY, ASHMOLE, 1966: 84-85.

had been so popular in the previous centuries, or even a parodic evocation of Herakles, who even as a baby in his cradle did strangle the serpents sent by Hera⁴²? The possibility, examined by Brunilde S. Ridgway⁴³, of the statue group of a child fighting with a goose being the result of a Greek classical plastic concept albeit with an Egyptian-inspired mythological and religious meaning is also plausible. That would mean that we are in the presence of a symbolic representation of Horus the child (or Horpakhred-Harpokrates), the divine and solar being born of the union of Isis and Osiris to triumph over the Chaos created by his uncle Seth. Although the composition under analysis is significantly different from the conventional iconography of the Egyptian god, usually identified by the braided hair hanging at the right side of his head and the fourth finger of his right hand pointing to his mouth, the presence of a bird associated with Egypt⁴⁴, the child's nudity, and the hair pulled up in a curl on the top of his forehead (which is more evident in the Louvre, Munich Glyptothek, and Vatican Museums copies) seem to support the hypothesis. As a matter of fact, the figuration is similar to the images of Harpokrates disseminated during the Roman Period, amongst which may be mentioned the Herculaneum fresco in which the god is standing by a serpent coiled around an altar (kept at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale from Naples), and the marble statue from Villa Adriana, Tivoli, kept in the Palazzo Nuovo of the Capitoline Museums, Rome. As noted also by Ridgway⁴⁵, it is possible that the religious meaning of the original was lost in the Roman Period, when the piece became popular as a decorative element in gardens and fountains.

Having mentioned some of the interpretations that have been advanced on the statue, it is certainly undeniable that, irrespective of what the correct answer may be, the mischievous boy and his poor goose still captivate us for their grace and humour as they certainly did in the past. There is also no doubt that, in spite of all possible interpretations, these two beings provide a realistic and lively evocation of the childhood universe. The fact that the statue was indeed popular is confirmed not only by Herodas' mention of it in his poem and by the existence of a number of Roman copies of the sculptured group, but also by the fact that Pliny the Elder attributed a piece that seems to correspond to the statue's description to an artist called Boethos⁴⁶. However, that attribution raises some doubts for the most famous sculptor known as Boethos was born in Kalchedon, a town in Asia Minor, and his

⁴² Cf. FOWLER, 1989: 52, BEARD, HENDERSON 2001: 143-144. In his analysis of the sculpted group, SMITH, 1991: 136 writes: «The boy is formally close to the Sleeping Eros in both head and body, and the elaborate pyramidal composition seems to echo heroic groups. This is an anecdotal subject treated in the ideal manner».

⁴³ RIDGWAY, 2006: 646-648.

⁴⁴ The goose is a sacred animal in Egyptian religion, a symbol of god (the Earth), the father of Osiris, Isis, Seth, and Neftis.

⁴⁵ RIDGWAY, 2006: 648.

⁴⁶ *Nat.* 34.84. The passage is corrupted. As established by Karl Mayhoof for the Teuber edition, it should read: *Boëthi, quamquam argento melioris, infans eximium anserem strangulat.* («Although he is better known for his silver work, Boethos is supposedly the author of a child strangling a singular goose»).

career developed in mid 2nd century B.C.⁴⁷. Therefore, the comment by the Roman writer corroborates at least the idea that the representation of a little boy strangling a goose became, like the Sleeping Eros statue, a model that was widely copied.

To conclude, Theocritus' and Herodas' poems are witnesses to a new social context where a woman seems to have had some degree of autonomy, being free to visit a sacred place by herself on her own free will without it being seen as neglecting her traditional roles and duties. However, these texts are also a sign of the importance of different artistic expressions during the Hellenistic Age and of the way they were appreciated by the common people, irrespective of whether their appreciation might or might not reflect those of the authors⁴⁸. They also are fundamental documents for a study of the complex relationship between religious rituals, the experience of tourism, leisure, and artistic heritage. Finally, my brief analysis of the statue of the mischievous boy and the unhappy goose, even if we cannot be certain that it could indeed correspond to the work mentioned by Herodas, had the purpose of showing that Kokkale was in fact right to marvel at the votive offerings in the temple of Asklepios.

⁴⁷ Cf. POLLITT, 1990: 115-116. On Boethos' artistic career, see also POLLITT, 1986: 128, 140-141. GARDNER, 1885: 12-15 discusses the possibility of Pliny the Elder referring to a Hellenistic silver statuette representing a boy and a goose, found in a grave near Alexandria and kept in the British Museum. Cf. RIDGWAY, 2006: 644-646.

⁴⁸ CUNNINGHAM, 1971: 128; ESPOSITO, 2010: 277.

PART III
MUSES, BOOKS
AND SCHOLARS

APOLLONIUS OF RHODES AND THE UNIVERSE OF THE *ARGONAUTICA*

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Abstract: *The Argonauts' saga belongs to an ancient repertory of mythical narratives set in the Eastern Mediterranean basin, about heroic journeys to a hostile unknown world in search of an invaluable object with unimaginable power. To obtain it, the hero and his journey companions must be brave enough to overcome several obstacles, which include human ensnarement, a wild indomitable nature and monstrous entities, almost personified entities. The narrative thus evolves around a kind of initiation journey that only exceptional men can successfully undertake. This type of narrative would come to inspire the western concept of journey, by land or sea, in quest of other objects with all sorts of powers. Apollonius would become the inspirational model for Roman poets such as Valerius Flaccus, Virgil and Ovid. We will briefly explore the contents of the Argonautica as the result of a new world vision of the Hellenized world that sprung in Alexandria under the inspiration of the Library.*

In Theocritus's work *The Idylls VII*, known as *Thalysiae*, one of the participants in the contest ponders metapoetic issues: both contenders agree that one should discard aesthetic standards that support poems the size of high mountains hindering and preventing the flight of birds, something the Muses prize; followers of such standards are also to be repudiated¹.

¹ Vv. 59-60 *et passim*.

The focus of this critique of tastes might be the magnitude of epic poetry, by comparison with the elaborate, erudite and exotic natured encomium, in the shape of a hymn to the gods, like Callimachus's work, which questions traditions and is deeply influenced by *ekphrasis*², or by comparison with the poetry rooted in the local traditions of a vastly hellenized world – such traditions embody a literary synthesis that reflects the biographical mobility and cultural formation of anyone who writes poetry and is inspired by the trials of love.

At the dawn of Alexandrine culture, Homeric epic, which informed the old Hellade, is not considered as the quintessential aesthetic model that inspires the epic poetry of new times³. The precious and elaborate jewels of archaic poetry are preferred to Homer. There are scarce traces of Hellenistic epic composition corresponding to the origin and development of the great cultural centres. Also from the 4th century B.C., there is information, along with a few fragments, about an epic poem by Antimachus of Colophon, one of the first *poetae docti* (RE), author of a *Thebaid*⁴. Apparently the action unfolds under the spell of erotic passion.

This shift in poetic taste, at the dawn of a new era, is corroborated by fragments of other narrative poems in elegiac metre, probably from the 3rd century B.C., by Hermesianax of Colophon or by Phanocles. However, as noted by P. M. Fraser⁵, these authors do not help us to contextualize the unique specificity of the *Argonautica*. The unique nature of this poem did not bring acceptance nor success as expected by the prestigious former head of the Library of Alexandria. In fact, Apollonius would become the inspirational model for Roman poets. Valerius Flaccus's version of the Argonauts' saga owes much to Apollonius but, prior to him, Vergil and Ovid were influenced by the poetic construction of Medea's outburst of passion, against her own will, and to Apollonius's construction of figures – such influence is attested by Dido's flare-up of passion in Aeneas's *Aeneid* and by Medea the witch's semi-demiurgic profile, who fell in love with Jason, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*⁶. And yet Apollonius's poem mirrors the ideology and expectations of new times and aesthetics; as I have demonstrated elsewhere, that new era and its aesthetic values contributed to the genesis of a new genre: the novel⁷.

² Callimachus's poetry is rich in descriptive *leitmotif*. To be noticed are those which concern female characters. They show how near poetry and sculpture were – what is testified, e.g., by the motive of the bath and of the female nude (*Hymn to Athena*).

³ This is probably one of the reasons for the moderate success of Apollonius' epos. The Homeric Hymns, however, were highly appreciated as an inspirational source for Hellenistic poets – already for Callimachus' predecessors, also for Callimachus and for the following generations of poets: «In the Hellenistic age the composition of hymns to deities continued on a considerable scale, perhaps even increased», FRASER, 1972: 650.

⁴ RE s. u. «Antimachos».

⁵ Op. cit. 624-625.

⁶ 7. 74 sqq.

⁷ FIALHO, 2005: 33-47.

The Argonauts' saga belongs to an ancient repertory of mythical narratives set in the Eastern Mediterranean basin, about heroic journeys to a hostile unknown world in search of an invaluable object with unimaginable power. To obtain it, the hero and his journey companions must be brave enough to overcome several obstacles, which include human enslavement, a wild indomitable nature and monstrous entities, almost personified, entities. The narrative thus evolves around a kind of initiation journey that only exceptional men can successfully undertake, bringing back the long-sought invaluable object, often obtained with the help of divine entities. This type of narrative would come to inspire the western concept of journey, by land or sea, in quest of other objects with all sorts of powers. It is the author of the *Odissey* himself who establishes the relative chronology of the Argonauts' search for the Golden Fleece (12. 69 *sqq.*), by having Circe warn Ulysses about the perils of navigating near the Clashing Rocks (*Symplegades*), something accomplished only by «the *Argo* known to all» – and even so with Hera's aid.

Apollonius organized his poem into four chapters, the third one being the highlight. When Jason arrives in Colchis, he will not reveal his identity; Hera and Athena decide to help him, persuading Aphrodite to send Eros to Colchis. These parallel plans are striking: they portray deities playfully deciding the fate of human affections, of mortal men and women turned into objects of cruel entertainment. Is the depiction of the aristocratic Aphrodite, combing her long hair while she meets with the goddesses, to be taken seriously?⁸ It is worth noting, in this epic context, the *motif* of the female hair, sung in epigrams at the time, represented in the marble heads of statuary⁹. The cruel, troublesome prankish boy, as portrayed in ancient representations of *erotes*, strikes Medea. The symptoms of her uncontrollable passion for the foreigner, the attempted concealment and the stunning vision of Jason devastate the young witch, who tries (to no avail) to fight her feelings; her frailty is revealed when she hides or when she confides in her sister, during the night, in the intimacy of the palace. In his description of the signs of the princess's amatory *pathos*, Apollonius draws on archaic Greek poetry, on Sappho's famous poem on jealousy (frg. 31 LP), bowing to contemporary tastes (3. 962-965): «Her heart fell from out her bosom, and a dark mist came over her eyes, and a hot blush covered her cheeks. And she had no strength to lift her knees backwards or forwards...».

Such a suffering soul, somewhat resembling Nausicaa and a tragic Medea, bears the relief and material tension of figures distorted by physical pain typical of Hellenistic sculpture.

Medea leaves the palace at night and wanders the woods, a love-stricken sorceress searching in Hecate's secrets for magic that will enable Jason to overcome the super-human trials and snatch the Golden Fleece. Her passion has nothing to do with the love magic

⁸ BEYE, 1982: 8, «In both instances, the Callimachean and the Apollonian, the heroic detail has been domesticated».

⁹ E.g. Callimachus' *Berenice's hairs*.

that drives Simeta, in Theocritus's *Idyll II*, to perform nightly rituals, her slave and the moon as her confidantes, almost having an epiphany of Hecate. Nonetheless, the magic that Medea uses to ensure Jason's victory is obviously intended to gain Jason's affection. The reader cannot but be sensitive to Apollonius's delighted narrative of a night stirred by Eros and dominated by esoterism and the goddess's revelation to the nocturnal young maiden.

In the first part of Book IV, Medea almost demands to go with Jason, a wavering hero, reminding him of their pacts and the bonds of plea, much alike Euripides's Medea¹⁰.

The core of Apollonius's epic poem is thus the erotic plot – the poem is dominated by deities that manipulate humans and by Medea, who, in spite of her frail esoteric nature, rises above the epic hero. Jason is a hero up to the moment when he hides with the Argonauts amid the reeds on the shores of Colchis. From thereon, the character expected to be the true protagonist emerges with a new dimension, framed by the loss of companions during his journey to Colchis: he is almost an anti-hero. The seer Idmon dies in what will become Heraklea, Typhis falls ill and dies too. Herakles loses his friend Hylas, who is mortally attracted by a nymph for whom he pines throughout the woods, like an idyllic unconsolable shepherd, and is left behind.

Death follows the Argonauts and Medea when they leave Colchis and also when they arrive in Lybia, where one more Argonaut, Mopsos, dies from a snake-bite. Death will lead them to Crete, where Medea's evil eye slays the giant Talos. These are not merely names left behind, but rather human figures that suffer and arouse the *pathos* of those who lose them. This epic perspective is closer to an expanded universe where death is meaningless and no longer compensated for by the perpetuity of institutions; although the structures of home and family in the polis still exist, along with administrative and royal power, the meaning of their role has faded. Human powerlessness in the face of death and the harmful powers of the occult gradually lend consistency to the narrator's voice and identity (uncommon in ancient epic); for instance, when he tells us of the giant's slaughter by Medea's eye he remarks:

Father Zeus, surely great wonder rises in my mind, seeing that dire destruction meets us not from disease and wounds alone, but lo! even from afar, may be, it tortures us! So Talos, for all his frame of bronze, yielded the victory to the might of Medea the sorceress¹¹.

As an author, Apollonius has the double ability to model his characters, with their contradictory behaviours and feelings; but he shows that same double mastery as an observer in the approach of the subject of his poem: as a scrutinizer of the human soul and an erudite scholar. Both abilities are balanced in a poem that is the product of its time and

¹⁰ 4. 66 sqq.; 350 sqq. Cf. Euripides, *Med.* 475-498.

¹¹ 4. 1673-1677.

that rises above the negative critiques it received – in fact, as noted by Brioso Sánchez¹², such critiques have been disregarded for decades by modern research in Classical Studies.

In my opinion that balance stems from the predominant linear structure of the poem, narrated *ab ovo*, from the moment they prepare for the journey and equip the ship, in Iolcos, to the moment of their return. The progression of the expedition enables Apollonius, the librarian, to explore the motif of prophecies, such as Phineas's and Mopsos's, and to embellish the itinerary, in the poem, with information on *aitia* of cults, like the Phrygians' Rhea-Cybele (1. 1130 *sqq.*), on the foundation of cities, toponymy – the author does so more often on the way to Colchis than on the return to Greece. The polygrapher Callimachus is the author of *Aitia*, with only a few fragments known to us, as of works that attest to his interest in Geography, about rivers, glossography of islands, cities and their foundation¹³.

Some scholars have found it odd that Apollonius chooses a difficult route for the Argonauts to reach the shores of Greece, thus directing them to the Italic space where contemporary tradition placed Circe's home. The author interweaves several spaces, subtly bringing Alexandria into the geographical web of the story: this allows him to establish the interconnections between the new world and the mythical past.

It seems to me that the interest for the erotic phenomenology in the feminine soul is not the only reason why Apollonius raises Medea above Jason, for the Ptolemaic Dynasty also claimed to have its roots in Colchis. The adventure of the ship Argo takes the mythical heroes to Colchis, through dangers and initiation rituals, in order to bring back not only the Golden Fleece but Medea, who imposes her return on an insecure Jason. In his journey Jason encounters displaced figures, like Phineas, former king of Thrace, whom reveals the future of their journey¹⁴. Mopsos, the augur who descended from Apollo and Manto and was bred in Colophon, in Ionia, accompanies the expedition only to perish from a poisonous snake-bite on the shores of Libya – in Northern Africa, near Egypt –, to where the ship had been dragged. Their fate is shaped by mobility. Medea and the Argonauts come near of the future Alexandria and then continue towards West, where they find Circe, in a nearby space of barbarism, the axis of which has shifted West¹⁵. The outer reaches of this universe centred in Alexandria arouse the interest and imagination of geographers and adventurous explorers. There were several tales of journeys beyond the columns of Hercules. In the second half of the 4th century, Pytheas allegedly sailed to the Northern Seas; Alexander ventured into the unknown reaching India, inspiring the author of *Story of Alexander*. Greek imagination reaches northern borders, which are mentioned in Antonius Diogenes's *The*

¹² This Hellenist points out how the epic text wins on expressivity by having been receptive to lyric resources, adequated to create an ambience of strong passion: BRIOSO SÁNCHEZ, 2003: 10 *sqq.*

¹³ On the literary and research activity of Callimachus vide BRIOSO SÁNCHEZ, 1998: 795-802.

¹⁴ 2. 316*sqq.*

¹⁵ ALVAR, 2008: 96-97.

incredible wonders beyond Thule or in Antiphanes of Berges¹⁶ a story about a land that freezes in winter.

The journey of the Argonauts, with Medea and the Golden Fleece, represents the route from the borders of the Hellenized world to the mythical world, in the sense that to travel is to dominate the path and its inherent dangers, novelties and adventures, from North to West, in a circular route, along the borders of the world. Although the topography of the hydrographic basin of the Danube – the Greek Istros – was not known at the time, the river was believed to divide in two along its course: one of the channels flowed into the Adriatic Sea and the other into the Black Sea.

This might explain Apollonius's choice of itinerary for *Argonautica*. At the end of a *periplos* that reached Egypt¹⁷, Iolcos is the place to return to, bringing closer the sorceress of mythical times to the future Ptolemaic kingdom. To strengthen the links between the two eras, of myth and Alexandria, Apollonius resorts to the eternal strength of passion, the limitations of humankind, painfully experienced in death and mortality, the anxiety caused by unfathomable powers of obscure forces that convey failness and uncertainty to human existence. The author also resorts to the craftsman's timeless repetitive daily work, the brute force of herds, the cattle, the hounds that run loose on the hills; the visual nature of these elements resemble a pictorial representation and are truly part of the wealth of erudition of this complex poem – its similes. Hunter highlights the degree of sophistication they can achieve, as part of a discursive strategy that convey the similes the mimetic qualities necessary to mirror the action as intended¹⁸. The reader is thus encouraged to confirm the correspondence between the comparative dimension and the compared «fictional reality». The search for that key supplies the simile with polysemy and the epic discourse acquires a second sense. Such is illustrated in 2. 541-548, when Athena rushes to the aid of the Argonauts when they try to sail across Pontos against the Etesian winds:

And as when one roveth far from his native land, as we men often wander with enduring heart, nor is any land too distant but all ways are clear to his view, and he sees in mind his own home, and at once the way over sea and land seems slain, and swiftly thinking, now this way, now that, he strains with eager eyes; so swiftly the daughter of Zeus darted down and set her foot on the cheerless shore of Thynia.

The amplification of senses is a charming game for the reader, which would be difficult to follow for the listener of oral or publicly read poetry. The rich similes, descriptions and landscapes, the internal conflicts, the contrast in attitudes are for the competent reader

¹⁶ GÓMEZ ESPELOSÍN, 2008: 66-78.

¹⁷ 4. 1228 sqq. A strong north wind throws them away from their course, for nine nights and nine days – a magical number that underlines the *quasi* iniciatic dimension of this journey. Vide CLAUSS, 1993: cap. 7.

¹⁸ HUNTER, 1993: 129-138.

to evaluate. Besides, the librarian of the magnificent Library of Alexandria, wrote an epic with new undertones, clearly a product of its time; as such, it can only be properly appreciated and enjoyed if one bears in mind that it is a work intended to be read, as expected within a society where readers and books prevail for the next millenia. This sociological reality undoubtedly plays an important role in the creation of new genres and new forms of fictional writing.

CALLIMACHUS AND THE NEW PATHS OF MYTH

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Abstract: *Callimachus presents himself as a teller of myths, of ancient stories told by others before. Some of his Hymns are a parody on the traditional narratives where the main characters are gods and which were passed on by poets, starting with Homer and Hesiod. This paper aims at analysing passages in the Hymns that demonstrate the poet's constant dialogue with the past and tradition, namely with Homer.*

The only integral part of Callimachus's works known to us, thanks to a continuous manuscript tradition throughout the ages, is a collection of six *Hymns*, the organisation of which is generally assumed as an editorial decision by the poet¹. Although Callimachus's *Hymns* are rooted in the artistic tradition of the *Homeric Hymns*, mostly composed in the Archaic Period for public performances on the occasion of the great festivities, by *aidoi* claiming to be descendants of the great epic poet, these compositions by the poet from Alexandria were not meant for public performance (an idea generally accepted by critics nowadays); they were destined to be read, notwithstanding the oral presentations at the Museum in which Callimachus was involved.

Hellenistic poetry is purported to be essentially mimetic and erudite. In Callimachus's case, there were underlying circumstances that explained those characteristics: since he

¹ DEPEW, 2004: 117, for instance, argues that Callimachus most likely organized the hymns into book form, since both his *Iambi* and *Aitia* had also been arranged in book format. Cf. PFEIFFER, 1949; HOPKINSON, 1984.

worked at the Alexandria Library and probably collaborated on the edition of the texts by some ancient poets, such as Pindar, he had access to most, if not all, of the literary heritage of the Hellenes. In fact, a careful reading of the *Hymns* conveys their palimpsestic quality, with several noticeable textual layers of distinct authors and literary genres – Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Bacchylides, among others. Callimachus uses the traditional hymnic form, applied both to the structure and to the metric scheme, which is the dactylic hexameter (except for the hymn to Athena, written in couplets) of the *Homeric Hymns*, the most obvious source of inspiration for these texts. In the so-called mimetic hymns² – to Apollo, to Athena and to Demeter – he even «pretends» the traditional performance context of this type of compositions, but his poems are full of intertextual references perceptible only in a reading context, rather than in a hearing context³. Moreover, his poetry does not refer to the real world, in opposition to the *Homeric Hymns*, the narratives of which explained the origins of rituals and cults, and explained the present by evoking past events. In fact, Callimachus's *Hymns* build a world of words, with abundant references to other words⁴. Once there is no interest in establishing analogies with reality, the constant poetic, intertextual, allusions that characterize them are a form of engaging the reader in the poetic universe. Art is not *mimesis tou biou*, instead it imitates itself, in a constant dialogue with the past and tradition.

No doubt this dialogue has often a good-humoured tone; since these are poetic compositions centred on gods, such a tone underscores, in my opinion, a specific purpose – on the one hand, to reply to the old attacks on poets because of their lies about deities, construed as antropomorphic and comparable with the worst and most ridiculous specimens of the human race; on the other hand, to reply to the interpretation of myths as allegories or historical reminiscences, widely known in this age, on which he seems to have engaged in polemics, judging from what is said in the first composition of his book of *Iambi*. I will focus on these two aspects.

Some of Callimachus's *Hymns* are in fact a parody on the traditional narratives where the main characters are gods and which were passed on by poets, starting with Homer and Hesiod. As is well known, the latter were violently criticized by Heraclitus and Xenophanes.

² On mimetic hymn, notice the definition given by MORRISON, 2007: 109: «The term “mimetic” is used in this way to describe a narrator who does not stand in the conventional relationship of narrator to audience in a hymn, but appears as a fictional character who addresses himself or other fictional characters, rather than the audience of the hymn, in the case of the *Hymns* one who presents himself as a participant in a ritual, and gives the audience the sense of witnessing a festival in progress». BULLOCH, 1985: 6 states that «the mimetic hymn, purported to be what is actually said by an organiser of a celebration, belongs to a distinct class of Alexandrian experimental poetry, literary drama». Cf. HUNTER, FUHRER, 2002: 146.

³ Cf. HUTCHINSON, 1988: 63. In the composition of hymns, new texts are intertwined with ancient texts and at the same time each poem is interwoven with all the others. HUNTER, FUHRER, 2002: 145 point out that in the book of *Hymns*, Callimachus created «a dynamic system, a “language” if you like, in which each poem and each divinity may be read in relation to all others». Cf. HARDER, 1992.

⁴ This is DEPEW's (1989, 1998) viewpoint: she argues that the use of the *aition* by Callimachus does not imply any relation with the extratextual world, but rather establishes a link between past and present texts.

These authors never abandoned the quest for the appropriate discourse to speak of divinity; such a quest is also pursued by great poets like Pindar or the tragic poets – Aeschylus, Sophocles and, in his own way, Euripides. In Pindar's case, for example, the search for the words and register adequate to the expression of the divine stems from the identification of poetry with truth, characteristic of his aesthetic universe; although this notion is seminally found in Hesiod, it is one of *the* central themes of the pindaric *epinikia*. Pindar views the morally inconceivable as falsehood and creates truthful narratives, thus presenting himself as a maker of myths, which enables him to fulfill the noble mission of teaching, an ancient prerogative of poets in the polis.

Callimachus, on the other hand, presents himself as the teller of myths, of ancient stories told by others before; he too selects some of the ancient versions, but does not find any incompatibility between falsehood and poetry. In his *Hymn to Zeus*, the first one in his book, after the three verses introducing the theme of the poem – *at libations to Zeus what else should rather be sung than the god himself, mighty for ever, king for evermore* – the poet alludes to a polemic that sets the question of truth and falsehood of mythical narratives at the very centre of these initial considerations (4-9):

How shall we sing of him – as lord of Dicte or of Lycaeum? My soul is all in doubt, since debated is his birth. O Zeus, some say that thou wert born on the hills of Ida; others, O Zeus, say in Arcadia; did these or those, O Father lie? «Cretans are ever liars». Yea, a tomb, O Lord, for thee the Cretans builded; but thou didst not die, for thou art for ever⁵.

He then proceeds to tell the «true» story of Zeus's birth – not the version told by the Cretans but the one told by the Arcadians. What are the grounds for the poet's claim of truth? Apparently, toponymy: for the Arcadians called a certain spot of the mountain the old place where Rhea gave birth. That is therefore Zeus's birthplace. The name given by the Cretans to the Omphalion plane also indicates that that is the place where the umbilical chord fell from Zeus's *omphalos*, while the nymph Neda took him to Crete, where he would be secretly reared away from his frightful father's sight.

However, the same logical inconsistencies in the Cretan story, which are the reason behind the poet's rejection of this version in favour of the Arcadian version, become apparent in the poet's own explanation, intentionally riddled with contradictions. For instance, the repetition of the adverb *ἀεί* «always» used with the verb *εἶμι* «to be» highlights the most relevant ontological characteristic of the gods, which Homer referred to by the epithet-formula *ἀεί ἐόντες* – the gods are «those who live forever». That is the formula that Callimachus herein evokes and uses as a logical argument against Zeus' death, implied by the construction of a tomb by the Cretans. But this logic is flawed by the tale of the god's birth:

⁵ English translations are from the Loeb edition of Callimachus' *Hymns*.

after asserting the eternal greatness and sovereignty of the god— *mighty for ever, king for evermore* – he begins the narration of how baby Zeus was delivered from his mother’s womb and, like an ordinary human newborn baby, had to be washed, and cleaned, his umbilical cord falls onto the ground, and then is cared for by a number of beings, such as the goat Amaltheia, which nurses him, and the Panacrian bee, which on Mount Ida feeds him honey, at the place named after it – Panacra. The purpose of these playful narratives is also recognizable in the poet’s version of Zeus’ birth, while invoking him as *πάτερ* and as *δαίμων*.

The topic of truth and falsehood is explicitly mentioned in some verses further on, when openly criticising Homer – namely the excerpt in the *Odyssey* where Poseidon mentions the division by lot among the three brothers, stating that Zeus was given the Olympus, Poseidon the seas and Hades the underworld. Callimachus says that old poets did not speak the truth (61- 65):

For they said that the lot assigned to the sons of Cronus their three several abodes. But who would draw lots for Olympus and for Hades – save a very fool? For equal chances should one cast lots; but these are the wide world apart. When I speak fiction, be it such fiction as persuades the listener’s ear!

Apart from paraphrasing Homer, these verses not only criticise the lies of the ancient poets but quite clearly echoe Pindar, as well as Hesiod and even Solon, who once remarked *πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί*. Callimachus recaptures the polemic surrounding the concepts of false and true and their relevance to the reflection on the statute and role of poetry and poets in the polis. The poet from Alexandria claims to reject certain mythical versions, just like Pindar, but the criteria he uses to single out a particular version seem to be dictated common sense, as remarked by Hutchinson⁶. It is this appeal to common sense, implicit in the arguments and void of any moral sense, that betrays the irony in the way he addresses the issue and shows that the poet is, in fact, not interested in the polemic. The humour in Callimachus’ approach to the elements typical of the narratives about gods⁷ highlights his detachment from the moral tones in the well-known debate on poetry and poets, and turns the topic of truth and falsehood into a rhetorical topic of hymnal discourse. Falsehood even appears to be a necessary condition for poetry and does not need, in Callimachus’ aesthetic universe, to be justified by the greater good. Unlike Hesiod, Callimachus prefers to be inspired by the Muses who «know how to say lies similar to truth». However, when he explicitly mentions his addressee as someone to be persuaded by lies if necessary, he dis-

⁶ HUTCHINSON, 1988: 66.

⁷ HUTCHINSON, 1988: 64-66 also stresses Callimachus’ playful and bewildering account of narrative elements typical of traditional hymns, such as the references to the birth and childhood of celebrated gods.

tances himself from the educational, pedagogical role of poetry in the past – of which Pindar is a supreme symbol – and recognizes his art as the art of fabricating a verisimilar narrative. On the other hand, the explicit allusions to different versions of the same history constantly remind the reader that what he reads is nothing but a story⁸, a narrative fabricated by the poet's art, the art of narrating received by tradition.

Concerning toponymical references, Callimachus mentions names of places and their meaning in almost every hymn, thus fulfilling one of the classic functions of myth – the aetiological function. As illustrated by the examples herein and many others, like those abundantly found in the *Hymn to Delos*⁹, aetiology expresses, in my opinion, the curiosity, astonishment and fun that we also experience when we learn the origin of names like those of the Aegean Sea, the Icarus Sea, or the Bosphorus and so on¹⁰. More than a display or erudition, it seems to me that, at least in his poetic work¹¹, Callimachus is interested in toponymy and the names of things in general because they uncover a distant world, not the world from the real or historical past but rather the «once upon a time» world, the incantatory power of which is the poetic matter *par excellence*. The myths disclose a wonderful world behind the surrounding reality. While a poet such as Pindar claimed that his mission was to unveil the truth beneath the appearance of things, Callimachus' purpose is to evoke the fictional universe inscribed in the names of things. Therein lies his interest in aetiology: aetiology is a way to teach ancient stories. It is not the past that explains the present, it is the present that takes us back to the fantasy of the past.

Therefore Callimachus does not reject the anthropomorphic image of gods in ancient poetry tradition, nor does he reject some all-too-human stories portrayed by them. Judging by the *Hymns*, he seems indeed to prefer them, and the more laughable the better.

I will give one more example: the *Hymn to Artemis*. Although it is modelled on the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, as demonstrated by Fain¹², in this composition one may recognize the Homeric Poems as yet again the underlying architext of the poem. It is one of the hilarious hymns by Callimachus, in which the goddess Artemis is first presented as an infant, sitting on her father Zeus' knees, making all sorts of demands, while she repeatedly says, like any human child: *give me, give me, give me*. What does she ask for? She asks for the attrib-

⁸ Cf. MORRISON, 2007: 103.

⁹ An interesting analysis of this hymn may be found in DEPEW, 1989: 75-115. The author points out how Callimachus distances himself from the models for the composition of his hymn and convincingly argues that «the *explananda* for which the myth provides an aetiological account are not elements of experienced religion at all, but, revealingly, *names*» (p. 76). SLINGS, 2004 has a different approach, reading the *Hymn to Delos* as a poetic reflection on poetry. Cf. also MINEUR, 1984.

¹⁰ Of course, the constant use of aetiology in the *Hymns* has other layers of meaning. DEPEW, 1989 demonstrates the literary meaning of aetiology in Callimachus' hymnical poetry. HOPKINSON, 1984: 141 sustains that both aetiology and etymology – references to the origin of words scattered throughout the *Hymn to Zeus* – are a display of poetic authoritativeness.

¹¹ Several titles of other lost prose works by Callimachus, such as *Foundations of Islands and Cities and their Names* or *On the Names of Fish*, refer to the author's interest in names.

¹² FAIN, 2004: 47. Cf. BING; UHRMEISTER, 1994.

utes which will later on define her as goddess: eternal virginity, as many names as her brother Apollo, a choir of sixty Oceanides, twenty maidens to accompany her on the hunt, all the mountains, cities, etc, etc. After the direct discourse of little Artemis, the narrator describes how she tries to grab her father's beard, following the rules of supplication, but in vain, because she is so small. Zeus reacts as any father proud of his offspring. Callimachus depicts Zeus answering her with a smile, saying (29-30): «When goddesses bear me children like this, little need I heed the wrath of jealous Hera». He grants her everything and even more than she asked for, and the scene closes with the verse (39): «So he spoke and bent his head to confirm his words». There are very clear reminiscences of the episode in chapter I of the *Iliad*, in which Thetis comes before Zeus as a suppliant at the Olympus, grasping his beard with her right hand and clinging to his knees with her left hand: the detailed ritual, the god's allusion to Hera's jealousy, the narrator's choice of ending of the scene by depicting Zeus' nod of approval. In the *Iliad* Zeus's nod is described in quite a comic tone, when the narrator says that the god's ambrosian hair flies in the wind and the vast Olympus shakes.

There are other resonances of Homer's *Iliad*. Afterwards, little Artemis travels from the Olympus to the forge of the Cyclops, of whom she asks new weapons; in the *Iliad*, Thetis also asks Hephaestus to create a set of new weapons for Achilles. Accompanied by the nymphs that her father had granted her (note that Thetis dwells among the Nymphs of the Ocean, although she goes alone to Hephaestus' forge), Artemis visits the blacksmith Cyclopes, one-eyed monstrous creatures, whose work stained and blackened them and whose anvils clanged frightfully loud. The nymphs are so terrified by this sight that they dare not look straight at the creatures. The narrator comments:

No shame to them! On those not even the daughters of the Blessed look without shuddering. Though long past childhood's years. But when any of the maidens doth disobedience to her mother, the mother calls the Cyclopes to her child – Arges or Steropes; and from within the house comes Hermes, stained with burnt ashes. And straightway he plays bogey to the child, and she runs into her mother's lap, with her hands upon her eyes.

While Homer would use a simile, comparing the nymphs' fear with the fright felt by infants when their mothers threaten them with the bogeyman, Callimachus sets a fully human, domestic and familial environment, without the use of any comparative link. Of course, also echoing the typical Homeric work, the fear felt by the nymphs further highlights the fearlessness expressed by Artemis. Nausicaa, in the *Odyssey*, is the only one who courageously stands before the castaway Ulysses, unwashed and naked, who had been hiding in the reeds; all her maidens flee in terror. Ulysses, like the narrator himself had done before, justly compares her to Artemis, who outshines her dancing companions.

In order to emphasize the dauntlessness of the little goddess, Callimachus tells one

more story, of how three-year-old Artemis had gone with her mother to visit Hephaestus; not only had she bravely sat on his lap, but plucked out a handful of his chest hair, with such force that to this day the blacksmith god's chest remained hairless.

I will mention just one more scene to complete this domestic and familial portrait of the Olympus that Callimachus undoubtedly assimilated from Homer. When the goddess returns to the Olympus, carrying her weapons, back from the hunt, she is greeted by, amongst others, Hercules, who is anxiously at the gates: he is waiting for her to bring food, because in spite of his demi-god condition, he remains a big glutton, as the narrator comments later on. The reaction of the gods to the former hero's gluttony is laughter, an endless (ἄλληκτον) laughter, in an obvious allusion to the undying laughter of Homer's Olympian gods (*Il.* 1. 599 – ἄσβεστος γέλως) watching the limping Hephaestus pour nectar to the guests at the divine feast.

In fact, the scenes set at the Olympus in chapter I of the *Iliad* are among the most hilarious ones in the *Homeric Poems*; it is therefore no surprise that Callimachus evokes them on multiple levels in this text, which to me is a homage paid by the poet from Alexandria to Homer. This playful parody extends to the poet's own status as narrator and erudite. Callimachus seems to joke about himself and his erudition¹³. Despite the aesthetic principles that the poet lays down in several fragments of his work and in the Book of Hymns – namely the well-known end of the *Hymn to Apollo*, in which the poet defends formal purity and thus rejects long-winded compositions, written in Homeric fashion –, he clearly surrenders himself to the charm of Homer's work, regardless of eventual inconsistencies in his long poems. Callimachus even makes small mistakes, apparently with the intent of playing a joke on himself and, of course, on the reader. For example, in the *Hymn to Artemis* he says that the belt and weapons forged for the goddess are made of gold, using the Greek adjective for «golden» no less than three times – and further down in the text he asks (113): «And how often goddess, didst thou make trial of thy silver bow?». It is an obvious but distorted reminiscence of Homer, for in the *Iliad* it is Apollo who has the epithet of «god of the silver bow». This inconsistency is also a conscious and deliberate parodic imitation of Homer's and Hesiod's sometimes mechanical and seemingly meaningless use of formulae and epithets.

The way how the poet playfully selects and manipulates his data demonstrates a keen interest in these stories, especially in the ancient form of narrative received from Homer, Hesiod and other poets in the past.

This allows me to approach another issue that may be inferred from the poet's stance in the *Hymns*. Callimachus certainly did not wish for myths to remain lifeless in the writ-

¹³ This is precisely what HUTCHINSON, 1988: 31 argues, in his analysis of fr. 75: «By dramatizing himself and playing with his character, Callimachus makes it as clear as possible that his professed involvements as scholar are treated in the poetry with the keenest awareness and the easiest detachment». Cf. MORRISON, 2007: 104.

ings of mythographers, but rather to keep them alive through poetry. In fact, only the work of poets could rescue myth from the draining destructive effects of allegorical (or akin) interpretations.

In the first of his *Iambi*¹⁴, Callimachus brings back from Hades the ancient poet, (6th century B.C.) Hipponax, who integrated, alongside Archilocus and Semonides, the canon of iambographers fixed by the Alexandrian sages. The Iamb is quite fragmented, like the rest, but it contains a very important reference to Euhemerus, a mythographer from the late 4th century and early 3th century. Euhemerus' written prose depicted the gods from mythical narratives as powerful men from the past who had become divinized over time by people thankful for their good deeds. As such, Euhemerus was called ἄθεός. Now, Callimachus, through Hipponax's mouth, alludes to him in very negative terms, calling his writings ἄδικα βιβλία, i.e., bad or unfair books or writings.

It seems to me that this allusion, in spite of being brief, clearly signals Callimachus' dislike of rationalizing approaches to traditional narratives, which were very common at a time when myth and poetry had long ceased to be the one and the same. It is likely that the work of a certain Palephatus¹⁵ was also known at the time; Palephatus was possibly contemporaneous with Aristoteles and followed the same path of rationalizing stories protagonized by heroes from the past, making them more credible according to factual and historical truth standards.

However, Callimachus' *Hymns* tread a very different path. All of his work encompasses the notion that the poet's role is not, no matter how erudite he may be, to rationally interpret myths, but to tell them and to invent new stories. This amounts to saying that the poet should give poetic shape to the stories that have not yet been dignified as myths, through a process of perennial dialogue with the cultural tradition in which he recognizes himself and from which he inherited the art that enchants and hence persuades.

¹⁴ On this composition and the meaning of Hipponax's presence in it (*vide* KERKHECKER, 1999). In his analysis of *Iamb 4* (LOWELL, 2001: 78) says that «Hipponax was a perfect model for Callimachus' participation in the literary controversy in which the historical Callimachus was apparently engaged and in which the poet Callimachus represents himself as engaged in well-known passages of the *Aitia*, in the *Hymn to Apollo*, and in *Epigram 28 P6*».

¹⁵ On this author, see STERN, 1999.

TRADITION AND IDENTITY IN LYCOPHRON

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Abstract: *Lycophron's Alexandra has been called an «obscure poem». Through the difficulties of an enigmatic text that raises questions about its author and date, this paper deals with two fundamental issues: first, if it is possible to call Alexandra a drama and set a parallel between this work and 5th-century Athenian tragedy. Second, how Lycophron deals with the long and well established identity of his characters, and in particular with the identity of Cassandra, whose words we hear throughout the poem. A long mythological tradition together with an enigmatic and elusive text – they both constitute a strange and challenging paradox. A brief analysis of Lycophron's «odyssey» (ll. 648-819) shows how the poet manages to achieve equilibrium while dealing with these two themes: tradition and identity.*

It is undoubtedly a challenge to write about a work that requires the use of an instruction book. Under normal circumstances, we find reasonable for this to happen with a domestic appliance: urban mythology is full of stories in which the act of programming a VCR dangerously resembles a descent in hell. But it will be reason to look with suspicion, and even fear, at a literary work that only can be clearly understood if we take into account the commentaries left by the scholiasts. Now this is what systematically happens with Lycophron's *Alexandra*.

The Suda will call it «the obscure poem» (τὸ σκοτεινὸν ποίημα), and this is a label that has stuck to it. When we start reading any work about this poem, we often find, more

or less vividly expressed, the disenchantment of its author, as if he had engaged in a task far beyond the forces of a mortal. In 1901, in the early 20th century, Gildersleeve said: «Few scholars now-a-days read Lycophron and almost all who do read him claim a reward of merit by writing something about him»¹. A century later, Elizabeth Kosmetatou² opens her essay with the following words: «Lycophron's *Alexandra* remains the most obscure and enigmatic literary work of the Hellenistic period and indeed, it could be argued, of the entire Antiquity». Together with encouraging words like these, a bibliographical flow not quite copious, though constant. There is only one exception, also quite disturbing. In these early years of the 21st century, a group of French scholars has dedicated itself to the study of Lycophron, so that, between 2005 and 2008, were published in France four different translations of the *Alexandra* (including the one belonging to the Budé collection), along with several studies, some of them collective works³. I cannot find an explanation for such abundance. It does not represent, for sure, a sudden need for the French reader, anxious to know four different ways to decline the *Alexandra* into the language of Molière. In fact, however bizarre it may seem, this exception simply confirms the rule.

We may begin with a brief description of the poem. This is a relatively long text, consisting of 1474 iambic trimetre. Not far, in extension, from a Sophocles' tragedy⁴. It consists of the long account of a messenger, who presents to his king the words of the young prophetess Alexandra (i.e., Cassandra). In her speech she reveals in detail the fate of Troy, in the future conquered by the Greeks, but also the troubled return of the conqueror army, victim of divine wrath, due to the way Ajax attacked Priam's daughter, near the altar of Athena. The story then extends beyond the moment when Alexander manages to reunite Europe and Asia. According to Stephanie West⁵, we can find in the huge temporal scope of this action a topic that works as a common denominator: the rivalry between east and west. At least the formal structure is simple and clear: the first thirty lines present the messenger's introductory speech; after, up to line 1460, we hear the literal words of the princess – thus these 1430 lines correspond to the core of the poem itself; in the last fourteen lines, we go back to the words of the servant.

Two questions claim our attention when we look at the *Alexandra* – and both, in some way, relate to the theme of this paper, tradition and identity. On one hand, we have to discuss how this work fits into the dramatic tradition, if it actually does; on the other, the

¹ *Apud* WEST, 1984: 127-8.

² KOSMETATOU, 2000: 32.

³ Translations: LAMBIN, 2005; HUMMEL, 2006; CHAUVIN, CUSSET, 2008; HURST, 2008. As an example of collective work see CUSSET, PRIoux, 2009.

⁴ It is almost the same verse number of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* (1471). It exceeds in extent *Ajax*, *Antigone* and *Trachiniae*, but is shorter than *Electra* and both *Oedipus*. It can therefore be said, using Sophocles as a perfectly legitimate reference, that *Alexandra* has the average length of an Athenian tragedy.

⁵ WEST, 2000: 154.

problem of the authorship, an endless debate that, by some undeniable similarities, never ceases to remind us of the well-known Homeric Question.

Let us begin exactly by this point. After all, who wrote the *Alexandra*? The Lycophron to whom the poem is usually attributed was born in Chalcis at an imprecise date, probably between 330 and 320 B.C. Tragic author – the *Suda* attributes to him twenty-one different titles of tragedies – he was a member of the tragic Alexandrian Pleiad. It is possible that, within the context of the critical editions carried out in the Library, he was responsible for editing the comedy, and is assigned to him a treatise, in nine books, about comedy (Περὶ Κωμωιδίας). He would have also composed a satiric drama entitled *Menedemus*. We speak thus of someone perfectly integrated in the literary world of Alexandria, who cannot be confused with any other author that we know having the same name.

If the biographical question seems peaceful – we must say nothing about Lycophron is completely peaceful – the problem arises from the text. Certain passages of the poem (particularly 1226-1280 and 1446-1450) seem to presuppose a knowledge of Roman power that would be quite unnatural at the time of an author as the Lycophron above. We can express this doubt (which already goes back to the ancient commentaries of Tzetzes) with the words chosen, in 1800, by a curious British reader, Charles James Fox (*apud* West, 1984: 127), which shows himself amazed while reading «the part where he speaks of the Romans in a manner that could not be possible for one who lived in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, that is, even before the Punic war».

At the beginning of the first passage (1226-1231), Cassandra speaks of her descendants, who will take the sceptre and power over land and sea (γῆς καὶ θαλάσσης σκῆπτρα καὶ μοναρχίαν / λαβόντες – 1229-30), and continues with a set of references, more or less cryptic to the voyage of Aeneas and to the first Roman myths. Either the nature of the power thus described, either the extension and the centrality of the reference to the Romans, in this passage, seem quite not adequate to the period where the tradition places that Lycophron of Chalcis, according to the biographical data presented by the *Suda*.

To this we may add, ahead in the poem (1446-1450), the reference to a descendant, a fighter (εἷς τις παλαιστής – 1447), who will have, in a way not completely clear, the domain over the Greek land, and that some scholars (the so-called radical unitarians) relate to Titus Quintus Flaminius and to the victory he got over Philip V of Macedonia in 197-6 B.C.

To these perplexities – here presented perhaps too briefly – experts have reacted with remarkable harmony. Basically, they agree to disagree. In general, we can speak of three major groups: first, the analytics, who defend that the poem was composed by more than one hand, even if the core may be attributed to the Lycophron acknowledged by the tradition⁶; the radical unitarians maintain that the whole poem was composed later, in the first

⁶ See WEST, 1984 and 2000; HUNTER, 2004: 437-439.

half on the 2nd century B.C., by an author completely different from the Lycophron of Chalcis⁷; finally, the conservative unitarians argue that all those problems do not prevent the attribution to the traditional author, considering, among other arguments, the elusive and enigmatic nature of the text⁸.

Unless new data arise that miraculously solve this question, the discussion is bound to continue. It is fair to say that this problem seems to be sought by the text itself: a work that is difficult to read and that assumes this difficulty as a deliberate purpose, even if that is not the only reason for the enigmatic textual organization, is subject to a multiplicity of readings and to the controversy that emerges from it. It should be noted, also, in relation to this particular question about the date of composition and the puzzling passages mentioned above, that our position, in the present, knowing all the subsequent events, clearly may divert our reading, even unintentionally. After all, it is easier for us to read as factual what, in the text, could just be allusive. My purpose, however, is just to acknowledge this difficulty and to stress how this text presents, even before we start reading it, a severe problem of identity, which naturally conditions the way we cope with it.

It will be more useful to question how this work fits into the dramatic tradition. The question is simple: is Lycophron's *Alexandra* a drama? Can we establish some sort of connection between this poem and the tragedy of the 5th century B.C.? One immediate answer will report some points of contact, such as the use of iambic trimeter or the presence of a dramatic device as the messenger speech. But these are the same aspects that clearly mark the difference. Greek tragedy never reduced itself to a sequence of verses in iambic trimeter – and a highly regular one, as is the case in the *Alexandra* –, even if that is, as we know, the metric form prevailing in the episodes. Tragedy is poetry marked by its rhythmic variety – and whether this variety may be present in the episodes, it becomes more evident when we consider the choral odes, and when we remember how the harmony of the tragic spectacle also relies on the richness of alternating episodes and stasima. On the other hand, if the messenger speech is an almost mandatory part of Greek tragedy, *Alexandra* seems to reduce the entire tragedy to a messenger scene, or, looking the other way around, seems to expand a messenger scene as to become an entire drama. In this obvious lack of balance, what is clearly visible are not the signs of proximity to the Athenian drama, but what prevents us from really being in face of a true dramatic work.

We should also have in mind that a messenger-speech is, in a drama, the very less dramatic element. Strictly speaking it is a narrative incision in the dramatic tissue, introducing a character which does not effectively *act*, only reports events that took place elsewhere. Somehow the use of a messenger is a way to get around a limitation of drama, incapable of representing plausibly more complex events (death, for example, or episodes of a fantastic

⁷ See ZIEGLER, 1969; JOSIFOVIC, 1968; GIGANTE LANZARA, 2000: 19-21.

⁸ See MOMIGLIANO, 1942 or HURST, 2008.

nature, involving many figures, as battles). There are actions that become more powerful when expressed in words, at least if we cannot use special effects such as those modern cinema industry can use nowadays. The messenger-speech scene bypasses a limitation of drama by making use of a device non dramatic in essence but narrative, a device which points us to epic, not to drama. Somehow, making this choice, Lycophron uses a sort of drama simulacrum, a façade, but what he does put inside it has a nature completely different from what we expect of a drama.

The very extent of the poem confirms the above statement. There is, in the messenger-speech of Greek drama, a principle of restraint – we can relate it with that kind of concentration which defines drama as a whole; a messenger's speech singles out an event (whether we are talking about the death of Eurydice or Jocasta, or how the Guard tells us the homage at the tomb of Polyneices); in the *Alexandra* this messenger's speech extends itself in time and space, goes through centuries, is longer than most epic poems. If we think it better, the messenger-speech is just a cover, concealing something else, closer to epic than to drama.

We might also impose to *Alexandra* the test of representation. Greek tragedies from 5th century B.C. are still staged today and, in most cases, we see excellent dramatic performances, as it has been demonstrated by several recent examples, in Portugal and abroad⁹. If we try the same with Lycophron's poem, certainly we have to store it in the closet reserved to the therapeutic category of sleep inducers. A long monologue, a single character, a text hard to interpret, all these elements would be able to discourage even the most benevolent public. Moreover, according to Stephanie West¹⁰, it seems reasonable to think that, even when it was created, this work was not aimed to any kind of public presentation. If anything, some selected parts could be recited in front of a chosen audience, a hypothesis that the episodic structure of the text encourages. But it is equally true that, at the third or 2nd century B.C., it would be possible to enjoy this poem through silent reading. All this – here is my main point – leads us away from drama and from the spectacular dimension necessarily associated to it.

Let us now comment on the selection and presentation of characters. The only voice we hear is that of a servant, telling to a king¹¹, in accordance to received orders, the words

⁹ I just point two recent examples, *Antigone* and *Oedipus Rex*, both presented in Oporto, the first in 2010, the last in 2012. Recorded here for a question of proximity, both are clear evidence of how Greek tragedy may be attractive to the 21st century audience.

¹⁰ WEST, 1984: 129.

¹¹ We notice, indirectly, that this king is Priam (l. 19). This happens during the introductory words of the servant and not in the speech of the prophetess. So the use of a sinuous and allusive language is not exclusive of Cassandra. Lycophron did not bother to differentiate between the two segments of speech, to give an autonomous voice to the servant. Or – this second assumption is perhaps too far-fetched – Lycophron wants the servant's speech to be, from the beginning, *contaminated* by the dark words of the princess, those words this man is scrupulously prepared to repeat in a moment.

of the king's daughter, Alexandra/Cassandra. The young woman remains in a secluded place, where her terrible words cannot spread the fear. Let us focus on these three figures.

In first place the silent and somehow absent king of Troy. He is the addressee of the message and the one that originates it. We may suppose him a silent listener, an invisible one, and, so, he may be taken as one of us, spectators or readers. If he is almost lost as a theatrical character, because of his absence, he gains an unexpected dimension, when we realize that Lycophron puts us exactly in the same position of Priam, facing, as he does, a challenging text, both by the calamities it predicts and by the difficulties of interpretation it arises.

As for the servant, this is, as we know, the kind of character that usually plays the role of messenger. The lack of importance of these figures allows us to focus on the message and not on who transmits it. As happens, usually, with the anonymous characters of Greek drama, the absence of a mythical tradition leaves a large margin in terms of characterization: a servant may be an example of fidelity and devotion, as he use to see in Euripides' drama, may produce some morally engaged considerations, more or less surprising or daring. But even in these cases, the message outweighs the messenger and we tend to forget him as a character. However, if this particular servant is just a voice that reproduces Cassandra's words, the truth is that he *is not* Cassandra and that, as we will see shortly, makes a lot of difference. We may add another aspect that modifies and distinguishes this specific messengers' speech: it is not exactly a narrative and even less a speech produced by the speaker himself. With the exception of a few verses that constitute the initial and final frame, the servant reproduces – we understand he makes it with absolute accuracy – the words of the princess. This servant is therefore a borrowed voice, a kind of ventriloquist's dummy through which Cassandra speaks. This conditions the messenger and his characterization, but also the way we relate with Cassandra as a character and even more as a character with a long literary tradition.

There is a deliberate choice in hearing Cassandra through a deferred voice. This does not seem to happen by chance. If we think of this character in Greek drama, we easily acknowledge a powerful tradition concerning the presence of Cassandra on stage: we all remember without effort two scenes, in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (ll. 1035-1330) and in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (ll. 292-461). In either of them, even taking into account the natural differences, two key elements stand out: the spectacle of the dramatic speech produced by a character under possession, and the dramatic presence, equally disturbing, of the prophetic words, presenting a terrifying image of the future. It is not necessary to insist on how these two elements influence mutually, how the prophetic discourse gains intensity through the disturbance of the figure that delivers it and, and how, at the same time, it is the prophetic ability that leads us to a deeper involvement with the disturbance of the character. Brake this connection causes a significant deviation from a traditional pattern, that has already a great amount of strength. Tradition cannot easily be ignored. Lycophron does

not follow the path we could expect regarding to Cassandra as a dramatic character. By giving her another voice, allowing us to access to her words but not to her presence, the poet runs away from a dramatic dimension, the princess becoming just a shadow without effective dramatic consistency. To remove the dramatic effect is a way to decaffeinate the drama, to put its purpose in a different place, creating an intellectual game, designed for a scholar audience who takes pleasure in deciphering puzzles. So, renouncing Cassandra as a character helps to remove this poem away from drama and contributes to make it something else. More difficult is to know exactly what that new thing is.

The truth is that of the two elements listed above (the prophetic figure, the prophetic speech) one of them still remains: the core of the text is the prophetic word and, in this particular, nothing seems more adequate. The prophetic word is uncertain, its meaning is never completely seen, it lives in the middle of shadows and fog, and it raises more questions than answers. Nothing more appropriate to a deciphering exercise than a text that is by definition difficult and challenging. And Lycophron takes things even further by putting us in front of a messenger that reproduces prophecies he himself does not understand; that brings us, spectators, closer to that puzzled voice delivering the speech. So we must recognize that the prophetic discourse, with its own very nature, is perfectly adapted to the purposes of Lycophron, and becomes, unlike what happens with the choice of characters, dramatically relevant and in accordance with tradition.

In this balance between tradition and obscurity a paradox emerges to which we must pay attention. Cassandra's prophecy deals with a set of well-known events, the fate of Troy, the troubled return home of the Greek heroes. This knowledge proves to be a key element in the work of deciphering a text admittedly hard to understand. It is the very need of not to completely eliminate the chances of understanding that leads inevitably to a point in which the relationship with the tradition has to be more conservative. It is not possible to subvert excessively a traditional version while using a cryptic speech – even such speech requires some opening to intelligibility. Lycophron's text is forced to move on this unstable path between concealment and recognition, and the way the poet manages this balance has obvious consequences on the efficacy of the text, or rather on the efficacy on the challenge it constitutes.

It is time now to return to Cassandra. Beyond her deletion as a dramatic character, and the obvious influence of that deletion on our relation with the poem, we cannot forget what we hear are the words of the Trojan princess. It is important to know if the way tradition is presented takes into account the character that, indirectly, produces the words, if Cassandra's prophecies, despite her absence as character on stage, represent a *voice of her own*.

A particularly suitable passage to deal with this question is the long «*odyssey*» of Lycophron, the central part of the poem (ll. 648-819), in which Cassandra predicts the return of Odysseus. I do not need do stress the importance of the Homeric *Odyssey* throughout Greek culture, its presence as a referential text, known to everyone. Its rooted-

ness, its dissemination, its influence makes even a more obvious dissonance if someone tries to present an alternative version. But we also know Greek myths are continually subject to change. Some alternative versions did exist and they also become shared territory. One of them, which may have served as inspiration to Lycophron, is the speech where Cassandra foretells the return of Odysseus in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (ll. 435-443). There, Hecuba's daughter emphasizes the sufferings of the hero during his long journey back home and strategically eludes any reference to a successful outcome after arriving to Ithaca, just saying, before changing the subject, that, also at home, Odysseus will find «pain and suffering». No mention to the revenge, to the death of the Suitors, to Penelope. So already in Euripides the «*odyssey*», according to Cassandra, only focuses on the sufferings of the hero, an option quite consistent with the negative image Odysseus has in this tragedy (and in Greek tragedy in general, we must say). Lycophron's version cannot be said properly original. But, as we have already seen, complete originality and puzzles do not get along quite well.

In the *Alexandra* the negative image associated to Odysseus' *nostos* is part of a broader narrative pattern. All the punishment that falls on the return of the Greeks is presented as a just penalty for the offence on Cassandra, attacked by Ajax under the protection of Athena's altar. This framework of punishment does not allow for exceptions and therefore also the *Odyssey* must be retold. While we are dealing with the return journey, the tradition has enough trials and tribulations, so the picture does not require substantial changes. After the arrival to Ithaca, as we easily understand, the rewriting process must be more radical.

Odysseus' wanderings are presented to us in an episodic structure, a sequential pattern, always according with the enigmatic nature of the text. Thus, the narrative organization we know from Homer's *Odyssey*, a crescendo that slowly leads us, through many detours, up to a happy end, is diluted here by a simpler presentation, to which the obscurity of the text draws emotional weight. Surely the necessary recognition effect is attained due to the presence, identifiable enough, of the episodes known from Odysseus' *nostos* (Laestrygonians, Cyclops, Circe, the Sirens, Scylla and Carybdis – even if some treated differently), creating a foil able to accommodate a less happy fate for Odysseus.

The signs of dissonance are, of course, more important, not only because of the way they differ from the Homeric version, but also because they represent an adaptation to the specific voice of Cassandra. I will address briefly three examples that seem to me sufficiently illustrative.

Let us look to the first word. We all remember the word (ἄνδρα) that initiates the Homeric text and how this «man» becomes the centre of the whole poem. Lycophron chooses to begin his «*odyssey*» with τοὺς («they», l. 648), and we understand he means Odysseus' comrades; only a few lines later he says that only one (ἕνα, l. 657) of these men, Odysseus himself, has survived from that terrible *nostos*. This ingenious reversal of *Odyssey's* proposition (cf. Od. 1. 1-9) can, in a single stroke, devalue Odysseus' role and

remove him from a central place, and, furthermore, turn our attention to those men whose return the lord of Ithaca failed to ensure¹². Obviously this effect is only achieved if we keep in mind – but how could we not to? – the first lines of the *Odyssey*.

The second example concerns the episode of the Sirens, quite important in Homeric narrative, but equally important because of its resonance throughout time. It is particularly relevant in Lycophron, both by its length (ll. 712-737) and by the way it occupies a central place in this specific «*odyssey*». The emphasis in Lycophron does not concern the magic spell of their song neither the stratagem that allows Odysseus to hear it. Naturally all this is in the memory of his readers, and Lycophron knows it. That is why he can so clearly depart from the Homeric story and almost erase Odysseus from his version. The focus of the episode, in Lycophron's poem, rests on how the Sirens – and their memory – came to occupy the landscape of southern Italy, the region where the poet locates this tale. We cannot find here the Sirens story as told by Homer, Cassandra takes up the episode from its Homeric ending and extends it in time for the following centuries. So the first punishment of Odysseus, in this episode, is how he almost disappears from it. The brief presence that still remains constitutes the second punishment, as the text essentially emphasizes the death of the Sirens. They have took their own lives, unable to bear the suffering due to the failure of the spell cast on Odysseus. The connection between this death and the king of Ithaca, evident in the verbal form that opens the episode (κτενεῖ – «he will kill», l. 712), stands as an accusation, in a narrative sequence where the *metis* of the hero fades away, making way for a man who, along his journey, continues to spread the seed of death – and, without effort, we are invited to connect the death of the comrades, evoked at the outset of the *odyssey's* episode, with this other moment: after all, and this is the point, finding Odysseus is to find death.

The third example concerns the return to Ithaca. We all know how, in the *Odyssey*, this moment is long and carefully prepared. We wait a long time, the action slips back and forward, and finally we see Odysseus arm the bow and massacre the Suitors. And we have to wait even more to witness the recognition between husband and wife. What strikes us first in the *Alexandra* is the brevity of the episode (just ll. 768-778), and, secondly, the avoidance of all elements that construct the narrative strategy of Homer's poem. Odysseus will return to find all events already accomplished. He has no intervention, becoming a mere spectator of his palace's ruin and of the betrayal of his wife. What we see in quick glances, always twisting, as is usual in the language of this poem, is the palace handed over to the appetite of «greedy thieves of women» (μύκλοις γυναικόκλωψιν, l. 771). And the female character,

¹² It is notorious how the *Odyssey's* author, in these opening lines, underlines that the death of Odysseus' comrades was caused by their foolishness, disobeying the order of their leader and eating the cattle of the Sun. This justification does not explain the death of most of the men that sailed with Odysseus from Troy. But the purpose is to point the uniqueness of that «man» who managed to escape from the traps others did not avoid. Cf. POWELL, 2004: 115-117. This concern, of course, is totally absent from Lycophron's work.

the lady of the house, is called βασίσα («fox without shame», 771), and is said to be «fornicating with haughty air» (σεμνῶς κασωρεύουσα, 772), while she empties the palace with feasts that exhaust Odysseus' properties. It is very brief this portrait of Penelope, but extremely eloquent in its hardness. We understand why Lycophron is so brief. Surely, if we think in Cassandra's point of view, it makes no sense that Odysseus had, waiting for him, a virtuous and faithful wife. But, on the other hand, fidelity is almost a second skin to Penelope, so her negative image is a point that Lycophron was not interested to stress. To draw Penelope in contradiction to her traditional portrait is fully consistent with the view of the Trojan princess, but only works properly as small detail in a larger picture. Giving it more emphasis could easily distort the picture itself, and develop some kind of resistance from those who hear the story.

The injuries and suffering that Odysseus receives inside his own home – we know it well from the Homeric text, Lycophron mentions it at (ll. 774-778) – are not a difficult stage before victory, but the very punishment of Odysseus, and not designed to end at this moment. The return to Ithaca is just a stage in the suffering of Odysseus, a man intended to continue wandering and die later at the hands of his son Telegonus – according to the version of the *Telegony*, much more appropriated to Cassandra's point of view. The final lines of Lycophron's «*odyssey*» present Odysseus as a man who dies after a life of constant suffering. He should have been much happier in his own land, had he succeeded to avoid war, without seeing denounced the ruse of his feigned madness. The general idea is that Odysseus as completely wastes his life.

One of the most impressive aspects in Lycophron's version of Odysseus' *nostos* is how the hero sees his role diminished. The story of his actions pays more attention to the fatal consequences they cause than to the value or excellence of the man who practices them. We can say that, without leaving his enigmatic speech, Lycophron is careful to adapt *Odyssey's* tradition to the particular voice that speaks here.

Lycophron's *Alexandra* is a very strange object. We may think of it as a drama, but we cannot find here the main characteristics of a theatrical play – and those we find are particularly distorted. As a literary work, *Alexandra* clearly lacks identity and must remain an odd and unclassifiable poem. We must say, however, that Lycophron tried to fit the tradition to Cassandra's character and situation. By saving Cassandra's identity he has saved – or at least tried to – the identity of the work itself. And, even unwillingly, we may become seduced by these strange and sinuous words.

MANETHO AND THE HISTORY OF EGYPT

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Abstract: *Under the royal commission by Ptolemy II, Manetho – an Egyptian priest in the temple of Re in Heliopolis – wrote in Greek a history of Egypt (Aegyptiaca). This original text has been lost but its quotations by posterior authors such as Flavius Josephus (1st century), Julius Africanus (2nd-3rd centuries), Eusebius of Caesarea (3rd-4th centuries) and George Syncellus (8th century) help us to understand the historiographical work undergone by the ancient Egyptian scholar who, in many ways, paved the way for modern Egyptologists.*

MANETHO AND THE HISTORY OF EGYPT

We owe to the Egyptian priest and scholar Manetho, contemporary of the first Ptolemaic kings, the dynastic periodization of pharaonic Egypt in thirty dynasties, still in use by Egyptologists¹. Manetho was born in Sebennytos (hellenized form of the Egyptian city Tebnetjer or Tjebnetjer, or even Tjebnutjer, in Coptic Djemenuti, today Samannud), located at the Central Delta, where the 30th Dynasty began, the last of the long Egyptian history. Sebennytos was also the capital of the 12th province of Lower Egypt. Manetho studied at the renowned temple of Re, in Heliopolis, and collaborated in the introduction of the Sarapis cult in Alexandria, which intended to merge both Greek and Egyptian beliefs. According to Plutarch, Manetho was an adviser of the king Ptolemy I (305-285 B.C.), the Macedonian

¹ WADDELL, 1980: VII-XV; SALES, 2001: 538-539; SHAW, NICHOLSON, 1995: 169; THISSEN, 1980: 1180-1181.

founder of the Lagid Dynasty and by request of Ptolemy II himself (285-246 B.C.) he wrote a history of Egypt.

Several literary works are ascribed to this scholar from Sebennytyos, but only one of them is surely attributed to him: his history of Egypt (*Aegyptiaca*), whose original text has been lost, but from which we have reasonable knowledge thanks to the quotations of posterior authors: Flavius Josephus (1st century), and Christian writers such as Julius Africanus (2nd-3rd centuries), Eusebius of Caesarea (3rd-4th centuries) and George Syn-cellus (8th century).

Although adopting a proselytist biased perspective, the Jewish writer Flavius Josephus seems to have been able to read the works of Manetho from the original itself. He used Manetho's text as a source to write his arguments as to prove the ancientness of the Jews, having recorded:

I will begin with Egyptian documents. These I cannot indeed set before you in their ancient form; but in Manetho we have a native Egyptian who was manifestly imbued with Greek culture. He wrote in Greek the history of his nation, translated, as he himself tells us, from sacred tablets; and on many points of the Egyptian history he convicts Herodotus of having erred through ignorance².

Flavius Josefus coincides with other pieces of information which attest that Manetho was a Hellenized Egyptian scholar who wrote in Greek his nation's history, based on the many facts he learned from the «sacred texts». To perform that huge task he would naturally had to be learned in the hieroglyphic writing (certainly seeking information in hieratic and demotic texts), as well as in the Greek language.

Sometimes the compilers of Manetho disagree among themselves in the composition of the royal lists and in the comments on the succession – monotonous at times – of kings' names and facts allegedly occurred in several reigns, as we shall see. On the other hand, the original Manetho's text only mentioned 30 dynasties, with the 30th Dynasty ending his 3rd book, the last one of his *Aegyptiaca*, but later on a 31st Dynasty was added, regarding the period of the Second Persian Domination, and then removed upon the arrival of Alexander.

The truth is that no one knows which material is from the Egyptian writer himself and which belongs to the work of his posterior compilers³. Flavius Josephus attempted to adjust the manethonian text to his intentions, in order to extol the history of his people. The version of Africanus, condensed in five books written during the reign of Heliogabalus (218-222), apparently derives not directly from Manetho but from a version that appeared soon after the publication of the original text by the Sebennytyos historian. Africanus's purpose

² WADDELL, 1980: 77-79.

was to compare the dense manethonian chronology of the ancient nations of the Near East, particularly the pharaonic civilization, with the biblical chronology. The version from Eusebius, written in Greek during the reign of Constantine (312-337) is inspired by a Manetho's version later changed by an Hellenized Jewish writer. Finally, around the year 800, the byzantine monk George, secretary of the patriarch Tarasios of Constantinople, began to write an extended history of the world since Adam to Diocletian. Among others, there is an Armenian version from the 5th century which passed down the Greek text of Eusebius to Latin.

MANETHO'S SOURCES

Monumental royal lists with the names of kings from ancient Egypt have been preserved⁴. Most of these lists date from the New Kingdom and they were certainly based on older records. Although many of these lists and records are lost today, most of them were probably still available to Manetho.

The Royal List of Abydos, which can be seen in a corridor of the temple-cenotaph belonging to Sety I, is the best preserved of such lists. In lithic support, its first king is called Meni (Menes), heading a list of 76 names, much more extensive than the number of kings mentioned in a smaller list of Ramesses II, quite damaged and found in a nearby Abydian temple, reckoning only 27 royal names. As for the list of Karnak, found in the «ancestors chamber» of the Akhmenu, in the temple of Amun, it was elaborated in the reign of Thutmose III and it can be seen today in the Louvre Museum, presenting the names of 61 kings since Sneferu (4th Dynasty) to the king that had it made in order to worship his ancestors. There is yet another list in Saqqara, carved in the tomb of an official of Ramesses II, which now bears only 47 of the original list of names, the first being that of Anedjib (1st Dynasty). Much older than these lists is another important source, the Palermo Stone dating from the 5th Dynasty, which however some authors date from the 25th Dynasty (7th century B.C.)⁵. Although some of its original parts are missing, the Palermo Stone, carved on both sides, probably started with the name of king Meni, while the last name that still can be read is that of Neferirkare, the third king of the 5th Dynasty. The rest of the block with the monarchs from that dynasty is now lost but, according to Alan Gardiner, it once presented three more names: Shepsekkare, Neferefre and Niuserre. Being so, this famous monument should date from the reign of this last king⁶.

³ WADDELL, 1980: XVII.

⁴ Monumental versions of such Egyptian royal lists can still be found either in their original places or in museums. SALES, 2011: 509-511.

⁵ Its name derives from the fact that the larger fragment from this monument is now kept in the capital of Sicily (the remaining parts of the great original block are kept in the Cairo Egyptian Museum).

⁶ GARDINER, 1961: 63; ARAÚJO, 2011: 34-35.

Even more complete was the *Royal Canon of Turin*, written in hieratic text during the reign of Ramesses II and found in a tomb from Western Thebes during the 19th century. The ancient scholar that compiled the information found in the papyrus consulted several sources which probably were still available to Manetho as well. This remarkable document is now kept in the Egyptian Museum of Turin, to where it was taken after its discovery, still in a reasonable reading condition in spite of the regrettable handling that it had been object upon its shipment. The frail document was shredded into many pieces and among the nearly three hundred fragments available to us we can still identify the names of 50 kings from ancient Egypt – only a few among the many once present – along with the length of their reigns in years and months, including the names of the mythical kings from the early times. The first scholar to work on this precious source was Champollion himself⁷.

Just like the Ramesside writer of the *Royal Canon of Turin*, Manetho also researched in the libraries and archives associated with the temples. Besides holding official documents of religious and cultural nature, libraries also stored papyrus regarding profane themes, from lyrical poetry to medical recopies, tales and narratives, among other subjects⁸. This can justify certain passages of his texts which have a more factual and anecdotic nature. The papyri were stored in those places, rolled and tied up with strings and sometimes sealed, with the possibility of being placed in niches especially carved for this purpose. The scrolls were kept in stone or ceramic containers or in small wooden boxes.

Although its construction had begun long after Manetho's lifetime, it is well known the composition of the library of the Edfu temple thanks to a list preserved on the wall of the ancient book depository room. According to this inscription we know that this deposit held the following works: the books and the large pure leather scrolls that allowed to defeat the daemons, scare the crocodiles, protect the honor, preserve the barge and sail in the great barge; the book to bring forth the king in procession; the book for conducting the cult, protecting the city, the house, the throne's white crown, the year; the book for appeasing Sekhmet; the book for hunting the lion, scaring the crocodiles, scaring the reptiles, learning all secrets of the laboratory; knowing the divine offerings in all of its details; the book of the temple's inventory; the book of capturing enemies; the book of all the fighting writings; the book of the temple's conduct; the book of instructions for decorating a wall; the book of the magical protection of the king in its palace; formula to repel the evil eye; knowledge of the periodical comings of the moon and sun as well as the control of the periodical returning of the other stars; the relation of all the sacred places and knowledge of what is found there; and all the ritual related to the go forth of the god from his temple on the festive days⁹.

⁷ Certainly many studies and editions followed. See ARAÚJO, 2011: 35.

⁸ Besides obeying to conservation purposes, to the constitution of a library in ancient Egypt was not exempt a certain ludic taste as well.

⁹ SAUNERON, 1988: 144-145.

Also in the Dendera temple dedicated to the goddess Hathor, the room designed to store the sacred books was carved with a scribe's palette on the wall, followed by a list of the several books kept in that location. The same occurred, according to the information provided by archaeological records, in the temple of Tod in Ermant, near Thebes, where the wall inscriptions tell us of the existence of a scroll regarding the entering of the god Montu in Thebes; the ritual of restoring the eye of Horus (the magical *wdjat*-eye); the book of offerings upon the altar of the temple of Amun; the book of Thot's festival (the god of scribes and inventor of writing); the book of the temple of Khonsu (young lunar god, son of Amun); the ritual of the victory's festival; the ritual for the birth of the god, among others. These are significant examples of the material kept in the temples, namely in the «rooms of divine writings», which were important places for archiving documents directly related to the daily life on the cultic space.

To those collections of manuscripts we can also add the libraries that we know that once existed in the late temples of Philae (dedicated to the goddess Isis), Kom Ombo (built for the double cult of Sobek and Horuer) and Esna (dedicated to Khnum), but all these libraries are in fact posterior to Manetho's activity. And, if all these temples had their own big libraries, we can only wonder how the library of the great temple of Amun in Karnak could be, since this was the largest of all the temples built in the ancient Egypt and was, indeed, available to the Sebennytyos priest.

There were also private libraries, made for private owners who wished to add some classical texts to their own funerary collections, as proved by a box found near the Ramesseum containing several papyri scrolls that once belonged to a priest that lived in the Middle Kingdom.

FROM EARLY TIMES TO THE OLD KINGDOM

Since the Manetho's original text is lost, we have to follow the later versions of the Christian cronographs that historiographed the dynasties of ancient Egypt. Looking at the somehow similar texts of Africanus and Eusebius we find that Manetho, as a good Egyptian and learned scholar, began his history on the millenary pharaonic monarchy with the reigns of the gods and the «Spirits of the Dead», referring to the *bau* of Pe and Dep, mythical locations of the Delta, and to the *bau* of Heliopolis (Iunu), which are indeed the «Followers of Horus» (Shemsu-Hor). As for the allusion to the Flood, or «Universal Flood», it probably is not the work of the Egyptian priest himself, being instead a later addition of the Christian authors that quoted his work.

The Palermo Stone and the *Royal Canon of Turin* notice the existence of gods that ruled in Egypt, meaning the world, starting with Ptah (who in Greek versions appears as Hephaestus) followed by Re, Shu, Geb, Osiris, Seth and Horus – this is the Heliopolitan Ennead, with Re taking the place of Atum and with the reign of Horus signing the victory

over the usurper Seth. This list also attest a typically harmonic fusion with the Memphite cosmogony of Ptah, who appears there as the first king, ending the list of divine kings with the names of Thot and Maet¹⁰.

The version of Africanus starts his cast of the historical phase with the following order:

Here is the account which Africanus gives of the dynasties of Egypt (after the Flood). 1. In succession to the spirits of the Dead, the Demigods, the first royal house numbers eight kings, the first of whom Mênès of This reigned for 62 years. He was carried off by a hippopotamus and perished. 2. Athôthis, his son, for 57 years. He built the palace at Memphis; and his anatomical works are extant, for he was a physician. 3. Kenkenês, his son, for 31 years. 4. Uenephês, his son, for 32 years. In his reign a great famine seized Egypt. He erected the pyramids near Kôchômê. 5. Usaphaidos, his son, for 20 years. 6. Miebidos, his son, for 26 years. 7. Semempsês, his son, for 18 years. In his reign a very great calamity befell Egypt. 8. Biênechês, his son, for 26 years. Total, 253 years¹¹.

As for the version of Eusebius, it presents the following order:

here is the account wich Eusebius gives of the Egyptian dynasties (after the Flood). In succession to the Spirits of the Dead and the Demigods, the Egyptians reckon the First Dynasty to consist of eight kings. Among these was Mênès, whose rule in Egypt was illustrious. I shall record the rulers of each race from the time of Mênès; their succession is as follows: 1. Mênès of This, with his 7 descendants – the king called Mên by Herodotus, – reigned for 60 years. He made a foreign expedition and won renown, but was carried off by a hippopotamus. 2. Athôthis, his son, ruled for 27 years. He built the palace at Memphis; he practised medecine and wrote anatomical books. 3. Kenkenês, his son, for 39 years. 4. Uenephês, for 42 years. In his reign famine seized the land. He built the pyramids near Kôchôme. 5. Usaphaïs, for 20 years. 6. Niebaïs, for 26 years. 7. Semempsês, for 18 years. In his reign there were many portents and a very great calamity. 8. Ubienthês, for 26 years. The total of all reigns, 252 years.

As for the Armenian version of Eusebius, besides the differences in the onomastic forms, there is mention to the fact that Herodotus called Men (Min) to the first king of Egypt¹². Athothis, the heir of Menes-Meni, may well be the Teti from the Abydo's list, founder of Memphis (Ieneb-hedj) and, regarding the other names, their relation with the Turin's list and with the Horus names that archaeology provided us, is only conjectural¹³.

¹⁰ GRIMAL, 1988: 63.

¹¹ WADDEL, 1980: 27-29.

¹² WADDELL, 1980: 29-35.

¹³ GARDINER, 1961: 430.

Surely Manetho, according to the records of his followers, does not mention the «Dynasty 0», as we conventionally call that foggy phase that preceded the 1st Dynasty initiated by Menes-Meni – and in this case this king would be no other than Horus Aha, since the identification of Menes-Meni with Narmer would place him at the end of the previous «Dynasty 0», as today some authors do¹⁴. But the archaeological endeavors of the last decades in the Abydos area (particularly in Umm al-Qaab) revealed the names of unknown monarchs who prepared the unification. To those names we can also add the information provided by the archaeological excavations in Hierakompolis (Kom el-Ahmar).

In the text of Africanus, the 2nd Dynasty presented nine kings from Thinis:

The first was Boêthos, for 38 years. In his reign a chasm opened at Bubastus, and many perished. 2. Kaiechôs, for 39 years. In his reign the bulls, Apis at Memphis and Mnevis at Heliopolis, and the Mendesian goat were worshipped as gods. 3. Binôthris, for 47 years. In his reign it was decided that women might hold the kingly office. 4. Tlas, for 17 years. 5. Sethenês, for 41 years. 6. Chairês, for 17 years. 7. Nephhercherês, for 25 years. In his reign, the story goes, the Nile flowed blended with honey for 11 days. 8. Sesôchris, for 48 years: his stature was 5 cubits, 3 palms. 9. Chenerês, for 30 years. Total, 302 years.

The Eusebius version, although smaller, is not much different from that of Africanus and only differs slightly in the names of the kings, and the Armenian version states the same, although there is a note considering the phenomenon of the Nile Flood mixed with honey nothing but a fable¹⁵. From this long onomastic list imported from Manetho, or from the texts inspired by his work, what then can we use with historical value? Just like the case of the 1st Dynasty, the royal names presented in the lists made by the compilers of the Egyptian priest do not match completely with those inscribed in the lists of Abydos regarding the 2nd Dynasty. The archaeological information allows us to list about 12 sovereigns but the manethonian list only reckons «nine kings from Thinis», and none of them has anything to do with the king Peribsen (who uncommonly took for himself the name-title of Seth) nor with the last king of that dynasty, the Horus Khasekhemwy, who promoted the stabilization of the country after a turbulent phase of rivalries¹⁶. On the other hand, we should underline a certain emphasis given to aspects related to the Lower Egypt (Delta) and the news that Binotris (who was the Banutjerem from the Abydos, Sakara and Turin's lists, or the Horus Ninetjer) decided that women «could hold royal positions». Being true, this decree just confirmed what in fact had already happened in the 1st Dynasty: the

¹⁴ CLAYTON, 2004: 16; WILKINSON, 2005: 66-70; ARAÚJO, 2011: 52-53.

¹⁵ WADDELL, 1980: 35-41.

¹⁶ GARDINER, 1961: 431-432; ARAÚJO, 2011: 62-65.

queen Merneith assumed the regency of the country during the minority of age of her son, the Horus Den¹⁷.

THE OLD KINGDOM

According to the version of Africanus, the 3rd Dynasty, which started the Old Kingdom, had nine kings, described in the following order:

1. Necherôphês, for 28 years. In his reign the Libyans revolted against Egypt, and then the moon waxed beyond reckoning, they surrendered in terror. 2. Tosorthros, for 29 years. In his reign lived Imuthês, who because of his medical skill has the reputation of Asclepios among the Egyptians, and who was the inventor of the art of building with hewn stone. He also devoted attention to writing. 3. Tyreis (or Tyris), for 7 years. 4. Mesôchris, for 17 years. 5. Sôÿphis, for 16 years. 6. Tosertasis, for 19 years. 7. Achês, for 42 years. 8. Sêphuris, for 30 years. 9. Kerpherês, for 26 years. Total, 214 years.

Meanwhile, the version of Eusebius mentions eight kings who were listed with different onomastic forms such as:

1. Necherôchis, in whose reign thje Lybians revolted against Egypt, and when the moon waxd beyond reckoning, they surrendered in terror. 2. He was succeeded by Sesorthos...: he was styled Asclepios in Egypt because of his medical skill. He was also the inventor of the art of building with hewn stone, and devoted attention to writing as well. The remaining six kings achieved nothing worthy of mention. These eight kings reigned for 198 years.

As for the Armenian version of Eusebius it is practically similar¹⁸. Tosorthos is undoubtedly the Horus Netjerikhet Djoser, to whom Imhotep (Imuthes) erected the funerary complex of Sakara with the Stepped Pyramid (note that a missing part of the text in the Eusebius version made disappear the name of the great royal architect). As for the nine kings mentioned by Africanus, the archaeological research only documented the existence of five names, who are also present in the list from Abydos: Djoser, Sekhemkhet, Nebka, Sanakht and Huni¹⁹.

From the existing versions that complete the lost original work of Manetho we can read in Africanus the list of kings from the 4th Dynasty, composed by «eight kings of Memphis, belonging to a different line». Those kings were:

¹⁷ WILKINSON, 2005: 75-78; ARAÚJO, 2011: 61.

¹⁸ WADDELL, 1980: 41-45; GARDINER, 1961: 433.

¹⁹ GRIMAL, 1988: 85-89; VERCOUTTER, 1992: 257-265; WILKINSON, 2005: 94-105; ARAÚJO, 2011: 68-72.

Sôris, for 29 years. 2. Suphis (I), for 63 years. He reared the Great Pyramid, wich Herodotus says was built by Cheops. Suphis conceived a contempt for the gods: he also composed the Sacred Book, wich I acquired in my visit to Egypt because of its high renown. 3. Suphis (II), for 66 years. 4. Mencherês, for 63 years. 5. Ratoisês, for 25 years. 6. Bicheris, for 22 years. 7. Sebercherês, for 7 years. 8. Thamphthis, for 9 years. Total, 277 years.

According to Eusebius, the 4th Dynasty

comprised seventeen kings of Memphis belonging to a different royal line. Of these the third was Suphis, the builder of the Great Pyramid, which Herodotus states that was built by Cheops. Suphis conceived a contempt for the gods, but repenting of this, he composed the Sacred Book, which the Egyptians hold in high esteem. Of the remaining kings no achievement worthy of mention has been recorded. This dynasty reigned for 448 years.

As for the Armenian version, it is very similar to the one of Eusebius²⁰.

Unlike the previous dynasties, to this one is easier to establish the relation between the names of Manetho and those recorded in the royal lists, also attested on historical records: Soris is Sneferu, Suphis is Khufu (the Queops from Herodotus) and Mencheres is Menkaure (Mikerinos to Herodotus). Between Khafre and Menkaure ruled Djedefre, omitted by Africanus and Eusebius, and the remaining names are not identified with the archaeological documentation, ending the dynasty with the poorly documented reign of Shepseskaf²¹.

In the list handed down by Africanus, the 5th Dynasty, which revealed a strong interest on the solar cult, was composed by «eight kings of Elephantine»:

1. Usercherês, for 28 years. 2. Sephrês, for 13 years. 3. Nephchererês, for 20 years. 4. Sisirês, for 7 years. 5. Cherês, for 20 years. 6. Rathurês, for 44 years. 7. Mencherês, for 9 years. 8. Tancherês (?Tatcherês), for 44 years. 9. Onnus, for 33 years. Total, 248 years.

The version of Eusebius is smaller, followed by the Armenian version which states that the 5th Dynasty consisted of «thirty-one kings of Elephantine. Of these, the first was Othoês, who was murdered by his bodyguard. The fourth king, Phiôps, succeeding to the throne when he was six years old, reigned until his hundredth year». As we can see, Africanus mentions eight kings but lists nine, while Eusebius mixes the 5th and 6th dynasties, giving only two names for his «31 kings»²². Some correspondence can be obtained between the Egyptian names of the pharaohs of the 5th Dynasty known today and

²⁰ WADDELL, 1980: 45-49; GARDINER, 1961: 434.

²¹ CLAYTON, 2004: 42-48; GRIMAL, 1988: 90-99; VERCOUTTER, 1992: 272-288; ARAÚJO, 2011: 72-82.

²² WADDELL, 1980: 51-53; GARDINER, 1961: 435.

their Hellenized versions. Note that – although Hellenized – the royal names of this dynasty maintain the final theoforic reference to the god Re (here with the typical «s» from the onomastic suffix of the Greek form), which in the case of Unas (Onnus) is well understood, because his forename is unknown, but is rather misunderstood in the case of Userkaf who didn't evoke the god Re in his name (maybe he did so in his forename), but this onomastic form corresponding to the name of the king of Upper and Lower Egypt never came to our knowledge. Africanus just mentions the length of reign of each pharaoh, omitting important events that occurred in this period, like the increment of the commercial relations with Lebanon and Nubia, as well as the construction of the solar temples in Abusir²³.

The Old Kingdom was a long period that ended with the 6th Dynasty, which, in the version of Africanus, was composed of six kings from Memphis:

1. Othoês, for 30 years: he was murdered by his bodyguard. 2. Phius, for 35 years. 3. Methusuphis, for 7 years. 4. Phiôps, who began to reign at the age of six, and continued until his hundredth year. 5. Menthesuphis, for 1 year. 6. Nitôcris, the noblest and loveliest of the women of her time, of fair complexion, the builder of the third pyramid, reigned for 12 years. Total, 203 years.

In the short version of Eusebius the list of kings from the 6th Dynasty is absent, but there is a reference to the fact that

there was a queen Nitôcris, the noblest and loveliest of the women of her time; she had a fair complexion, and is said to have built the third pyramid. These rulers (or this ruler) reigned for three years: in another copy, 204 years. Sincelus adds:

It must be noted how much less accurate Eusebius is than Africanus in the number of kings he gives, in the omission of names, and in dates, although he practically repeats the account of Africanus in the same words.

In the Armenian version of Eusebius we can read:

The 6th Dynasty. There was a queen Nitôcris, braver than all the men of her time, the most beautiful of all the women, fair-skinned with red cheeks. By her, it is said, the third pyramid was reared, with the aspect of a mountain. The united reigns of all kings amount to 203 years²⁴.

²³ GRIMAL, 1988: 99-105; VERCOUTTER, 1992: 290-310; ARAÚJO, 2011: 83-85.

²⁴ WADDELL, 1980: 53-57; GARDINER, 1961: 436.

For the 6th Dynasty the manethonian list essentially adjusts to the historical veracity provided by archaeology and other sources, even in the detail of the attack perpetrated on the life of Othoes (Teti), and the long reign assigned to Pepi II partially coincides with the numbers of the *Royal Canon of Turin*, although this subject still remains controversial²⁵.

THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

Between the troubled end of the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom occurred a chaotic period of five dynasties (from the 7th to the first half of the 11th Dynasty), known as the First Intermediate Period, and the texts regarding this phase clearly show the uncertainties in that time.

According to Africanus, «the 7th Dynasty consisted of seventy kings of Memphis, who reigned for 70 days», while to Eusebius there were «five kings of Memphis, who reigned for 75 days», and the Armenian version says that the 7th Dynasty «consisted of five kings of Memphis, who held sway for 75 years». As to the mysterious 8th Dynasty, it «consisted of twenty-seven kings of Memphis, who reigned for 146 years». The version from Eusebius, as well as the Armenian text, only reckons 100 years to the 8th Dynasty. Regarding the 9th Dynasty, the text from Africanus gives unbelievable numbers, clearly adulterating the initial Manetho's text that includes «19 kings of Herakleopolis» who ruled «409 years», while the version from Eusebius only assigns 100 years and the Armenian version states that it consisted of only four kings from Herakleopolis who ruled during 100 years. These two last references seem to be more plausible. In a strange coincidence, Africanus says that the 10th Dynasty also consisted of «19 kings of Herakleopolis», although they ruled less time, in a total of 185 years. Nevertheless, the sources available today include seven kings ruling at the same time for the 9th and the 10th dynasties, of which very little is known²⁶.

In the versions of Africanus and Eusebius, the later followed by the Armenian text, 16 monarchs are mentioned for the 11th Dynasty, although the documentation known today only allows the identification of ten of them, and it should be noted that we have scarce information about the first, king Mentuhotep Tepiaa, considered the dynasty's founder, while for the last three we have their names recorded in the Abydos list²⁷. One of them, Mentuhotep II, responsible for the reunification of the country and for the erection of a flaring funerary complex in Deir el-Bahari, now fairly ruined, would deserve a special reference – but he's not mentioned in Manetho's list nor in those proposed by his compilers. To whom can this lapse be assigned? One fact, though, is right: the name of this king appears in the Abydos list, so Manetho should have seen it there.

²⁵ GRIMAL, 1988: 105-115; VERCOUTTER, 1992: 318-345; ARAÚJO, 2011: 85-89.

²⁶ WADDELL, 1980: 57-63; GARDINER, 1961: 437-438; GRIMAL, 1988: 188-194.

²⁷ WADDELL, 1980: 63-65; GARDINER, 1961: 438.

One of the most brilliant phases in the history of the pharaonic Egypt was the Middle Kingdom, which occurred between circa 2040 (end of the 11th Dynasty) and 1750 B.C. The lists given by Africanus and Eusebius for the 12th Dynasty do not match in their kings' names nor in the duration of their reigns, and there is not a clear relation between the onomastic forms used in the version of Manetho's compilers and the Egyptian pharaonic names, starting by the founder Amenemhat I, who Africanus calls Ammanemes and Eusebius presents as Ammenemes, or even the forename of Amenemhat III, which is Lamares to the first and Lamaris to the second. The 12th Dynasty, which we know that lasted about 230 years, had only 160 years to Africanus and 245 in the version of Eusebius. The crowns of glory of this dynasty, which dictated the accomplishment of *maet* (Egyptian word that can be translated as balance, harmony, truth, justice, righteousness, reflection, tolerance, universal order), are best seen in agriculture, literature and art, but in the texts of Manetho's compilers we can't find any allusion to this fundamental concept of Egyptian culture. We wonder if the Christian chronographers went over this expression without giving it the due prominence or if Manetho himself didn't stress the word – in any event the priest Petosiris, who was almost a contemporary of the Sebennytyos scholar, exalted in the texts of his unusual tomb at Tuna el-Gebel the exercise of good, showing a clear commitment of maetic tone in his exhortations²⁸.

According to Africanus, the Second Book of Manetho includes in the 12th Dynasty

seven kings of Diospolis. 1. Sesonchosis, son of Ammanemês, for 46 years. 2. Ammanemês, for 38 years: he was murdered by his own eunuchs. 3. Sesôstris, for 48 years: in nine years he subdued the whole of Asia, and Europe as far as Thrace, everywhere erecting memorials of his conquest of the tribes. Upon stelae (pillars) he engraved for a valiant race the secret parts of a man, for an ignoble race those of a woman. Accordingly he was esteemed by the Egyptians as the next in rank to Osiris. 4. Lacharês (Lamarês), for 8 years: he built the Labyrinth in the Arsinoïte nome as his own tomb. 5. Amerês, for 8 years. 6. Ammenemês, for 8 years. 7. Scemiophris, his sister, for 4 years. Total, 160 years.

The version of Eusebius, as well as its subsequent Armenian text, has substantial differences, particularly in the number of years of that dynasty and in the omission of the queen Sebekneferu (Scemiophris):

The first of these, Sesonchosis, son of Ammenemês, reigned for 46 years. 2. Ammanemês, for 38 years: he was murdered by his own eunuchs. 3. Sesôstris, for 48 years: he is said to have been 4 cubits 3 palms 2 fingers' breadths in stature. In nine years he subdued the whole Asia, and Europe as far as Thrace, everywhere erecting memorials of his

²⁸ ARAÚJO, 2003: 313-340.

*conquest of the tribes. Upon stelae (pillars) he engraved for a valiant race the secret parts of a man, for an ignoble race those of a woman. Accordingly he was esteemed by the Egyptians as the next in rank to Osiris. Next to him Lamaris reigned for 8 years: he built the Labyrinth in the Arsinoïte nome as his own tomb. His successors ruled for 42 years, and the reigns of the whole dynasty amounted to 245 years*²⁹.

Both chronographers start the 12th Dynasty with Senuseret I, when it is well known that the founder of the dynasty was Amenemhat I, who was supposedly murdered – tragic event here connected with Amenemhat II. Then we see Senuseret III in fancy conquests and described as the builder of unheard-of monuments, and we recognize Amenemhat III in his name of Lamares (Nimaetre), which was his name as king of Upper and Lower Egypt (forename), builder of the Labirinth – a reference to the enormous buildings Amenemhat III built next to his pyramid in Hawara³⁰.

The dynastic and chronological confusion offered by the First Intermediate Period repeats itself in the Second Intermediate Period, and Manetho himself would have experienced a frustrating difficulty in gathering information about this troubled stage of Egypt's history. The Christian cronographers solely follow the disappointing text regarding that phase, with Africanus claiming that the 13th Dynasty «consisted of sixty kings of Diospolis, who reigned for 453 years» and the 14th Dynasty «consisted of seventy-six kings of Xoïs, who reigned for 184 years». The version from Eusebius coincides in these numbers, and the Armenian text raises the confusion as it registers «seventy-six kings of Xoïs, who reigned for 484 years»³¹.

According to Africanus, the 15th Dynasty was composed of «Shepherd Kings», of whom he wrote:

There were six foreign kings from Phoenicia, who seized Memphis: in the Sethroïte nome they founded a town, from which as a base they subdued Egypt. The first of these kings, Saïtès, reigned for 19 years: the Saïte nome is called after him. 2. Bnôn, for 44 years. 3. Pachnan (Apachnan), for 61 years. 4. Staân, for 50 years. 5. Archlès, for 49 years. 6. Aphôphis (Aphobis), for 61 years. Total, 284 years.

But to Eusebius the 15th Dynasty «consisted of kings of Diospolis, who reigned for 250 years», which is repeated by the Armenian version³². Although little or nothing can be extracted from the discrepant onomastic list made by Africanus, we know from

²⁹ WADDELL, 1980: 67-73; GARDINER, 1961: 439.

³⁰ GRIMAL, 1988: 210-225; VANDERSLEYEN, 1995: 43-113.

³¹ WADDELL, 1980: 73-75.

³² WADDELL, 1980: 91-93.

archaeological sources, that the last kings of this confusing dynasty have names with clear semitic origin, like Iakub-Baal, Iakbam and Ioam³³.

For the 16th Dynasty, the text of Africanus records that «were Shepherd Kings again, 32 in number: they reigned for 518 years». But in the version from Eusebius (repeated in the Armenian version) we can read that it consisted of «kings of Thebes, 5 in number: they reigned for 190 years». For the next dynasty, the 17th, Africanus says «were Shepherd Kings again, 43 in number, and kings of Thebes or Diospolis, 43 in number. Total of reigns of the Sheperd Kings and the Theban kings, 151 years». As we can see, the pharaohs of Herakleopolis and those from Thebes-Waset are here confusingly mixed.

As for the version of Eusebius, followed by the Armenian text, it is longer but it is also not very enlightening, saying that the 17th Dynasty was composed by «shepherds and brothers: they were foreign kings from Phoenicia, who seized Memphis. The first of these kings, Saïtes, reigned for 19 years: the saïte nome is called after him. These kings founded in the Sethroïte nome a town, from which as a base they subdued Egypt»³⁴.

In the 16th Dynasty, the last name appearing on the list made by Egyptologists, based on more credible information (like scarab inscriptions) is Anu, which can be an inaccurate reference to an unknown ruler of semitic origin, since Amu is translated as «The Asian»³⁵. The clash between North and South, which would lead to the reunification of the country circa the 17th century B.C., had as protagonists the last Hyksos king of the 15th Dynasty (Apopi II) and the coeval kings of the 17th Dynasty, Sekenenre Taa and Kamose, but there are no records of the battles that followed in Manetho's compilers³⁶.

THE NEW KINGDOM

The Jewish writers interpreted Manetho's information about the Hyksos invasion as being connected with the coming of their people into Egypt and with their posterior exodus. In the classical text of Flavius Josefus, *Contra Apionem* (I. 15, 16, §§ 93-105), the Jewish author uses Manetho's text to defend his arguments regarding the antiquity of the Jews, mixing the 18th and 19th dynasties:

For the present I am citing the Egyptians as witnesses to this antiquity of ours. I shall therefore resume my quotations from Manetho's works in their reference to chronology. His

³³ ARAÚJO, 2011: 28.

³⁴ WADDELL, 1980: 95-97. This historical period deserved some attention in the manethonian text recovered by Flavius Josephus, with an emphasis given to the Hyksos seen as ancestors of the Jews, being the expulsion of the Asiatics related to the famous episode of the Exodus, although for the Jewish writer it wasn't pleasant to see that Manetho placed the «chosen people» as descendants from the heaps of lepers from Egypt.

³⁵ ARAÚJO, 2011: 28.

³⁶ VANDERSLEYEN, 1995: 194-199; ARAÚJO, 2011: 126-130.

account is as follows: «After the departure of the tribe of Sheperds from Egypt to Jerusalem, Tethmôsis, the king who drove them out of Egypt, reigned for 25 years 4 months until his death, when he was succeeded by his son Chebrôn, who ruled for 13 years. After him Amenôphis reigned for 20 years 7 months; then his sister Amesis for 21 years 9 months; then her son Mêphrês for 12 years 9 months; then his son Mêphramuthôsis for 25 years 10 months; then his son Thmôsis for 9 years 8 months; then his son Amenôphis for 30 years 10 months; then his son Ôrus for 36 years 5 months; then his daughter Acenchêrês for 12 years 1 month; then her brother Rathôtis for 9 years; then his son Acenchêrês II for 12 years 3 months, his son Harmaïs for 4 years 1 month, his son Ramessês for 1 year 4 months, his son Harmessês Miamûn for 66 years 2 months, his son Amenôphis for 19 years 6 months, and his son Sethôs, also called Ramessês, whose power lay in his cavalry and his fleet. This king appointed his brother Harmaïs viceroy of Egypt, and invested him with all the royal prerogatives, except that he charged him not to wear a diadem, nor to wrong the queen, the mother of his children, and to refrain likewise from the royal concubines. He then set out on an expedition against Cyprus and Phoenicia and later against the Assyrians and the Medes; and he subjugated them all, some by the sword, others without a blow and merely by the menace of his mighty host. In the pride of his conquests, he continued his advance with still greater boldness, and subdued the cities and lands of the East. When a considerable time had elapsed, Harmaïs who had been left behind in Egypt, recklessly contravened all his brother's injunctions. He outraged the queen and proceeded to make free with the concubines; then, following the advice of his friends, he began to wear the diadem and rose in revolt against his brother. The warden of the priests of Egypt then wrote a letter which he sent to Sethôsis, revealing all the details, including the revolt of his brother Harmaïs. Sethôsis forthwith returned to Pêlusium and took possession of his kingdom; and the land was named Aegyptus after him. It is said that Sethôs was called Aegyptus, and his brother Harmaïs, Danaus³⁷.

Of the confusing amalgam of names taken by Flavius Josephus from Manetho's original it seems possible to establish a parallel with the true succession of known monarchs of the 18th Dynasty (although the text also includes kings from the 19th Dynasty). So, leaving aside the proposed dates, mostly anomalous, we can recognize Tethmosis, who expelled the Hyksos from Egypt, the last king of the 17th Dynasty, as being Kamose, succeeded by Ahmose, founder of the 18th Dynasty (here Chebron). Then comes Amenhotep (in the hellenized and distorted form of Amenophis), who in fact ruled for about twenty years, followed by the perplexing presence of a woman in the throne, Amessis – it is Hatshepsut (during 21 years and 9 months, which corresponds to the length of reign of the pharaoh-queen). It is interesting to note that the name of Hatshepsut doesn't appear on the official royal lists. Therefore Manetho had to obtain this information from other sources: maybe he could read some inscriptions in Karnak or Deir el-Bahari or in any other place where the name of the queen was not erased. Then are presented several names out

³⁷ WADDELL, 1980: 101-105.

of their normal order, but to which we can admit the correspondence of Thutmose I (Mephres), Thutmose II (Mephramithosis) and Thutmose III (Thmosis). This adulteration may have come from the Jewish writer, as Manetho had available in the several royal lists the correct order of the pharaohs succession.

For the second half of the 18th Dynasty it makes sense to see in Amenophis the vigorous fighter which was Amenhotep II and, leaping through the void that is the absence of Thutmose IV, the Pharaoh Orus who, having ruled «during 36 years and 5 months» adjusts to Amenhotep III. Then, all is complicated by the flood of names and dates, which again include a woman in the throne, one Acencheres, suggesting, who knows, the presence of the influent Nefertiti who was perpetuated in a certain oral tradition – being so, one of the final names of the dynasty would be that of the heretic Akhenaton, but again he is not mentioned in any official royal list. Then we get to Harmais, who is Horemheb, with the unusual length of reign of «4 years and 1 month» instead of the extended number of years in which he effectively ruled (about thirty years). Without any dinastic division suggested in the text from Josefus, we can admit that Ramesses is Ramses I, founder of the 19th Dynasty, who ruled little over a year, giving place to his son Sety I (absent here) and then to the great Ramesses II (Harmesses Miamun), who in fact ruled «during 66 years and 2 months» approximately. The ending of the dynasty is here somehow confusing: the strange Amenophis could be Merenptah, Sethos could be Sety II, leaving aside the aberrant irruption of a new Harmais.

Josephus uses the information from Manetho accordingly to his convenience, using from the original text what interested him the most. When the story of the Egyptian writer contradicts his opinions he then diminishes it and disallows it:

Up to this point he followed the chronicles: thereafter, by offering to record the legends and current talk about the Jews, he took the liberty of interpolating improbable tales in his desire to confuse with us a crowd of Egyptians, who for leprosy and other maladies had been condemned, he says, to banishment from Egypt.

And as for the thorny case of Moses and the Exodus, Josephus resolves the issue in this way:

It remains for me to reply to Manetho's statements about Moses. The Egyptians regard him as a wonderful, even a divine being, but wish to claim him as their own by an incredible calumny, alleging that he belonged to Heliopolis and was dismissed from his priesthood there owing to leprosy. The records, however, show that he lived 518 years earlier, and led our forefathers up out of Egypt to the land which we inhabit at the present time.

Clearly, the «records» from Josephus «showing» the life of Moses are those from the Bible, which naturally he follows without discussion, helping himself with the manethonian text to reinforce his ideas.

According to Sincelus, who quotes Africanus, the 18th Dynasty had 16 kings from Diospolis:

The first of these was Amôs, in whose reign Moses went forth from Egypt, as I here declare; but, according to the convincing evidence of the present calculation it follows that in this reign Moses was still young. The second king of the 18th Dynasty, according to Africanus, was Chebrôs, who reigned for 13 years. The third king, Amenôphthis, reigned for 24 (21) years. The fourth king (queen), Amensis (Amersis), reigned for 22 years. The fifth, Misaphris, for 13 years. The sixth, Mispfragmuthôsis, for 26 years: in his reign the flood of Deucalion's time occurred. Total, according to Africanus, down to the reign of Amôsis, also called Mispfragmuthôsis, 69 years. Of the length of the reign of Amôs he said nothing at all. 7. Tuthmôsis, for 9 years. 8. Amenôphis, for 31 years. This is the king who was reputed to be Memnôn and a speaking statue. 9. Ôrus, for 37 years. 10. Acherrês, for 32 years. 11. Rathôs, for 6 years. 12. Chebrês, for 12 years. 13. Acherrês, for 12 years. 14. Armesis, for 5 years. 15. Ramessês, for 1 year. 16. Amenôphath (Amenôph), for 19 years. Total, 263 years.

But in the version from Eusebius, the 18th Dynasty consisted of 14 kings, also from Diospolis:

The first of these, Amôsis, reigned for 25 years. 2. The second, Chebrôn, for 13 years. 3. Ammenôphis, for 21 years. 4. Miphrês, for 12 years. 5. Mispfragmuthôsis, for 26 years. Total from Amôsis, the first king of this 18th Dynasty, down to the reign of Mispfragmuthôsis amounts, according to Eusebius, to 71 years; and there are five kings, not six. For he omitted the fourth king, Amensês, mentioned by Africanus and the others, and thus cut off the 22 years of his reign. 6. Tuthmôsis, for 9 years. 7. Amenôphis, for 31 years. This is the king who was reputed to be Memnôn and a speaking statue. 8. Ôrus, for 36 years (in another copy, 38 years). 9. Achenchersês (for 12 years). (Athôris, for 39 years (?).) (Cencherês) for 16 years. About this time Moses led the Jews in their march out of Egypt. (Syncellus adds: Eusebius alone places in this reign the exodus of Israel under Moses, although no argument supports him, but all his predecessors hold a contrary view, as he testifies.) 10. Acherrês, for 8 years. 11. Cherrês, for 15 years. 12. Aramaïs, also called Danaus, for 5 years: thereafter, he was banished from Egypt and, fleeing from his brother Aegyptus, he arrived in Greece, and, seizing Argos, he ruled over the Argives. 13. Ramessês, also called Aegyptus, for 68 years. 14. Ammenôphis, for 40 years. Total, 348 years.

In conclusion, Eusebius gives the 18th Dynasty 85 more years than the version of Africanus. As for the Armenian version, it follows that from Eusebius, with the same confusion regarding names and duration of reigns³⁸.

³⁸ WADDELL, 1980: 111-119; GARDINER, 1961: 443-444.

The 19th Dynasty consisted of seven (six) kings of Diospolis:

1. Sethôs, for 51 years. 2. Rapsacês, for 61 (66) years. 3. Ammenephthês, for 20 years. 4. Ramessês, for 60 years. 5. Ammenemnês, for 5 years. 6. Thuôris, who in Homer is called Polybus, husband of Alcandra, and in whose time Troy was taken, reigned for 7 years. Total, 209 years. This is said by Africanus, because in the version of Eusebius this dynasty had only five kings: 1. Sethôs, for 55 years. 2. Rampsês, for 66 years. 3. Ammenephthis, for 40 years. 4. Ammenemês, for 26 years. 5. Thuôris, who in Homer is called Polybus, husband of Alcandra, and in whose reign Troy was taken, reigned for 7 years. Total, 194 years.

The Armenian version essentially follows the previous list, although it gives Amenephtis only 8 years, much less than the 40 years given by Eusebius.³⁹ Here we can easily identify the Pharaoh Sety I in the form of Sethos, although he only ruled about 12 years, and the sumptuous Ramesses II appears in the ambiguous form of Rapsases (61 years) and as Ramesses (60 years), being that one of them shouldn't be here. The version from Eusebius deserves more credit (even with the strange presence of the *p* in the name Ramses) with his 66 years, according to what we know today. Meanwhile, nothing is said about the campaigns of Sety I and Ramesses II in the Syria-Palestine, although many descriptions of battles were available to Manetho on the walls of many Egyptian temples which he undoubtedly visited when elaborating his Egyptian history, nor there is any allusion to the reign of Merenptah⁴⁰.

Contrasting with the information given to other less important dynasties, the Third Book of Manetho, quoted by writers who studied his work, is scarce in information for the 20th Dynasty. To Africanus it «consisted of 12 kings of Diospolis, who reigned for 135 years». To Eusebius the duration of the dynasty was about 178 years, while in the Armenian version 172 years were registered⁴¹. In fact, none of these dilated numbers are correct: the 20th Dynasty lasted about 115 years, since 1186 B.C. (beginning of the reign of Sethnakht, founder of the dynasty) to 1070 B.C. (time of the disappearance of Ramesses XI), including ten kings, amongst them the last great sovereign of Egypt, Ramesses III. This monarch left many traces of his long reign, starting with his great funerary temple of Medinet Habu, where Manetho surely collected information for his history of Egypt – so we can naturally conclude that the later Christian chronographers abbreviated the text regarding the 20th Dynasty, for reasons that escape us. Therefore, there are no records of the victories achieved by Ramesses III against the «Sea People», which are largely described and well illustrated in Medinet Habu⁴².

³⁹ WADDELL, 1980: 149-153.

⁴⁰ VANDERSLEYEN, 1995: 493-570; ARAÚJO, 2011: 166-180.

⁴¹ WADDELL, 1980: 153-155; GARDINER, 1961: 446.

⁴² VANDERSLEYEN, 1995: 591-650; ARAÚJO, 2011: 180-188.

THE FINAL MILLENNIUM

After the collapse of the New Kingdom, the Third Intermediate Period begins with the 21st Dynasty (1070-945 B.C.), which in the text of Africanus was composed by seven kings of Tanis.

*1. Smendès, for 26 years. 2. Psusen(n)ês (I), for 46 years. 3. Nephhercherês (Nephelcherês), for 4 years. 4. Amenôphthis, for 9 years. 5. Osochôr, for 6 years. 6. Psinachês, for 9 years. 7. Psusennês (II) (Susennês), for 14 years. Total, 130 years*⁴³.

Of the recorded names some are recognizable by approximation, such as in the case of the dynasty's founder, who appears in its hellenized form of Smendes, corresponding to the Egyptian name Nesubanebdjed, followed by Psusennes (Pasebakhaenniut in Egyptian form), the strange Amenophis in the list (Amenemope), and Psinaches, which can only be Siamon. For the 21st Dynasty a total of 130 years is given, a number that shouldn't be far from reality. The version from Eusebius and the Armenian one agree with the list and with the number of years for this dynasty, which was committed to the building of large buildings in Tanis, although those activities are not mentioned here⁴⁴.

The doubts detected on the list made by Africanus for the 22nd Dynasty, from Libyan origin and derived from Bubastis (in the Oriental Delta), say much about the difficulty of Manetho himself in compiling the information he possessed on this troubled phase of the Egyptian history. According to the register of Africanus, the 22nd Dynasty «consisted of nine kings of Bubastus»:

*1. Sesônchis, for 21 years. 2. Osorthôn, for 15 years. 3, 4, 5. Three other kings, for 25 (29) years. 6. Takelôthis, for 13 years. 7, 8, 9. Three other kings, for 42 years. Total, 120 years. The version of Eusebius, followed by the Armenian one is briefer: 1. Sesônchôsis, for 21 years. 2. Osorthôn, for 15 years. 3. Takelôthis, for 13 years. Total, 49 years*⁴⁵.

Until this day the doubts about these reigns persist, because we know of 11 kings instead of 9 proposed by Africanus, who starts the dynasty with the Pharaoh Chechonk, whose name is not far from the original Egyptian form, registered in the Bible as Chichak, recognizing also other names like Osorkon and Takelot. There is no reference to the attack led by Chechonk I in Palestine from where he brought a huge loot⁴⁶.

The 23rd Dynasty appears in the version of Africanus with *four kings of Tanis*:

⁴³ WADDELL, 1980: 155-157; GARDINER, 1961: 447.

⁴⁴ KITCHEN, 1986: 262-286; ARAÚJO, 2011: 190-196.

⁴⁵ WADDELL, 1980: 159-161; GARDINER, 1961: 448.

1. *Petubatès, for 40 years: in his reign the Olympic festival was first celebrated.* 2. *Osorchò, for 8 years: the Egyptians call him Hêracles.* 3. *Psammûs, for 10 years.* 4. *Zêt, for 31 years (34). Total, 89 years.* The list from Eusebius differs in the wording of kings' names and in the duration of the dynasty: 1. *Petubastis, for 25 years.* 2. *Osorthôn, for 9 years: the Egyptians called him Hêracles.* 3. *Psammûs, for 10 years. Total, 44 years*⁴⁷.

We can be mistaken by the allusion to the «kings from Tanis», since the new dynasty, founded by Padibastet, was based in Leontopolis (Tell el-Muqadam, in Central Delta), as a result of the succession of the 22nd Dynasty from Tanis, having subsisted until the arrival of the Nubian pharaohs of the 25th Dynasty⁴⁸.

The settlement of the 25th Nubian or Kushite Dynasty in Lower Egypt led to the removal of the dynasties of Libyan origin that had shredded the Delta in their benefit and dominated over some regions to the South, having the resistance been coordinated by Tefnakht from Sais, who is traditionally included on the 24th Dynasty as its founder. Meanwhile, the epitome of Africanus states that this dynasty is composed of by only one pharaoh: «*Bochchôris of Saïs, for 6 years: in his reign a lamb spoke...*». But, oddly, the writer registers a length of reign of 990 years, which is unacceptable. Yet, the version of Eusebius, like the posterior Armenian text, says *Bochchôris of Saïs, for 44 years: in his reign a lamb spoke. Total, 44 years*⁴⁹. There is not any mention to the founder of the dynasty, Teknakht of Saïs (727-720 B.C.), only to the six years given by Africanus to Bocchoris, Greek form of the Egyptian name Bakenrenef (720-715 B.C.). As for the 990 years of the 24th Dynasty it can only be an error in the transcription from the original, and the long 44 years of reign registered by Eusebius do not make any sense⁵⁰.

The manethonian versions of Africanus and Eusebius regarding the 25th Dynasty differ slightly in the names of the monarchs and in the total of years. According to Africanus, this dynasty consisted of «three Ethiopian kings» who were

1. *Sabacôn, who, taking Bochchôris captive, burned him alive. And reigned for 8 years.*
2. *Sebichôs, his son, for 14 years.* 3. *Târcus, for 18 years. Total, 40 years.*

In the text of Eusebius the total of years was 44, just like the Armenian version, which is exactly the same⁵¹. Missing on the list are two kings of this Nubian Dynasty, starting with the first, Piye, who supposedly had Bakenrenef burned to death, and the last, Tanutamun,

⁴⁶ KITCHEN, 1986: 288-355; ARAÚJO, 2001: 647-648.

⁴⁷ WADDELL, 1980: 161-163; GARDINER, 1961: 449.

⁴⁸ KITCHEN, 1986: 338-361; ARAÚJO, 2001: 657 and 648.

⁴⁹ WADDELL, 1980: 165-167; GARDINER, 1961: 449.

⁵⁰ KITCHEN, 1986: 362-177.

⁵¹ WADDELL, 1980: 167-169; GARDINER, 1961: 450.

who fled to Nubia after the Assyrian invasion which culminated in the plundering of Thebes-Waset. It's not difficult to make the correspondence between Sabacoon and Shabaka, Sebichos and Shabataba (or Shebiteku), Tarcus and Taharka, but some important episodes are omitted, like the fights between the Nubian kings and the kings of the Delta, the Assyrian attacks and the assault on Thebes-Waset⁵².

The 26th Dynasty appears in the version of Africanus with «9 kings from Saïs», in this order:

1. Stephinatês, for 7 years. 2. Nechepsôs, for 6 years. 3. Nechaô, for 8 years. 4. Psammêtichus, for 54 years. 5. Nechaô the Second, for 6 years: he took Jerusalem, and led King Iôachaz captive into Egypt. 6. Psammuthis the Second, for 6 years. 7. Uaphris, for 19 years: the remnant of the Jews fled to him, when Jerusalem was captured by the Assyrians. 8. Amôsis, for 44 years. 9. Psammecheritês, for 6 months. Total, 150 years 6 months». According to Eusebius the list is different: «1. Ammeris the Ethiopian, for 12 years. 2. Stephinathis, for 7 years. 3. Nechepsôs, for 6 years. 4. Nechaô for 8 years. 5. Psammêtichus, for 45 (44) years. 6. Nechaô the Second, for 6 years: he took Jerusalem, and led King Iôachaz captive into Egypt. 7. Psammuthis the Second, also called Psammêtichus, for 17 years. 8. Uaphris, for 25 years: the remnant of the Jews fled to him, when Jerusalem was captured by the Assyrians. 9. Amôsis, for 42 years. Total, 163 years.

The Armenian version, which essentially followed the one from Eusebius, gives a total of 167 years⁵³. It's noticeable that Manetho begins the 26th Dynasty with 3 predecessors of Psametek I (664-610 B.C.), considered to be its founder. These three characters, amongst which is Necaou I (Nechau), were protected by the Assyrians and ensured, in the Delta, the fight against the Nubian pharaohs of the 25th Dynasty, but the Christian chronographers do not mention this fact. The long duration of the reign of Psametek I (Psammeticus) is well documented but the 15 years of reign of his son Necaou are quite reduced here. For the rest of the dynasty we know Psametek II, Apries (Uaphris, or Uahibre in Egyptian form), Amasis (Amosis, or Ahmose in its Egyptian form) and finally Psametek III (Psammecherites in the version of Africanus). This last one is absent in the version of Eusebius, who begins the list of the 26th Dynasty with a strange Ammeris, the Ethiopian, in what can be an allusion to Tanutamani, the Nubian king from the 25th Dynasty who was defeated by the Assyrians and took refuge in Nubia. The main events of this dynasty do not appear on the list, with the exception of an allusion to the victory of Necaou over the king Josiah of Judah at Meggido and the arrival of Jewish refugees to the region of Apries after Jerusalem was taken by the Neo-Babylonians (and not by the Assyrians, as the versions of Africanus and Eusebius state – and probably the Manetho's original). Some notable occurrences are

⁵² ARAÚJO, 2011: 206-210.

⁵³ WADDELL, 1980: 169-173; GARDINER, 1961: 451.

not mentioned, like the growing presence of Greek elements in Egypt, the establishment of an effective navy under Necau, as well as his ambitious project for opening a canal to connect the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. There is also no mention to a story told by Herodotus, according to which Phoenician sailors at Necau's service had contoured the African continent. Also, there is no record of Psametek's II victorious campaign in Nubia, or the deposition of Apries by his general Amasis⁵⁴.

According to Africanus, the 27th Dynasty had eight Persian kings:

1. Cambysês in the fifth year of his kingship over the Persians became king of Egypt, and ruled for 6 years. 2. Darius, son of Hystaspês, for 36 years. 3. Xerxês the Great, for 21 years. 4. Artabanus, for 7 months. 5. Artaxerxês, for 41 years. 6. Xerxês, for 2 monyhs. 7. Sogdianus, for 7 months. 8. Darius, son of Xerxês, for 19 years. Total, 124 years 4 months.

The version from Eusebius is slightly different as it includes the information that «Magi ruled for 7 months» before king Darius, but there is no mention of Artabano, giving the dynasty a total of «120 years and 4 months»⁵⁵. On the next versions that copied Manetho's text there is no reference to the Egyptian resistance against the Persian domination, nor to Darius' project for the construction of a canal in the Sinai (ancestor of the current one in Suez), not even of the Greek support in the fight against Persia, which would be fundamental for the success of the rebellion that started in the reign of Artaxerxes II and culminated with Armiteus of Saïs gaining the throne and creating the 28th Dynasty⁵⁶.

Both the versions of Africanus and Eusebius, as well as the Armenian text, agree that the 28th Dynasty had only one monarch who ruled during six years. The only difference is in the writing of the name of its only king: Amyrteos (in Africanus), Amyrtaeus (in Eusebius) and Amyrtes (in the Armenian version). We do not know that much about the short reign of Amirteus, and his name is never mentioned in its hieroglyphic form in any monument, being found only in Demotic and Aramaic papyri, which were certainly available to Manetho⁵⁷.

In the manethonian version of Africanus, the 29th Dynasty was composed by «4 kings of Mendes», which were:

1. Nephritês, for 6 years. 2. Achôris, for 13 years. 3. Psammuthis, for 1 year. 4. Nephritês (II), for 4 months. Total, 20 years 4 months.

⁵⁴ GRIMAL, 1988: 456-469; ARAÚJO, 2011: 213-219.

⁵⁵ WADDELL, 1980: 175-177; GARDINER, 1961: 452.

⁵⁶ GRIMAL; 1988: 477-478; ARAÚJO, 2011: 220-221.

⁵⁷ WADDELL, 1980: 179; GARDINER, 1961: 452; GRIMAL, 1988: 478.

But Eusebius, followed by the posterior Armenian version, says that the 29th Dynasty had «4 kings of Mendes», when in his list 5 kings appear, in this order:

*1. Nephritès, for 6 years. 2. Achôris, for 13 years. 3. Psammuthis, for 1 year. 4. Nephritès (II), for 4 months. 5. Muthis, for 1 year. Total, 21 years 4 months*⁵⁸.

Of this penultimate Egyptian Dynasty we know more today about its order because we have archaeological information on its first three monarchs: Naifaurud I (Neferites), who came from Mendes, in the Delta, then Pacherienmut (Psamutis), deposed by Hakor (Achoris), who in the two lists above appears exchanged with Psamutis, and Naifaurud II (Neferites II), from whom we only know the name⁵⁹.

Finally, for the last 30th Dynasty, the Manetho's compilers mark the existence of 3 kings from Sebenitos:

1. Nectanebès, for 18 years. 2. Teôs, for 2 years. 3. Nectanebus, for 18 years.

Eusebius differs in the years of reign: only 10 years for the first and 8 years for the third, the same happening in the Armenian version, being Africanus closer to reality⁶⁰. There is no reference to the building activities which occurred in this dynasty, nor to the Egyptian campaigns to the south of Palestine, trying to hold the Persian advances, nor even to their decisive victory in 343 B.C., when king Artaxerxes III put an end to the last Egyptian Dynasty, with Nakhthorheb (Nectanebo II) fleeing to Nubia. The founder of the dynasty was Nakhtnebef (Nectanebo I) and his ephemeral and disastrous son and successor was Teos, the hellenized form of Djedhor, a very popular name at the time⁶¹.

CONCLUSION

Today it's not possible to fully comment the historiographical work of Manetho since the original text is lost. Because the critical appreciation of the manethonian work have to be based on the texts of posterior writers, who not always have respected Manetho's original text, contemporary readers will always have to deal with an inconsistent hermeneutics of the manethonian sources.

From Manetho we have a classical division of thirty dynasties, although not all agree with the periodization generically admitted⁶².

⁵⁸ WADDELL, 1980: 179-181; GARDINER, 1961: 452.

⁵⁹ GRIMAL, 1988: 478-479; ARAÚJO, 2011: 221-222.

⁶⁰ WADDELL, 1980: 183-185; GARDINER, 1961: 453.

⁶¹ GRIMAL, 1988: 481-486; ARAÚJO, 2011: 223-225.

⁶² MÁLEK, 1997: 6-17.

It's noticeable that in the dynastic lists above mentioned the names of some kings well known today are absent. They were purely omitted and wiped off from history by political and ideological reasons. We can understand the absence of the Hyksos kings (although some of them appear in the *Royal Canon of Turin*), but the names of Akhenaten and the Pharaoh-Queen Hatshepsut, among others, are also missing. And because they were not recorded in the Egyptian well-known royal lists, Manetho did not include them – in this respect he was led to error by Egyptian sources, in the same way the first Egyptologists did many centuries later.

As to the value of his historiographical work, several questions are intriguing. We would expect that Manetho would develop the information concerning the history of the New Kingdom, since a great deal of documentation for this historical phase was available at that time. If it is not surprising the omission of the Amarna Period and Akhenaten, the same cannot be said concerning the absence of Horemheb.

And what about the long apologetic texts on the victories of the great kings of the New Kingdom, such as Thutmose III in Meggido, Ramesses II in Kadesh, or Ramesses III against the Sea People? Were they quoted in Manetho's original text? The cold onomastic and dynastic lists from his compilers do not allow us to read any of these episodes, and we also do not know what kind of treatment Manetho gave to the historical records available in sources such as in the Palermo Stone (and in many other identical sources now lost), where interesting historical data were recorded such as the length of reign, the expeditions by land and sea, the building of palaces and temples, the production of statues and stelae, the great festivities, the height of the Nile's annual flood.

It is known that Manetho responded to a solicitation of the Lagid king and, as other Egyptian literates, he collaborated with the monarchy established in Alexandria, a city that was the great metropolis of a vast rural territory, Egypt⁶³. We have to keep in mind that in the commission of this historical work is not by all means excluded a strong political statement. The writing of Manetho's *Aegyptiaca* is inserted in a climate of lively rivalry with the neighboring Seleucid kingdom, which ruled, among other territories, Syria-Palestine and the area of Ancient Mesopotamia. After all, both kingdoms were the result of the division of Alexander's empire between his generals. The foreign kings that now ruled the land of Egypt literally wanted to propagate the Egyptian history (told in Greek language) and among readers who could understand the Greek language. By extolling the revered antiquity of the land they ruled from Alexandria, Ptolemies presented themselves as the «natural» successors of the millennial pharaonic monarchy – and the same did the Seleucids in their kingdom, using the literate Babylonian priest Berosus.

Manetho served indeed the Ptolemies, and these used him – we can say that probably any other choice was left for the Sebennytes scholar but to collaborate, as many others who

⁶³ RODRIGUES, 2001: 47.

served under the Macedonian power, like the priest and physician from Sais Udjahorresnet, or Petosiris, high priest of the god Thot, who supported the growing power of the Pharaoh Alexander – unlike one of his predecessors who was executed by the new Greek-Macedonian authorities for having collaborated with the Persian enemy and for being recalcitrant to the emerging Hellenistic power in Egypt. Studying, within his possibilities, the old and millennial pharaonic monarchy through the several documents at his disposal, Manetho was also exalting the Ptolemaic royalty hidden behind the mask of the pharaohs⁶⁴.

In spite of the political agenda behind his work, it is unquestionable that it owns much to the genuine study of the Egyptian sources. The thirty dynasties of the Egyptian history are presented respecting a periodization that is already sensed in the autochthonous Egyptian royal lists, where three major stages of the restoration of the national unity are already identified by key-elements such as Menes-Meni (the legendary unifier), Mentuhotep II (Middle Kingdom) and Ahmose (New Kingdom). The most remarkable accomplishment of the Manetho's work, however, lies in his historiographical approach to the Egyptian sources who never compiled a coherent history of their own country. The surviving historical records well known today (probably used by Manetho himself) show a fragmentary and ambiguous nature that proves the absence of a genuine historiography as we see it today⁶⁵. In spite of that the ancient Egyptians had a strong sense of their own past, characterized by a paradoxal play of immutability and cyclic renewal, permanence and continuity. A strong sense of the past was therefore an important feature of the autochthonous culture, especially during the first millennium B.C. However the historiographical work of Manetho is only possible due to his «bilingual» culture: he had to be learned in Greek authors in order to achieve the historiographical perspective with which he regards the native Egyptian sources.

⁶⁴ GRIMAL, 1988: 489.

⁶⁵ CARREIRA, 2011: 426-427.

THE ALEXANDRIA OF PHILO IN PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

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Abstract: *As we reflect on the Hellenistic Alexandria of education and culture, of sophistic rhetoric and philosophy, we need to focus our attention on the work of one of its most famous and distinct sons in the first decades of our Christian era. Though being few the explicit references in Philo's treatises to the city, the models of education and culture that emerge and take form in them are significantly numerous, if not even decisive to clarify the sophistic movement and its vitality in his time. We will center our attention in two topics: Alexandrian sophists under Philo's critical eyes, and the Alexandrian rhetoric in his philosophical education.*

Philo lived in Alexandria when this capital of Hellenistic *paideia* was recognized in the Roman world as one of its main centers of higher education as well as of critical and literary production. The specific references he makes to the city are not many, but its implicit presence is almost a constant, not only in culture, art and the values that distinguish it, but also in their impact in the society of his time. We then ask ourselves: how did the Alexandrian philosopher see the city and its people? Which images he pictures of the models of education and culture it inspires? The origins of the Second Sophistic are still questioned today as well as the knowhow this movement represents in the training of the most cultured and learned representatives of this celebrated center of *paideia* by the beginnings of the 1st century B.C. A keener attention to thinkers like Philo on these matters would surely provide us

a better understanding of the movement, once we can find in his treatises «a rich vein of information on the early 1st century sophists»¹.

PHILO AND THE ALEXANDRIA OF HIS TIME

Recognized as one of the most important centers of culture in Hellenistic Antiquity, Alexandria attracted the most learned masters of Hellenic education and became a prolific and radiating center of culture in the most expressive and universalizing meaning of the term. Not many decades after its foundation, this great metropolis of knowledge was being transformed in a meeting point of civilizations and cultures, in an authentic barn of the world; food not only for the body, but also and above all for the spirit². Established in 290 B.C., the Library of Alexandria symbolically perpetuated the ecumenical dream of Alexander, attracting to the city a new elite of intellectuals, thinkers, sophists, philosophers, writers and specialists in philological and literary criticism³.

Rightly considered a second Athens, this Mediterranean pearl was above all distinguished by the singular diversity of its people; so propitious it was to the germinal configuration and reconfiguration of ideas. In the first decades of our era, the Museum still received and employed students from all origins, as in the glorious days of the Ptolemies. The great public library – «mirror of the soul and memory of the world» – continued being the inspiring center of culture in that important academy, as in the golden times of its highest splendor⁴.

The Jewish community was installed in Alexandria since its beginnings, and the signs of its presence were always increasingly visible until the foundations of our era, so important it was for the Hebrews as the cradle of the Bible in Greek and of flourishing Greek literature based in their traditions.

In the time of Philo, this important capital of Hellenistic culture was also the motherland of an essential part of the population who formed the Jewish diaspora. Tradition and Greek *paideia* converged in the education of the Jews who took advantage of the benefits of this authentic cultural golden age. The Jewish community was dispersed through the different strata of society, recognized among the rich and powerful as well as among the hum-

¹ WINTER, 2002: 240.

² «Alexandria was the chief trading center in the Roman Empire. It shipped out enormous amounts of grain and luxury produce. Philo regularly names sailors and maritime merchants as well as fishermen in his occupation lists». He identifies pilots as «skilled people on whom lives depend»: And he names the common seamen «who had to labor at the oars when the wind was calm» (SLY, 1996: 83-84). Cf.: *De plantatione* 152; *De Abrahamo* 65; *De virtutibus* 49; *De praemiis et poenis* 33; *In Flaccum* 26, 125.

³ JACOB, 1991: 23-24.

⁴ Contrary to what is usually said, the library of Alexandria was not much affected by fire in the time of Julius Caesar. Cf. SLY, 1996: 39.

ble and poor⁵. And two of the five administrative divisions were mainly occupied by Jews⁶; which means that, in about five to six hundred thousand inhabitants, their community would not be far from one hundred eighty thousand⁷. Taking full advantage of the freedom granted for the exercise of their religious services and other social activities, the Jews had across the town many important synagogues; one of them being referred in the Talmud as follows: «who has not seen it, did not see for sure the glory of Israel»⁸.

Totally immersed in the cultural environment of the land where he lived, Philo was distinguished among the most powerful and learned thinkers of his time, in no way inferior to the best of those who were nurtured with Hellenic *paideia*. Eusebius of Caesarea clearly says: «In regard to philosophy and the liberal arts of classical education, especially to his devoted study of Plato and Pythagoras... he surpassed all his contemporaneous»⁹. Although sparse in information on his life, Philo's evidence points to a man who was familiarly identified with the most flourishing strata of the Alexandrian society, distinguished amongst its members as a consummate thinker and a promoter not only of Hebrew wisdom but also of Hellenic philosophy and literature. As a credible source of information, Josephus mentions his brother Alexander the Alabarch as object of the greatest honors, and refers him as truly illustrious in the domains of philosophy¹⁰.

For this distinct Jew of the diaspora Alexandria was his home, his land, the place of his birth, education and mission as philosopher and educator of his own people¹¹. The deep appreciation Philo had for this city can even be seen in the way he mentions the benefits the emperor Augustus provided with it: monuments that surpassed the most important art works of other imperial cities¹². In the words of Pearce, «the importance of Alexandria as a great city in Philo's consciousness is revealed by the fact that Alexandria is the only earthly city he calls a *μεγαλόπολις* (great city), a word he normally uses to describe the cosmos»¹³. His description of the sea in front and its harbor¹⁴, the strategic position of the city, its lighthouse Pharos and central square¹⁵, the numerous monuments and palaces¹⁶ which occupied

⁵ PEARCE, 2007: 8. As Pearce adds, «Philo gives no indication of how his family came to be in Alexandria... His sense of a profound attachment to Alexandria may point, however, to longer-established roots in the city. Philo's own commitment to his ancestral traditions speaks loud and clear throughout his writings... Philo's loyalty to the Jews of Alexandria and their local institutions... is concretely demonstrated by his role in the embassy of Gaius».

⁶ *De virtutibus* 64; *In Flaccum* 55.

⁷ Apparently inaccurate, the numbers advanced by Philo of Alexandria point to a million Jews in Egypt (*In Flaccum* 43).

⁸ Sukkah 51b.

⁹ Eus. *HE* 2.4.2-3. Cf. TAYLOR, 2003: 21-22.

¹⁰ *J. AI* 18.159-160, 259; 19.276; 20.100.

¹¹ *De vita contemplativa*, 21; *In Flaccum* 2, 43, 45, 74, 163.

¹² *Legatio ad Gaium* 150.

¹³ PEARCE, 2007: 14.

¹⁴ *De somniis* 2.143; *De sacrificiis* 90.

¹⁵ *De specialibus legibus* 1.319-320; 3.105, 169, 171. *De Abrahamo* 20-21. Cf. Str. 17.1.10.

¹⁶ *Legatio ad Gaium* 149-151; *De ebrietate* 177; *In Flaccum* 85.

about one third of the geographical space as well as its secular¹⁷ and religious life¹⁸, give us a lively and multifaceted image of the social and cultural lifestyle that was taking place there. Philo's sense of patriotism is especially visible in the reported sufferings of the Jews of Alexandria under Flaccus' administration¹⁹; mainly in climax, he adds:

*But why were we to suffer such humiliations? When were we suspected of revolting? When were we not thought to be peacefully inclined to all? Were not our ways of living, which we follow day by day, irreproachable and inclined to good order and stability in the city?*²⁰

As a faithful son of his motherland and the culture he incarnated, the Alexandrian was, in the words of Arnaldez, «l'artisan principal de cette oeuvre gigantesque d'où est sortie toute la civilisation occidentale: l'union intime du judaïsme et de l'hellénisme»²¹. And that could only happen in the soul of a great city like Alexandria. The monumental work of Philo represents, in fact, an unprecedented intellectual consummation made possible by the simultaneous convergence of the truths expressed by the wisest Greeks with those revealed in the sacred writings of Judaism. His matured knowledge of Greek literature, philosophy and culture in general, in all branches of Hellenic and Hellenistic education were surely acquired in the schools of Alexandria. In his treatises, he describes numerous times the different levels of instruction from the basics of learning and most elementary encyclical studies to the highest degrees of academic education, mainly in rhetoric and philosophy²². Perhaps it is Philo who helps us the most to perceive the dynamics of the sophistic movement in the 1st century A.D., including the beginnings of the most characteristically Asiatic phenomenon of the Second Sophistic.

If Philo's literary work had not been neglected for many centuries as it was, the traditional opinion that the Second Sophistic did not bloom until the end of the 1st century would have vanished long ago²³, and long ago what now seems so clear would have been accepted: that by the beginnings of the 1st century this movement already flowered or even flourished. That old tendency of interpretation and understanding of the origins of this phenomenon was in the meantime timidly questioned by Boulanger and vividly opposed by Bruce Winter. Referring Herod Atticus, Boulanger says that, «his school is just a partic-

¹⁷ *Legum allegoriae* 2.85; *De fuga et inventione* 31-32; *In Flaccum* 136.

¹⁸ *De cherubim* 92; *De vita Mosis* 2.28, 216; *De specialibus legibus* 1.2-11, 316, 319-320, 323; 3.40, 100-101, 171; *De vita Mosis* 2.14; *De vita contemplativa* 85; *Quis rerum divinarum Heres sit* 69; *Legatio ad Gaïum* 82-83; *Quod Deus sit immutabilis* 17, 69; *Hypothetica/Apologia pro Iudaeis* 7.14.

¹⁹ *In Flaccum* 55-72. Cf. PEARCE, 2007: 15.

²⁰ *In Flaccum* 94.

²¹ ARNALDEZ, 1967: 14.

²² *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 74-78. Cf. PEARCE, 2007: 17-18.

²³ «According to Filostratus, the "modern" period of the movement only really began in the reign of Nero» (WINTER, 2002: 2).

ularly brilliant step of a slow and uninterrupted evolution, which has its origins in the times of Augustus»²⁴. Winter on the other hand maintains that this movement was already flourishing in the first part of the 1st century, especially in the cities of Alexandria and Corinth²⁵, and that the traits that perform and inform the Second Sophistic movement were already verified in the Hellenistic *paideia* of the previous century.

In the same line of Boulanger, who says that sophistic was a symbol of Hellenism in the imperial centuries²⁶, Giner Soria wisely sustains that the movement never ceased to be more or less markedly present in the Hellenistic and Hellenized world between the 5th century B.C. and the final end of Hellenism; that these educators and teachers were known everywhere for their most characteristic activity, the education of youth, and for the supreme investment of their art in speech composition and elaboration²⁷; also that rarely a talented sophist limited himself to the simple office of teaching, assuming himself in full as a craftsman of the word put to the service of the social, civic and political community²⁸; in Athens, as well as in the rest of the Hellenized world, and not only in Asia Minor.

In Alexandria, the Sophistic phenomenon was surely identical, with many teachers permeating the social tissue of the cities: sophists and rhetoricians as well as philosophers. Although Anderson reports the testimony of a student in the *P. Oxy* 2190 to support his argument on «the shortage of sophists» in Egypt by the second half of the 1st century²⁹, the fact is that the expression used by Neilus might preferably mean that there was abundance of them, and those many, especially the good sophists, were not enough to satisfy the numerous solicitations of the most exacting. This explains his difficulty to find one, and that is the interpretation Winter makes of the expression ἡ τῶν σοφιστῶν ἀπορία³⁰, seemingly the most consentaneous with truth. In fact, Philo mentions «a large amount of sophists» teaching in Alexandria³¹, and Dion Chrysostom confirms it as he refers «an abundance of them»³². Though Philostratus scarcely mentions them in the transition from the Roman Republic to the Empire, he does not omit among others the sophist Philostratus of Egypt «who studied philosophy with the queen Cleopatra» and was distinguished among others by his skillful speech and judicious reputation³³.

²⁴ BOULANGER, 1923: 108.

²⁵ BOULANGER, 1923: 8. Winter uses these two cities as examples, as he clarifies the situation of the phenomenon: Alexandria in the first half of his work, and Corinth in the second (BOULANGER, 1923: 15-108, and 109-239 respectively).

²⁶ BOULANGER, 1923: 57.

²⁷ GINER SORIA, 1982: 27.

²⁸ GINER SORIA, 1982: 30.

²⁹ ANDERSON, 1993: 25.

³⁰ WINTER, 2002: 20.

³¹ *De agricultura* 136.

³² D. Chr. (Dion of Prusa) *Oratio* 32.11.

³³ *Vidas dos sofistas* 486.

THE ALEXANDRIAN SOPHISTS UNDER THE CRITICAL EYES OF PHILO

All historians agree that, «the foundational trait of intellectual education in Alexandria... is its scholarly character», observes Arnaldez³⁴. And he adds: «the grammatical and philological studies, rhetorical and philosophical, corresponded to precise programs for which manuals, anthologies and doxographies existed». The curriculum of the Greco-Roman schools of grammar and rhetoric was exemplarily followed in Alexandria, including a series of preparatory exercises of literary analysis and composition called *προγυμνάσματα*; most of them being taught in those schools and made visible in the formal structures of his exegetical commentaries³⁵.

The works of Theon of Alexandria precisely reflect this reality in the 1st century. His treatise of *Elementary Exercises of Rhetoric* is the best and most important rhetorical manual known of Alexandrian origin. And his exercises were programmed to provide to students and teachers a unified system of instruction, as a preparatory basis for higher courses of rhetoric and philosophy. These exercises were gradually qualifying the students for the intelligent and structured use of mind and word, for the analysis of model speeches and the consequent elaboration of their own discourses. Viscerally connected to the rhetorical tradition of Alexandria, Theon wrote other rhetorical treatises of no minor importance, but none of them survived to the erosion of time. This, however, is sufficient to underline the cultural and pedagogical labor of Alexandria, where two sophistic tendencies were being drawn in profile: that of those who, aligned with ancient orators like Isocrates, defended the necessity of studying philosophy as a basis for higher studies of rhetoric; and that of those who studied higher levels of rhetoric immediately after their training on the *progymnasmata*, valuing more their ability on the uttered word than competence on the logical reasoning of the *logos* born in the mind³⁶.

The *Progymnasmata* of Theon on rhetoric represented in his time a correction attempt for the sophistical movement to recover its real face and to transform its model of education into a holistic science and art of knowledge that could combine philosophical and rhetorical training in the education of a really cultured man. This explains why the sophists were so important in the educational system of Alexandria, providing and promoting the conditions needed to accomplish in the society this noble cause of *paideia*.

The same pedagogical attitude was taken by Philo half a century before and with a similar purpose; mainly when he criticized a particular group of sophists for simplifying

³⁴ ARNALDEZ, 1961: 95.

³⁵ Cf. *De congressu* 74-77; *De Cherubim* 105; *De agricultura* 18; *De somniis* 1.25; *Quaestiones et solutiones in Exodum* 2.103; *De congressu* 11, 15-18; *Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesim* 3.21; *De vita Mosis* 1.23.

³⁶ A recurring problem in the history of sophist culture, and not only in the Hellenized Alexandria of the 1st century A.D. (cf. Isoc. 1-11).

and swallowing the system, perhaps more taken by their wish of profit and fame than by their own concern with a fully integrated education philosophy.

The impact of Hellenistic education on the cultural environment of Alexandria was felt in the work of the promoters of sophistic rhetoric in such a way that it fertilized all genre of human discourse. This phenomenon is clearly verified in the way orators established their themes, structured their arguments and defended their theses, and in a time when conference rooms and theaters were overloaded with people who attentively watched eloquent orations on virtue and similar themes³⁷. The evidence of such phenomenon in the works of Philo is thus crucial for understanding the importance of this movement in the city where he was born and lived all the time, and crucially opposes the belief that «there was an absence of rhetorical activity in Alexandria from the late Ptolemaic Period through to, and during, the movement called the Second Sophistic in the late first and second centuries A.D.»³⁸.

The term «sophist», originally used to describe the sage, was used in the 1st century to designate the rhetorician skillful in rhetoric; the educator who was able not only to touch the heart of the hearers with his speeches, but also to attract disciples to his school. The sophist was intrinsically the master of eloquence who devoted himself to higher degrees of Hellenic *paideia*. Many of those teachers of rhetoric preferred, however, to be called rhetoricians, perhaps because of the unfavorable connotations the term «sophist» was attracting, per force of the unavoidable deflections to which this noble mission was being subjected³⁹.

In the succinct words of Bowersock, a sophist is «a virtuous rhetor with a big public reputation»⁴⁰; in other words, a cultured orator (a *pepaideumenos* in action), competent in the art of speaking in public and able to develop, with greater or smaller degree of ostentation, a higher form of education predominantly rhetorical⁴¹. What then was expected from the sophist was for him to be a good educator of youth, skilled in the exegesis and interpretation of the great creative pieces of literature, a learned expert in rhetoric, competent to instruct his students in the art as well as in eloquence⁴².

The concept of «sophistic» is semantically so inclusive in the time of Philo that he

³⁷ SMITH, 1974: 71-72, 130.

³⁸ WINTER, 2002: 2. See this argument in FRASER, 1972: 810; also in TURNER, 1975: 5.

³⁹ For the distinction between the terms ῥήτωρ and οφιστής by that time, see BOWERSOCK, 1969: 12 ss.: in short, a sophist would be a rhetorician who attained a high degree of success in his art as educator and master of rhetoric. A teacher who specialized in the art of rhetoric, but not necessarily trained in philosophy.

⁴⁰ BOWERSOCK, 1969: 13.

⁴¹ Cf. ANDERSON, 1993: 1.

⁴² The rhetoric of the first sophists was configured by the following principles: rationale of circumstances, ethics of competition, aesthetic of exhibition. They could not be understood only as specialists in ornamental oratory; because, itinerant educators and exceptional cultural leaders, the sophists were characterized by their versatility, but also by their determined Hellenism as authentic ambassadors of the Hellenic culture.

sometimes calls sophists to the philosophers, to those speaking on philosophical themes⁴³, and even to classical poets like Homer and Hesiod⁴⁴. The rhetorical culture of the sophists is so relevant in his treatises and so frequently acute is his demarcation from the sophistic pattern that the images he uses talk by themselves, leaving us with the conviction that the two movements in tension were vividly felt in the Hellenistic *paideia* of Alexandria at the beginning of our Christian era. Such is the reason why the Alexandrian philosopher defends a rhetoric that is worth of the philosopher, a rhetoric that will change man into a consummate master of words in the utterance of the most sublime ideas, and not a defaced type of rhetoric proclaimed by a certain elite of clever sophistry⁴⁵.

True sophistic *paideia* very early triumphed in the Roman Empire, developing an authentic literary culture in schools where the director was a sophist and «rhetorical imitation» creatively encouraged the reconfiguration of the models found in the best literature of Classical Antiquity⁴⁶. Winter clearly shows its vitality in Alexandria by the time of Philo based on three primary sources⁴⁷: the Philonic corpus, which reflects the character of this movement in the first half of the 1st century; the *Oratio* 32 of Dion of Prusa⁴⁸, which discussed the movement primarily in terms of relationship with public life; and a letter (*P. Oxy.* 1290) that a student of Alexandria called Neilus⁴⁹ wrote to his father in the perspective of a student who learns Greek rhetoric with the sophists. From each one of these documents, we receive precious information on the activities of the philosophers, orators and sophists in the Alexandria of the 1st century A.D. and from them we conclude not only that the sophistic movement was solidly implanted in Alexandrian soil, but also that numerous sophists were then teaching in the city⁵⁰. So important was the sophistic presence in Alexandria in its diverse configurations that Philo directly or indirectly refers it over a hundred times, not to mention the numerous commentaries he also makes to the movement⁵¹. And,

⁴³ Cf. *De congressu eruditionis gratia* 67.

⁴⁴ Large was the variety of people who called themselves or were called sophists in Greek antiquity. This name was applied to poets, to musicians and rhapsodes, to diviners and seers, to wise men and philosophers like the pre-Socratics, to mathematicians and politicians. Cf. WOLFSON, 1962: 28. As Winter opportunely observes, Wolfson argues that Diogenes Laertius equally supports this identification, when saying that sophist was a different name given to important educators: to wise men, philosophers and poets. Cf. *De providentia* 1.43; *De sacrificiis* 78; *De congressu* 15, 74, 148; *De agricultura* 18; *De somniis* 1.205.

⁴⁵ «On se souviendra que tout éloge de la rhétorique s'accompagne chez lui d'une mise en garde» (ALEXANDRE, 1967: 37. Cf. *De congressu* 17).

⁴⁶ CASSIN, 2000: 973.

⁴⁷ WINTER, 2002: 5.

⁴⁸ D. Chr. *Alexandrian Oration* 32.68.

⁴⁹ *P. Oxyrhynchus* 2190.

⁵⁰ WINTER, 2003: 38-39, 58.

⁵¹ As conclusively observes Bruce Winter, «There are, however, forty-two references to “sophist” (σοφιστής) in Philo, apart from fifty-two references to cognates, and numerous comments on the sophistic movement. His evidence constitutes the single most important witness for the first half of the 1st century on the Greek side, and nothing comparable exists elsewhere for this period in the empire» (2003: 7).

we repeat, only an unfortunate inattention to these sources justifies the sparse references made to the Alexandrian by the scholars who have studied this rhetorical phenomenon in the Roman Empire⁵².

Although Philo of Alexandria usually mentions the term in a less positive sense to connote a deviant component of the Alexandrian sophists, he is careful enough to register the impact they had in the city for the admiration they got with the competence and technical value of their art. What Philo condemns is not the sophistic culture that philosophers and educators like Isocrates inspired⁵³. With this Isocratic philosophy of discourse he was plainly identified. It is the bad use of it, the type of education being provided by the «ill educated in rhetoric», by those who exploited «the legitimate arts of speech or methods of persuasion not to defend the truth but to oppose it»⁵⁴, the ones who were more eager to serve themselves and their own appetites than the students whose education they were paid for; rhetoricians who were supposed to be masters of virtue and roundly failed in the culture of the ethical ideal of Hellenic *paideia*; sophists who taught eloquence to seduce their students and not to honor truth with their teachings; ingenious masters of rhetoric more motivated by gain ambition than by the enrichment of their hearers in the pedagogical and ethical values of Hellenic *paideia*. These problems were always common among the sophists, even in the early times of Isocrates; problems against which this great Athenian educator was raising his voice without failing to be an illustrious and paradigmatic sophist⁵⁵.

In Philo's Alexandria, as in the 4th century B.C., the most important characteristic of the sophists was thus that all of them taught rhetorical art in its best; a genuine sophistic *paideia* that, as a «true oasis of ideas», incarnated the sublime of Hellenic wisdom, and rhetorically nurtured «the theories of discourse, composition and argumentation»⁵⁶. The real purpose of sophistic education was initially, and continued to be, the holistic shaping of a wise man competent in the art of thinking as well as in that of acting. However, with difficulty were these ideas anytime materialized into a univocal sophistic rhetoric; a rhetoric that united theory, practice and ideology in the configuration of speeches logically and argumentatively persuasive, structurally and figuratively expressive, and ideologically impregnated with an ethic of values truly human and universal.

⁵² See: SMITH, 1974: 130; KENNEDY, 1972: references to Philo, p. 452-453; references to Dion of Prusa: p. 566-582. In *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994): reference to Philo, p. 186-187. BOWERSOCK, 1969: 20-21. ANDERSON, 1993: 203-205.

⁵³ The Isocratic program of education, *logon paideia*, aimed at forming leaders of a high moral temper that could provide solid orientation and counsel in matters of civic value, relevance and effectiveness. The *philosophy of discourse* he taught was the philosophy of life he practiced.

⁵⁴ WINTER, 2002: 61-62.

⁵⁵ Cf. *Panegyricus* 1-10.

⁵⁶ SCHIAPPA, 1999: 49. Quoting Jasper Neel, Schiappa adds: «Declaring himself a Sophist, Jasper Neel advocates 'Sophistical Rhetoric' as a study of how to make choices and a study of how choices form character and make good citizens» (*Plato, Derrida, and Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988, p. 211).

Far from this conception of a univocal sophistic, would also be the schools of educators who impregnated the social Alexandrian tissue, some perhaps closer to Gorgias and others to Isocrates or even to Plato. But the fact is that the teaching of rhetoric, the teaching of eloquence and the education of the orator were closely related, with more or less ethical rigor, to form both the orator and the philosopher, the most astute politician and the most honest and faithful server of the polis. In the city, the sophist and the philosopher both cultured Hellenistic *paideia*, and both were prepared to teach rhetoric from the encyclical and most elementary typologies of rhetorical exercises to the highest levels of knowledge; that type of philosophy of the discourse aimed by the *pepaideumenos*, be it in search of the ultimate reality of being, be it in search of a consummate wise man who thinks well, talks well and acts well in behalf of his fellow-citizens in the construction of a higher well-being for all.

Instead of resisting to Greek *paideia*, Philo absorbed the essence of its contents⁵⁷ and described all disciplines of encyclical education⁵⁸, paying special attention to grammar, rhetoric and dialectic. *Grammar* – elementary and higher stages of studies, including writing and reading in the first part, and the study of literature in the second – is referred six times in his treatises as of great value for studying philosophy, able to develop intelligence as well to deepen knowledge⁵⁹. *Rhetoric* – awakening the mind for the observation of facts, training and tempering the mind for the expression of its thoughts – will make man a true master of words and ideas, refining even more the peculiar and special gift that nature entrusted to man alone⁶⁰. «Dialectic – a structured discipline designed to discover truth and falsity by probing into the particulars of the argument»⁶¹, and usually compared with logic as one of the three parts of Stoic philosophy –, is to Philo «the sister, the twin sister of rhetoric, distinguishing true argument and refuting the plausibilities of sophistry»⁶². In his understanding, those who accomplish the various stages of *paideia* but are not cultured in virtue, end becoming sophists in the worst meaning of the word. But the true rhetorician or sophist is necessarily «a master of virtues»⁶³. And when he does not reach the goal of being so, easily fails confusing sustainable arguments with the magical seduction of words, and consciously or unconsciously permitting or even promoting the defeat of truth⁶⁴.

⁵⁷ RUNIA, 1986: 35-36.

⁵⁸ The eight individual disciplines of the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία that by the Middle Ages constituted the seven liberal arts and sciences: the *trivium*, including grammar, rhetoric and dialectic; the *quadrivium*, including geometry, arithmetic, music, and astronomy. Cf. *De congressu* 74-77; *De cherubim* 105; *De agricultura* 18; *De somniiis* 1.205; *Quaestiones Exodum* 2.103; *De congressu* 11, 15-18; *Quaestiones Genesis* 3, 21; *De vita Mosis* 1.23.

⁵⁹ *De congressu* 15, 74, 148-150; *De agricultura* 18; *De ebrietate* 49. *De mutatione nominum* 229.

⁶⁰ *De congressu* 17, 69.

⁶¹ MENDELSON, 1982: 10-11.

⁶² *De congressu* 18.

⁶³ *De sobrietate* 8-10.

⁶⁴ *De somniiis* 2.40; *De praemiis et poenis* 25; *De gigantibus* 59; *De agricultura* 96; *Quis rerum divinarum heres sit* 85, 302, 304-305, etc.

ALEXANDRIAN RHETORIC IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL TRAINING OF PHILO

The synagogues were in Alexandria the chosen centers of religious life of the Jews⁶⁵. The Greek word to synagogue means «assembly», «congregation», a «house of prayer». And the religious activities that took place there were so important for the Jewish communities that Philo used to call them «schools» of wisdom and other virtues⁶⁶. There were many synagogues in the city as meeting points of community life for the Jews and privileged learning centers of Jewish culture; houses of prayer, Bible teaching, communion and worship service, but also schools for basic instruction and the incarnation of essential principles and values for daily living in community.

Receptive to Hellenistic culture, the Jews of Alexandria used the *Septuaginta*⁶⁷ for reading and exposing the Biblical texts, and forgot with time their own language, being thus encouraged, not to say forced, to attend the Greek schools. In the Gymnasium, they combined physical education with the encyclical studies of grammar and the elementary exercises of rhetoric⁶⁸, jointly with dialectics, geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy. In more advanced stages of learning, they could even be trained to the point of receiving degrees in the areas of rhetoric and philosophy as well as others in the scientific realm; especially members of rich families. Higher studies of rhetoric and philosophy were usually done in the schools of the sophists. And it was in fact the case of Philo.

A simple reading of Philo's writings immediately leaves us with the impression of a vast Hellenistic culture permeating his ideological universe and governing the expression of his own thought. The text flows more or less naturally in an impeccable Greek atticizing *koine*, through a copious and appropriate vocabulary. His evident knowledge of all genre of Greek literature is, for a Jew like him, impressive, quoting numerous times more than fifty different classical authors⁶⁹.

The themes developed along his treatises are usually elaborated in conformity with «an ample variety of rhetorical techniques»⁷⁰ and the productive clarity of his thought as well as his dense and articulate philosophical knowledge place him among the great thinkers of his time. The cultural environment of Alexandria and his exemplary education in the domains of Greek *paideia* justify it, the contents and literary structure of his work testify it and confirm it too.

⁶⁵ The epigraphic and papyrologic evidence of synagogues is abounding, in the inner city as well as in the suburbs. But detailed information on the worship services and the teaching of the Law that were taking place there comes to us through the work of Philo himself.

⁶⁶ *De vita Mosis* 2.215-216; *De specialibus legibus* 2.62-63.

⁶⁷ Greek version of the Jewish Bible, the LXX.

⁶⁸ Cf. MENDELSON, 1982: 2-3.

⁶⁹ SANDMEL, 1979: 15.

⁷⁰ WINSTON, 1981: 1.

It might sound as nonsense to speak of sophistic rhetoric in Philo's philosophical training. But it was in fact rhetoric, in the Isocratic meaning of the term that has mainly contributed to his philosophical vocation as interpreter and commenter of Scripture: rhetoric as philosophy of discourse, conceived in the mind and born from it; the kind of rhetoric that, in his own words, «will transform man into a true master of words and thoughts»⁷¹.

What does Philo want to say with these words? Why is this type of mastery so important for him? The answer is found in *Quod deterius* 34-42. As we read in Mendelson,

virtuous men, such as Abel and Moses, find themselves in situations where verbal ability becomes a matter of vital importance. «Abel has never learned arts of speech (τέχνας λόγων), and knows the beautiful and noble with the mind only» (Det. 37). Because Abel was not equipped to speak, Cain did not find it difficult «to gain the mastery over him by plausible sophistries» (Det. 1). Moses, on the other hand, wisely let his brother Aaron speak for him.

While Moses produced his speech in the mind, Aaron uttered and transmitted it to the people⁷². What Aaron had and Abel did not have was then rhetorical competence; a technique that, in Philo's understanding, was urgent and necessary to orators as well as to philosophers to fight the sophistries of the Alexandrian orators; those who did not care to defending themselves with the shield of virtue and the noblest thoughts (*Det.* 41). For, as Philo asserts,

when we have been exercised in the forms which words take, we shall no more sink to the ground through inexperience of the tricks of the sophistic wrestling... But if a man though equipped in soul with all the virtues, has had no practice in rhetoric, so long as he keeps quiet he will win safety... but, when like Abel he steps out for a contest of wits, he will fall before he has obtained a firm footing (Det. 42).

The essential goal of rhetoric, adds Mendelson, «was not simply to develop superficial skills which any «clever wrestler» might acquire. Rather, its central goal was to insure that speech interpreted thought properly»⁷³. In short, Philo fought for an art worthy of the philosopher, a rhetoric that would transform man into a consummate master in the expression of sublime ideas. The arguments he advances in *Quod deterius* 34-45 are clear and persuasive enough to show that. Even the wisest and most persuasive orator will unavoidably succumb if he fails having a genuine training in this art.

⁷¹ *De congressu* 17.

⁷² MENDELSON, 1982: 7-8.

⁷³ *Loc. cit.*

Comparing rhetoric with medicine and medical theory with clinical practice, he clarifies then the close relationship that should exist between wisdom and eloquence. In other words, rhetoric is as necessary to logic as clinical practice is to its theory, and vice-versa.

For, just as in medicine there are some practitioners who know how to treat almost all afflictions and illnesses and cases of impaired health, and yet are unable to render any scientific account either true or plausible of anyone of them; and some, on the other hand, who are brilliant as far as theories go, admirable exponents of symptoms and causes and treatment... but no good whatever for the relief of suffering bodies, incapable of making even the smallest contributions to their cure; in just the same way those who have given themselves to the pursuit of the wisdom that comes through practice and comes out in practice have often neglected expression, while those who have been thoroughly instructed in the arts that deal with speech have failed to store up in soul any grand lesson which they have learned. It is in no way surprising that these latter should discover an arrogant audacity in the unbridled use of their tongue. They are only displaying the senselessness that has all along been their study. Those others, having been taught as doctors would be, that part of the art which brings health to the sickness and plagues of the soul, must be content to wait, until God shall have equipped in addition the most perfect interpreter, pouring out and making manifest to him the fountains of utterance⁷⁴.

In other words, rhetorical argumentation is as necessary to logic as is clinical practice to medical theory. For it is by the discipline of language that thought is expressed and the mind is able to mold into intelligible form its most beautiful ideas. Without it the philosopher would lose himself in a logomachy of abstract terms (*De Opificio mundi* 1). In Philo's understanding, those who practice rhetoric with no care for rigorous truth, place themselves in the basest plan of sophistry and are in risk of serving the cause of those who are against truth itself, so absorbed they are in arguing for the sake of argument, or in their passion for money.

What in the philosophical and rhetorical training of Philo made the difference was his frame of references and values, which since childhood nurtured his mind and heart, namely truth and virtue; also equated balance in his studies of rhetoric and philosophy in his ultimate pursuit of wisdom, to the point of conciliating both with excellence and developing the contours of his own philosophy of language – what is perfectly in tune with the values of Hellenistic *paideia* in its best and perhaps transcends it. Like Plato, he distinguishes true from false rhetoric, connoting philosophical rhetoric with the first and sophistic rhetoric with the second, and recognizing the propaedeutic value of the first as the one really indispensable to the education of man in its wholeness.

No doubt inspired in the Stoic and Isocratic concept of λόγος as a distinct trait of

⁷⁴ *Quod deterius* 43–44.

man and supreme gift of humanity, Philo stresses the ambivalence of the word and turns perfect human communication dependent from both of its semantic components: the mind or reason that suggests ideas, and the speech that utters them. This is the key observation he makes when tracing the symbolic picture of Abel and Cain as figures that represent thought and word as complementary aspects of the excellence of the same λόγος. This term represents in fact two twin brothers, one mental and the other verbal, the last one being the interpreter of the first. The rhetoric that Philo exemplifies in Moses and Aaron is, thus, the most convenient to the philosopher and the wise man⁷⁵, a species of perfect rhetoric, which unites λόγος προφορικός and λόγος ἐνδιάθετος in each act of communication; that is, idea and word, reason and discourse. It is consequently a philosophical rhetoric, concomitantly rhetorical philosophy, which is ultimately accomplished as servant of a species of consummate philosophy usually called wisdom.

According to Philo, the authentic rhetorician is thus the incarnation of «a species of a «perfect synthesis» of wisdom and eloquence»⁷⁶ – the wisdom incarnated in logical truth, and the eloquence that utters it suitably. The λόγος contained in the mind of the sage incarnates in the orator's discourse, in order to hermeneutically discern and communicate truth. And then the need to express the truth contained in the mind of the philosopher is more than a sufficient reason for the Alexandrian thinker to insist in the importance of a perfect dominion of rhetoric⁷⁷.

Philo's matured reflections on rhetoric eloquently show the levels of education that support the structure of his rhetorical and philosophical competence. He mastered these two branches of knowledge as a paradigmatic example of the excellent rhetorical education provided in the city. And thus he used the most diverse structures of argumentation and proof in his exegetical commentaries as well as in the logical argumentation of a thesis or the elaborate development of a theme. It is difficult to find in the rhetorical conventions a typology of argumentation that Philo did not make use of or strategically did not adapt to his literary project⁷⁸. He was in fact one of the most learned and illumined minds of Alexandria in the 1st century of our common era, a really learned product of that celebrated center of reception and irradiation of culture, recommended at all levels as the true capital of Hellenistic *paideia*; a center that continued inspiring the circulation of the most celebrated paradigms of learning and knowledge. The search for the sublime in knowledge should have been so high in this historical capital of culture that students like Neilus lamented the shortage of good sophists' schools to satisfy all needs (*P. Oxy.* 18-19), though they were many, according to Philo and Dion Chrysostom⁷⁹.

⁷⁵ Moses, the trustee of divine thoughts; Aaron, the symbol of the uttered word and brother of the mind.

⁷⁶ MENDELSON, 1982: 8-9.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Quod deterius potiori insidiari solet* 122-123, 130-131; *De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini* 82-83, 85; *De migratione Abrahami* 82.

⁷⁸ ALEXANDRE JUNIOR, 1999: 248-249.

⁷⁹ Philo, *Agr.* 136; D. Chr. *Oratio* 32.11.

The number of sophists in Alexandria was effectively high in the first decades of the 1st century AD, but apparently few were truly sophists in the ideal sense of the word, excellent in knowledge and effective in its expression. Philo of Alexandria profusely shows it in his audacious critique of the sophistic tradition. Were he not so much forgotten and neglected, and perhaps today we would be much more informed on the impact and evolution of this important phenomenon in that unique cultural capital of the Hellenized world.

THE ELEMENTS OF EUCLIDES: THE CORNERSTONE OF MODERN MATHEMATICS

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Abstract: *Greek mathematics occupies a central place in the History of Mathematics. Its relevance rests on its methods, more than on its mathematical results. In this text we try to give an idea how mathematics changed from a collection of problem solving algorithms into a building of knowledge, with special foundations and methods of validation. Euclid's Elements embodies the new mathematical tradition and today, 2300 years after being written, it is still the paradigm of high quality mathematical writing.*

Greek mathematics occupies a central place in the History of Mathematics. Its relevance transcends its mathematical results – a present day high school graduate should know most of the theorems found by the ancient Greek mathematicians –, being the paradigm for the present way of doing mathematics.

The ancient Greeks, using logically based arguments similar to our own, produced a kind of mathematics unheard of before them. Their appearance can be considered the founding moment for modern mathematics. Greek mathematics stands as a decisive moment, matched only by the appearance of writing or, for the Western civilization, the life of Jesus Christ. The corresponding «Bible» is the book *The Elements*, by Euclid (about 300 B.C.); organized in thirteen chapters, it was the main mathematical reference work for over two millennia.

«Euclid's influence was outstanding, and by the young student that struggled with geometry, the subject of study was referred to by another name: Euclid. He was their subject

matter. Until very recently, almost all students were familiar with the expression QED» – Quod Erat Demonstrandum –, «that finished the proofs of the theorems. Still today, high school geometry is directly based on Euclid's text»¹.

The Elements – «the most important text of Greek times, and probably of all time»² – and its author are clearly intertwined, one reason for that being the fact that we do not know much about Euclid's life and his other writings: «Essentially nothing is known about the life of the author of the *Elements*, it is generally assumed that Euclid taught and wrote at the Museum and Library at the Alexandria»³.

The Elements survived until today, although no copy of Euclid's times lived that long. However, «has appeared in more editions than any other except the Bible. It has been translated into countless languages and has been continuously in print in one country or another nearly since the beginning of printing»⁴.

As mentioned before, Greek Mathematics became the paradigm for proper mathematics. Before them, the Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations flourished. It is generally accepted that some of the knowledge of those cultures migrated to Greece, but the mathematical methods changed radically.

*The methodology in the Elements, however, is entirely different from that of the Egyptians and Babylonians. Mathematics in earlier cultures always involved numbers and measurement. Numerical algorithms for solving various problems are prominent. The mathematics of Euclid, however, is completely nonarithmetical. There are no numbers used in the entire work aside from a few small positive integers. There is also no measurement. Various geometrical objects are compared, but not by use of numerical measures. There are no cubits or acres or degrees. The only measurement standard – for angles – is the right angle*⁵.

The concept of proof, which stands today as the basis of the mathematical corpus, did not exist in those ancient civilizations. The results were organized by analogy of particular problems, which did not lead to new discoveries. The Babylonians and the Egyptians never produced a consistent body of mathematical knowledge, they were just competent to solve a finite collection of specific problems. The best they did, in generalizing and abstracting from particular resolutions was to give recipes as to solve similar problems. Greek mathematics left this approach behind. Mathematical results became supported by proofs, which started from first principles and were based on solid arguments.

¹ SEYMOR-SMITH, 2007: 109.

² KATZ, 2004: 36.

³ KATZ, 2004, 37.

⁴ KATZ, 2004: 36.

⁵ KATZ, 2004: 38.

The theorems in *The Elements* were not, we believe, found by Euclid. His outstanding contribution materialized in its conceptual organization. As Burton put it:

Anyone familiar with the intellectual process realizes that the content of the Elements could not be the effort of a single individual. Unfortunately, Euclid's achievement has so dimmed our view of those who preceded him that it is not possible to say how far he advanced beyond their preparatory work. Few, if any, of the theorems established in the Elements are of his own discovery; Euclid's greatness lies not so much in the contribution of original material as in the consummate skill with which he organized a vast body of independent facts into the definitive treatment of Greek geometry and number theory. The particular choice of axioms, the arrangement of the propositions, and the rigor of demonstration are personally his own. One result follows another in strict logical order, with a minimum of assumptions and very little that is superfluous. So vast was the prestige of the Elements in the ancient world that its author was seldom referred by name but rather by the title «The Writer of the Elements» or sometimes simply «The Geometer»⁶.

It is evident that the conceptual leap necessary to bridge from casuistic mathematics to abstraction is enormous. The fact that this step was actually given shows us that Greek civilization was culturally ripe enough. The starting point was the logic and philosophical traditions, that go back to 6th century B.C. when Thales and, after him, Pythagoras, started looking at the physical world through mathematical spectacles, on one hand, and understood the higher level of mathematical truth. Aristotle, later, raised the techniques of valid deduction to new levels, and gave directions along which new knowledge could be obtained.

The Elements, no copy of which from Euclid's times reached us, travelled through a crooked path.

There are no copies of the Elements dating from Euclid's time. (...) Copies of the work were, however, made regularly from Euclid's time onward. Various editors made emendations, added comments, or put new lemmas. In particular, Theon of Alexandria (4th century CE) was responsible for one important new edition. Most of the extant manuscripts of Euclid's Elements are copies of Theon's edition. The earliest such copy still in existence is in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University and dates from 888. There is, however, one manuscript in the Vatican Library, dating from the tenth century, that is not a copy of Theon's edition but of an earlier version. A detailed comparison of this manuscript with several old manuscript copies of Theon's version allowed the Danish scholar J. L. Heiberg to compile a definitive Greek version in the 1880s, as close to the Greek original as he believed was possible⁷.

⁶ BURTON, 2007: 147

⁷ KATZ, 2004: 37.

In early 20th century Heiberg's text was eventually translated into English by Thomas Heath (with extensive commentaries), and it is this work that serves still today as the main reference on the subject. However, throughout the centuries, several versions of *The Elements* co-existed in the western world.

The first complete Latin translation of the Elements were not made from the Greek but from the Arabic. In the eighth century, a number of Byzantine manuscripts of Greek works were translated by the Arabians, and in 1120 the English scholar Adelard of Bath, made a Latin translation of the Elements from one of these older Arabian translations. Other Latin translations were made from the Arabian by Gherardo of Cremona (1114-1187) and, 150 years after Adelard, by Johannes Campanus. The first printed edition of the Elements was made at Venice in 1482 and contained Campanus' translation. This very rare book was beautifully executed and was the first mathematical book of any consequence to be printed⁸.

It is remarkable that the first mathematical book to be printed was already eighteen hundred years old. This shows how important it was. In Portuguese, the first translation, incomplete, of this work was made in the University at Coimbra in 1855⁹. It was based on a Latin version of Frederico Commandino from the 16th century.

In the following table (*see next page*), based on Heath¹⁰ and Sá¹¹, we summarize the content of *The Elements*.

The first six books got wider circulation, being focused on basic plane. On the other hand, we should underline that this work does not cover all the geometry known by then by the Greek. It is likely that Euclid left out most of his mathematical knowledge. The focus on this work is on the organization and presentation of the material, not so much on mathematical sophistication.

There is no new discovery attributed to him, but he was noted for expository skill. This is the key to the success of his greatest work, the Elements. It was frankly a textbook and by no means the first one. [...] Proclus describes the Elements as bearing to the rest of mathematics the same sort of relation as that which the letters of the alphabet have in relation to language. Were the Elements intended as an exhaustive store of information, the author probably would have included references to other authors, statements of recent research, and informal explanations. As it is, the Elements is austere limited to the business in hand – the exposition in logical order of the fundamentals of elementary mathematics¹².

⁸ EVES, 1964: 114.

⁹ See <<http://www.mat.uc.pt/~jaimecs/euclid/elem.html>>.

¹⁰ HEATH, 1956.

¹¹ SÁ, 2000: 251-252.

¹² BOYER, 1991: 104.

*Few books have been more important to the thought and education of the Western world than Euclid's Elements. Scarcely any other book save the Bible has been more widely circulated or studied; for 20 centuries, the first six books were the student's usual introduction to geometry. Over a thousand editions of the Elements have appeared since the first printed version in 1482; and before that, manuscript copies dominated much of the teaching of mathematics in Europe*¹³.

Book	Content		
I	Congruence of triangles. Parallel lines. Pythagoras Theorem and converse.	23 definitions 5 postulates 5 common notions 48 propositions	Plane geometry (proportion theory can also be applied to three-dimensional geometry)
II	Geometric algebra.	14 propositions 2 definitions	
III	Geometry of the circle.	11 definitions 37 propositions	
IV	Polygons inscribed and circumscribed to circles.	7 definitions 16 propositions	
V	Eudoxo's theory of proportions.	18 definitions 25 propositions	
VI	Applications to plane geometry.	11 definitions 37 propositions	
VII	Introduction to number theory. Euclidean algorithm to find the greatest common divisor of two numbers.	22 definitions 39 propositions	Arithmetic
VIII	Geometric progressions.	27 propositions	
IX	Fundamental Theorem of Arithmetic. Proof of infinitude of prime numbers.	36 propositions	
X	Irrationals.	16 definitions 115 propositions	
XII	Solids.	28 definitions 39 propositions	Three-dimensional geometry
XII	Volume calculations using exhausting.	18 propositions	
XIII	Properties of the five Platonic solids.	18 propositions	

¹³ BURTON, 2007: 145.

In Portugal, namely in the University of Coimbra, Euclid was used in teaching as well. As a matter of fact, until the Reform of Pombal, in 1772, Euclid accounted for almost the whole curriculum.

Besides this didactical use throughout the centuries, and its main justification, the main characteristic of the *Elements* is its organization.

Euclid was aware that to avoid circularity and provide a starting point, certain facts about the nature of the subject had to be assumed without proof. These assumed statements, from which all others are to be deduced as logical consequences, are called the «axioms» or «postulates». In the traditional usage, a postulate was viewed as a «self-evident truth»; the current, more skeptical view is that postulates are arbitrary statements, formulated abstractly with no appeal to their «truth» but accepted without further justification as a foundation for reasoning. They are in a sense the «rules of the game» from which all deductions may proceed – the foundation on which the whole body of theorems rests¹⁴.

The rigorous and organized mathematical field was born in Greece, as we saw. The mathematical reasoning of today is not essentially different from Euclid's. His influence was widespread in space and time:

Biographies of many famous mathematicians indicate that Euclid's work provided their initial introduction to mathematics, that in fact motivated them to become mathematicians. It provided them with a model of how «pure mathematics» should be written, with precise definitions, well-thought-out axioms, carefully stated theorems, and logically coherent proofs¹⁵.

Even though the amount of new discoveries nowadays is enormous, the techniques that lead to these findings and their proofs are two millennia old.

Euclid tried to build the whole edifice of Greek geometrical knowledge, amassed since the time of Thales, on five postulates of a specifically geometric nature and five axioms that were meant to hold for all mathematics; the latter he called common notions. (The first three postulates are postulates of construction, which assert what we are permitted to draw.) He then deduced from these 10 assumptions a logical chain of 465 propositions, using them like stepping-stones in an orderly procession from one proved proposition to another. The marvel is that so much could be obtained from so few sagaciously chosen axioms¹⁶.

¹⁴ BURTON, 2007: 147.

¹⁵ KATZ, 2004: 36.

¹⁶ BURTON, 2007: 148.

The order is so well chosen that usually the proof of a proposition is based on the previous one. The reader witnesses the construction of an incredible mathematical building. So accomplished the *Elements* were in its structure that no other similar work took its place during so many centuries.

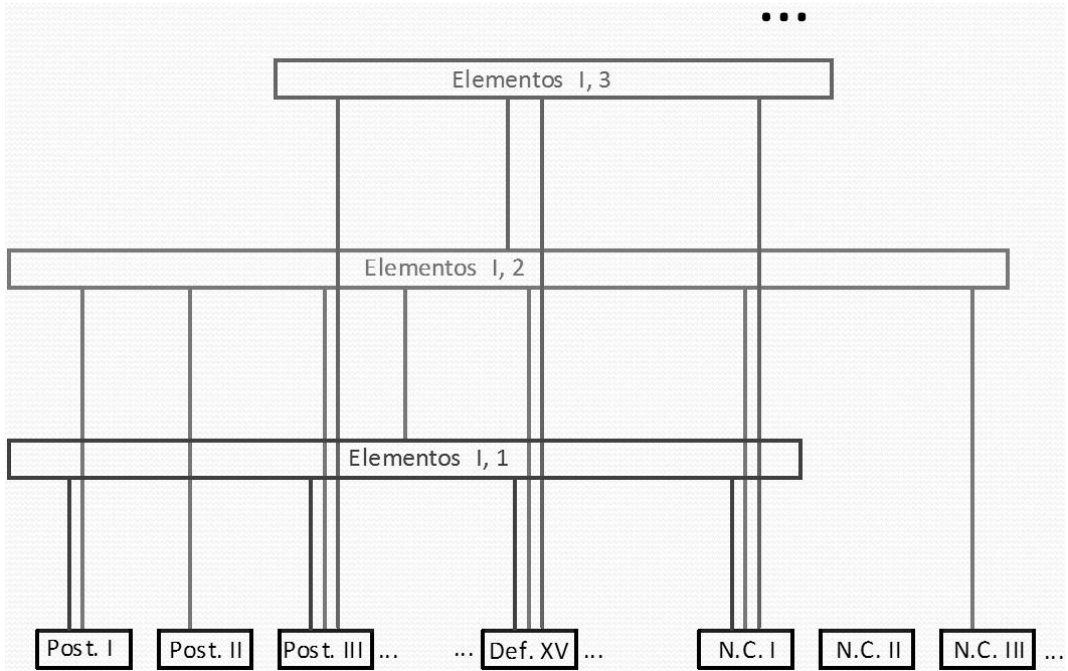


Fig. 1: The structure of dependencies of the first three propositions of the *Elements*.

Euclid starts with the:

1. DEFINITIONS

1. A point is that which has no part.
2. A line is breadthless length.
3. The extremities of a line are points.
4. A straight line is a line which lies evenly with the points on itself.
5. A surface is that which has length and breadth only.
6. The extremities of a surface are lines.
7. A plane surface is a surface which lies evenly with the straight lines on itself.
8. A plane angle is the inclination to one another of two lines in a plane which meet one another and do not lie in a straight line.
9. And when the lines containing the angle are straight, the angle is called rectilineal.

10. When a straight line set up on a straight line makes the adjacent angles equal to one another, each of the equal angles is right, and the straight line standing on the other is called a perpendicular to that on which it stands.
11. An obtuse angle is an angle greater than a right angle.
12. An acute angle is an angle less than a right angle.
13. A boundary is that which is an extremity of anything.
14. A figure is that which is contained by any boundary or boundaries.
15. A circle is a plane figure contained by one line such that all the straight lines falling upon it from one point among those lying within the figure are equal to one another.
16. And the point is called the center of the circle.
17. A diameter of the circle is any straight line drawn through the centre and terminated in both directions by the circumference of the circle, and such a straight line also bisects the circle.
18. A semicircle is the figure contained by the diameter and the circumference cut off by it. And the center of the semicircle is the same as that of the circle.
19. Rectilinear figures are those which are contained by straight lines, trilateral figures being those contained by three, quadrilateral those contained by four, and multilateral those contained by more than four straight lines.
20. Of trilateral figures, an equilateral triangle is that which has its three sides equal, an isosceles triangle that which has two of its sides alone equal, and a scalene triangle that which has its three sides unequal.
21. Further, of trilateral figures, a right-angled triangle is that which has a right angle, an obtuse-angled triangle that which has an obtuse angle, and an acute angled triangle that which has its three angles acute.
22. Of quadrilateral figures, a square is that which is both equilateral and right-angled; an oblong that which is right-angled but not equilateral; a rhombus that which is equilateral but not right-angled; and a rhomboid that which has its opposite sides and angles equal to one another but is neither equilateral nor right-angled. And let quadrilaterals other than these be called trapezia.
23. Parallel straight lines are straight lines which, being in the same plane and being produced indefinitely in both directions, do not meet one another in either direction.

2. COMMON NOTIONS

1. Things which are equal to the same thing are also equal to one another.
2. If equals be added to equals, the wholes are equal.
3. If equals be subtracted from equals, the remainders are equal.

4. Things which coincide with one another are equal to one another.
5. The whole is greater than the part.

3. POSTULATES

Let the following be postulated:

1. To draw a straight line from any point to any point.
2. To produce a finite straight line continuously in a straight line.
3. To describe a circle with any center and distance.
4. That all right angles are equal to one another.
5. That, if a straight line falling on two straight lines make the interior angles on the same side less than two right angles, the two straight lines, if produced indefinitely, meet on that side on which are the angles less than the two right angles.

This last statement was the source of many a discussion and led to several dramatic breakthroughs later on.

From the very beginning, as we know from Proclus, the Postulate [V] was attacked as such, and attempts were made to prove it as theorem or to get rid of it by adopting other definition of parallels; while in modern times the literature of the subject is enormous¹⁷.

Postulate 5, better known as Euclid's parallel postulate, has become one of the most famous and controversial statements in mathematical history. It asserts that if two lines l and l' are cut by a transversal t so that the angles a and b add up to less than two right angles, then l and l' will meet on that side of t on which these angles lie. The remarkable feature of this postulate is that it makes a positive statement about the whole extent of a straight line, a region for which we have no experience and that is beyond the reach of possible observation.

Those geometers who were disturbed by the parallel postulate did not question that its content was a mathematical fact. They questioned only that it was not brief, simple, and self-evident, as postulates were supposed to be; its complexity suggested that it should be a theorem instead of an assumption. The parallel postulate is actually the converse of Euclid's Proposition 27, Book I, the thinking ran, so it should be provable. It was thought impossible for a geometric statement not to be provable if its converse was provable. There is even some suggestion that Euclid was not wholly satisfied with his fifth postulate; he delayed its application until he could advance no further without it, though its earlier use would have simplified some proofs¹⁸.

¹⁷ HEATH, 1956: 202.

¹⁸ BURTON, 2007: 149.

However, the best that could be achieved after many tries was to come up with equivalent statements, like the following:

- By a point exterior to a straight line passes exactly one parallel to the line (Playfair);
- The internal angles of any triangle are equal to two right angles;
- Pythagorean Theorem.

Only the 19th century produced mathematicians like Gauss, Bolyai, Lobachevski and Riemann which were able to prove the independence of the 5th Postulate. They proved that when we replace Euclid's postulate by another, keeping the other postulates, we get a consistent set and, accordingly, another geometry. In one case there are infinitely many parallel lines through an exterior point (hyperbolic geometry), in another there are no parallel lines at all (elliptic geometry).

We cannot be too emphatic in stating that Euclid created mathematics as we know it, by writing *The Elements*, and did so 2300 years ago. Today, with the increasing role of automatic computing, we may foresee a paradigm shift, but our vision blurred and the object is still fuzzy... Euclid lives too strongly inside our mathematical souls.

PART IV
TRADITION
IN TRANSITION

ZEUS KASIOS OR THE *INTERPRETATIO GRAECA* OF BAAL SAPHON IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT

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Abstract: *This essay's aim is mainly to understand and explain the characteristics of Zeus Kasios cult in Ptolemaic Egypt as an avatar or manifestation of the Semitic god Baal-Saphon already worshipped in Egypt in early periods. This Oriental form of the Greek god Zeus, worshipped in Mountain Kasios, Syria, was also found in the Egyptian Mount Kasios which points out to a cultural and religious diffusion movement, due to geographical proximity of both centers of cult and also due to the establishment of syro-palestinian populations in Egypt since the times of the Hyksos invasion, which made easy the religious acculturation and syncretism between divinities.*

THE SOURCES

The cult to *Zeus Kasios* in ancient Egypt is well known and widely referenced in a number of historical sources from the Classical to the Arabian Period. These sources are not consensual about the accurate location of the mount *Kasios* or *Kasion*, the place where there would have been one of the most important cult centers to this divinity. The epithet *Kasios* finds no parallels in native Greek cults and it is usually accepted that its basic etymological designation came from the Hurrian mount *Hazzi*¹. However, a sanctuary dedicated to a god

¹ SALAC, 1922: 180.

named *Zeus Kasios*, upon the Egyptian mount *Kasios* is quoted by the ancient Greek sources as the main cult center in the Ptolemaic Period, among other sites occasionally referred to.

The association that can be establish between both deities relies essentially on the information gathered from textual sources, most of them from the Greco-Roman Period, that associate the cult of *Zeus Kasios* to these two locations sharing a similar name but in distinct geographic places.

Archaeological dissemination of this cult is also attested in Syria, in Corcyra² and Delos – and there is also an account of its diffusion to the Iberian Peninsula, especially to cape Palos and cape Saint Vicent³.

In Strabo's work several mentions are made to the cult of this form of the god Zeus in a location called *Pelusium*, in Egypt, dating back to the reign of Seleucus I, Nicator⁴ (306-280 B.C.), in a sanctuary nearby the Lake *Sirbonis*, thereby near a sandhill identified as *Kasios*. The temple would have been raised in a sandy promontory that wouldn't exceed 100 meters high, in close proximity to the Mediterranean Sea.

Strabo mentions that, while he was staying in Alexandria, a significant earthquake affected the region. Seemingly the earthquake changed drastically the topography of the area thus increasing the difficulty in identifying the geographical location of the so-called «mount». The author references that the sea raised so high in that region that flooded the surrounding area of the mount, becoming almost possible to cross all the way to Syria by boat⁵.

The area presents four toponyms involving the name «*Kasion*»; mount *Kasion*, Pompeius Magnus tomb, a sanctuary dedicated to *Zeus Kasios* and a small village named *Kasios*⁶. Both the tomb and the sanctuary were settled by the author on mount *Kasion*.

Flavius Josephus narrative describes how Vespasian's son, Titus Caesar, in the year 70 A.D., during his campaign into Jerusalem, while⁷ reorganizing his army, set his camp near a temple dedicated to Jupiter *Kasios*. This fact tells us that the temple would have been situated in a main terrestrial road, near the border of the Syro-Palestinian territory.

In his *Natural History* Pliny also mentions the mount *Kasios*⁸; he alludes to the Lake *Sirbonis*, as an insignificant swamp (ca. 1st century B.C.) placing the mount – initially far

² The city of Cassiopeia in Corfu island would have had its etymology in the word *Kasios*, due to the cult dedicated to Zeus *Kasios*. FENET, 2005: 39-49.

³ PEREA YÉBENES, 2004: 95-112.

⁴ *Geography*, I, 31; X, 5, 18; XVI, 12, 1-5; XVI, 8, 17-31; XVI, 26, 11-21; XVI, 28, 12-15; XVI, 32, 1-8; XVI, 33, 9-16; XVI, 34, 1-17; XVII, 11, 41-52.

⁵ CLÉDAT, 1923: 65.

⁶ Issues about the orthography that several Greek sources point out in the use of the Greek word «*Kasion*» or «*Kasios*» are not to be discussed in this work. The same to the Latin use of «*Casion*» or «*Casios*». Cf. VERRETH, 2006: 423-425 and 989-991.

⁷ *The Jewish War*, IV, 11, 5; In the Latin sources Jupiter was also identified with Zeus.

⁸ *Pliny's Natural History*, 5, 12, 65.

in the North – westwards of the lake⁹, but considering the innumerable changes that local topography suffered throughout the ages, an unequivocal geographic identification once again becomes a very difficult task.

In the 5th century B.C., Herodotus mentions a mount *Kasios* as a border settlement between Egypt and Syria¹⁰ and locates it in the Mediterranean coastline. In its *History*¹¹, in the account on the military campaign of King Cambyses against Egypt, Herodotus mentions the Pelusian region and the proximity of the Egyptian *Kasios* whose hillside touched the sea. He adds that is from Lake *Sirbonis* (where the monster Typhon would be hidden) that resides the entrance of Egypt¹². This land was named by the Greeks as *Kasiotide*, upon the village that would be located at the foothill of the mount nearby the lake. There, would have been erected a sanctuary dedicated to Zeus *Kasios*¹³.

Around the 5th century A.D. sources refer to another cult place dedicated to the same god, in Egypt, in the northeast region of Sinai – at the present time called Tell Farama which is today's designation of *Pelusium* – in the proximity of mount *Kasios*, where it was found a temple dedicated by the navigators to the cult of this form of Zeus.

The geographic proximity from both Egyptian places and the toponymic resemblance creates number of doubts regarding the emplacement of the Egyptian temple of Zeus. Once again, the epithet *Kasios* given to the god Zeus that received cult at *Pelusium*, is due to the existence of a hill – located eastwards from *Pelusium* – mentioned in the sources as «mount *Kasios*» or «*Kasion*». Several authors identify the place southwest, approximately 60 km from *Pelusium*, thus located in the route for Syria.

The Alexandrian writer Aquila's Tacitus gives us account of the cult he performed in *Pelusium*, before the statue of this god which the author describes as having resemblances with Apollo due to his iconography (a representation of a young man holding a pomegranate)¹⁴.

The existence of a temple dedicated to Zeus *Kasios* in Syria – this far in a mountain which toponym is also *Kasios* – suggests that the development of this cult in Egyptian territory could have been originated in the Syrian mountain *Kasios*. Votive stocks of anchors were found nearby with dedication to this manifestation of Zeus.

In this viewpoint of the classical sources, references to the cult of Zeus *Kasios*, are not conclusive, upon the fact of being mentioned either the Syrian mountain *Kasios* or its Egyptian homonym. The proximity of both centers of cult and the acknowledgment of the same toponym are partially responsible for this situation.

⁹ *Op. Cit.*, 5, 14, 68; 6, 33, 167.

¹⁰ *History*, 2, 6, 1; 2, 158, 4; 3, 5, 2-3.

¹¹ *Idem*, 3,5.

¹² CLÉDAT, 1923: 76.

¹³ *Idem*, 80.

¹⁴ Leucippe and Cleitophon, III, 6.

Nevertheless, the existence of both temples of Zeus attests the diffusion of religious cult from Syria to the Egyptian territory thus following the usual pattern detected in the material culture: cults (attested by stock anchors inscribed with divine names) spread from a central temple to the territories under its influence, thus originating the erection of other temples, usually in the coastline, built upon hills, capes or promontories.

The diffusion of these cults was certainly facilitated by the displacement and establishment of Greek and Semitic populations throughout the 10th century B.C. in the coastline of the Eastern Delta, a movement that had an important impact in the area. Furthermore, contacts between Egypt and Syria-Palestine ended with Greek piracy that frequently ravaged the area, bringing prosperity and stability¹⁵, thus creating the conditions for the construction of new sacred buildings.

BAAL SAPHON

The introduction of Canaanite gods in Egypt dates back from the occupation of the Hyksos, along the Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1780-1560 B.C.). Knowing a widespread diffusion all over the Mediterranean basin, the Ugaritic god Baal was introduced in Egypt as well, where he was identified with other autochthonous divinities, such as Montu or Seth, thus integrating a dual identity composed of Ugaritic features of Baal and attributes borrowed from Egyptian gods.

Comparison between Ugaritic textual description of Baal and the Egyptian iconography allows identifying several places where the god received cult. Egyptian iconography shows evidence of exogenous features probably derived from the very definition of Baal as attested in Ugaritic literature, such as «Cycle of Baal».

Baal Saphon is an Ugaritic manifestation of Baal that deals with the control of the atmospheric phenomena such as storms, thunders and lightening. It's not in strict senses a marine divinity but a god that bears a protective and favoring nature for navigators and their maritime wanderings.

Baal Saphon's worship in Egypt goes back to the Second Intermediate Period, as attested by a seal-stamp from Tell el Da'ba, in the Eastern Delta¹⁶. The Egyptian god Seth would have assimilated some of the attributes of the Syrian god Baal, especially those concerning to atmospheric phenomena, like the storms, retaining a few of the typically Syrian features of Baal¹⁷.

¹⁵ CLÉDAT, 1923: 157.

¹⁶ It was found in Tell el-Da'ba a seal-stamp where this divinity was represented. Iconographically a Syrian smiting god, in a standing position, with a long beard and each foot on a mountain. In one hand he brandishes a spear in the other an axe. In front, left side the image of a boat with two human figures rowing. This depiction is related to a divinity with climatic functionalities. Cf. PORADA, 1985: 485-488.

¹⁷ PORADA, 1985:157.

Evidence of worship in a number of locations testifies the ongoing cult performed to Seth/Baal-Saphon until the Ramesside Period. In Memphis, a Phoenician papyrus dated from the second half of the 6th century B.C., provides an interesting evidence on the diffusion of the this cult in Egypt. It consists on a private letter where a woman, probably living in Tahpanhes, salutes another one living in Memphis, in the name of Baal Saphon and other gods of Tahpanhes¹⁸.

Three references to mount Saphon can be found in a block of Aramaic texts in demotic writing, originated from Memphis, dating probably from the 5th century B.C., in close relation to the god Baal¹⁹.

Papyrus Sallier IV (v.s 1.6) – dating from the Ramesside Period – provides a list of divinities from Memphis mentioning Egyptian gods followed by a list of Canaanite divinities²⁰, where, among others, the name of Baal Saphon is cited.

During the 19th Dynasty Baal Saphon was worshipped under the form of the god Seth in Pi-Ramesse, the Egyptian capital in the Ramesside Period²¹. The earliest cult dedicated to this Syro-Palestinian deity was found in a temple in the city of Ugarit, located in mountain Saphon. Inside the temple innumerable deposits of votive block-anchors were found, material remnants that corroborate the marine protective character of this god²².

We must also bear in mind that in the Egyptian pantheon there was not a god that could correspond to the protective needs of sailors travelling in open sea. This god was worshipped in Peru-Nefer harbour, that according with Bietak's point of view would be located not in the surroundings of Memphis but closer to the Mediterranean, in Avaris²³.

This fact might have favored the penetration of the cult of Baal Saphon in Egypt which would have filled a gap in the Egyptian pantheon. The worship of Baal Saphon thus was concerned with the protection of navigators in open sea, which differs from riverine sailing.

Under the Greek domination, Baal Saphon was related with Zeus *Kasios* an oriental manifestation of Zeus which worship spread all over the oriental Mediterranean, not only in Ugarit and Egypt but also into the islands of Corcyra and Delos.

In the Book of Exodus, (Ex. 14: 2, 9) along the route of the Exodus it is mentioned a place near Baal Saphon, by the sea, where Pi-hahiroth should be located.

This place becomes the focus of an endless discussion in order to trace the route of the Exodus. In Nu, 33: 7 it would be «between de Migdol and the sea»²⁴.

¹⁸ Cf. VERRETH, 2006: 427.

¹⁹ VERRETH, 2006: 428.

²⁰ Divinities such as Baalat and Kadesh. It can also be pointed up the reference to these divinities in the papyrus *Hermiteage1116 A* (vs. 42), where Baal is included, VERRETH, 2006: 167.

²¹ BIETAK, 2011: 22-23.

²² PEREA YÉBENES: 2004: 99.

²³ BIETAK, 2011: 26-29.

²⁴ CHOMSKY, 1993: 99-101.

The association between the location where Baal Saphon would have had a temple and the biblical route of Exodus sets the chronology of Baal Saphon's cult, back to the New Kingdom, and somehow coherent with Late Greek and Roman sources, references of the sanctuary, that later would be associated to Zeus *Kasios*.

ZEUS KASIOS

The worship to Zeus *Kasios* emerged in Egypt in the Ptolemaic Period²⁵ in the sequence of miscegenation of attributes from a native Greek god – Zeus – with an autochthonous one, originally from Ugarit, Baal Saphon. This last god was introduced in Egypt due to the geographic proximity and to the regular cultural, economic and warlike contacts developed since the Second Intermediate Period, until the Greco-Roman Period.

The migration of Asiatic and Greek populations into Egyptian territory, had consequences on the religious interaction within local communities, which becomes visible in the material evidence²⁶ attesting a continuous acculturation. In this context Zeus *Kasios* emerges as an oriental manifestation of Zeus, merged with the local cult of Baal Saphon. Both gods shared several specificities, mainly due to the fact they are both divinities related to mythical mountains²⁷ and both had power over atmospheric phenomena.

According to textual sources, the epithet *Kasios* seems to be related to the primordial place of worship of this avatar of Zeus in Ugarit, Syria. During the Greek occupation, the Ugaritic mountain Saphon was renamed as *Kasios*. Nearby in Egypt, close to the important trade route known as «Ways of Horus», supposedly named after the original mountain in Ugarit, layed its homonym, the Egyptian mount *Kasios*.

Zeus *Kasios*'s avatar is often depicted under the form of a young man's image showing clear affinities with another Greek god, the young Apollo and to Harpocrates, the Hellenized designation of the Egyptian god Horus²⁸.

A coin, dated from 109 A.D. (Emperor Trajan's reign) referring to the province (or the Greek designation *nomos*) of *Pelusium*, presents an image of Harpocrates wearing the Egyptian *hemhemet*-crown²⁹, holding a scepter in the left hand and a grenade in the right hand.

The classical writer Aquila Tacitus in his work *Leucippe and Cleitophon* mentions the existence of a statue dedicated to Zeus *Kasios* in *Pelusium*; it describes this statue as the image of a young man similar to Apollo's, holding a grenade in his stretched hand³⁰. This

²⁵ Ca. 332 B.C.E.

²⁶ These evidences can be found in onomastic, toponymia, and in private and royal cults.

²⁷ Zeus from the mount Olympus, and Baal Saphon from the mount Saphon.

²⁸ BONNER, 1946: p. 52.

²⁹ According to COOK, 2010: 987, the Egyptian *hemhemet*-crown was one of the iconographical marks of Zeus *Kasios*, due to the fact that appears associated to the divinity name, even when there is no visual representation of the god.

³⁰ *Leucippe and Cleitophon*, III, 6.1.

description is also coincidental with the Apollonian representation that figures in Trajan's coin, also from this area. In *Leucippe and Cleitophon* it is attributed an oracular ability to the divinity. The characters should make a plea and run a complete turn around the temple, fulfilling a ritual in exchange for an oracular prediction, about the shipwrecked person's destiny. This feature of Zeus *Kasios* agrees with the apollonian appearance and with Apollo's oracular ability. Moreover, *Leucippe and Cleitophon* provides a brief description of the image and attributes of the god, confirming the visual attributes found in the Trajan's coin³¹.

Archaeological excavations carried out by Jean Clédat, in the coastal region of *Pelusium* brought to daylight the remains of an ancient temple from Adrian's reign (ca.122 A.D.) that according to the inscriptions was dedicated to Zeus *Kasios*³². Littman also references a very damaged Nabatean inscription found in El-Mahemdiya by the French Egyptologist Jean Clédat, where the name Zeus *Kasios* was inscribed. The inscription would have been found in an alabaster altar niche of the sanctuary³³.

The earliest cult known to Zeus *Kasios* would have its origins in a sanctuary located in a region 40 km from Ugarit, near Antioch, at the mouth of the Orontes River, corresponding to the mountain Saphon. *Kasios* or *Kasion* was the Greek designation.

CONCLUSIONS

All the region of the Delta was deeply Hellenized since the 3rd century B.C. onwards and for centuries it was a crossroad for Semitic and Near Eastern contacts thus facilitating the introduction and diffusion of Asiatic divinities that assume similar functions within the Egyptian pantheon.

It seems consensual among scholars the opinion that Zeus *Kasios* was an oriental *interpretation graeca* of the Greek native god Zeus, syncretized with the Canaanite god Baal Saphon, both in Antioch and Egypt during the Ptolemaic Period.

This manifestation of Zeus found in Egypt, mainly in locations where Baal Saphon was worshipped, most of them located in emplacements related to sea harbours or in the proximity of the Mediterranean Sea. This fact may be a lead to determine that Zeus *Kasios* in spite of not being a sea god was indeed a protective deity of the seafarers of the Mediterranean.

³¹ PEREA YÉBENES, 2004: 104.

³² It is a question of debate whether this temple rehabilitated previous existent structures of an earlier temple dedicated to the same divinity or if it was erected from scratch. Cf. CLÉDAT, 1913: 79-85.

³³ LITTMANN, 1954: 230-231.

Archaeological evidences show that Zeus *Kasios* was not only worshipped in the original Mountain *Kasios*, in Syria and Egypt. His cult also reached Delos, Corcyra and even the far Cape of Palos, in the Iberian Peninsula.

Zeus *Kasios* while absorbing some of the divine attributes of Baal Saphon, also captured some other features from the Greek god Apollo which was worshipped in this period in *Pelusium* as a Greek manifestation of the Egyptian god Horus. The Egyptian cult of Zeus *Kasios* thus presents an Hellenistic form of Horus that gather characteristics from Syrian, Egyptian and Greek divinities. This cult reflects the fusion of several cultural traditions present in the Delta.

Furthermore, the fusion of qualities taken from divinities with several origins and provenances aiming to fulfill a certain gap within the religious experience of the populations is a phenomenon typical of the multicultural background of the Hellenistic civilization.

The affinities between both gods as mountain divinities, Zeus from the Olympus and Baal from Mount Saphon, smooth the progress of blending the qualities of Baal Saphon into those of the Greek Zeus, creating a new Oriental metaphor, Zeus from the Mount *Kasios*, in Syria.

The nature of this cult and the proximity to other known centers of worship let us assume the possibility of diffusion of these practices especially towards Egypt where Baal Saphon was already worshipped since earlier periods. The establishment of another location of the cult with the same name *Kasios*, also dedicated to Zeus *Kasios* but in Egyptian territory, with earlier references of a sanctuary dedicated to Baal Saphon could document the need to reproduce the Syrian Mountain *Kasios* in Egyptian soil.

This cult extended itself through the Mediterranean basin until the Roman era under the name of Jupiter Cassius.

«LOST IN TRANSLATION»: THE HELLENIZATION OF THE EGYPTIAN TRADITION

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Abstract: *Starting with the guidelines that can help us to understand the framework of demotic culture during Greco-Roman Period this chapter is focused on the Egyptian background behind the multicultural tradition that rose in the Serapeum of Alexandria. Despite of its Hellenistic atmosphere, the Alexandrian Serapeum was the cradle of a new multicultural tradition: within its sacred precinct Greco-Egyptian deities received cult in the temple of Sarapis, while a multicultural community of scholars was actively engaged in the creation of a vast repertoire of texts and iconography. With its roots grounded on the Egyptian wisdom, such tradition was expressed in Greek or demotic philosophical discourses and was in use by a wide multicultural population, reaching so disparate territories as the Egyptian oasis of the Western Desert or the shores of the Atlantic.*

For more than three thousand years, the Egyptian civilization developed a unique culture which, although firmly grounded on its Nilotic background, would have a bold impact, not only among its African neighbours, but also in some of the cultures of the Ancient Near East. And yet, with the exception of political propaganda, it seems that Egypt never aimed to seek an audience in what concerns cultural exchange with its neighbours. Acculturation of local populations apparently occurred massively in Nubia, but no particular efforts seem to have been made to adapt the Egyptian culture and cults to the Nubian population. On the contrary, the foundation of Egyptian temples on occupied territories underwent a massive and deep Egyptianization of Nubia, to such an extent that, in the 25th Dynasty, Nubian

Pharaohs felt themselves entitled to remind the Egyptians of the «Egyptian» ways. As to the Asian neighbours, economic exchanges certainly led to the diffusion of Egyptian motifs, particularly as regards the use of Egyptian iconography in the decoration of objects. Nonetheless, the true Egyptianization seems restricted to the ruling elite: the children of the Asian city rulers were brought to Egypt to be educated in the royal *kep* itself in order to be instructed in the Egyptian culture, knowledge and literature¹. In spite of the restricted target of this acculturation, it certainly played a very important role in the diffusion of Egyptian wisdom and religious literature in the Near East. It is a strong possibility that this phenomenon may have created intellectual circles outside the borders of Egypt that were familiar with Egyptian literature. Such cultural trend eventually led to the translation of the Egyptian texts themselves, a phenomenon particularly clear in Israel, where such translation seems to have been the result of the scholarly work of biblical writers and not so much the result of Egyptian scholars aiming to reach foreign audiences².

EGYPTIAN TRADITION IN NEW CONTEXT: THE ALEXANDRIAN MULTICULTURALISM

Even according to contemporary definitions, Alexandrian society was fully multicultural: it «was at ease with the rich tapestry of human life and the desire amongst people to express their own identity in the manner they see fit»³. It is in this context that we assist, apparently for the first time, to a new cultural trend which consisted in the «translation» of the Egyptian tradition itself. Hellenistic language and culture was sought, in Greco-Roman Egypt, as a way to spread autochthonous ideas and cults to a foreign, wider audience.

It is with no surprise that we detect the first attempts of this cultural trend in the Hellenization of the iconography of the Egyptian gods. At the time of the Macedonian conquest, Memphis was the most important Egyptian city and, certainly for that reason, its local cult of Osirapis, a funerary manifestation of Apis, supposed to be the embodiment of the Ba (divine power) of Ptah, became the main source of inspiration for the new syncretic cult of Sarapis promoted by Ptolemy I. From then on, the once purely Egyptian deities manifested themselves with Hellenized names, such as Sarapis, Isis and Harpokrates (from the Egyptian Horpakhered, «Horus-the-child») and were fully rendered in Greek iconography⁴.

¹ SHAW (ed.), 2002: 245.

² The influence of Egyptian wisdom literature on biblical texts is detectable not only in the translation and adaptation of some of its texts but also in the influence of Egyptian in the Hebrew language. See SHUPAK, 1993: 348.

³ BLOOR, 2010.

⁴ Already in the Late Period, religious syncretism was as distinctive feature of Egyptian religion, which undoubtedly paved the way for the syncretic identification of Egyptian deities with Greek gods under Ptolemaic rule.

Once clad with Greek identities, these deities were soon escorted by other Greco-Egyptian deities such as Agathodaimon (the Egyptian god Shay, «Fate»)⁵, Hermanubis (resulting from the identification between Hermes and Anubis), Cerberus (the Greek guardian of the Hades equated with Anubis), Sirius (the star-goddess Sopdet) or Thermouthis (the Hellenized serpent-goddess Renenutet).

These cults not only resulted from a process of translation of the Egyptian tradition into Greek language and imagery, as they were the object of syncretic assimilation with Greek divinities as well. Without discarding the direct involvement of Egyptian priests in this «translation» process, still, it is a strong possibility that the Greeks themselves were actively involved as well. After all, Greek interest in the Egyptian gods is at least as old as the conquest of Egypt by Alexander. A temple of Isis at Piraeus is attested as early as the same year of the conquest of Egypt (332 B.C.)⁶. Under Ptolemaic rule, however, these cults soon became the very expression of the multicultural character of Alexandria.

The interaction of Greek and Egyptian traditions was brilliantly used by the Ptolemaic kings to empower their political and religious status in ways that would be difficult to achieve if they followed the traditional Macedonian ideology alone. In fact, Hellenization of the Egyptian deities involved a reversed process of Egyptianization of Hellenistic rulers⁷. Alexander started this process by adopting the horns of Amun in his own iconography and by making himself depicted in Egyptian temples, such as in the Luxor Temple, with the typical pharaonic regalia. Macedonian kings and Roman emperors followed his example, particularly in the walls of the newly built Egyptian temples, depicting themselves as «true» Pharaohs. Through this Egyptianization, Macedonian rulers gained divine status and achieved a broader acclamation of their «universal» power. Thus, Alexandrian multiculturalism must always be understood at the light of the political ideology of the Ptolemaic kings who search for their own «universal» acclamation.

With this ideological purpose in mind, Alexandrian art increasingly blurred the frontiers between the Egyptian and the Greek style. Royal statues once again give us a number of different examples of this phenomenon with Ptolemaic kings and queens adopting the hieratic attitude and regalia of the Egyptian tradition, while displaying a fair naturalistic portrait. The once purely Egyptian deities were also the object of intriguing sculptures, displaying a subtle combination of the Greek canon of proportions with the Egyptian hieratic attitude. One of the finest statues of this kind was recently found in the sunken site of the ancient Pharos lighthouse and it depicts the goddess Isis who, in spite of the hieratic attitude and Egyptian dress, presents an unexpected dynamism wisely achieved by means of the «wet drapery» that reveals her sensual body magnificently recalling the myth of

⁵ HORNUNG, BRYAN, 2007: 211.

⁶ HORNUNG, 2001: 64.

⁷ SALES, 2005: 52.

Aphrodite born from the sea. Reversely, some Greek sculptures – while displaying the typically Praxitelean smoothness – present an outstanding sense of sacredness achieved with the «solarization» of the forms, usual in royal or divine Egyptian statues. With time this trend evolved significantly and gave rise to the production of pieces that displayed an even more complex and deeper symbiosis. Such is the group statue depicting Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, the sons of Cleopatra and Antony: the twins are represented as the personifications of the Moon and the Sun depicted within the coils of two snakes. While the boy has a sun-disc on his head, the girl boasts a crescent and a lunar disc. Both discs are decorated with the *wedjat*-eye. This interesting composition mingles Egyptian symbols (*wedjat*-eye, the cobras and the side-lock of the boy) with the Greek representation of the sun and the moon as a couple (note that in Egypt the moon did not have a female connotation).

Even the dual identity of the Alexandrian deities themselves reflected this search for universalism. Mingling attributes borrowed from Ptah, Osiris, Amun, Zeus, Poseidon and Hades, the all-encompassing solar-chthonian god Zeus-Sarapis took his seat as *cosmocrator*, the supreme god of a truly multicultural Pantheon⁸. Isis reinforced her status of universal goddess, absorbing the qualities of Hathor and Nut, but also Demeter and Athena⁹, and soon enough she would be called «the one who is all»¹⁰. As to Harpocrates, being himself designated by many Hellenized names such as Harsiese (from the Egyptian name Horsaiset, «Horus son of Isis»), or Harendotes (from the Egyptian form Hornedjitef, «Horus the savior of his father»), was also the object of syncretic identification with the Greek Herakles, sometimes depicted wearing the typical mace of this mythic hero¹¹. Not surprisingly, in this syncretic process of «translation» and assimilation, the former Egyptian deities gained the status of truly universal gods. The newly founded Alexandrian cults – either divine or royal – were thus generating the culture cement that could bring together the multicultural population of Alexandria under the universal sovereignty of the Ptolemaic kings.

Furthermore, textual evidence, such as the famous Rosetta Stone or the Canopus Decree, fully documents a «bilingual» culture and society and may be seen as the very symbol of Alexandrian Hellenism. However, this «bilinguism» was not only the result of a sociological reality: either in texts or in iconography, Alexandrian «bilinguism» always expresses the search for universalism.

If nowadays it is difficult to have a clear idea of how deep multiculturalism was imprinted in the buildings of ancient Alexandria, its necropoleis provide a vivid glimpse on such cultural «bilinguism». It should be noted that, particularly in the funerary realm, such approach between the Greek and the Egyptian traditions was almost impossible to achieve,

⁸ WITT, 1997: 53.

⁹ Even outside Egypt, the cult of Isis was rapidly associated with the Greek cults of Athena and Demeter as it is showcased in the Iseum of Dion in Macedonia.

¹⁰ HORNING, 2001: 64. See also in this respect the article of Mona Haggag, *supra* in this volume.

¹¹ CORTEGGIANI, 1986: 176.

given the profound differences that separated their conceptions of the afterlife¹². The arriving Hellenistic settlers brought with them their own traditions of funerary monuments and rituals, usually involving cremation or urn burials. Such burials can be found in Alexandria with cinerary urns placed in *loculi*, rather than the corpse¹³. Sometimes it is possible to detect in the same tomb the use of cremation and inhumation, some of the latter with mummified bodies¹⁴. Curiously enough, in a land where burning of the corpse was considered the ultimate punishment, new funerary practices were rapidly adopted merging both Classical and Egyptian traditions¹⁵.

The catacombs of Kom el-Shogafa are famous for its hybrid style of the decoration showcasing the diffusion of Egyptian iconographical elements in Alexandrian tombs¹⁶. In this respect, a secondary group of tombs positioned around the so-called «Hall of Caracalla» presents particularly interesting features for our discussion. From the cloister of eight rock-cut tombs, only two (tombs 1 and 2) still display some of the original decoration painted on the white stuccoed walls. These tombs date back to the Roman occupation (late 1st century or early 2nd century A.D.) and each wall is divided in two registers. Those from the upper register are depicted in Egyptian style, whereas those from the lower register are depicted in pure Greek style. The surviving features of their iconographic program are similar, although presumably executed by different artists¹⁷.

In the upper register, the central wall features the typical embalming scene of Osiris (Fig. 1): the god lies on a bed while Anubis performs the funerary rites before Isis and Nephthys, who protect the mummy of Osiris with their wings. Horus stands behind the two goddesses. The left wall depicts Thoth standing before an enthroned Osiris, while the right wall presents the resurrection of Osiris depicted in standing position between two enthroned deities.

The lower register is decorated with scenes related to the myth of Persephone. In the central wall, Hades is depicted on his chariot, taking Persephone in his arms while Artemis, Athena and Aphrodite watch the event (Fig. 1). In the left wall, Persephone rests in a luxurious garden with flowers, sources, nymphs and a river-god. In the right wall (only the decoration of tomb 2 remains), Persephone is depicted coming out from the underworld in the cave of Eleusis, assisted by her mother Demeter (left), Hermes (center) and Hecate (right)¹⁸.

¹² Seemingly such Egyptianization can be detected in the theme of the weighing of the heart, already in Homer. See RODRIGUES, 2006: 247-258.

¹³ Tomb BI at Gabbari presents a vast number of loculi some of which held both cremations and inhumations. DODSON, IKRAM, 2008: XXVIII.

¹⁴ Tomb BI at Gabbari. DODSON, IKRAM, 2008: XXVIII.

¹⁵ DODSON, IKRAM, 2008: 292-293.

¹⁶ VENIT, 2002: 124-145. See also in this volume the article of Kyriakos Savvopoulos.

¹⁷ GUIMIER-SORBERTS, 1998: 34-37.

¹⁸ GUIMIER-SORBERTS, 1998: 34-37.

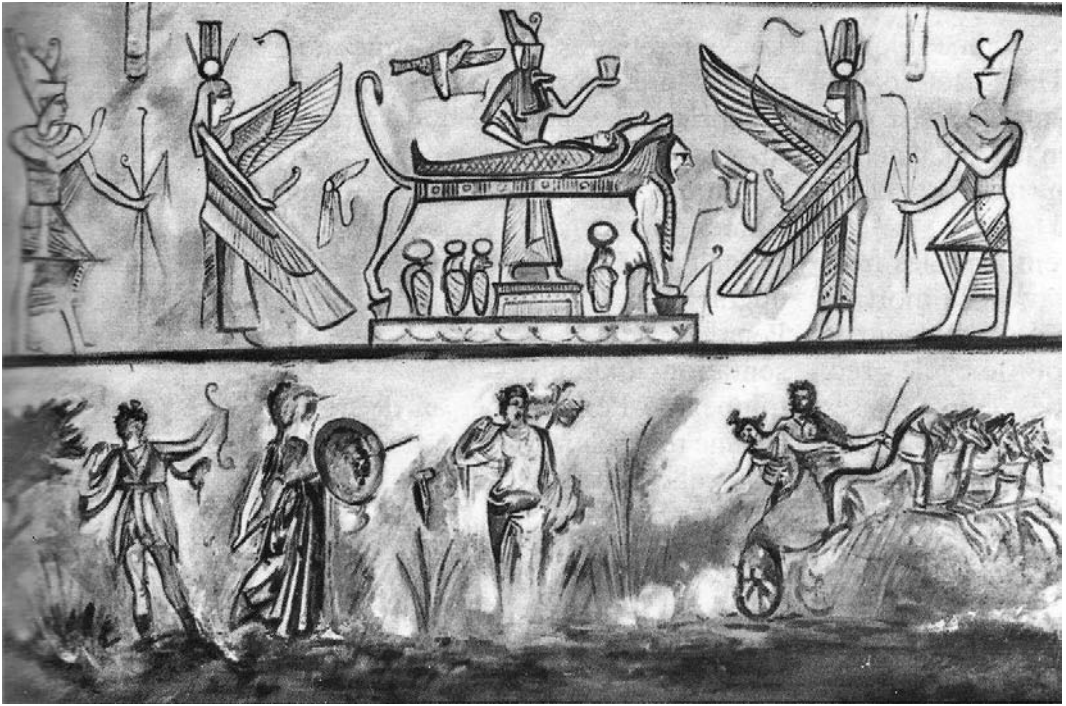


Fig. 1: Kom el-Shogafa, Hall of Caracalla, tomb 2, central wall.

Such program clearly documents that the hybrid Greek-Egyptian style displayed in most of the tombs of Alexandria was not merely a question of fashion. It shows that the myths of Osiris and Persephone were being taken as parallel mythic cycles, both expressing the idea of resurrection. We could say that, at the level of iconography, these tombs display the same bilingual culture that created the Rosetta Stone. However, an important distinction must be made: while the official Ptolemaic documents merely looked for an equality of status, the «bilingual» tombs of Kom el-Shogafa attest a deeper inquiry. In other words, it is clear that in Roman Alexandria both traditions became the object of a search for meaning, perhaps looking for an universal interpretation of their myths, thus attesting that the search for universalism was no longer just a matter of political ideology and fully become a distinctive feature of the Alexandrian culture.

THE EGYPTIAN NECROPOLEIS IN GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

The Hellenization of the Egyptian tradition, merging both Classical and Egyptian motifs, did not remain restricted to Alexandria. This process started immediately in the context of the Egyptian necropoleis themselves, where tomb decoration, extremely rare in

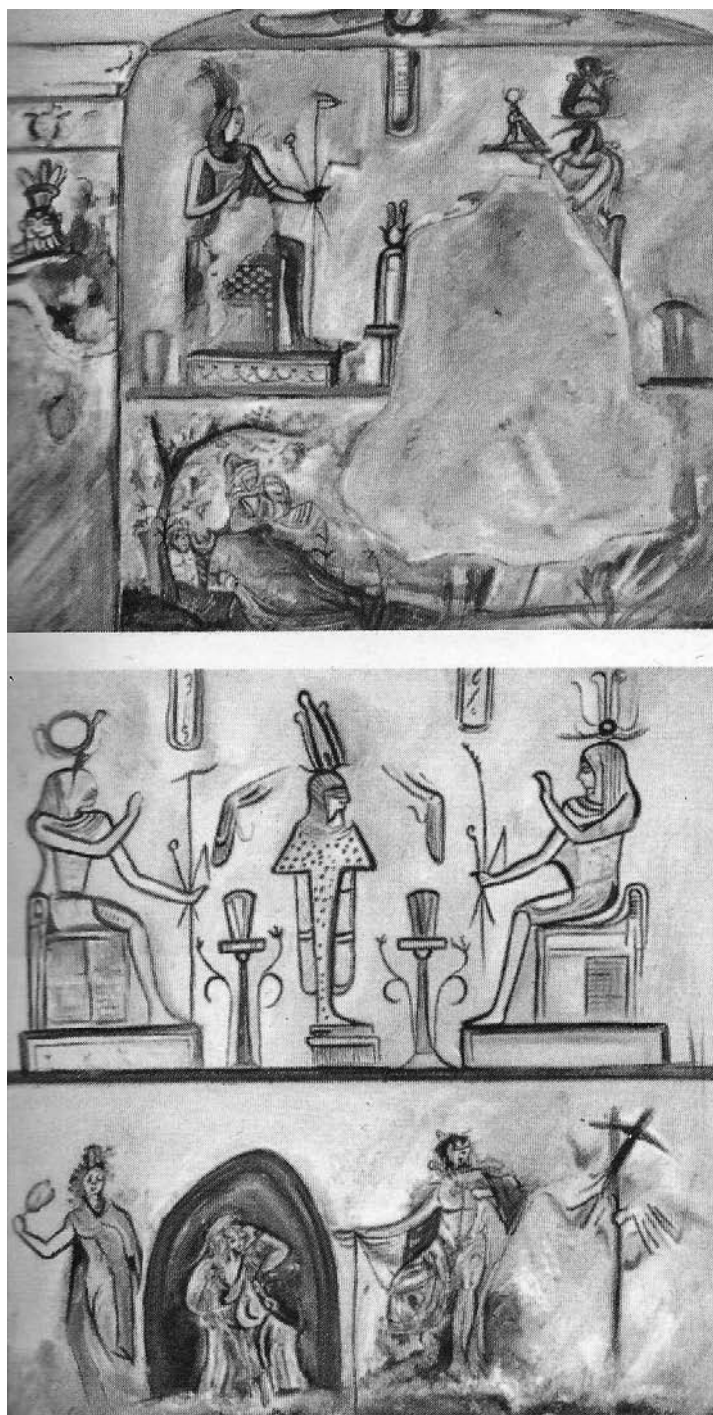


Fig. 2a: Kom el-Shogafa, Hall of Caracalla, tomb 1 (left wall) and tomb 2 (right wall).



Fig. 2b: Kom el-Shogafa, Hall of Caracalla, tomb 1, central wall.

Ptolemaic Egypt, also displays such an erudite combination of Egyptian and Hellenistic features, as it is the case of the rock-cut tomb of Siamon (Siwa oasis) dating from the early Ptolemaic times, where the deceased, depicted in Greek fashion, participates in the Egyptian funerary rites, such as the Opening-of-the-mouth ritual, or in the traditional scenes of the afterlife, such as the weighing of the heart.

In fact, interest in syncretic approaches can be detected in Egyptian sources from the very beginning of Macedonian occupation. The most remarkable example in this respect is the tomb of Petosiris, high priest of Thoth under Ptolemy I (in Tuna el-Gebel). The tomb chapel is designed as a temple, presenting two styles of decoration. The pronaos of the tomb is decorated with the Egyptian mundane themes related to the activities of the daily life, but the human figures are depicted in Greek clothing and attitudes, while in the inner room the decoration is purely Egyptian style and it is exclusively devoted to religious and sacred motifs¹⁹. Although mingling the Greek and Egyptian styles, we detected in the tomb of Petosiris a veiled tension between the two traditions: while a strong sense of sacredness is associated with the Egyptian style, the Greek fashion is somehow diminished and publicly

¹⁹ BAGNALL, RATHBONE, 2004: 167.

«mocked» by its identification with peasants and shepherds, the lowest social stratum of the Egyptian society.

This particular trend of «syncretism» was short lived: in Ptolemaic times, monumental tombs decorated in Egyptian style fall in disuse, due to a profound change of patterns in the use of Egyptian necropoleis. The reuse of earlier sepulchers for collective burials is now the rule, sometimes with addition of new chambers provided with the typical individual *loculi* of Greco-Roman tombs. In some regions, such as in the Fayum, mummies apparently remained for considerable periods among the living, perhaps housed inside a wooden shrine kept at home or in a public repository. Periodically these bodies were removed to the necropolis but not to be buried in an individual or family tomb but to be piled together in mass brick-lined burial pits²⁰.

Burial practices also underwent a process of profound change with the evergrowing importance of collective burials and cheaper mummification techniques which, for the first time in ancient Egypt, originated a true democratization of the necropoleis, a phenomenon in which the Hellenistic element seems to have played a decisive role since, against the usual practice, Greeks and Romans settlers did search for mummification²¹. The disparate use of mummification by the Greek and the Roman elite is one of the most striking phenomena of cultural «contamination» of the Hellenic population by Egyptian burial practices. However, while adopting mummification, the new settlers also transformed it: the attention of the embalmers shifted from the preservation of the corpse itself to its external appearance: it is not uncommon that beautiful wrappings hide crude and inferior procedures of preservation of the corpse²².

It is not surely coincidental that with the Greek era the development of cartonnage adornments of the mummy has been greatly expanded. Beautifully painted collars, pectorals or mummy-masks were fixed to the mummy, usually showcasing traditional Egyptian motifs such as the four Sons of Horus, Anubis, winged goddesses and sacred scarabs producing a colourful and beautiful effect suitable for public display before burial. In the mummy-masks it is worthy to note the depiction of curly hair over the forehead of the deceased, a typical Hellenistic motif introduced in royal portraits since the Ptolemaic Period²³. While the decoration of the masks tends to observe the Egyptian idealized style, mummy-masks and portraits become progressively more naturalistic thus suggesting a stronger attachment to the everyday existence than before. Many of these masks show the deceased in Greek garments with Egyptian motifs relegated to subordinate positions²⁴. The Greek or Roman elements, such as hairstyle, short beard or clothing, seem to be included

²⁰ DODSON, IKRAM, 2008: 297.

²¹ TAYLOR, 2001: 87.

²² TAYLOR, 2001: 91.

²³ WILDUNG, REITER, ZORN, 2010: 179. IKRAM, DODSON: 1998: 187-188.

²⁴ TAYLOR, 2001: 243.

in the funerary equipment in order to display the high rank of the deceased and may not be related at all to his ethnic identity. The Greek element thus became omnipresent in the autochthonous necropoleis.

The opposite process also occurred with Egyptian motifs integrated into typically Greek funerary materials. In Terenouthis (Kom Abu Billo) were found carved stelae dating from the late 1st to early 3rd centuries A.D. These gravestones represent the deceased, clad in Greek garments, with hands raised in worship (as an *orans*) or reclining at a banquet, perhaps their own funerary banquet. Besides the inscription with the name and date of death of the deceased, iconography often includes Egyptian features such as architectonic elements and gods (especially in their animal form)²⁵.

Eventually, these processes evolved to the full manifestation of a multicultural identity. Funerary shrouds dating from the Roman Period, present a full combination of the complex and multicultural set of ideas and artistic styles that coexisted in Greco-Roman Egypt. The deceased, depicted at the center of the shroud, wears a Hellenistic garment and his depiction is naturalistic, following the style of the Roman portraits – such as it occurs in the contemporary «Fayum portraits». At his left side figures the jackal-headed god Anubis and at his right side stands Osiris (depicted as an Egyptian mummy but in full frontal view). At the background, small depictions include mummification and judgment scenes typical of the Egyptian funerary tradition. Most significantly, the deceased holds a papyrus scroll or a bunch of flowers, suggesting his identification either with a Greek Philosopher (papyrus scroll) or with a justified Osiris (bunch of flowers). Shrouds like these fully attest that a fully multicultural identity was achieved, at least in the realm of the funerary beliefs²⁶.

The local funerary traditions thus document the magnitude of multiculturalism in later Egypt. It should be noted that such processes occurred quite naturally and didn't necessarily require the adoption of non-Egyptian features. It could manifest itself simply in the way how pharaonic tradition was adopted and adapted for contemporary use. Anthropoid coffins, for example, fell progressively out of use: mummies of the Greco-Roman Period relied on the elaboration of their wrappings and cartonnage equipment turning the anthropoid coffins obsolete²⁷. Sarcophagi, on the other hand, were still being used, although seldom for an individual: more often they were used as shrines or «pavilions» for the public display of mummies, according to «evidence that mummies remained for some time accessible to the living before consignment to the necropolis»²⁸. Even religious beliefs were under revision: for the first time, female anthropoid coffins of Ptolemaic or early Roman times

²⁵BAGNALL, RATHBONE: 2008: 81.

²⁶MÁLEK, 2003: 356.

²⁷IKRAM, DODSON: 1998: 241.

²⁸IKRAM, DODSON: 1998: 273.

describe the deified female deceased as «Hathor», as opposed to the traditional male title «Osiris» always used as a funerary title both for men and women²⁹.

The patterns of use of the necropolis were changing: now it was no longer confined to the funerary use and more and more it was becoming a public space, we almost could see it as a funerary «forum» or «agora», where very popular cults took place. The animal cults, already important in the Late Period, attracted to the necropoleis a multitude of pilgrims from Egypt and the Mediterranean that visited their renowned oracles, such as occurred in the Serapeum at Saqqara³⁰. Deified sages were also the object of very popular cults as healing deities, such as the cult of Imhotep (equated with Asklepius) in the Asklepeum in Saqqara and, together with Amenhotep son of Hapu, in the former funerary temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (Thebes). Surprisingly enough Greek «prophets» were allowed to live and work in the oracles of the Egyptian necropoleis. During the 2nd century B.C. we know that Ptolemaios, a son of a Macedonian general, lived in Saqqara in the vicinity of the temple devoted to the Canaanite goddess Astarte. There he worked as a dream interpreter in the sanatorium of the Asklepeum, the temple of the deified Imhotep³¹. Also found at Saqqara, a painted limestone trade sign, now in Cairo Egyptian Museum (27567) presents the image of an Apis bull and a Greek inscription: «At the god's command I interpret dreams. Good fortune. The interpreter is a Cretan»³². Apparently, Greek dream interpreters were favored in Egyptian oracles, perhaps due to the health of Greek customers.

Egyptian necropoleis thus reveal that multiculturalism did not manifest exclusively in the changes detected in the production of the funerary artifacts or in the design of tombs. It deeply affected local traditions which, in turn, were also open to new inputs and absorbed influences selectively showcasing vivid interest on innovative features, as has it always occurred in Pharaonic Egypt³³. As a consequence of the new demographic influx, the use of Egyptian necropoleis was now deeply contaminated by Hellenistic social patterns. Multiculturalism was now a distinctive feature of Egyptian funerary practices.

EGYPTIAN TEMPLES IN GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

Temples of the Ptolemaic and Roman times are the result of an extensive temple building program, probably initiated by the Egyptian priests themselves³⁴. All over Egypt temples were built or expanded, such as the temples of Hathor at Dendera, Khnum at Esna,

²⁹ Such is the case of the coffins from Akhmim. WALKER, HIGGS, 2001: 109.

³⁰ TAYLOR, 2001: 255.

³¹ CHAVEAU, 2000: 130-140.

³² BAGNALL, RATHBONE, 2004: 91.

³³ SOUSA, 2011c: 131-150.

³⁴ FINNESTAD, 1997: 185.

Horus at Edfu, Sobek and Horus at Kom Ombo and Isis at Philae. Although apparently conforming to the Egyptian tradition, the late temples clearly display a renovation of the «classical» model. Sacred precincts present a number of architectonic distinctive features, such as the typical screen wall of the pronaos, or the conception of the innermost sanctuary as an independent structure erected within the main building and, last but not the least, the so-called «birth houses» erected in the vicinity of the main temple³⁵.

Nevertheless, the most distinctive feature of the new style of temples is its decoration. The walls of these temples are heavily decorated with texts and iconography and they can be seen as huge reservoirs of the Egyptian knowledge. The texts carved on the walls are apparently extracts from the collection of books kept in the temple archives, and they are representative of the entire spectrum of ancient Egyptian religion and scholarly learning. Monumental inscriptions refer to rituals and myths but also to calendars, astronomy or medical tools. Later temples are literally the translation of temple's knowledge into architecture and through them cultic knowledge preserved in books could be transformed into action through the appropriate rites³⁶.

In fact, temples of Greco-Roman Egypt are all about knowledge. It would be difficult to see in this renovation of the Egyptian temples some kind of influence by the Greek occupants. And yet, in spite of the royal support³⁷, they fully represent a reaction towards the Greek culture.

As a local reservoir of the Pharaonic knowledge, each temple literally «petrified» the local tradition into a complex set of buildings. Certainly this role was reflected in the importance of sacred books as well. In each temple, a local selection of sacred books was enshrined in a small library that codified the entire treasury of relevant knowledge for that particular community³⁸. The sacred libraries of Edfu and el-Tod still display a catalogue of the books they hold. These catalogues reckon 42 books in each temple and correspond to a local canon intending to represent the universe in book form³⁹. Obviously they do not reflect the entire corpus of texts available in the «Per Ankh» or the House of Life – the school and the library of the temple – which was certainly much more extensive⁴⁰. The scribes and scholars of the House of Life were called by the Greeks *hierogrammateis*. Some

³⁵ FINNESTAD, 1997: 185.

³⁶ ASSMANN, 2002: 419.

³⁷ The Ptolemies followed a dual policy toward the great Egyptian temples. On the one hand, the temples' political and economic power was decisively curtailed. On the other hand, the Ptolemies supported the extensive program of building and rebuilding Egyptian temples. FINNESTAD, 1997: 233.

³⁸ ASSMANN, 2002: 412.

³⁹ Mirroring the 42 provinces of Egypt, the canon of 42 books described in the reliefs of the sacred libraries reflects the desire of self-segregation and canonization. Forty-two was in fact allusive to the 42 nomes of Egypt, thus suggesting the identification between the books and the world. ASSMANN, 2002: 413.

⁴⁰ Therefore we should distinguish the sacred libraries (positioned inside the temple) from the archives of the House of Life (positioned in a separate building probably used also as a school).

were priests, all were guardians of liturgical and other kinds of texts, coping and commenting on them, but were also involved in the administration and management of temple's properties. They worked in temple annexes that housed the libraries and served as places of studying and writing⁴¹. This community had his own way of life characterized by asceticism and contemplation, forming what can be seen as a «textual community»⁴².

Late Egyptian temples were certainly not isolated from the rest of the society. However, while most of the sectors of the Egyptian society revealed a notorious openness to the Hellenistic element, in the context of the Egyptian temples the response to foreign occupation took form in the tendency toward self-segregation. The development of cryptography is precisely a distinctive feature of the intellectual culture of later Egyptian temples. The result was the exponential growth of the repertory of signs with almost every religious center developing its own cryptic system⁴³.

In spite of the desire for self-segregation, the temples of later Egypt were important socioreligious forums for exchanging religious beliefs among large numbers of people, and of course the frequent temple festivals became lively meeting places for the population of neighbouring towns. Popular devotional activities took place around the temple, often assisted by priests. Many people came specifically for dream interpretations or oracles. Others visited, often from great distances, to seek medical help at those temples reputed to be centers of healing. Within the precincts of Hathor's temple at Dendera there was a *sanatorium* with baths and probably also facilities for healing incubation. Oddly enough, such devices are typical of the *sanatoria* from the Hellenistic sacred precincts (Epidauros), thus revealing an unexpected Greek «contamination» of the Egyptian temples⁴⁴.

This «contamination» shows that even inside the sacredness of the temple's precinct, other intellectual forces were at work. In our view, the source for this trend could not be other than the House of Life.

Egyptian temples of Greco-Roman Period housed complex multidimensional communities which were simultaneously involved in the retrograde search for the «right» knowledge and in the prospective transformation and recreation of the temple, i.e., the «world». These two tendencies reflected in two cultural trends. One, enclosed within the secrecy of ritual practices, involved a centripetal phenomenon of self-segregation and manifested itself in a canon of texts kept secret in the sacred library of the temple. The other, centrifuge in nature, grew up in the open and broader context of the «House of Life» and was open to the influxes of the (multicultural) community that surrounded the temple.

⁴¹ FINNESTAD, 1997: 228.

⁴² ASSMANN, 2002: 418.

⁴³ ASSMANN, 2002: 418.

⁴⁴ FINNESTAD, 1997: 236.

These two literary trends were always active in Egyptian religion and can be assigned respectively to the cult activities in *stricto sensu* (ritual and magical texts) and to the wisdom tradition (theological texts)⁴⁵. As a reflex of this «dual» definition of the Egyptian religion, its Hellenization must be seen as a dual process as well: one based on ritual knowledge of the sacred libraries of the temple and the other grounded on the theological texts of the House of Life.

THE EGYPTIAN CONNECTION: DEMOTIC CULTURE IN THE GRECO-ROMAN PERIOD

In close association to the Hellenization of the Egyptian intellectual tradition is its own «demotization». This process is again better illustrated in the funerary context. Perhaps as a result of the new cultural influxes detected in local necropoleis, changes deeply affected the funerary literature. During the second half of the Ptolemaic Period, there was a significant decline in the production of the Book of the Dead manuscripts, while other funerary compositions rose in production – such as the Documents of Breathing and the Book of Traversing Eternity. The reasons for this decline are difficult to grasp but it is possible that purchasers preferred their Netherworld guides to be written in contemporary demotic language, which of course originated less sacred artifacts than if written with hieroglyphic or even hieratic scripture. Yet, these demotic objects were preferred and regarded by customers as more useful, since they could understand them⁴⁶. The adoption of the Documents of Breathing thus supposes not only a different social organization of the necropoleis⁴⁷ but a new intellectual trend that aimed to express itself in a living language rather than a sacred but unintelligible script.

It is worthy to note that during Greco-Roman Egypt, scribes were using four different writing systems: demotic and Greek for everyday purposes, and hieroglyphic and hieratic for religious purposes. Only erudite scholars could understand the Egyptian language cyphred both in the hieroglyphic and hieratic writing⁴⁸. Demotic, on the contrary, must be seen as the privileged interface for the cultural interaction between Pharaonic tradition and Hellenism. In fact, ordinary scribes used demotic and Greek.

In the Egyptian temples some of the priests knew Greek and maintained contact with Greek scholars. Egyptian tradition in the Ptolemaic Period was vigorous and in full dialogue with much of the Hellenistic thought⁴⁹. We have to keep in mind that, legendary or

⁴⁵ ASSMANN, 2001: 3-7.

⁴⁶ MUNRO, 2010: 59.

⁴⁷ Because they were written in demotic, it is also possible that these texts could have been copied without a formal supervision of professional priests or a temple: they could have been handed down simply by scribes working in the necropolis.

⁴⁸ ASSMANN, 2002: 414-415.

⁴⁹ FINNESTAD, 1997: 228.

not, contact with Greek scholars begun long before the conquest of Alexander, thus originating the appearance of Egyptian motives in Greek texts, such as it occurred in Plato's or in Herodotus's writings. After the Macedonian invasion, however, Ptolemaic rulers actively encouraged the composition of scholarly works devoted to the Egyptian tradition, such as the historiographical work by Manetho, a priest of the temple of Re in Heliopolis, which constitutes a remarkable example of this new cultural trend. Although commissioned by Ptolemy II, such work can be properly considered as one of the first native attempts to translate autochthonous Egyptian tradition to a highly receptive Hellenistic audience. It is to be noted that such translation required the work of an indigenous scholar knowledgeable in the pharaonic tradition and learned in Greek language as well, and – most certainly – well acquainted with Greek historical literature, such as Herodotus's writings⁵⁰. Egyptian scholars thus become active in the construction of a new civilization that aimed to reach universalism by means of its bilingual culture.

This same period witnessed to the increasing production of naturalistic «portraits» of sages: aging men displaying high social status and severe dignity. Some of them stand among the most accomplished sculptural works of Egyptian Art, depicting men with bold heads, hieratic attitude and clad with a long garment typical of the priests. These «wise men» present a very naturalistic rendering of the anatomical structure of the face and head, also displaying vivid «psychological» portraits. One could think of Hellenistic influence in the anatomical representation of aging men but such naturalism is also detected in purely Egyptian sculpture⁵¹. This is perhaps one of the most extraordinary corpus of Egyptian sculpture and surely reflects the important role performed by «sages» in Ptolemaic Egypt⁵².

This veneration for the wise men extended to and perhaps was inspired by the deification of the sages of the past. We have already mentioned the popularity and boldness of the cults of Imhotep and Amenhotep son of Hapu. This veneration is well documented in Egyptian demotic literature where sages from the past became the heroes of tales. These tales tell us that the special status of these men is specifically due to their knowledge on the sacred texts. In the demotic *Story of Setne Khaemwas* (Khaemwas was son of Ramses II and high priest of Ptah at Memphis,) the hero searches for a divine book written by Thoth «with his own hand». The book had the power to reveal «how it is possible by one magic formula

⁵⁰ See *supra* in this volume, the article of Luís Manuel de Araújo.

⁵¹ This naturalistic trend is detected as far as the 4th Dynasty in the royal statues of Menkhaure, but also in private statues, such as the bust of Ankhaf. Naturalistic royal portraits were also produced in the 12th Dynasty, especially under Senuseret III and Amenemhat III and in the 18th Dynasty, during the reign of Akhenaten, with special emphasis to the famous head of Nefertiti or Queen Tiy. See WILDUNG, REITER, ZORN, 2010: 84. The later example is particularly interesting for our discussion since it showcases the face of a «wised» woman who has grown old.

⁵² MÁLEK, 2003: 347. This type of statues were also carved with pure Hellenistic portraits, such as it occurs in the statue of Hor, priest of Thoth (see WALKER, HIGGS, 2001: 182-183), where the influence of Roman portraiture seems to have been very skillfully merged with the Egyptian sculptural tradition giving.

to enchant the sky, the earth, and the infernal regions, the mountains and the seas, to understand the language of the birds and reptiles, and then by a second formula to recover one's own identity»⁵³. The search for knowledge thus reflects, in the demotic tradition, the quest for magical power, both contained and revealed by the sacred books.

The attribution of the authorship of the sacred books to Thoth is proverbial in ancient Egyptian literature and it can be traced back as far as the Middle Kingdom. In the tale *Khufu and the Magicians*, the great magician Djedi is supposed to be gifted with great magical power because «he knows the number of the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth. Now the majesty of King Khufu had been spending time searching for the secret chambers of the sanctuary of Thoth in order to copy them for his temple»⁵⁴.

The search for secret texts related to Thoth is a traditional motif of the Egyptian literature and it can be found in funerary texts, as well. Several chapters of the Book of the Dead were supposedly «miraculously» found by the prince Djedefhor, son of the king Khufu (4th Dynasty), also taken as a great magician, at the feet of a statue of Thoth, or in a secret chamber of his temple in Hermopolis⁵⁵.

Written in demotic, the Book of Thoth reveals a later development of this intellectual trend. It was probably written in the 1st century A.D.⁵⁶. Thoth imparts information regarding the netherworld, ethics, the sacred geography of Egypt, secret language and mysteries. Most interestingly, the text displays many correspondences with the *Hermetica*⁵⁷. Such demotic text was clearly written by Egyptian priests, using Egyptian language to express their own tradition and, yet, it reveals knowledge akin to the hermetic tradition, which is traditionally considered a purely Hellenistic product.

Although the influence of Egyptian tradition in Hermetic texts has been greatly overlooked⁵⁸, today, however, it is acknowledged that hermetic texts made use of genuine Egyptian knowledge⁵⁹. The *Corpus Hermeticum* comprises 18 Greek treatises and the Latin *Asklepius*, dating back from the 1st to late 3rd century A.D. Some of these texts are of a theological-philosophical nature, while others comprise magical, astrological or alchemical content⁶⁰. In spite of the massive destruction of Hellenistic texts, we can still have a glimpse nowadays on what once must have been an immense literary corpus. When we consider

⁵³ This tale is written in a demotic papyrus found at Thebes in the tomb of a Coptic monk. It is dated from the Ptolemaic Period. See SALEH, SOUROUZIAN, 1987: n° 262.

⁵⁴ LICHTHEIM, 1975: 118

⁵⁵ See rubrics of chapter 30-b and chapter 64 of the Book of the Dead.

⁵⁶ JASNOW, ZAUZICH, 2005: 68

⁵⁷ HORNUNG, 2001: 48.

⁵⁸ Festugière greatly contributed to strengthen this idea, highlighting the predominance of Greek philosophical elements and reducing Egyptian influence to merely decorative motifs. EBELING, 2007: 9.

⁵⁹ However, the genuinely Egyptian concepts of the Hermetic tractates have been stressed after the discovery of the manuscripts of Nag Hammadi. EBELING, 2007: 30.

⁶⁰ EBELING, 2007: 9.

the hermetic texts found in the library of Nag Hammadi, it becomes clear that such texts document the existence of an intellectual tradition that expressed itself in demotic, Greek⁶¹ and Coptic⁶², with the texts from the *Corpus Hermeticum* as its later product. As the new findings suggest the Hermetica were not an isolated corpus and must be seen in a broader cultural perspective. For commodity, although they are usually used exclusively to designate the texts from the Hermetica, we will keep the Modern designations of «hermetic texts» or «Hermeticism», while referring to this broader multicultural intellectual trend highly dependent on the native demotic tradition, keeping in mind that such designations were not in use in Antiquity.

The content of the hermetic texts is heterogeneous and, in spite of the Hellenistic atmosphere, it can be traced back to traditional Egyptian motifs. It is clear that the *Asklepius* and its apocalyptic prophecy is a later product of pure Egyptian tradition that began with the *Admonitions of Ipuwer*, the *Prophecy of Neferti* and similar texts from the Middle Kingdom⁶³. This literary tradition continued on to the Ptolemaic Period with texts such as the *Nectanebo's Tale*, the *Demotic Chronicle*, the *Prophecy of the Lamb* or the *Oracle of the Potter*. Compositions such as the *Asklepius* suggest a strong Hellenized context, which perhaps, even in the 3rd century, could only have been possible in Alexandria.

However, autochthonous cultural centres should have played an important role in the creation of such tradition. The Memphite temple of Ptah was perhaps one of the most likely contexts for the development of such demotic intellectual tradition⁶⁴. This could explain many of the key features of hermetic theory, starting with Hermes Trismegistus himself. In fact, in the Hermetica, Trismegistus does not emerge as a god, but as a Philosopher instead, a supersage mixing the features of Plato, Moses and, above all, the deified Egyptian sage Imhotep (c. 2650 B.C.) who lived under the reign of Djoser Netjererkhet and performed such important tasks as the king's chief physician, high priest of Heliopolis and builder of the first pyramid ever erected in Egypt, the Stepped Pyramid at Saqqara. In later times, Imhotep was not only believed to be the founder of Egyptian wisdom and regarded as the very prototype of the sage, but also, from the 26th Dynasty onwards, he became a god in his own right. In Ptolemaic times, he was equated with the Greek god Asklepius and received cult as a healing deity. Finally, in the hermetic texts Hermes Trismegistus figures as a deified Philosopher, resulting from the Hellenization of the Egyptian cult of Imhotep. On the other hand his name fully displays his hybrid origin: he combines the Greek god Hermes with Thoth's epithet, «three times great», thus fully embodying the multicultural archetype of sacred wisdom – both Greek and Egyptian.

⁶¹ This is the case of the Hermetica.

⁶² A significant number of hermetic texts found in Nag Hammadi, some of them belonging to the *Corpus Hermeticum*, were also written in demotic and Coptic.

⁶³ HORNING, 2001: 51.

⁶⁴ LLOYD, 2002: 414.

Although grounded on a demotic tradition, the *Hermetica*, as we know them, present Egyptian content fully expressed in a philosophical discourse, which in itself is a Greek innovation. Hence, such texts could only have been the result of a close cooperation between Greek philosophers deeply akin to Egyptian tradition and Hellenized Egyptian scholars. The Alexandrian Serapeum emerges again as the melting pot for the development and blooming of this multicultural intellectual trend.

THE ALEXANDRIAN SERAPEUM AND THE CREATION OF A «UNIVERSAL» TRADITION

As we already mentioned, Alexandrian gods attained the status of universal deities. Regardless of its origin, the universal character of Sarapis is usually seen as the result of the syncretic assimilation of several supreme gods as Hades, Zeus, Osiris and Helios. Nevertheless the characterization of Sarapis presents a much better correspondence with the divine definition of one particular Egyptian god, Ptah. Conspicuously overlooked by scholars, Ptah presents all the aspects of the divine definition of the Alexandrian deity and it was surely in this god that Sarapis found his archetypes. As a chthonian god, Ptah was a god of the underworld and as such he was the provider of the people of Egypt. The god presided over the fertility of the land and the growth of vegetation – one of his epithets was exactly the «Granary of Tatenen». His chthonian character gave him power over minerals that provided rich materials as stones and metals. But, above all, Ptah was the supreme god, creator of all living things but also a funerary deity with Osirapis as his manifestation. In spite of his chthonian definition, this supreme god also gained solar connotations when he became equated with Shu – the Heliopolitan god of light and divine utterance. As early as the New Kingdom, Ptah fully achieved the status of a supreme deity, thus paving the way for the proclamation of Sarapis as cosmocrator, the universal deity gifted with solar and chthonian attributes⁶⁵.

The foundation of the cult of Sarapis occurred between the reigns of Ptolemy I and II, between 285 and 282 B.C. The earliest dedication found at the site of the Alexandrian Serapeum dates back to the reign of Ptolemy II, with the formal sanctuary being dedicated under Ptolemy III⁶⁶. When a fire destroyed the temple in 181 A.D., it was rebuilt (by 217 A.D.) on a still larger scale⁶⁷.

The great Serapeum of Alexandria was one of the most important monuments of ancient Alexandria, with its imposing buildings dominating the acropolis of the city. In the

⁶⁵ SOUSA, 2011b: 168-172.

⁶⁶ Tacitus (*Histories* 4.84) states that Ptolemy III was responsible for the dedication of the cult statue in Alexandria, since he financed the building stages of the main *temenos* and temple. WALKER, HIGGS, 2001: 73.

⁶⁷ BAGNALL, RATHBONE, 2004: 60.

Roman times two monumental staircases led to the sacred precinct. Columned porticoes elegantly framed the sacred precinct, displaying fine and exquisite decoration, which included selected artworks both from the Greek world and Egypt, making this complex renowned through the Roman Empire as one of the most splendid places on earth.

Inside the main temple stood the famous chryselephantine statue of the god by the Athenian sculptor Bryaxis. Ptolemaic iconography of the god included a lotus-crown, beard and carefully divided fringe. It is only later in the Roman Period that the god is shown with a *modius* (corn-measure representing the importance of Egyptian corn to the feeding of the people of Rome)⁶⁸ on his head and is accompanied by Cerberus, the three-headed dog gate-keeper of the underworld⁶⁹. In the Ptolemaic temple Sarapis was depicted enthroned – as the statue of Zeus at Olympia, perhaps holding a *cornucopia* or a sceptre – but sources from Roman times suggest that the statue of Sarapis depicted the god in standing position holding a staff and a *cornucopia*⁷⁰.

The iconography of the god included a subtle feature, seldom noted: his lips are depicted open, as if speaking, probably alluding to his oracular reputation, as opposed to the Hellenistic iconography of Harpocrates – who raises his finger before the lips to impose silence in face of the mystery. The statues of Sarapis are meant to «speak» thus illustrating the recreation of the world with his divine utterance – like Ptah, who created the world with his Tongue.

Not to be overlooked are the underground galleries excavated within the area of the sacred precinct. As Kyriakos Savvopoulos and Robert Bianchi accurately point out, these galleries should not be taken as premises for the Library Daughter, as it is so often repeated⁷¹. It is a possibility that some of them could have been used as catacombs for sacred animals thus replicating the chthonic passages of the Serapeum at Saqqara. A square pit excavated in the western side of the temple gave access to the northern underground galleries. One of these galleries was probably used as a crypt for the cult of Apis. It was excavated beneath the Temple of Sarapis itself and it held a black diorite statue representing Sarapis in his Apis bull incarnation with the sun-disk between his horns; an inscription dates it to the reign of Hadrian (117-38).

However, at least some of these galleries may have been used for the celebration of the mysteries of Sarapis as well. Echoes of these rituals have been handed down to us by written sources, such as the *Asinus Aureus*, but glimpses on the death and resurrection of Sarapis

⁶⁸ Note that, already in the Shabaka Stone, Ptah is referred to as the corn-provider of Egypt (Shabaka Stone, 61). See SOUSA, 2011b: 67.

⁶⁹ WALKER, HIGGS, 2001: 73.

⁷⁰ The statue of Sarapis found in Cortina (Crete), was probably a copy of the Alexandrian statue. The same composition is reproduced in the Roman coins from the reign of Trajan. See BAKHOUM, 1995: 63. It may refer either to a new statue of Sarapis in the Serapeum or to another statue of the god that received cult in Alexandria.

⁷¹ SAVVOPOULOS, BIANCHI, 2012: 56.

can also be observed in Hadrian's Serapeum at Villa Hadriana where it was recreated in the statuary group that once decorated its inner rooms: here again figures the Apis bull along with the deified Antinoo – here identified with the reborn sun.

South to the Temple of Sarapis was excavated an imposing L-shaped underground passage that seems to have been used for such rituals. The underground galleries lead to a puzzling structure: a platform rising from a large basin excavated right in the central area of the court, probably working as a sacred lake. Resembling to the crypts of the Osireum in Abydos – also provided with a L-shaped underground passage giving access to a ritual island – this structure probably replicated in the Serapeum the chamber for the resurrection of the god. For this reason, this «island» figure as the most suitable place for the erection of the most of the Pharaonica found at the site⁷², such as monumental diorite scarab, depicting the rebirth of the sun god⁷³.

Besides the cultic facilities, the Serapeum was composed of a complex of buildings displayed around the central court. In the great central court stood, already in Roman times, the Diocletian Column (the so-called Pompey Column), on top of which probably stood a statue of Sarapis-Helios. The column stood in front of a large lustral basin used for purification rituals. It was probably in the porticoes displayed around the central court that it was installed the library (the «daughter» of the Great Library) provided with lecture rooms, and smaller shrines. Facilities for pilgrims, such as the sanatorium and rooms for incubation, were certainly associated with the complex, as well.

To our perspective, in spite of the Hellenistic atmosphere of this complex, the Alexandrian Serapeum was fully working as any other contemporary Egyptian temple: besides the temple itself, where the divine cult was performed, the sacred precinct involved a complex system of crypts, facilities for its library/school and premises for pilgrims. The main difference between the Serapeum and the Egyptian autochthonous temples was the multicultural nature of the former: within its sacred precinct Greco-Egyptian deities received cult, while a multicultural community of scholars associated to the «House of Life» (i.e. the Library-Daughter) was undergoing the creation of an open multicultural wisdom tradition. With its roots grounded on the Egyptian demotic wisdom, such tradition was now expressed in Greek philosophical discourses.

⁷² The creation of a «pure» Egyptian temple in the context of the Roman Serapeum could have been created as the result of the «Egyptianization» of Alexandria and its sacred places apparently promoted under Roman rule. See SAVVOPOULOS, BIANCHI, 2012: 20-25.

⁷³ Such position of the sacred scarab is known from the sacred lake at Karnak. See SOUSA, 2007: 279-302.

HERMETICISM AS A MULTICULTURAL «PARADIGM»

Archaeological evidence suggests that Memphite priests were particularly connected with the Alexandrian Serapeum. Among these testimonies figure the statues of the Memphite priest Psentais, depicted in Egyptian style⁷⁴ and the Shabaka Stone (716-702 B.C.). This remarkable inscription was originally erected in the sacred precinct of Ptah in Memphis, from where it was taken in Ptolemaic times in order to be sent to the Alexandrian Serapeum, a suitable place for such monumental «book».

The inscription of the Shabaka Stone was certainly regarded, already at that time, as a major work of autochthonous theological tradition. In order to estimate the impact of this composition in the Egyptian cultural milieu of Greco-Roman Period, we have to keep in mind both the boldness of the role of the temple of Ptah in later Egypt and the prestige of the text itself, which, already at that time, embodied the quintessence of Egyptian theological thought⁷⁵.

Although we don't have any direct quotation of this Egyptian text from ancient authors, either Egyptian or Greek, the cosmogonic vision of the inscription written on the Shabaka Stone is strikingly akin to the gnostic character of Alexandrian philosophical thought:

*Heart took shape in the form of Atum, Tongue took shape in the form of Atum. It is Ptah, the very great, who was given (life) to all the gods and their kaw through this heart and through this tongue*⁷⁶.

In this text, the Supreme Being is Ptah who conceived the world in his Heart (i.e. mind – suggesting a parallel with the Greek concept of the divine *nous*) and created it with his Tongue (i.e. word – thus with strong correspondence with the divine *logos*).

*Thus heart and tongue rule over all limbs in accordance with the teaching that it is in every body and it is in every mouth of all gods, all men, all cattle, all creeping things, whatever lives, thinking whatever it wishes and commanding whatever it wishes. (...) Sight, hearing, breathing – they report to the heart, and it makes every understanding come forth. As to the tongue, it repeats what the heart has devised. Thus all the gods were born and his Ennead was completed. For every word of the god came about through what the heart devised and the tongue commanded*⁷⁷.

⁷⁴ See supra in this volume, the text of Kyriakos Savvopolus, note 343. See also SAVVOPOULUS, BIANCHI, 2012: 116.

⁷⁵ SOUSA, 2011b: 112-120.

⁷⁶ Shabaka Stone (55), in LICHTHEIM, 1975: 54.

⁷⁷ Shabaka Stone (55), in LICHTHEIM, 1975: 54.

With this statement the ancient writer aims to suggest that all living creatures were shaped according to the same «plan» conceived in the heart, i.e. the mind or intellect, of the creator god. This is the basis for one of the most important key-features of Hermeticism: the equivalence between man, understood as the microcosmos, and the Universe, the macrocosmos⁷⁸. Thanks to their divine source, all living creatures are related to the mind of the creator. Between men, in particular, justice is a matter of obedience to a natural law. One should do what is loved (by god):

*Justice is done to him who does what is loved, and punishment to him who does what is hated. Thus life is given to the peaceful, death is given to the criminal*⁷⁹.

Already in Shabaka Stone we detect the ontological bonds which tie the «individual intellect to the universal Intellect and, in this way, the individual self to the infinite or absolute Self»⁸⁰. From this vision results a «hieroglyphic» perspective of the world: all existing things compose a living text, the cosmos, in which each being is the earthly embodiment of a divine idea or plan⁸¹. The world is literally understood as a book whose «hieroglyphs» are the very living beings created by god, himself:

*He is Tatenen, who gave birth to the gods, and from whom every thing came forth, (...) thus is recognized and understood that he is the mightiest of the gods. Thus Ptah was satisfied after he had made all things and all divine words (lit.: hieroglyphs)*⁸².

Moreover, man is invested with a special responsibility for he is able to create «hieroglyphs» in the world, thus completing by means of his work the great creation of Ptah. Such vision is absolutely clear in the hermetic texts as well. It is therefore a strong possibility that the Shabaka Stone was regarded by Alexandrian scholars as a «Tabula Smaragdina» *avant la lettre* and that a congruent literary corpus might have been taken as the bulk of their «translation» work either in demotic or in Greek.

It was probably in the multicultural context of the Serapeum that it became possible the creation and diffusion of Hermeticism, as «universal» tradition. The Library-Daughter of Alexandria must therefore be seen as a Hellenized «House of Life» of the Serapeum with Hermeticism as its multicultural, thus universal, intellectual tradition.

⁷⁸ According to Hermetic texts, the «first human was formed by Nous, the creator of the world. The man himself functioned as a creative demiurge». In HORNUNG, 2001: 52.

⁷⁹ Shabaka Stone (55), in LICHTHEIM, 1975: 54.

⁸⁰ FILORAMO, 1999: 139.

⁸¹ SOUSA, 2011b: 99-103.

⁸² Shabaka Stone (55), in LICHTHEIM, 1975: 55.

One of the main problems raised by this hypothesis is the conspicuous absence of references to Sarapis in the hermetic texts. In spite of that, numerous references are made to Isis, Horus, Thoth (Tat) and Imhotep (Asklepius). The supreme god is always referred to as the Universal Intellect (*nous*) and not as a concrete manifestation of a particular god that received cult. Curiously enough, also in this respect the hermetic tradition follows the Egyptian wisdom tradition from the «Houses of Life» of the Pharaonic temples. Although omnipresent in these texts, the identity of the supreme god is always left open, referring to the supreme god as an unnamed deity. The reason to left open the identity of the supreme god would be again the sake for universalism: as any other Egyptian wisdom tradition, Hermeticism was not restricted to a specific cult or temple⁸³.

As we have mentioned, the characterization of the supreme god in the *Hermetica* presents a striking correspondence with the divine definition of Ptah in the Egyptian theological texts. With this equivalence in mind, we should thus question ourselves if the supreme god that received cult in the Serapeum could have any parallel with the Memphite creator god.

In fact, Ptah presents all the aspects of the divine definition of Sarapis. As a chthonian god, Ptah was a god of the underworld and as such he was the provider of the people of Egypt. The god presided over the fertility of the land and the growth of vegetation – one of his epithets was exactly the «Granary of Tatenen» – and it was precisely this aspect that was symbolized by the *modius* in the Roman iconography of Sarapis. In spite of his chthonian definition, Ptah also gained solar connotations when he became equated with Shu – the Heliopolitan god of light and divine utterance – reminding the identification between Sarapis and Helios. But, above all, Ptah was the supreme god, creator of all living things, the universal deity gifted with solar and chthonian attributes⁸⁴. Together with Osarapis, his chthonian manifestation, this god provided the nuclear elements for the cult of Sarapis.

THE UNIVERSE IN SYMBOLS: THE IMPACT OF THE HERMETIC PARADIGM

Accordingly to the heterogeneous community that created it, the Hermetic paradigm used a system of symbols and metaphors that combined key-elements taken from the Greek, Egyptian and Chaldean traditions in order to produce a philosophic discourse. The most important fact to retain about the Hermetic view of the world is the deep bond between man, taken as a microcosm, and the world, the macrocosm, with all its stars and

⁸³ Cf. HORNING, 2001: 53.

⁸⁴ SOUSA, 2011b: 168-172.

planets. The combination of Egyptian and Babylonian astrological motifs performed a very important role in the creation of a new syncretic view:

*Thus derives the influence of these (decans) in everything that happens (...). Overthrow of kings, revolts of cities, famines, plaques, receding of the sea, earthquakes; nothing of these, my son, occurs without their influence*⁸⁵.

It should be noted that, already in Pharaonic Egypt, the decans⁸⁶ (the 36 stars that rule the Egyptian calendar) were connected with the concept of *shai*, «fate»⁸⁷. Later, in Ptolemaic times, the decans figure in Egyptian temples as divine beings that have power over water and wind. They bring fertility to the fields, but they also cause illness and sudden death⁸⁸. The decans also influence certain parts of the body, a belief that would play its role in Alexandrian Hermeticism, where it forms part of the correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm⁸⁹. This theory of the decans was thus combined with the twelve signs of the Zodiac, adopted from Chaldean tradition early in the Ptolemaic Period⁹⁰. This view of the Cosmos was grounded on a hierarchy of celestial spheres that ascended from the earthly realm to the Supreme Being: the zodiac (the «circle of animals»), the Sun and the Moon were closer to the Earth, followed by the sphere of the planets and, further away, by the decans that preceded the supreme sphere of the Whole⁹¹. This appealing vision gave rise to a new iconographic theme abundantly depicted in pure Egyptian canon, as well as in Greek style, and even in hybrid Greco-Egyptian style. While the famous astronomical ceiling of the Temple of Dendera magnificently showcases the monumental rendering of this new concept in Egyptian style⁹², the ivory astrological tablets found in Grand (France) display exactly the same concepts in Greek fashion (Fig. 3)⁹³. Here the sky is divided into

⁸⁵ Book of the Thirty-six Decans, Frag. VI, in EBELING, 2007: 23.

⁸⁶ They are already mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, but the system of the 36 decans was not developed until the First Intermediate Period and the Middle Kingdom. The main source of information regarding them is a series of coffins from Asyut, where they are connected with the regeneration of the dead. See also in this volume the article of Telo Canhão.

⁸⁷ HORNUNG, 2001: 28-29. Particularly in the Third Intermediate Period and in the Late Period, decans start to be depicted on amulets, as protective deities.

⁸⁸ HORNUNG, 2001: 29.

⁸⁹ In European Modern Hermeticism the parts of the body are ruled by the planets, which seem to be a later development of this concept.

⁹⁰ EBELING, 2007: 22. Also MAHÉ, 1998: 60. See also MOYER, 2011: 237-238.

⁹¹ MAHÉ, 1998: 62. Note that in the pharaonic Egypt such theory of the planets is lacking. See HORNUNG, 2001: 28.

⁹² In the central disk there are 36 decans depicted around the circumference, evoking the 360 days of the year. On the inside are twelve signs of the zodiac, together with constellations such as the Great Bear. Five planets are represented: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. The conjunction of planets and stars depicted in the zodiac is used to date it from about 50 B.C. ANDREU. RUTSCHOWSCAYA, ZIEGLER, 1997: 210. This depiction, now in the Louvre Museum. See also HORNUNG, 2001: 31. On the other hand Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt has argued for an Egyptian origin of the signs of the Zodiac, connecting them with the cycle of the sun and Osiris. See DESROCHES-NOBLECOURT, 2004: 308-319.

⁹³ MAHÉ, 1995: 40.

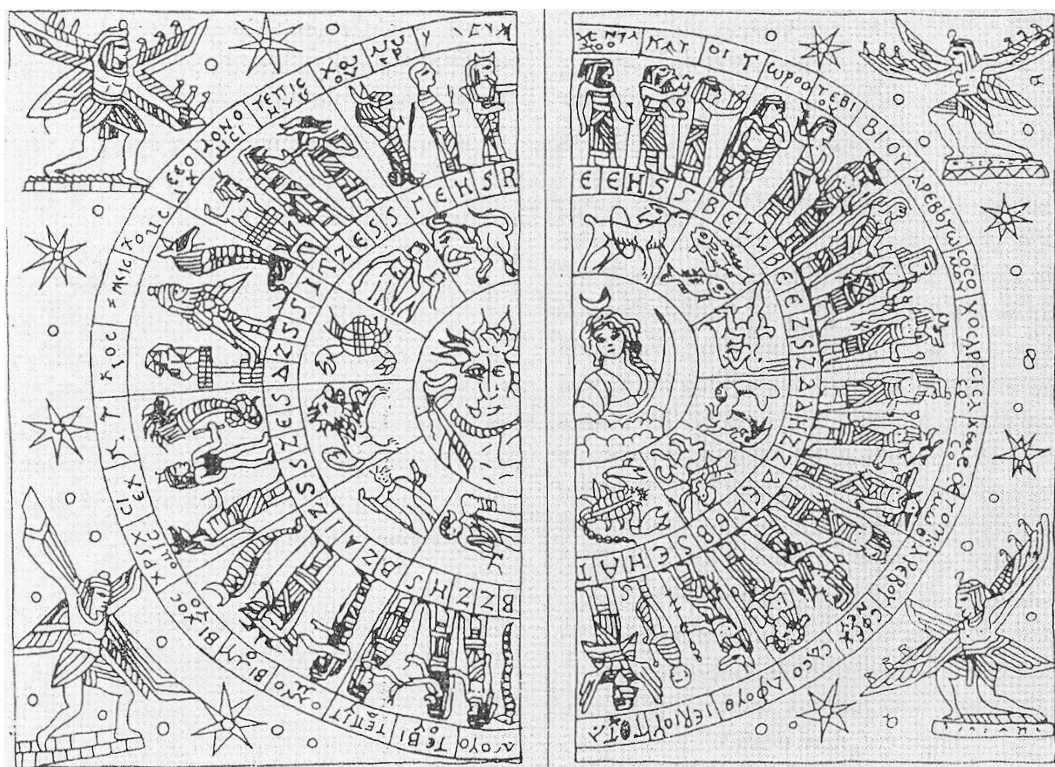


Fig. 3: Ivory astrological tablets found in Grand (Vosges).

three concentric areas: at the center of the composition stand the Sun and the Moon, followed by the twelve signs of the Zodiac and, in the third circle, the thirty-six decans which, although their names have been written in Greek, kept their Egyptian iconography, some of which depicted with animal heads⁹⁴.

This same iconographic *thopos* figures in the Egyptian coffins from the Greco-Roman times as well. Traditionally, Nut, the Egyptian goddess of the sky, is the main figure depicted in the interior walls of the coffins. However, even when produced in Egyptian style, some coffins present a new version of this theme: the goddess is surrounded by the signs of the zodiac. We can find similar astronomical lids as early as in the Royal Sarcophagi of the New Kingdom. However, such early depictions display the decans around Nut's body, instead of the zodiac. In the Theban coffin of Soter, Nut is surrounded by the signs of the zodiac, the Egyptian goddesses of the hours and the position of the planets (noted in demotic) as well, thus indicating the horoscope of Soter, dated from 93 A.D.⁹⁵.

⁹⁴ See KÁKOSY, 1982: 163-191; QUACK, 1995: 97-122.

⁹⁵ HORNING, 2001: 32.

The expression of this «hermetic» *thopos* in such a multitude of styles and contexts fully attests the multicultural character of the hermetic tradition and shows that this Hellenized tradition had a strong diffusion both in Egypt, thus in purely autochthonous Egyptian circles, and in the entire Mediterranean as well. Usually seen as having little influence on local Egyptian traditions, Hermeticism seems, on the contrary, to have been widely diffused in autochthonous communities, both in the necropoleis and in the temple communities, revealing that the new cultural inputs were integrated into local traditions.

The reverse movement is also attested with Egyptian motives being adapted to purely Hellenistic contexts. In fact, Greek sources provide striking elements that showcase unexpected interactions with the Egyptian tradition. This is the case of the Hellenistic statuary groups depicting a child and a goose⁹⁶. Although any relevant feature of the iconography of Harpokrates is explicitly introduced in these groups, the fact is that an important corpus of Hellenistic depictions of the god Harpokrates includes the riding of a goose. In the Egyptian tradition the goose was the symbol of the god Geb (the primordial god of the earth) and it is with this reading that it appears together with Isis⁹⁷. However, the goose also stood for the god Amun and, in this context, it evoked the creation of the world, which started with its gaggle. It is certainly this later reading that is illustrated in the group statues: the child (probably stands as symbol for the solar rebirth of Sarapis) «strangles» the bird in order to make it gaggle, thus making the world to become. Thus, it is a strong possibility that the anecdotic gesture depicted in the statue hides a religious «mystery».

Those examples illustrate the impact that the Alexandrian Serapeum must have had in the creation of erudite and subtle play of symbols, thus showcasing the wide diffusion of its religious paradigm in the Alexandrian cultural circles. Not to be overlooked is the diffusion of such knowledge among the Greek philosophical schools of the Serapeum. More than a philosophical school – a concept that would have been strange to the Egyptian tradition – Hermetic «paradigm» acted as a multicultural, thus «universal», corpus of erudite knowledge. As such it certainly had a profound impact on neoplatonists, especially on Porphyrius and Jamblicus, but also on the emerging religious communities, such as the gnostic sects or even the Coptic monachism. It was probably the universalism of its wisdom tradition that made the cult of Sarapis the common denominator for the Alexandrian complex and rather heterogeneous religious scene. Such striking ability was seen, even for an erudite Roman as the Emperor Hadrian – also akin of the Sarapis's mysteries – as an evidence for the decadence of Alexandrian culture:

⁹⁶ See the article of Luísa da Nazaré Ferreira, *supra* in this volume.

⁹⁷ Such Hellenistic depictions derive from the Egyptian depictions of Nut and Geb in cosmetic spoons. See WALKER, HIGGS, 2001: 106-107.

*The land of Egypt, the praises of which you have been recounting to me, my dear Ser-
vianus, I have found to be wholly light-minded, unstable, and blown about by every breath
of rumor. There those who worship Sarapis are, in fact, Christians, and those who call them-
selves bishops of Christ are, in fact, devotees of Sarapis. There is no chief of the Jewish syna-
gogue, no Samaritan, no Christian presbyter, who is not an astrologer, a soothsayer, or an
anointer. Even the Patriarch himself, when he comes to Egypt, is forced by some to worship
Sarapis, by others to worship Christ⁹⁸.*

The priests of Sarapis were thus seen as keepers of a sacred knowledge that was prob-
ably regarded by the multicultural population of Alexandria as a «universal» tradition.

ALCHEMY AS MYSTIC CRYPTOGRAPHY

As any other Egyptian temple, it is also likely that the Serapeum could have held a
«cryptographic» tradition that revolved around magical books and cult initiation. Clement
of Alexandria reckons, at the beginning of the 3rd century, 36 books of Hermes carried in
an Egyptian cult procession – priceless information that shows that these «philosophical»
texts were used in the context of a cult⁹⁹. Therefore it is nothing but natural that also the
Serapeum possessed a collection of such sacred books, at the image of the autochthonous
temples themselves who kept them in sacred libraries.

Indeed we know for a fact the Hermetica also present «technical» texts, most of them
concerned with astrological and magical procedures aiming to achieve practical results –
such as healing from diseases¹⁰⁰. In order to understand the development of this kind of
texts, we have to keep in mind the reputation of the Serapeum as a healing complex where
incubation took place.

The mandatory reference in Alexandrian alchemy is Zosimus of Panopolis (Akhmim),
the first renowned alchemist, who lived in the late 3rd and the early 4th century A.D.¹⁰¹. Like
the hermetic tractates, the texts attributed to Zosimus of Panopolis reflect the multicultural
environment of Alexandria and he himself revealed a multifaceted identity: he was a Gnos-
tic Christian but nevertheless revealed a natural affinity with the hermetic, Zoroastrianism
and Mithraism doctrines. His texts reveal that he revered alongside with Hermes Trismegis-
tus, Zoroaster, Agathodaemon, and the Persian Ostanes.

⁹⁸ *Historia Augusta* 8.

⁹⁹ These books included divine hymns and royal biographies, astrological tractates, education and cult practices, laws, gods
and the training of priests. See EBELING, 2007: 9.

¹⁰⁰ Deriving from temple practices and rituals, these technical Hermetica became, in medieval and modern times, the very
core of alchemy and for this reason they can be properly seen as the ancestors of the modern alchemic texts.

¹⁰¹ Other Egyptian sages were active, such as Petasius, Phimenas and Pebechius. One of the latest was Stephanus of Alexandria
who lectured on alchemy in the 7th century. HORNUNG, 2001: 34. It is interesting to note that, unlike the Hermetic texts,
who are attributed to a mythic author, the alchemic works are attributed to historical sages.

Not surprisingly, although deriving from ancient temple practices, «technical» Hermetica reveal a strong affinity with the experimental spirit of the Alexandrian Museum. Alchemy involved complex technical and laboratory procedures seeking to achieve manipulation of the properties of matter. Alchemists look for the specific effect that planets had in the occurrence of certain diseases, aiming, on the other hand, to detect the most suitable treatments to restore the «cosmic» balance of the body, taken as a replica of the Universe. The correspondences between the planets and the plants provided the bases for the supposed therapeutic effects of the latter¹⁰². Minerals and metals were also associated with the decans, creating a bridge between astrology, alchemy and medicine¹⁰³. In Hermeticism, these Egyptian notions were combined with the Greek idea of *heimarmene*, «fate», or *ananke*, «destiny»¹⁰⁴. This pharmacology combined astrology with 'botanical' and mineral knowledge, which could only have been possible in the context of the Alexandrian Museum.

As the nature of the universe and human nature had a strong affinity with each other, the alchemist longed for accomplishing the transmutation of the four elements in order to produce a fifth element, that of the *aether* or spirit, which held in itself the secret of life. In modern times, this work was symbolized in the production of the Philosophical Stone, or *Lapis*, the quintessence that resulted from the harmonious union between the elements of matter and spirit¹⁰⁵. There is debate over the extent to which the theory of the four elements did exist in ancient Egypt¹⁰⁶. Although reference to physical elements, such as air, light or water, can figure in the funerary texts, only seldom are they quoted together. In fact only one of such attestations is known to us:

*Words spoken by Osiris, the foremost of the Amentit, the great god: offerings are given to him in Abidos. He gives light (fire), bread, breeze and water to the Osiris Mistress of the House, songstress of Amun-Re, Shedsutauetpet*¹⁰⁷.

Although remarkable, this allusion can hardly be taken as an evidence for an Egyptian theory of the four elements. While most of the Egyptian sources do not give us a clear indication in this respect, Greek sources are, on the contrary, quite prolific. Greek influence in the adoption of the four elements seems more likely.

The oldest known alchemical texts already reveal the concern to synthesize quicksilver and precious metals. Although rooted in the Hermetic tradition, alchemic works are not

¹⁰² EBELING, 2007: 22.

¹⁰³ HORNUNG, 2001: 30.

¹⁰⁴ HORNUNG, 2001: 30.

¹⁰⁵ SIMON, 2004: 169.

¹⁰⁶ HORNUNG, 2001: 40.

¹⁰⁷ Inscription 1 (lid), coffin of Shedsutauetpet (A.110) in the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa.

philosophical discourses and they seem strongly akin to the Greek context of Alexandria. The standard alchemic work, *Physica kai Mystika* of Pseudo-Democritus, offers instructions on the imitation or preparation of precious metals from base ones. Gold or the Philosopher's Stone is to be prepared from lead: success will be achieved through a process by which the metal turns successively black, white, yellow and red¹⁰⁸.

It is important to state that such «laboratorial» activities were also performed in autochthonous temples of Greco-Roman Egypt¹⁰⁹. Far from the Hellenized Alexandrian alchemists, a sacred «laboratory» is found in the Ptolemaic temple of Edfu. Its texts, carved under Ptolemy VI, include a number of formulas for preparing incense and ointment for the divine statues. Various mixtures were to be heated and reheated at two-days intervals:

*when it is hot, add 2 kite (1 kite = 9 g) of each of all kinds of precious stones, namely, of gold, silver, genuine lapis-lazuli, genuine red jasper, genuine green feldspar, turquoise, genuine faïence, and genuine carnelian, crumbling each of these especially fine*¹¹⁰.

Also in the Greco-Roman temple of Hathor at Dendera, a special chamber, the «House of Gold», was designed for the preparation of sacred substances used in worship. The texts mention Thoth as the divine «alchemist» responsible for these activities. The goddess Hathor says: «Receive these costly materials of the mountains to carry out every work in the House of Gold»¹¹¹.

Alexandrian alchemists and Egyptian priests of Greco-Roman Egypt were seemingly working under a similar inspiration. In fact, long before Greco-Roman times, we know for a fact that the use of gold and other precious materials in Egypt performed magical purposes, especially in the funerary context. The «House of Gold», the royal funerary chamber, does not necessarily indicate that such room was filled with gold but rather that a magical phenomenon was supposed to occur: the identification of the Sun (materialized in gold) and the Pharaoh that attested his transformation in an immortal being¹¹². The same reading of the magical purpose of gold can be detected in alchemy¹¹³.

The equation between the creation of gold and the inner transformation is already attested in Pharaonic Egypt. For the Egyptians, minerals were living entities. Lapis-lazuli «grows» like a plant¹¹⁴ and gold «emerged» (*besi*) from the Nun, in the depths of the earth.

¹⁰⁸ EBELING, 2007: 25.

¹⁰⁹ EBELING, 2007: 17. Also HORNUNG, 2001: 35.

¹¹⁰ HORNUNG, 2001: 37.

¹¹¹ (*Dendara VIII 132, 3-8*), in HORNUNG, 2001: 37.

¹¹² AUFRÈRE, 1991: 376-390.

¹¹³ AUFRÈRE, 1991: 362-366.

¹¹⁴ *Pyramid Texts*, § 513.

The same verb, *besi* («to emerge» or «to introduce»), had an important religious meaning as well, since, in Pharaonic times, it stood for the initiation of the king (or priest) in the divine realm. Through initiation, the Pharaoh was transformed into a divine being, thus achieving immortality. This event was clearly equated with the almost miraculous emergence of gold from the darkness of the earth¹¹⁵. Not surprisingly, this phenomenon was particularly meaningful for the Memphite tradition, where the priests of Ptah presided over the work of goldsmiths, surely involving the technical process of their work within a symbolic framework¹¹⁶.

It is already clear to the reader that, at least in its later use, the 'laboratorial' alchemical language consisted in a ciphered allegory for an inner or «mystical» transformation. In the context of alchemy, mystical experiences are allegorically translated into chemical language to cover a Gnostic redemptive path¹¹⁷. It should be noted that the use of allegory is by no means stranger to the spirit of Alexandrian culture¹¹⁸. In many ways, the allegorical interpretation provided a semantic «translation» of the texts and revealed, through the philosophical approach, the true hidden meaning of the text. The distinction between a literal sense of reality and a deeper, hidden meaning, which can be accessed through its allegorical interpretation, is a distinctive feature of Alexandrian culture and it can be seen as the intellectual ground of its multiculturalism.

The alchemical metaphors used a similar process. Allegorical language is composed of images borrowed from laboratory techniques in order to keep the secrecy of their message untouched. In this respect the discourse of alchemy clearly betrays its Egyptian background and takes further on the same cryptographic process that was being developed in the autochthonous temples. The allegorical interpretation of alchemy aims to conceal its message rather than to reveal it, thus showcasing the same desire of self-segregation detected in cryptographic and cultic texts. While trying to unravel the secrets of nature (pretty usual attitude for the scholars of the Museum), alchemist aimed to preserve its sacredness by keeping them secret. It is precisely in this pursuit for secrecy that alchemy reveals its Egyptian roots which always have been eminently esoteric¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁵ SOUSA, 2009: 32; See also KRUCHTEN, 1989: 150.

¹¹⁶ AUFRÈRE, 1991: 362-366.

¹¹⁷ HORNUNG, 2001: 40.

¹¹⁸ The translation of the religious texts from other traditions did not occur only for the sake for knowledge from the part of the Greek sages. It served practical purposes, especially to the ethnic community which they belonged to: the translation of the biblical texts has to be related with the illiteracy of the Alexandrian Jews on Hebrew as well. However, this «translation» process evolved into a deeper level, when an allegorical interpretation took place over these translated texts, as if the Greek translation would be regarded as insufficient to reach the true meaning of the texts.

¹¹⁹ In order to preserve its sacredness the text must conceal it following a distinctive feature of the Egyptian sacred texts. LOPRIENO, 2001: 30-32.

The need for secrecy around the alchemical opus is better understood when we attend to the equivalence established between alchemic transformation and the myth of Osiris. In fact, Zosimus of Panopolis explicitly refers to the alchemical process as an «Osirification»¹²⁰. The alchemical process thus appears to be grounded in the mythic archetype of death and resurrection of Osiris: the corpse of the king, Osiris, undergoes a decaying process (the *nigredo*) and engenders his heir, Horus, in whom he will live again.

Mummification was the inspiration for the alchemic quest¹²¹: death triggered the decomposition process, the *nigredo*, but sage manipulations of the corpse through chemical operations culminated in spiritual rebirth. When seen in this light, the alchemic *opus* should be concluded with a ceremony somehow equivalent to the Egyptian Opening-of-the-mouth funerary ritual, which allowed for the rebirth of the deceased¹²². During this ritual, a heart scarab is often positioned over the mummy to symbolize the awakening of the deceased and his rebirth¹²³. Although in Greco-Roman Egypt such objects were largely in disuse in mummification, as many other aspects of the Egyptian funerary beliefs, their symbolism might have been transferred to the earthly life¹²⁴. It is therefore a possibility that their symbolism was now seen at the light of the inner transformation that occurred in the heart of the alchemist, the true *Lapis*, as the concluding result of the *opus*¹²⁵. The modern quest for the *Philosophal Stone*, the «stone that is not a stone, a precious substance of no value in many ways and report, known and familiar to all»¹²⁶, should then be seen as a later reminiscence of the Egyptian heart scarab, understood as metaphor for the awakening and illumination of the heart, i.e., the divine mind¹²⁷.

This gnostic «osirification» should lead the alchymist to a spiritual rebirth, leading him to see god and to unveil the ultimate nature of things. Although the laboratorial quest may seem conspicuously absent, a similar process of transformation was expected to occur during the initiation to the cults of Isis and Sarapis described in Apuleius' *Asinus Aureus*. As the alchemic initiates, Lucius witnesses a change not only of his body, but also of his mind

¹²⁰ HORNUNG, 2001: 39.

¹²¹ Crypts dedicated to Osiris reflect the mortuary aspect of the late Egyptian temples. FINNESTAD, 1997: 214. Such «Osirian» reading of the alchemical process is therefore based on identification between the laboratorial processes of alchemy and the mummification ritual. See ASSMANN, 2002: 409-411.

¹²² Such ritual is described in the Book of Thoth where the neophyte is the object of a ritual similar to the Opening-of-the-mouth. See JASNOW, ZAUZICH, 2005: 59.

¹²³ One should here recall the important Egyptian symbols for the heart: the heart amulet and the heart scarab. See SOUSA, 2011a: 37-44.

¹²⁴ Indeed in Ptolemaic times, the heart amulet was mainly used as a symbol of the divine children and was often depicted in Egyptian temples built during this period. See SOUSA, 2010: 81-91.

¹²⁵ For the pharaonic symbolism of the cardiac amulets see SOUSA, 2011a: 37-45.

¹²⁶ SIMON, 2004: 154.

¹²⁷ Such change of interpretation can be witnessed in the Egyptian iconography of the heart amulet as well, since in the Ptolemaic Period, the heart amulet is no longer used in the funerary contexts, but in close association with the cult of Hor-pakhered, thus as symbol of enlightenment. SOUSA, 2010:81-91. See also SOUSA 2011a:10, 48-49.

and life as opposed to the traditional hero of the Hellenistic novels who, at the end of many vicissitudes, has not changed¹²⁸.

One could expect that the initiation to the Alexandrian cult of Sarapis could involve a longer and much more demanding period of learning, where alchemic knowledge would take a very important part of the priestly training, as it happened in the contemporary autochthonous temples. Although following a model of priestly initiation well known in the Pharaonic tradition, the «mystery» cults of Isis and Sarapis developed in Alexandria obviously present associations with the Eleusian mysteries as well. As we have seen, particularly in the context of the Alexandrian Serapeum, the Eleusian mysteries and the Osirian myth were the object of close association.

Hellenized cults of Isis and Sarapis were adopted by and necessarily adapted to the urban culture of the Roman Empire. Such version of inner regeneration transcended completely the borders of Egypt and spread out through the Roman Empire propelled by the diffusion of the cults of Sarapis and Isis as far as the shores of the Atlantic. Perhaps Panóias, Vila Real, Portugal, the Roman complex dedicated to Sarapis, witnessed similar rituals but it would be difficult to expect in such remote sanctuary the same degree of complexity that could have been found in the Serapeum of Alexandria. And yet, together with a striking symbiosis with local Neolithic traditions, it displays – however simplified they might have been – the key-features of a Serapeum.

CONCLUSION

All sectors of Egyptian sociocultural life underwent change during the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods: economy, government, demography, religion. Granted, the social and cultural contexts had always been changing, and the temples had continually adapted. Political and historical studies on this period stress the openness of the cultural and sociological milieu of Ptolemaic Period as opposed to the increasing tensions emerging in Egyptian society during Roman domination, most of them related to the definition of citizenship. Cultural identity is a much broader concept, involving social practices and cultural belief-systems. Adopting Egyptian beliefs does not mean do became Egyptian, and most certainly many of the new settlers that adopted mummification as burial practice did not hesitate to define themselves as Greek or Roman citizens. The same probably could be said of the Egyptian priests that wrote their texts in Greek.

The religious scene during the Ptolemaic and Roman Periods was diverse and complex. Egyptian tradition existed side by side with non-Egyptian traditions, or mingled with them to produce new gods, new cults, and new cultic communities, especially in Memphis

¹²⁸ FILORAMO, 1999: 148.

and in the cities newly founded such as Alexandria, Antinoopolis and others. Important Ptolemaic and Roman temples existed in all major towns dedicated to foreign deities – Jewish religion had been practiced in Egypt since the 6th century B.C. and in the Roman Period many Christian churches were established. The patterns of interaction and relationship between the various cults are difficult to grasp¹²⁹.

Starting as a political «tool» used by the Ptolemaic rulers, Hellenization of the Egyptian cults aimed at the integration of the multicultural society and had important consequences both in the affirmation of the universal character of the dynasty and in the diffusion of the autochthonous beliefs, particularly those related to the afterlife, into a wider multicultural audience. Religious and literary sources suggest that the limits that once distinguished Egyptian cultural tradition from the Greco-Roman thought became more and more blurred up to the point that the classification of a particular text or artifact as «Egyptian» or «Greek» can be a difficult if not impossible task¹³⁰.

At first, the Hellenization of the Egyptian tradition involved the adoption of Greek language and iconography but it progressed into more subtle and deeper ways by the adoption of the Greek language and the philosophical methods for the very expression of the Egyptian theology and wisdom. The effectiveness of such process could only have been possible thanks to the increasing «demotization» of the Egyptian culture in the Greco-Roman Period: in fact Pharaonic legacy was already under «translation» into Demotic language when the Macedonians installed themselves in Egypt. This phenomenon, detectable in the local intellectual centers, particularly in the temple of Ptah in Memphis, launched the bases for the Hellenization of the Egyptian tradition in the context of the newly founded city of Alexandria.

Attending to the high degree of the cultic and magical knowledge revealed in hermetic texts and iconography, it does not seem excessive to admit that they should be attributed to a multicultural community composed of Hellenized Egyptian priests and Greek scholars as well who were carrying out much more than just a process of translation of texts. They were expressing the contents of the Egyptian theological thought, not only in Greek language or images, but also recurring to Greek philosophical concepts, myths and methods. During this process, the Egyptian background might seem to be lost in translation. Nevertheless, Hermetic texts must be properly seen as the result of an autochthonous and multicultural tradition born from the demotic background of the local Egyptian temples and fully matured in Alexandria: demotic in content, Greek in language and discourse, Hermeticism longed for universalism, thus in perfect alignment with the multicultural trend of ancient Alexandria. Adopting elements and images from other (familiar) traditions, such as the Persian or the Jewish, it not only mirrored the richness of the cultural influx that charac-

¹²⁹ FINNESTAD, 1997: 234.

¹³⁰ See the article of Kyriakos Savvopoulos, *supra* in this volume.

terized Ptolemaic Egypt as it fully expressed its own search for universalism¹³¹. Possibly for this reason, it seems that interaction with the Egyptian demotic tradition of the local temples and necropoleis has originated a constant influx in both directions with hermetic features being also integrated in demotic texts.

Once established, Hermeticism do seems to have truly played the role of a paradigm for local autochthonous cult centers as well, thus irradiating the new multicultural *corpus* of texts and knowledge to all over Egypt. Notwithstanding differentiations among the various categories of Egyptian priests, they acted in many respects as a socioreligious group and they met regularly in synods¹³², which could make easy the diffusion of such ideas and texts. Once formulated in Greek or demotic, the ideas of the Hermetic «paradigm» revealed to be perfectly compatible both with the Alexandrian cults and with the traditional Egyptian cults as well. One could say that Hermeticism could have been seen in Antiquity as a corpus of concepts working as a «paradigm», a bulk of erudite knowledge that was able to inspire the intellectual activity of Greek Alexandrian philosophers, Hellenized priests of the Alexandrian temples and Egyptian priests of the autochthonous temples.

This multicultural «paradigm» combined elements from all the ancient traditions and originated a great diversity of textual and iconographical expressions – from philosophical discourses to tomb decoration. In this scenario, the Alexandrian Serapeum emerges as the cradle of this new multicultural tradition. With its roots grounded on the Egyptian wisdom, the sages of the Library-Daughter expressed this new tradition in Greek or demotic philosophical discourses. In spite of the Hellenistic features of its gods, the cult performed at the Serapeum involved a ritual initiation grounded on a multicultural worldview, the hermetic «paradigm», which preserved quite remarkably its Egyptian background and was encoded on alchemic procedures aiming at the awakening of the neophyte. In spite of and perhaps because of that, the tradition forged in the Alexandrian Serapeum would be in use by a wide multicultural population and would reach territories far beyond the borders of Egypt itself, eventually leading to the diffusion of these cults through the entire area of the Mediterranean.

The diffusion of the Alexandrian cults thus involved a complex set of notions related to temple architecture, ritual initiation and knowledge – the latter provided by philosophical texts (such as those later collected in the *Corpus Hermeticum*) while ritual initiation would be attained through training on magical procedures (encoded in alchemical and magical texts).

Although clearly grounded on a genuine Egyptian conceptual framework, hermetic paradigm must be seen as the result of the cultural elite, which, regardless of their ethnic or

¹³¹ EBELING, 2007: 30.

¹³² During a long period under the Ptolemies, they were expected to meet in annual conventions to discuss with representatives of the state matters pertaining to politics and cultus. FINNESTAD, 1997: 228.

cultural origin, and even their priestly or profane duties, could look into Hermeticism as a source for knowledge and wisdom. It is difficult to know how aware ancient writers, whether Greek or Egyptian, were in regard to the definition of Hermeticism as a philosophical tradition on its own. Such definition would be superfluous, at least to the Egyptian sages. Perhaps it is this typically open Egyptian attitude towards knowledge that explains the huge success of Hermeticism in the Hellenistic world and the adoption of its elements by different philosophical schools and even by different (and antagonist) religious sects.

Identity in Greco-Roman Egypt and particularly in Alexandria is a multicultural phenomenon. The «bilingual» culture of the Ptolemaic Period evolved more and more progressively into the constitution of a global cultural paradigm, Greek in expression, but multicultural in content. The Alexandrian Serapeum fully expressed this bilingual civilization both through its cult and its culture.

Much research is still needed in order to have a clearer picture on the interaction of the Egyptian autochthonous culture with the Greco-Roman thought. The fact is, even after the complete destruction of the Alexandrian Serapeum, its legacy has been able to survive. Both Alchemy and Hermeticism would reveal themselves as two long last traditions that would mock the frontiers of space and time: they would be able not only to widespread their influence long beyond the borders of Egypt as they would have an important role to play in the «awakening» of knowledge both in the medieval Islamic world and in modern Europe.

WAS SARAPIS OF ALEXANDRIA A MULTICULTURAL GOD?

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Abstract: *This chapter is devoted to the multicultural nature of Sarapis. We used to think that he was a «unifier» of the Greeks and the Egyptians. The deity did have mixed traits, but it doesn't prove that the Egyptians also worshipped him. These ethnic groups were too separate in other spheres to be joined in the field of religion. Sarapis was a patron of Alexandria as a Greek polis and was worshipped by its citizens. Moreover, there were many other descendants of Greek immigrants and of mixed marriages, who thought themselves to be the Hellenes, and Hellenized Egyptian officials. It was them, for whom the cult was intended. In this context the god was truly multicultural.*

Many scholars supposed that the cult of Sarapis was «created» by Ptolemy I to join the Greeks and the Egyptians¹.

Sarapis became a divine patron of the country's new capital – Alexandria. In the Armenian version of the *Romance of Alexander* the god assures Alexander the Great that the city will flourish under protection of the deity². It is known from written sources of the Roman period that Sarapis was called Polieus, i.e. patron of Alexandria as a Greek polis. On the other hand Alexandrian Serapeum was situated in Rhakotis, the most ancient part of the city, where the majority of local Egyptians lived. This quarter was situated far from the

¹ See for example HÖLBL, 2001: 99; BEVAN, 1968: 44.

² Hist. Alex. Magni. 92.

administrative center of the city with its royal palaces, *agora* and other buildings related to Greek culture³. Moreover, numerous Egyptian objects were discovered at the site, including artifacts that were made in the Pharaonic era in other cities and towns of Egypt (massive stone stelae, statues of sphinxes and kings, etc.)⁴.

Could the deity be a unifier of two ethnic groups? Was he really a multicultural god?

We could make an appeal to data connected with a question of architectural look of the Alexandrian Serapeum. This subject was much discussed in works of recent years⁵, and it has a close connection with the question of architectural look of Serapeum in the Greco-Roman period, which is also a polemic and a quite difficult one, because the temple was destroyed in the end of the 4th century A.D. by the Christians.

S. A. Ashton supposed that Egyptian elements prevailed in the temple. In her opinion it was a tribute of Ptolemies to Egyptian roots of Sarapis. Only in the reign of Ptolemy III a tendency towards hellenization appeared in decoration of the temple⁶.

J. Yoyotte noted that remains of Hellenistic Serapeum were similar to that of Egyptian temples built in the same period. On the base of this fact he supposed that Egyptian elements had prevailed in the temple and ritual services were carried out in Egyptian way⁷. In his opinion, a sphinx, which was found on the slope of the southern hill, was one of many others set on the both sides of a ceremonial way that led to the temple. The same view is taken by M. Bergmann, who also used the presence of Egyptian elements (namely subterranean galleries and a nilometer) as a proof of her theory that in spite of numerous Hellenistic traits the cult of Sarapis was mostly Egyptian⁸.

On the contrary, P. M. Fraser noted that despite presence of Egyptian elements the Greek ones prevailed in architecture of the Serapeum⁹. J. McKenzie, who made an axonometric reconstruction of Ptolemy's III temple, proceeded from an assumption that it had a Hellenic architecture¹⁰. The same opinion is held by a Polish scholar B. Tkaczow. She supposed that the temple was built in a «classic» style with a few Egyptian elements. The question of how they looked – like freestanding monuments, buildings in Egyptian style or decorations of separate interiors – is still opened¹¹. Both scholars agree that installation of foundation tablets is an Egyptian tradition¹², but it must not be forgotten that the tablets found under Alexandrian Serapeum contained two inscriptions – a Greek and a hieroglyphic.

³ ASHTON, 2006: 24.

⁴ YOYOTTE, 1998: 199.

⁵ See for example YOYOTTE, 1998: 199-220; FRASER, 1972: 265-267; ASHTON 2006: 24.

⁶ ASHTON, 2006: 31.

⁷ YOYOTTE, 1998: 212.

⁸ BERGMANN, 2010: 113.

⁹ FRASER, 1972: 266.

¹⁰ MACKENZIE, GIBSON, REYES, 2004: 87.

¹¹ TKACZOW, 2010: 41.

¹² MACKENZIE, GIBSON, REYES, 2004: 82; TKACZOW, 2010: 41.

At the present moment it is only possible to suppose that in the Roman period, after it was a few times rebuilt and enlarged, the Serapeum (its main temple) was a typically Greco-Roman public building. Like this it is represented on a coin minted in Alexandria in the period of Hadrian's reign, on which a statue of Sarapis is standing under a portico with a freeze that is decorated with Corinthian columns¹³. Thus the scholars don't have any opportunity to make conclusion based on fundamental facts – they can only make suppositions. But I am inclined to believe that the Serapeum was mainly a Greco-Roman building with some Egyptian elements.

It is necessary to study other aspects of the cult of Sarapis in Alexandria to make the question of its multicultural nature clearer. First of all, it is known that the god had a fully Hellenic iconography regardless to an iconographic type (Memphite or Alexandrian). It is well known that he was represented as a young man with curly hair, a beard and a *kalathos* on his head wearing a Greek *chiton* and a *himation*. This kind of iconography is typical for Greek gods, such as Zeus or Hades, with whom Sarapis was identified during the Greco-Roman period.

Further, there was a special festival, devoted to Sarapis. It is known from written sources that a solemn procession was the main event of it (at least in the Roman times). For example, Aelius Aristides mentions it in one of his orations¹⁴. It is said in Achilles Tatius' *The Adventures of Leucippe and Cleitophon* that nocturnal torch-light processions were devoted to Sarapis¹⁵. This fact is supported by architecture of the Serapeum. Two ways out were made in its wall in the Hellenistic period¹⁶. Probably they were made to facilitate movement of a festive procession and its exit to the streets of the city. Moreover, there was a hippodrome, which was connected by a road with the *temenos*¹⁷. E. Rice after examination of different sources concluded that the procession of devotees of Sarapis had started its movement somewhere near el-Silsilah (ancient Lochias), had gone by the hippodrome and had ended its way in the Serapeum. The scholar supposed that it was one of Greek religious processions¹⁸. There are no descriptions of this procession at disposal of modern scholars, but, judging by a well-known fragment of Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, where a procession of Isis is depicted¹⁹, it may be supposed that the one devoted to Sarapis also was Greek in some aspects and Egyptian in the others.

Mysteries of Sarapis may be partially reconstructed by analogy with the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries. The cult of this deity inherited a lot of their traits. It is no coinci-

¹³ EMPEREUR, 1998: 90.

¹⁴ Ael. Aris. Orat. III. 48.

¹⁵ Ach. Tat. Leucippe and Clitophon. V. 2.

¹⁶ MACKENZIE, GIBSON, REYES, 2004: 87.

¹⁷ MACKENZIE, GIBSON, REYES, 2004: 101-102.

¹⁸ RICE, 1983: 182.

¹⁹ Apul. Metamorph. XI. 8-11.

dence that Plutarch²⁰ and Tacitus²¹ connected its «creation» with the name of an Eleusinian priest Timopheus. Initiates (alone or in company of a priest) were wandering in a big hall in search for the deity. This ritual had to remind ramblings of souls in the Underworld.

Thus, many aspects of the cult in question were mixed – Greek and Egyptian at the same time. But it doesn't prove that the Egyptians worshipped Sarapis along with the Greeks. More probably it was a way of accentuation on Egyptian roots of the god, manifestation of respect for them. Sarapis was worshipped in Egypt, so his cult had to have some Egyptian traits regardless to descent of his devotees.

Unfortunately we know too little about ethnicity of devotees of Sarapis. Authors of Alexandrian dedicatory inscriptions, like Nikanoros and Nikandros from the Deme of Polydeukes²², bear Greek names and titles. Obviously, these people belonged to the upper economic brackets – they were able to afford to dedicate a statue, an altar or even a whole *temenos* to the god (like Archagathus, son of Agathocles, epistates of Libya and a relative of Ptolemy II²³).

It seems that there was a huge division between the Greeks and the Egyptians in Hellenistic Egypt, especially in Alexandria. The representatives of the former ethnic group were greatly superior to the Egyptians in development of technical equipment, army and administrative institutions²⁴. Unlike local inhabitants they also had some privileges. For example, they paid only a so called salt tax (Alexandrians and citizens of other *poleis* situated in Egypt conferred immunity from it), and the Egyptians had to pay one more obol to the State²⁵. There were two different administrative systems – a Greco-Macedonian, on which central authorities and governance of Hellenistic cities-states were based, and an Egyptian that remained in villages and towns of a so-called *chora* – and two legal systems in Ptolemaic Egypt (but there was no separate law for the Greeks and the Egyptians – everything depending on the case)²⁶. Moreover, the Egyptians held a lower position in the social structure of Alexandria than the Greeks, who didn't have citizenship there²⁷. But in many cases this division existed more in paper than in real life.

It is known that many people from *chora* came to Alexandria in Greco-Roman period on business or for religious purposes. They came from upper strata of provincial cities and towns, had Greek names and were literate in Greek (or just paid to scribes and dictated

²⁰ Plut. *De Isid. et Osir.* 28.

²¹ Tac. *Hist.* IV. 83-84.

²² See BERNAND, 2001: 17-18.

²³ See BERNAND, 2001: 151.

²⁴ GOUDRIAAN, 1988: 5-6.

²⁵ CLARYSSE, 1992: 52.

²⁶ DUCAT, 1995: 71.

²⁷ FRASER, 1972: 38.

them texts of their letters and other documents). Probably many of them were descendants of mixed marriages between local population and new inhabitants of the country²⁸.

Sometimes descendants of Greek soldiers signed and kept in their archives demotic documents. For example, there are Greek (will, petitions to high ranking officials, etc.) and demotic (marriage and divorce contracts) texts in an archive of a certain Dritones, a citizen of Ptolemais with Cretan roots, who served as an officer in Egyptian cavalry and lived in the Ptolemaic period not far from Thebes²⁹. Thus, choice of language depended on type of a document and traditions of a certain ethnic group. For example, succession according to Egyptian law was automatically passed to someone's children, and marriage contracts were an integral part of local legal practice. It must be noted here that Apollonias, a wife of this officer, positioned herself as a Greek woman, though there are demotic obligatory writings in her archive. M. Vierros supposed that the woman was illiterate in Greek and in a few cases she just couldn't reach an *agoranomos*, who helped her with translation³⁰. Many other descendants of Greek immigrants and of mixed marriages, like Dritones and Apollonias, thought themselves to be the Greeks. They tried to carry out a Greek way of life and to place their children to the gymnasium.

Moreover, so-called Greeks were not homogenous. There were Macedonians and Greeks from all over Hellenic world in Egypt. Many soldiers of armies of the Diadochi and Epigones, who were defeated in numerous battles of the Hellenistic period, moved to Egypt, where they received pieces of land and help with living arrangements at the new location³¹. There were even the Thracians among cleruchs³².

Egyptian scribes in the 3rd century B.C. started learning Greek³³, and there were officials of Egyptian origin in provincial administration³⁴, many of whom studied this language and tried to copy the way of life of new rulers of their country.

Of course, the majority of peasants and dwellers of villages were Egyptians, but they are almost absent from written sources of Greco-Roman period. It should be supposed that they worshipped their own gods, inherited by them from their ancestors, and were not interested in new religious trends. Sarapis was probably only a Greek analogue of Osiris for them. For example, a name «Sarapion» is translated in one of demotic texts as «the Son of Osiris». It is said in a Greek part of this bilingual dedicatory inscription: «To Sarapis, the great god, Paniscus, son of Sarapion». The Egyptian text is the following: «Osiris of Coptos, the chief of the house of gold, gives life to Pamin, son of Pa-she-Usir»³⁵.

²⁸ The question of mixed marriages is discussed in: LEWIS, 1986: 27; BAGNALL, 1996: 28, 233; BRADY, 1978: 16.

²⁹ VIERROS, 2005: 75-76.

³⁰ VIERROS, 2005: 79-80.

³¹ BEVAN, 1968: 40.

³² BINGEN, 2007: 83-93.

³³ CLARYSSE, 1995: 19.

³⁴ BERGMANN, 2010: 111.

³⁵ PFEIFFER, 2008: 391.

Thus, it is very difficult to make any ethnical divisions between the «middle class» Egyptians and the Greeks living in Egypt in the 2nd century B.C. and later. Onomastics doesn't help scholars to identify them³⁶. For example, a certain Paris, an Egyptian, asked the ruler to protect him from lawlessness of Greek officials³⁷.

Thus, a new population stratum was formed in Egypt towards the end of the Ptolemaic period. It contained descendants of the Greeks and Macedonians, representatives of some other ethnic groups that moved to Egypt and Hellenized Egyptian officials. They constituted the «middle class» of Egypt (and Alexandria in particular) and had to be unified in the religious field. It is these people together with Greek citizens of Alexandria that worshipped Sarapis, mentioned him in their letters, copied stories about miracles that he accomplished, dedicated statues, altars, etc. to him. In this context he was truly multicultural and helped the first Ptolemies to build a new elite and a middle stratum that became a base of their power in the country. Thus, the situation with the cult of the god probably was more complicated than we have been accustomed to think.

³⁶ CLARYSSE, 1992: 134; VIERROS, 2005: 75.

³⁷ GOUDRIAAN, 1988: 38

THE CULT OF ISIS IN ROME: SOME ASPECTS OF ITS RECEPTION AND THE TESTIMONY OF APULEIUS' *ASINVS AVREVS*

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Abstract: *After providing a brief summary of the most significant aspects of the reception of the cult of Isis in Rome and of its relationship with political power, this chapter focuses on Apuleius' Asinus Aureus in order to analyze some aspects of the Isiac cult that may have justified its success among Romans: its universal character, its connection to justice, and its capacity to produce direct communication between individual goddess and religious institutions.*

The cult of Isis seems to be, as a whole, one of the best examples of the connection between political aspects of religion and the lives of the individuals taking part in it. Its difficult reception in the Roman world, particularly during the first centuries of its implementation, can be seen as a typical case of action-reaction (action on the part of its coreligionists, initially restricted to the lower social classes; reaction by political institutions, which either allowed for the cult's existence, or created limitations and prohibitions in accordance with the political interests that marked different periods). On the other hand, the growing popularity of the cult derived overall from the nature of the divinity and from its communicative potential. For the Egyptians, Isis was the goddess of life, protector and mother of Pharaohs, the protagonist in the story of Osiris' resurrection, the mother of Horus and goddess of a thousand names. Isis embodied therefore a multitude of divine attributes and abilities¹. On

¹ LÓPES SALVÁ, 1992: 163: «Isis (...) era una diosa universal (...) por su capacidad de adaptación a todas las circunstancias, y que además prestaba atención individualizada a sus devotos concediéndoles salud y bienestar».

the other hand, the myth related to the goddess was rooted on a divine narrative of suffering and triumph over adversity, thus increasing people's ability to identify with the goddess. On the whole, Isis and her narrative represent a matrix that is simultaneously divine and human, protective and magnanimous, and capable of a kind of justice that is as intelligible as it is universal, and therefore very difficult to associate with any other deity worshipped among Greeks and Romans.

Nevertheless, before achieving such definition, this goddess and her cult underwent a process of evolution in and around the city of Alexandria, which became a locus for the cult's development and promoted its cultural reception within the Greco-Roman context. Isis' first appearance in the Greek space, however, took place at an earlier stage and is indebted to the deep tradition of exchanges between the Greek and Egyptian material cultures. Archaeology attests explicit references to the goddess Isis the Archaic and Classical periods². During the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. the cult was already present, according to archaeological information, in most Greek cities³. However, the cult of Isis that spread in Greece and resulted from the hellenization of the cult that took place in Alexandria

The renewal of the goddess in the Alexandrian context⁴ was traditionally justified by a political necessity of Ptolemy I (305-282 B.C.) to find an element of religious homogeneity that would unify the two distinct populations living in Egypt by creating a common identity. In this way, Alexandria would have witnessed, in this period, the birth of Sarapis, a Hellenized version of Osiris, whose association with Isis would appeal to both Egyptians and Greeks, thus becoming inseparable divinities in the Greco-Roman world, as the epigraphic evidence shows. Today, this thesis of the Ptolemaic creation of Sarapis and the political motives underlying the promotion and the propagation of the cult outside of Egypt is rejected by many scholars⁵ in favour of a perspective which supports the notion of a spontaneous expansion, promoted by merchants and travellers, by Greeks who served in the Egyptian army and also by slaves⁶. This new way of thinking, however, does not hinder the idea

² For the Hellenization of the cult of Isis, vide NAOUM, 2008.

³ Vide HEYBOB, 1975, especially the references to the inscriptions, pages 7-9.

⁴ Among others, see the discussion of the problem in HEYBOB, 1975: 2-6; LÉVÊQUE, 1987: 153; LÓPES SALVÁ, 1992: 164-165.

⁵ ALVAR (2008) observes: «There were a number of quite different versions of Sarapis' origins. Few nowadays credit the story that the friends of Alexander had consulted the god in his temple in Babylonia when the King was dying. It has been suggested that this was some kind of oracular Baal subsequently identified with Sarapis. By this account, Serapis might have been taken to Sinope from Babylonia, and thence to Alexandria. Most scholars however have tried to solve the problem by distinguishing between the introduction of the god's statue at the end of the fourth century B.C. and the "creation" of a new cult, most likely in the reign of Ptolemy II. It seems clear that there were at least two, perhaps several, quite different accounts which have become indissolubly fused, so that there can be no final clarity. (...) It is surely more plausible to think that various syncretistic pressures, both native-Egyptian and Graeco-Egyptian, put their stamp on the new god, who, perhaps originally conceived already by Alexander, was then read through the prism of various other deities that seemed to possess analogous features. Though he was marginal among Alexander's gods, Sarapis became important once Egypt came to be ruled by a Macedonian

that the reception of the goddess in Greece was reinforced by the permeability of its polytheistic system to the inclusion of foreign gods and by its tendency towards syncretic assimilation. In addition, the Greek and Egyptian religious systems, in spite of being different, intersected at certain points, allowing for similar empathetic responses and comparisons⁷. What stands out in Isis is the movement of this syncretism: linked to divinities like Demeter, Aphrodite, Artemis, Persephone as well as to Io and forces like *Tyche* and Providence, the goddess does not fulfil the role of assimilated divinity, but rather of assimilating divinity, thus reinforcing her own autonomy and acquiring a character which would become increasingly multifunctional. As such, contact with the Greek culture did not only amplify the various attributes which the goddess possessed in the Egyptian world, it also made it possible for her to acquire new characteristics and purposes, encompassing different aspects of human life. This polyvalence connected, as it is, to an iconographic attempt to make her more Hellenistic⁸, which in a broad sense translated into a loss of the Egyptian rigidity and an increase of her anthropomorphic figure, due to the stylization of the theriomorphic elements that defined her, are the primary explanations for her success:

The Hellenistic style of Isis in Greece is completely Greek. The goddess was transformed in such an artistic way that she lost any Egyptian character. The fundamental innovation in the Hellenistic iconography of Isis consists in the metamorphosis of the hieratic stiffness of an Egyptianising Isis into a very human beauty. This transformation of the goddess Isis becomes Greek with her anthropomorphic form (Vandebeek 1946: 146) and with elements of a theriomorphic stylised crown of cow horns, crescent or sun-disc⁹.

In the 2nd century, a period of Greco-Oriental influence, the Romans came into contact with the Egyptian cult via its Hellenistic form. Material aspects, such as trade, the growing presence of Eastern slaves in Rome, the army and immigration, as well as the proximity to Sicily (a centre of trade where the cult was already established) and the existence of a community of Romans living in Delos, who could equally have imported the cult¹⁰, stimulated the expansion of the cult to the cities of the Roman peninsula¹¹.

king. Quite apart from the other aspects of his identity, the new god obviously needed an appropriate face and bearing, that is, a cult-image. Of course the dates offered by the literary tradition do not fit with such a scenario, but in my view that is not a serious objection, since everyone accepts that the information it provides is unreliable».

⁶ Vide NOCK, 1971.

⁷ NAOUM, 2008: 18: «Ancient Greek historians such as Plutarch and Diodorus called her the daughter of Cronus and Rhea in terms of Greek mythology and the daughter of Geb and Nut in terms of the Egyptian (...)».

⁸ On the iconographic evolution of Isis and, especially, on the iconography of the goddess in the Roman world, vide ARROYO DE LA FUENTE, 2002: 207-232.

⁹ NAOUM, 2008: 19.

¹⁰ About these aspects, vide HEYBOB, 1975: 10-11.

¹¹ According to Heybob, its oldest reference dates back to 105 B.C., in Puteoli. Vide discussion on the initial expansion of the

On the relationship of the cult with the Roman political system, it is worth mentioning the most significant points, seen by scholars, that show that these relations were troubled¹², in spite of the great tolerance with which the Alexandrian cults were received in the *Vrbs*¹³, especially during the transition from Republic to Empire. This tension was partly a result of the changing political relations between Rome and Egypt. On the other hand, the need to stimulate the political adherence of the lower classes that adopted the cult led the Second Triumvirate to build a temple to Isis and Sarapis in Rome in the year 43 B.C. As Heybob observes, it was a decision that implicitly addressed – as far as Octavian was concerned – not only an appeal to the popular classes, but also a kind of symbolic call for Cleopatra's help against Cesar's assassins¹⁴.

This dual intention, steered by the necessity of internal support and the maintenance of external alliances, underwent some changes during Augustus' reign due to the influence of new factors and political realities. As such, the movement that, up until that period, had allowed for the desired effects to coincide, both in accordance with the existing realities in the *Vrbs* and externally, in the relationship with Egypt, had now changed due to the moral policies of Augustus¹⁵ on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the conflict which set him against Mark Antony. From an internal point of view, the need to renew moral habits,

cult in HEYBOB, 1975: 10-17; and specifically on the matter of Puteoli, in 12-13. Heybob also observes that the cult expanded rapidly in Campania, which is evidence of the markedly urban characteristics of the cult of Isis. Since they first found a home in port cities, or cities that benefited from the fact that they lay on trade routes, which were, each in their own way, more open to the reception of foreign divinities, «It is evident, then, that the Egyptian gods definitely followed the *negotiatores*». In HEYBOB, 1975: 14.

¹² HEYBOB, 1975: 18, observes that this tolerance did not, however, diminish the political control of individuals in religious associations, since these associations frequently turned out to be receptacles for subversive ideas, above all among the less privileged classes – a circumstance which must have been behind the abolition, in Rome, of collegiate associations, not to mention the persecutions of the cult, which are documented during the 50s and 40s B.C.

¹³ Heybob observes that this tolerance did not, however, diminish the political control over individuals in religious associations, since these associations frequently turned out to be receptacles for subversive ideas, especially among the less privileged classes – which was probably the main cause for the abolition of collegiate associations in Rome, not to mention the persecutions to the cult documented during the 50s and 40s B.C. (HEYBOB, 1975: 18).

¹⁴ *Vide* HEYBOB, 1975: 19.

¹⁵ *Vide* HEYBOB, 1975: 24-25 on Augustus' conciliation between the most important political necessities and popular anxieties, which also fed imperial policy and brought a counterbalanced approach between the prohibition of the cult within the limits of the *pomerium* and the construction and restoration of temples outside it; also on the expulsion en masse of Jews and Egyptians under Tiberius in 19 CE, which, in terms of literary explanations, can be as a consequence of the scandal of Paulina's seduction with the help of the priests in the temple of Isis, which led to the crucifixion of the latter and the forced exile of thousands of worshippers, a story whose contours reflect the literary tradition of sexual immorality associated with women members of the cult apparent in Catullus, Juvenal, Josephus, among others; also on the fortune of the cult during the reign of Caligula, the emperor who, in literature, is most associated with Isis (a relationship that, according to TAKÁCS, 1995: 90-91, is explained by the presence of a classroom devoted to Isis in the palace, the prince's adoption of Egyptian customs and clothing, a policy of permissiveness toward Egyptian cults, the construction of a temple to Isis in the *Campus Martius* and the insertion of the festival that commemorated the death and resurrection of Osiris into the Roman Calendar, a date declared *sacra publica populi romani*).

whose principal element was the promulgation of legislation of a moralizing nature (e.g. the *Lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus* and the *Lex Iulia de adulteris coercendis*), fomented a religious reform aimed at promoting Latin religious institutions, which meant, in its turn, the strengthening of the emperor's position. Preference was given to the cults of

*Venus Genetrix, Divus Julius, Mars Ultor sentaron las bases de la divinización del emperador, inspirada en las ideas tradicionales del genius y el numen. Por un lado, Augusto enfatizaba la divinidad de su padre adoptivo y, por otro, destacaba la genealogía divina de los Julios, que entroncaban con Venus y Marte, asociando la tradición griega de Eneas y la latina de Rómulo. El templo de Marte fue también recuerdo de las glorias militares y Apolo, a quien Augusto atribuía la victoria de Actium, se consolidó como propiciador de esas victorias militares*¹⁶.

On the other hand, from the perspective of external relations, hostility toward the Egyptian cults cannot be disassociated from the new alliance between Cleopatra and Antony, a character about whom Rome would witness the development of a new iconography, one that associated him with Dionysus or Osiris¹⁷. If the politico-historical context thoroughly justifies the animosity that began to form and develop in the capital toward the Egyptian alliance, the analysis of coeval literature makes it quite clear that this animosity is related to the exploitation of idiosyncratic fears and of essential ideas associated with the very notion of Romanness and to the opposition between civilization and barbarism. Cleopatra and Mark Antony's victory would be more than just a military victory; it would represent a defeat of an advanced model of civilization, ordered and just, in favour of a widespread implementation of a barbaric and irrational state of civilization. In this sense, it is not surprising to find in literature a recurring association, for example, between Egyptian religion and theriomorphism. The Ekphrasis of Aeneas' shield brings together different elements of a civilizational narrative ideologically organized around the topos of order against disorder¹⁸, and represents at its very centre the battle between Actium and the rival factions. On one side there is Augustus accompanied by the Senate, the Penates and Agrippa, and protected by Neptune, Venus, Minerva and Apollo; on the other side stand Antony and Cleopatra followed by an army of barbarians and protected by «omni genumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis» (8. 698)¹⁹.

The second time in Roman history in which the political relationship between the state and the Egyptian cults stands out as a merger of their respective interests corre-

¹⁶ ARROYO DE LA FUENTE, 2002: 208.

¹⁷ HEYBOB, 1975: 20-21.

¹⁸ TEIXEIRA, 2007: 220-22.

¹⁹ Even more explicit, Augustus' speech to his troops, reproduced in Cassius Dio, 50.24-28. As HEYBOB observes (1975: 20-21), these works certainly reflect the increasing hostility Augustus felt towards the Egyptian cults.

sponds to the period of the Flavians²⁰. This new interest toward Egyptian cults reflects their political development as a way to consolidate power through the divinization of living emperors, thus paving the way for an autocratic political system. The Ptolemaic Dynasty and its osmotic, politico-religious configuration served as the model for this new concept. In this way, the appropriation of Egyptian elements – more than a manifestation of religious interest – served a political purpose: the «assumption by the emperors of titles commonly given to the eastern divinities was directly connected with attempts to unite themselves with deities in order to gradually reach the goal of a living divine monarch»²¹.

The Antonines²² also established a relationship with the cult based on protection. Indeed, Egyptian cults seem to have escaped Hadrian's supposedly hostile policies towards foreign cults in general. The subsequent emperors – with the exception of Commodus' presumed active participation in Alexandrian rituals – did not show much interest in cults, although the image of Isis had remained in Rome's coinage²³. This situation changed completely during the reign of Caracalla, when the interdiction against the celebration of rites inside the *pomerium* was finally abolished. But also here the renewed interest in the cults of Isis and Sarapis resulted in certain changes in an attempt to establish a model of theocratic power, something which is very evident in the iconography that appears in one of the coins of the emperor, in which «Caracalla, portrayed as Sarapis, is cosmocrator, having power over heaven and earth»²⁴. From this moment on, Isis was iconographically preserved in the coinage and had followers until the 4th century, when the destruction of the *Serapeum*, in Alexandria, extinguished the spiritual centre of the cult and hastened its decline. In 394, the consul Nicomachus Flavianus celebrated the last official festival of the *Magna Mater* and Isis, although Rutilius Claudius Namatianus would speak of a festival celebrated in Falerii, in 416²⁵.

If, from a political point of view, the successive positions taken towards the cult and its members reveal a connection between the «establishment» and the religious subsystem, it is interesting to see that to a certain degree this relationship mimics similar conjectures regarding the relationship between the political powers and the religion of the state. If traditional religion provided feudal control²⁶, the difficult implementation of the cult of Isis in Rome proves that foreign cults were also appropriated in a way that would favour the communicative and relational dialectic between the state and the necessity for its ruling

²⁰ HEYBOB, 1975: 26.

²¹ HEYBOB, 1975: 26. *Vide* WITT, 1997: esp. 98-138, on Trajan and Hadrian.

²² HEYBOB, 1975: 30.

²³ HEYBOB, 1975: 30.

²⁴ *Vide* WITT, 1997: esp. 98-138, on Trajan and Hadrian.

²⁵ Information gathered in HEYBOB, 1975: 35, based on *Carmen in paganos*, 98-99 (note 208) and Rut. Num., *De red. Suo*, 1.371-376.

²⁶ *Vide* CIAFRARDONE (2010), on Cicero's *De diuinatione*.

class to affirm itself politically. This is more a consequence than a cause of the cult's expansion, since the stance of the rulers towards the cult followed the dynamics of an empire and its social structure, which were characterized by the weighty presence of foreigners and slaves in Rome and by the important role played by growing commerce and by the symbolic practices developed by the new *bourgeoisie*. Not to mention how economic and spiritual crises tended to make the Eastern gods more attractive, because they differed very much from the institutional and austere character of the official religion.

Thus, it may be said that the success of the cult is based on a number of factors that arise on a propitious melting pot of cultural and political elements. Among these factors highlights the fact that the Isiac cult has been formed as a model of organized religion which combined, in a close and cohesive way, religiosity and religious institution.

Regarding the first aspect – that of religiosity, the universal, or universalizing, character that the goddess acquired, was fundamental. The presentation that the goddess makes of herself in Apuleius' *Asinus aureus*, in 11.5, is a good example of this:

*Behold, Lucius, moved by your prayers I have come, I the mother of the universe, mistress of all the elements, and first offspring of the ages; mightiest of deities, queen of the dead, and foremost of heavenly beings; my one person manifests the aspect of all gods and goddesses. With my nod I rule the starry heights of heaven, the health-giving breezes of the sea, and the plaintive silences of the underworld. My divinity is one, worshipped by all the world under different forms, with various rites, and by manifold names. In one place the Phrygians, first-born of men, call me Pessinuntine Mother of the Gods, in another the autochthonous people of Attica call me Cecropian Minerva, in another the sea-washed Cyprians call me Paphian Venus; to the arrow-bearing Cretans I am Dictynna Diana, to the trilingual Sicilians Ortygian Proserpina, to the ancient people of Eleusis Attic Ceres; some call me Juno, some Bellona, others Hecate, and still others Rhamnusia; the people of the two Ethiopias, who are lighted by the first rays of the Sun-God as he rises every day, and the Egyptians, who are strong in ancient lore, worship me with rites that are truly mine and call me by my real name, which is Queen Isis. (...)*²⁷

If this presentation constitutes, in ideological terms, an affirmation of her multifunctionality and power, then the way she is described (11.3-4)²⁸ also «stimulates ideological

²⁷ Latin edition and English translation by HANSON, 1989: 298-301.

²⁸ AA, 11. 3-4: (...) *First of all her hair, thick, long, and lightly curled, flowed softly down, loosely spread over her divine neck and shoulders. The top of her head was encircled by an intricate crown into which were woven all kinds of flowers. At its midpoint, above her forehead, a flat round disc like a mirror – or rather a symbol for the moon – glistened with white light. To right and left the crown was bounded by coils of rearing snakes, and adorned above with outstretched ears of wheat. Her robe, woven of sheer linen, was of many colours, here shining with white brilliance, there yellow with saffron bloom, there flaming with rosy redness; and what most especially confounded my sight was a deep black cloak gleaming with dark sheen, which was wrapped about her, running under her right arm up to her left shoulder, with part of its border let down in a form of a knot; it hung in complicated*

elements that give this power meaning: the natural elements that make up her clothing are flowers and fruits, which show the divine consonance with a fertile and harmonious natural world; the light, which symbolizes the essence of the divinity, is conveyed through the speculum, the tunica multicolor and the palla nigerrima (....) and lends an idea of harmony and serenity, enemies of chaos and of violence»²⁹. In all of this shapes Isis is the divinity of order and harmony: she is the one who eliminates the chaos, violence and insecurity with which humanity is confronted. Closely related to this notion is another principle, that the *Asinus aureus* associates with Isis and that, from this point of view, is not only central to this particular Roman novel, but also to the meaning of the goddess' nature – the principle of justice. Lucius' odyssey makes it quite clear that beyond Isis' ordered world the human being can only be guaranteed one thing: an absence of justice. This is most frequently the result of contingencies and chance, both of which favour the disconnect between guilt and punishment (the stories about adultery, for example), or due to a failure of the judicial contract in human society (as the emphasis given to deceit in the tribune episodes narrated in the novel shows); and, in addition, beyond the ordered world of Isis, the essence of justice is itself perverted, a corruption introduced and maintained by the patronage of traditional divinities, incapable of either exercising justice, or promoting it, as the episodes of Paris' judgment and the *Story of Amor and Psyche* demonstrate.

The only guaranty of justice is Isis. Likewise, the only guarantee of salvation rests in the goddess. Inspired by Isis³⁰, one of her high priests explains to Lucius that his fall was impeded neither by birth, nor by *dignitas*, or through *doctrina*, all of which turn out to be insignificant in the presence of *latrones*, *ferae*, *seruitium*, *asperrima itinera* and *metus mortis*. If the high priest's words are particularly directed towards Lucius and principally to the story of his life, they also refer to the broader ideology of the fall and the idea that the elements of earthly nature (birth, dignity, culture) are of little importance when it comes to orienting individuals in general. In this sense, the possibility of salvation becomes universal,

pleats, beautifully undulating with knotted tassels at its lower edge. Along the embroidered border and over the surface of the cloak glittering stars were scattered, and their centre the full moon exhaled fiery flames. Wherever streamed the hem of that wondrous robe, a garland of flowers and fruits of every kind was attached to it with an inseparable bond. Latin edition and English translation by HANSON, 1989: 294-297.

²⁹ TEIXEIRA, 2000: 134.

³⁰ AA, 11.15: You have endured many different toils and been driven by Fortune's great tempests and mighty stormwinds; but finally, Lucius, you have reached the harbour of Peace and the altar of Mercy. Not your birth, nor even your position, nor even your fine education has been of any help whatever to you; but on the slippery path of headstrong youth you plunged into lavish pleasures and reaped the perverse reward of your ill-starred curiosity. Nevertheless the blindness of Fortune, while torturing you with the worst of perils, has brought you in its random wickedness to this holy state of happiness. Let her begone now! Let her rage in all her fury and hunt some other object for her cruelty, for hostile chance has no opportunity against those whose lives the majesty of our goddess has emancipated into her own servitude. Robbers, wild animals, slavery, the twists and turns of the harshest journeys that end where they begin, the daily fear of death – what benefit were all these to wicked Fortune? But now you have been taken under the protection of a Fortune who can see, and who with the brilliance of her own light illumines all the other gods as well. (...) Latin edition and English translation by HANSON, 1989: 318-321.

by showing, through Lucius' experience, that salvation is not realized neither in the psychological principle of repent, nor in the philosophical principle of learning, but only in the theological principle of *magna prouidentia Isidis*. It becomes clear that this salvation, as it is based only on a voluntary act of submission to the goddess and her cult, is accessible to the human race in general. This is a Providence that, contrary to what happened with traditional divinities, is a regulating entity, offers justice and security and which, in theological terms, presents the only guarantee of man's deliverance.

Therefore, it is the combination of spiritual factors, which combine a high degree of mysticism with answers and guarantees for the anxieties and problems of life, which explains the growing popularity and success of this cult. These answers and guarantees were certainly no less negligible due to the fact that they extended to *post mortem* life, an idea which, in the case of Isis, was developed from the divine narrative itself, in which the goddess insists that her stay on earth is only transitory, preserving her true reign for the after-life. In addition, there are also institutional factors³¹, among which is the promotion of the congregating and integrative character of the cult. In fact, if the cult was initially confined to the least favoured classes of the population (slaves, freemen and foreigners), historical evidence suggests that, with time, the cult attracted a vast and varied group of individuals of different races and all levels of society.

The openness of the cult is evident in Apuleius' description, in Book XI of the *AA*, of the *Navigium Isidis*, the most important festival dedicated to the goddess, held at the beginning of the seafaring epoch, on the fifth day of March.

The procession described therein tells of the presence of a great number of symbolic objects, which show the powerful process of the goddess' acculturation into the Greco-Roman sphere (of which the *Navigium Isidis* itself is an example) and which testify to the multifunctionality of the goddess (emblems of justice, lanterns, symbol of light, amphorae), and of others which testify to her connection with Egypt (Anubis; a cow «symbol of fecundity and image of the mother goddess of all things» (11.11-2); palm fronds; the sistrum; linen clothes). However, it is the makeup of the group that accompanies the procession that best shows the popularity of the cult. In addition to the successive waves of initiates in the divine mysteries, women and men of all ranks and ages, it also includes a jocular group of masked characters that, allegorically, represent human professions, showing

³¹ ALVAR, 2008: 62, explains the success of Sarapis' cult in a similar way: «Despite his absence from the mythological cycle, then, and despite recognition of his recent origin, the cult of Serapis succeeded thanks at least partly to institutional backing. On the one hand, the men who put him together as a divinity of abundance well knew how to appeal to the needs in view of which he was created. On the other, it was the prestige of the Ptolemies (often indeed their territorial conquests), and of Isis, that enabled his cult to spread through the eastern Mediterranean. Serapis' polyvalence helped meet the politico-religious uncertainties of the Hellenistic period: a god of everything, omnipresent, director of the cosmos, lord of production and reproduction, bulwark of monarchy, succour of the little man – and to all that he added personal command of the world beyond the grave. This was the kind of symbolic capital that a god now needed if he were to triumph».

that, in the unifying framework of Isiac cult, under the patronage of a divinity of many names and multiple forms, a diversity of human types and social categories have found hospitality, from the gladiator to the magistrate, from the soldier to the hunter and the fisherman, from the woman to the street philosopher. Particularly significant is the presence of the woman and the street philosopher, since they convey sociological premises which make it possible to reach certain conclusions about the expansion of the cult to areas of the broader society that were traditionally not involved in it. As Gionotti observes, in this way, these two symbolical characters seem to ensure the universality of the Isiac cult: women, due to the primary role of the feminine element in the Isiac cult, are granted citizenship, traditionally given only to men; and the philosopher no longer labelled an exceptional character, joins the procession, which gathers within it all social categories³².

As far as women are concerned, if the Egyptian goddess did not serve as a specifically feminine role, the Hellenistic Isis emphasized this attribute due to her connection with maternity. Nevertheless, although distinct from her Egyptian origins, in which the goddess seems to have been a cosmic divinity with a clear funerary function ritualized around the death of Osiris, Isis' most particular characteristic, which seemed to be essential for the cult's expansion in the Roman world, is her association to Osiris and her role as family member evoked in the Isis-Osiris-Horus paradigm. In the words of Amparo Arroyo, Isis had appeared as a Mother-goddess and Rome would come to know her as such. In addition to the representations of her as *Panthea* and other syncretic representations, the «iconografía de la *Isis lactans*, que gozó de una enorme difusión por todo el Imperio e adquirió inclusivamente um carácter netamente occidental, uma vez que a par das estátuas marcadas por elementos orientalizantes que lembram a origem egípcia, se encontram outras que a convirtieron en una matrona romana dedicada a amamantar a Harpócrates»³³. This feminine character, which naturally attracted the understanding of women, became for them a model of inspiration, galvanized by the possibility of an effective participation in the cult and of access to the religious hierarchy.

By including the philosopher among the cult's worshippers, Apuleius' *Asinus aureus* offers something to think about as to the adhesion of individuals from a full range of culturally and socially elevated strata.

The problem of religion, particularly the debate over the nature of divinities, as it was linked to the problem of death, was always a controversial subject among Greek schools of philosophy, and was later argued over methodically in Rome at least from the period of Cicero³⁴. Influenced by Stoicism, the philosophical-religious thinking considered the existence of a divinity – the *fatum* – superior to all others, with a regulating power over men and

³² GIANOTTI, 1986: 91.

³³ ARROYO DE LA FUENTE, 2002: 218.

³⁴ Cf. MACKENDRICK, 1989.

gods. This was a divinity that accommodated a monotheistic spirit, or, as in Isis' case, monotheistic tendencies.

Likewise, poetic, philosophic and religious traditions of Platonic, Orphic and Pythagorean influence, conveyed ideas of *post mortem* salvation and condemnation. These ideas are revealed in literary contexts, such as in the description of the underworld in the *Aeneid*, in which «the notion of the afterlife as a release from toil which we find in the last part of Book 6 of the *Aeneid* probably springs from popular belief and folklore crystallized and organized by Orphic mystery religions and Pythagorean philosophy; many Orphic ideas were developed by Plato, and many were assimilated in Stoicism»³⁵.

Thus, the reason why these religions were so successful and experienced such growing acceptance is not some exogenous phenomenon which seeped into the empire and suddenly replaced the traditional religion. Ruptures were already apparent in the classic paradigm, some of them part of a long philosophic-religious tradition that mostly found expression in certain erudite circles; while others, more recent and more likely to be found among the popular classes, were a result of the empire's growing crisis and of the traditional religion's failure to provide answers.

This intellectual tendency was appropriated and adapted to the beliefs of the Isiac cult. Apuleius' *Asinus aureus* shows evidence of this. The connection of Isiac elements present in the first ten books and the more explicit Isiac message in the last book effectively make the story of Lucius – who, in Book III, inadvertently turns himself into an ass because of his obsession with the magic *ars* and is saved by the divine intervention of Isis – into a kind of Isiac morality tale, which is not strictly confined to a religious perspective. This perspective, which cements the notion of an ontological tale of fall and resurrection, evolves through a complex game of philosophical entities and notions: *Fatum*, *Necessitas*, *Providentia* and *Fortuna*³⁶. These concepts, which display a neo-Platonic origin coupled with Stoic variants, lend themselves to the formation of a religious plain as it emerges out of a highly evolved

³⁵ WILLIAMS, 1990: 192.

³⁶ An interpretive definition of these entities based on philosophical works attributed to Apuleius could be seen in FRY, 1984: 137-170. The concept of *Fortuna* (139-141) «apparaît 21 fois dans les *opuscula*. Si l'on excepte les 11 occurrences où elle ne revêt que son sens pécuniaire, ses 10 autres apparitions la présentent chaque fois comme une divinité mal définie, au comportement instable, le plus souvent génératrice de maux. (...); Quant à *Providentia*, elle apparaît 16 fois (dont 7 dans *Plat.* 1, 12). A 4 reprises elle ne signifie que «prévoyance humaine». Dans les autres cas, elle prend le sens de «ordonnatrice du monde». Il est en outre précisé dans *mund.* 24 que l'Être qui dirige l'univers (*mundi rector*) (...) se sert de sa Providence pour en assurer la création matérielle et en préserver la cohérence. (...). *Fatum* apparaît à 15 reprises (...). À chaque fois, ce mot exprime l'idée d'une loi préétablie dont les termes échappent à l'entendement humain. (...) La pensée extrêmement éclectique de l'auteur du *De mundo* semble n'avoir laissé aucune part au libre arbitre ou à la contingence, pour ne prôner qu'un strict déterminisme. (...). La *Necessitas* est l'instrument utilisé par la divinité pour contraindre l'homme à accomplir son destin. (...) La Providence guide ce que l'on accomplit de son plein gré tandis que ce qui nous est imposé l'est par la *Necessitas*. L'une et l'autre ne sont, par conséquent, que deux aspects opposés mais complémentaires d'une seule et même réalité: la volonté du *Fatum*».

philosophical perspective: «Étant maîtresse de la destinée humaine, elle a été assimilée à la Fortune (...). Si la conduite de l'homme est conforme à sa volonté, elle est Providence; dans cas contraire, elle peut se faire contraignante, voire répressive. (...) l'unique possibilité d'échapper aux décrets du destin est de se plier totalement aux exigences de la déesse (...)»³⁷.

The fact that the cult did not exhaust itself in one single kind of universality, aimed simply at achieving a general adhesion, is equally significant. In effect, although it was open to all, after joining the cult each individual was encouraged to adopt an intimate rapport with the goddess. This rapport was made possible through the ritual of initiation, which, according to Plutarch, would represent death and resurrection, after which the follower would expand his/her relationship with the divinity. Putting aside the numerous interpretations of the actual Mysteries and other meanings of the ritual, and once again calling upon the work of Apuleius, Lucius' initiation, first into the Mysteries of Isis and then those of Osiris, proves that this kind of direct contact with the divinity is a real possibility – a possibility that, once accomplished, brings an *inrenumerable beneficium* to the initiate, which is then translated not only into Happiness and the spiritual benefits brought about through a life of complete religiosity, but which also extend to the material aspects of life. This last fact can be inferred from the promising professional career as a lawyer which Osiris predicts for Lucius, as well as the affirmation that he would be granted admission into the School of Pastophors.

In this sense, despite several conflicting theories whether regarding historical or chronological aspects which have to do with the goddess' appearance in the Greco-Roman context, or in terms of syncretic elements and certain aspects related to the religion's institutional realities, it would not be too bold to say that Isis and her cult became one of the most popular foreign cults in the Roman context. Its success was determined not so much by the political sympathy which gradually it would come to claim, but more by the fact that its message was so well suited to the Roman *zeitgeist* and by its ability to mould itself to the needs of the individuals involved in the cult thus increasing the direct connection between the individual, the goddess and the temple. This is the message that ultimately Lucius leaves at the end of *Asinus Aureus*, summing up his life of devotion to the goddess in a single word: Happiness.

³⁷ FRY, 1984: 145.

A TIMELESS LEGACY: THE CALENDARS OF ANCIENT EGYPT

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Abstract: *Since the year 45 B.C., Julius Caesar introduced, in the whole Roman world, the Egyptian calendar with 365 days and six hours i.e. 365, 25, adding the necessary days in the shorter months. It was also intercalated one day between the 23rd and the 24th of February every four years, which was called bissextile because the 6th day before the calends of March counted twice. This day gave the name to the year where it was included but it was not the 29th of February, which did not exist at the time. This calendar became known as the Julian calendar and lasted until the 1st of January 1582 when Pope Gregory VIII made its last modification, implementing what we know as Gregorian calendar, which has been in use till the present day. The adopted Egyptian calendar had a mathematical simplicity; it didn't require any adjustments by means of intercalary days or months and was used to date every official or officious act, thus justifying Julius Caesar's statement: «the only intelligent calendar of Mankind's history». He had for advisor an Egyptian hemerologist, the astronomer Sosigenes from Alexandria, an Egyptian about whom we know little but who managed to impose his ideas about this issue to Julius Caesar not only because they were good but also because they were based on a millennial practice.*

In the 1st century B.C., Alexandria was the most crowded urban area of the Ancient World, except for Rome. A myriad of races and cultures coming from the Greek world, Rome, Persia, Arabia, including a large Jewish community joined the indigenous popula-

tion of Egyptians and Nubians. There, the late Hellenistic culture flourished. It was through Alexandria that Egypt has opened itself to the Mediterranean world. In that same century Roman's civil year was three months in advance in relation to the solar year thus showing the ancestral imperfection of the Roman calendar. After being sworn as *Pontifex Maximus*, Julius Caesar (100-40 B.C.) solved the problem, by adding the days required to set the dates. For that reason the year 46 B.C. exceptionally got 445 days, corresponding to the year 708 after the foundation of the city of Rome and it must have been the *ultimus annus confusio-nis*, according to the writings of Macrobius, a Roman writer of the beginning of the 5th century, in his book *Saturnais*¹.

From 45 B.C. on, the Romans adopted the Egyptian solar calendar of 365 days and six hours, adding the required extra days to the shorter months. They also inserted one day between February 23 and 24, every four years, which was called bissextile, since the sixth day before the calends of March was counted twice. This day gave the name to the year in which it was included, but it wasn't February 29 yet, because it didn't exist at the time. This calendar became known as the Julian calendar and it was used until January 1, 1582, when Pope Gregory XII made its last major reform, thus implementing the Gregorian calendar, as we know it, and which is now still in use.

The Egyptian calendar, which Julius Caesar had installed upon the whole Roman world, was of a great mathematical simplicity. It didn't require any adjustments by inserting days or months and was used to date any official or officious act, religious or civil, leading to Julius Caesar's statement «the only intelligent calendar that has ever existed in the History of Man»². On this matter, he was accessorized by the Egyptian hemerologist Sosigenes of Alexandria, an Egyptian about whom little is known but who managed to impose all his ideas to Julius Caesar, since they were based on a millennial practice which had already proved to be actually good.

THE RECKONING OF TIME IN ANCIENT EGYPT

The Egyptian conception of time derived from the fusion of two complementary ideas:: *djet*, a linear counting of times – which started whenever a new king ascended to the throne, one after the other in an irreversible way – it was linked to earthly items and to the ideas of lasting duration; and *neheh* – the cyclic time grounded on the periodicity of cosmic phenomena, particularly the movement of the sun, which reborns every day – it was linked to the ideas of «rebirth», «transformation», «becoming». The conception of History itself, in ancient Egypt, was a «celebration» of the eternal return to the «first time», the time when

¹ SANTOS, 2006: 120.

² POSENER, 1970: 40.

the Creator established the essential order, which the pharaoh was supposed to maintain. According to the myth of Osiris, the dead king was taken as a new Osiris, getting into eternity (*neheh*) forever (*djet*), two concepts that, by appearing together, express the idea of «forever and ever». This is the perfect coexistence of two different concepts created by the gods: a cyclic time, marked by traditions and religious rituals, and so related to the sacred; and a more linear time, marked by daily activities and, therefore, profane. The union of these two concepts stood for the wholeness of time³.

The 365-day-years were counted from the day when the king ascended the throne, thus following a linear reckoning of time until the moment of his death. With the next king the counting restarted from the beginning. The number 365 had been originally calculated, in pre-dynastic times or before the end of the Neolithic, in one of two ways: either by calculating the average of the systematic recording of the days imposed by lunar observation, or then by observing the interval between two appearances of a reference star, which, as we will see, should be Sirius.

This counting didn't depend on the seasons of the solar year, which were three and had a precise existence marked exclusively by the needs of agriculture:

- Akhet (the inundation itself, which, according to the Julian calendar, went from mid-July to mid-November, more precisely from July 19 to November 14 – the dates we match to the Gregorian calendar are only approximate, since they depended on variable astronomical phenomena – and could be called a season of floods);
- Peret (the period of the spring waters and the growing of plants, from mid-November to mid-March, more precisely from November 15 to March 14, or the spring time);
- Shemu (the period of drought and crop, from mid-March to mid-July, more accurately, from March 15 to July 13, or the harvest time).

Each season had four months of thirty days each (numbered 1 to 30), 360 days in total, to which were added five days – the Greeks called them epagomenal days and the Egyptians called them *heru renepet*, «those which are above the year» – considered out of the year and numbered from 1 to 5, a total of 365 days at the end of which was celebrated «The opening-of-the-Year», that is, the New Year's Day. On each of the five epagomenal days it was celebrated the birth, respectively, of Osiris (*mesut Usir*, July 14), Horus (*mesut Hor*, 15 July), Seth (*mesut Set*, 16 July), Isis (*mesut Iset*, July 17) and Nephthys (*mesut Nebet-hut*, July 18) the five deities who, in Heliopolitan theology represented time. On the other hand, on the first day of the year, July 19, it was celebrated the «birth of Re», *mesut Re*⁴. As a result of con-

³ CANHÃO, 2006: 39.

⁴ CANHÃO, 2006: 40.

cerns about agriculture, the most ancient Egyptian calendar was based on lunar observations combined with the annual cycle of flooding of the Nile, measured by especial devices known as Nilometers.

Each month was assigned a name, usually the name of the festival that was held at that time and, simultaneously, the name of the celebrated deity. This is attested to the Middle Kingdom, in the region of Memphis:

- the 1st month of the Flood was called Tekhi; the 2nd, Menekhet; the 3rd, Khenethu-thor; the 4th, Nehebkaui;
- the 1st month of winter (5th month), Shefbedet; the 2nd (6th month) Rekehaá; the 3rd (7th month), Rekehnedjés; the 4th (8th month), Renenutet;
- the 1st month of summer (9th month), Khonsu; the 2nd (10th month), Khenet-khetyperetj; the 3rd (11th month), Ipethemet and the 4th (12th month) Upetren-pet⁵.

In the New Kingdom, the majority of these designations have changed, especially due to the supremacy of the festivals held at Thebes. Reinforced by the theophoric nomenclature⁶, the Egyptian designations of the months have survived in Greek language and are still in use by the Coptic Church in its religious calendar. The new designations were (in brackets the Greek name):

- the 1st month of Akhet was Djehuti (Thoth), the 2nd was Paneipet (Paofi), the 3rd was Huthor (Athir) and the 4th was Kahorka (Khoiak);
- the first month of Peret was Taabet (Tibi), the 2nd was Panepame-kheru (Meshir), the 3rd was Paneamen-hotep (Famenoth) and the 4th was Panerenenutet (Farmuti);
- the first month of Shemu was Panekhensu (Pakhonsu), the 2nd was Paneinet (Paini), the 3rd was Ipip (Epifi) and the 4th was Mesutr   (Messori)⁷. Depending on the sources, there are variants for some of these names.

The names of the months appeared mostly in lists of festivals or in private letters, but rarely in ordinary texts. The dating of a particular event followed a standard procedure: «Year 6 (ie, number of years of reign), 2 winter 12 (ie, the second month of the season of Peret, Panepamekheru, day 12), under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt (throne-name of the reigning pharaoh)»⁸.

⁵ ALLEN, 2000: 108.

⁶ This became a common practice in Egypt to form the names of individuals.

⁷ ALLEN, 2000: 108; DEPUYDT, 1997: 129.

⁸ It is thought to have been common the designations of the months in spoken Egyptian, as we use today January for «month one», February for «month two», March for «month three», etc.

There is also a variation in relation to the positioning of epagomenal days. Although the last day of the year is always the 30th day of Mesutr , and the five epagomenal days are beyond the year, in the Old Kingdom they preceded the year, while in the Middle and New Kingdom they were placed at the end of the year.

The natural division of the lunar month into irregular quarters still originates an irregular composition of months in what concerns the number of days assigned to each month. In the early Egyptian civilization it was the very week with seven and eight days that alternated in accordance with the lunar phases, but this system was soon replaced by the introduction of a much more regular one: the Egyptian month of three decades, each marked by the appearance of a decan. The Egyptian decans are stars that seemed to born, live and die, so they were known as «the living» (*ankhu*), as opposed to the circumpolar stars «those who do not know the destruction» (*ikhemu-sek*). In the decanal cycle the full circle of each decan was 360 . They were 36 and, due to translational movement of the Earth, were visible for periods of ten days, hence their name⁹ (Fig. 1). So, the year was divided into 36 periods of ten days and each month into three decades. Although the word «week» was unknown to the Egyptians, every decade corresponded, in current terms, to a «week» of ten days. The gap of five days between the last and first decan of this decimal organization was completed by epagomenal days, out of the decanal cycle (36 days x 10 = 360 days, or 12 months x 30 days = 360 days, or 3 seasons x 120 days = 360 days) and, as such, treated after 36 decades, only then completing the year of 365 days.

The decanal system would lead the Egyptians to divide the day into twenty-four hours (*unut*),

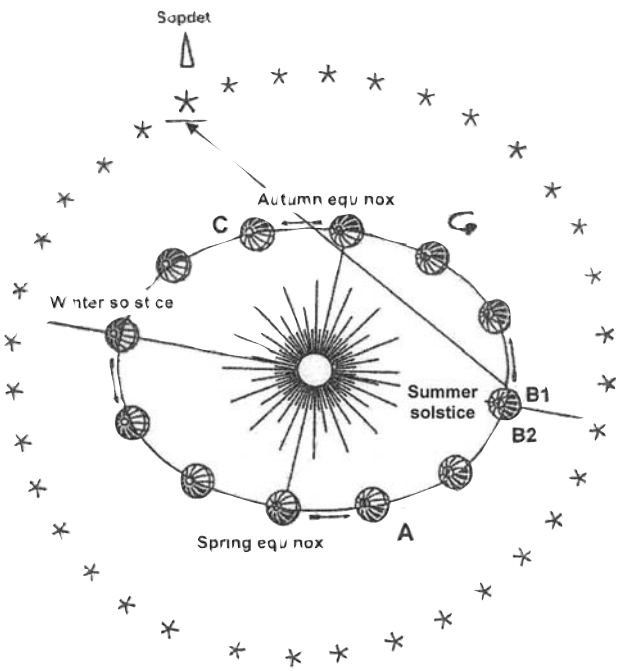


Fig. 1: Rotation: the 36 decanal stars of the year. Every ten days of the translational movement of the Earth, a new star appears. When the Earth is on A, only the stars outside the orbit of the earth can be seen. The Sun prevents us from seeing Sirius. It is its period of invisibility. An observer on B2 (beginning of the night) can't see Sirius because the Earth is in-between; but on B1 (end of night) Sirius can be seen straight before dawn: the heliacal rising of Sirius. On C, Sirius remains visible all night.

⁹ SAUNERON, 1970: 80.

each of them equal to 1/24 of the day, of sixty minutes each¹⁰, with twelve night hours, the «hours of darkness», and twelve daytime hours, the «hours of sun», with reference to the sun at its zenith. The day was divided into ten hours according to the movement of the sun, plus two of twilight – sunrise and sunset. The fact that in summer, at the latitude of Egypt, only twelve decans could be seen each night rising from darkness (Fig. 5) led to the division of the night into twelve «hours». At night the system worked as follows: decan I rose early in the evening of July 19 and when it went out of sight it was signaled the end of that night, and the same happened in the next nine nights. It was then replaced in that role by decan II for another ten days. After the same number of days it was replaced by decan III and so on until getting to decan XXXVI. In each 1/24 of the day, the next decan entered, waiting for its decade of «control». Thus, the stellar clocks were organized in frames of thirty-six columns and twelve rows, giving for each decade (columns) and each hour of the night (lines) the decan whose rising marked the end of that hour. The simplicity of the scheme got disturbed by the epagomenal days, to which were introduced other twelve intercalary decans. Each decan was moving regularly and diagonally upward from one decade to the next.

Hours	1	2	3	4	....Decans....	33	34	35	36
1	I	II	III	IV	.....	XXXIII	XXXIV	XXXV	XXXVI
2	II	III	IV	V	.....	XXXIV	XXXV	XXXVI	I
3	III	IV	V	VI	.....	XXXV	XXXVI	I	II
4	IV	V	VI	VII	.....	XXXVI	I	II	III
5	V	VI	VII	VIII	.....	I	II	III	IV
6	VI	VII	VIII	IX	.....	II	III	IV	V
7	VII	VIII	IX	X	.....	III	IV	V	VI
8	VIII	IX	X	XI	.....	IV	V	VI	VII
9	IX	X	XI	XII	.....	V	VI	VII	VIII
10	X	XI	XII	XIII	.....	VI	VII	VIII	IX
11	XI	XII	XIII	XIV	.....	VII	VIII	IX	X
12	XII	XIII	XIV	XV	.....	VIII	IX	X	XI

Each hour corresponded to a divine couple and a name, used mainly in astronomical texts. For example, they designated the first hour of the day *ubenut*, «the bright one», the last night of *peter neferu neb set*, «the one which sees the beauty of Re», the sixth hour of the day, midday, *ahat*, «the one that is standing», expressing the verticality of the shadow. However, in current texts, the hours were designated by counting the ordinal numbers. For example: *unut mehet-10 net heru* is «the tenth hour of the day» (four in the afternoon) or

¹⁰ BRIER, HOBBS, 1999: 77.

unut 4-nut net gereh the «fourth hour of the night» (ten o'clock). The division of the day and night into twelve hours each, seems originally Egyptian and may have to do with the practical need to maintain over the years equinoctial equality between day and night, combined with mythological issues, the twelve territories of the Duat that Re followed on his night trip, for example, or even, by analogy with the twelve months in which the year is divided.

However, the division of the hour into sixty minutes was introduced by the Babylonians who used the sexagesimal system (60 is divisible by 30, 20, 15, 12, 10, 6, 5, 4, 3 and 2) created by the Sumerians, the first to cultivate astronomy and to apply mathematical methods to it, and which we still use for measuring time. The day was divided into twelve double hours, while each hour was divided into sixty double minutes and the minute into sixty double seconds. Although the division of minutes in 60 seconds has not been achieved by the Egyptians, they had the notion that the minute was still a very wide measure of time for certain circumstances, once they recognized as the smallest unit of time the *at*, usually translated by «moment», «instant», and without a definite duration¹¹. Besides the designations used in religious and astronomical contexts, there were popular names for the hours, in which certain expressions corresponded to numbers, for the hours of day or night, such as: *em duá*, «in the morning»; *nu en seti-rá*, «the hour of perfume for the mouth», i.e., the time of the noon meal; *mesit*, «supper», «the last meal of the day», *er ter en khani*, «at the time of night».

The day began with sunrise, with various devices to measure the hours. By day it was used the sundial, which the Greeks and Romans called the gnomon, literally the «indicator». It was a simple sundial which measured the length or direction of a shadow, produced by a stick and projected horizontally, vertically or obliquely in a graduated flat or curved surface. Since sundials could not be used at night, the decans were used to determine the twelve night hours. From this observation stellar clocks were used, the *merkhet*, «instrument of knowledge» (Fig. 6) and a sighting tool, a forked pole (Fig. 6), a kind of wire-plumb with a function similar to astrolabe¹². The observation of the evolution of stars was reserved for priests in charge of measuring time, a kind of astronomers who systematically measured the height of the reference stars, made their recording in tables and compared them with previous ones¹³. Although only approximately, they determined what time of the night they were. It was a systematic work, fortnightly, since the rotation and translation of the Earth determine the constant changes in the positioning of the stars.

From the New Kingdom on, a full star table was composed of twenty-four partial tables, two for each month – not considering epagomenal days. These fortnightly astro-

¹¹ SHAW, NICHOLSON, 1995: 58.

¹² SALES, 2001: 121.

¹³ RACHET, 1987: 45.

nomical tables show the image of a man kneeling on the floor, his face facing the viewer and the body surrounded by stars arranged in a grid background composed of nine vertical and thirteen horizontal lines (Fig. 6). This is a representation of one of two priests in charge of measuring time. Each drawing shows only one of these two astronomers who were facing each other along the direction from south to north, on the horizontal roof of a temple. There was a table where the position of reference stars in each hour of the night was registered as well as a device for astronomical vision, to observe the entrance of the stars represented on the board along a north-south line. Thus, any time of the night could be indicated. The observer indicated the position of a star in the sky, according to the position it occupied in relation to the silhouette of his partner: above the middle of the body, above the right elbow, above the right ear or right eye or possibly above the eye, ear or left elbow. This decanal transit was mentioned in the grid in seven internal vertical lines. There are beautiful decans lists, the most famous in the vaulted ceiling of the tomb of Seti I, organized in hourly and very complete tables, with their associated deities. It must be said, however, that because the tables of the royal tombs are mainly intended for decoration, the positioning of the stars next to the figures does not fully coincide, or is even at odds, with the indications of the respective table.

Regarding the example of Figure 6, the sixteenth day of month Paneipet (Paofi), the second month of Akhet, we have:

1st hour	leg of the Giant	above the middle
2nd hour	the pedestal star of the Giant	above the middle
3rd hour	Arit, the star	above the left eye
4th hour	the bird's head	above the left eye
5th hour	its back	above in the middle
6th hour	the star of thousands	above the left eye
7th hour	Sart, the star	above the left eye
8th hour	the Orion arm	above the left eye
9th hour	Orion, the star	above the left elbow
10th hour	the star that follows Sothis	above the left elbow
11th hour	the star that precedes «two stars»	above the right elbow
12th hour	the water stars	above in the middle ¹⁴

Fifteen days later, on the first of Hathor, the third month of Akhet, the stars occupy the following positions in this new table:

¹⁴ ERMAN, RANKE, 1976: 451.

1st hour	the pedestal star of the Giant	above in the middle
2nd hour	Arit, the star	above the left eye
3rd hour	the bird's head	above the left eye
4th hour	its back	above in the middle
5th hour	the star of thousands	above in the middle
6th hour	Sart, the star	above in the middle
7th hour	the Orion arm	above in the middle
8th hour	Orion, the star	above the right eye
9th hour	the star that follows Sothis	above the right eye
10th hour	the star that precedes «two stars»	above in the middle
11th hour	the water stars	above in the middle
12th hour	the lion's head	above in the middle ¹⁵

After another fifteen days, on the sixteenth day of the same month of Hathor, the stars were arranged in another table this way:

1st hour	Arit, the star	above the left eye
2nd hour	the bird's head	above in the middle
3rd hour	its back	above in the middle
4th hour	the star of thousands	above in the middle
5th hour	Sart, the star	above the right eye
6th hour	the Orion arm	above in the middle
7th hour	Orion, the star	above the left eye
8th hour	the star that follows Sothis	above the left eye
9th hour	the star that precedes «two stars»	above in the middle
10th hour	the water stars	above in the middle
11th hour	the lion's head	above in the middle
12th hour	its tail	above in the middle ¹⁶

In the New Kingdom another instrument was invented to measure time, whether day or night: the clepsydra or waterclock (Fig. 3). The oldest of them date from the 18th Dynasty. They were made of stone, copper or ceramic, of considerable size, with a time scale engraved on the inside, the exterior decorated with inscriptions and representations of time deities and a hole at the bottom to drain the water. Perhaps more to worship than for technical reasons, the Egyptians divided the unequal nights into twelve equal parts. In fact, with the exception of two annual equinoxes, all the other days and nights of the year have

¹⁵ ERMAN, RANKE, 1976: 451.

¹⁶ ERMAN, RANKE, 1976: 452.

unequal lengths due to Earth's axial obliquity in relation to its orbit, which determines the seasons and causes short nights in summer and long nights in winter. Different marks inside the clepsydras determined the different lengths of the night hours according to the months and seasons of the year. The greater or lesser water flow velocity was obtained by varying the diameter of the hole through which the water passed. Thus, by keeping the same pace, it drained the twelve parts of each night. Probably, they changed the device according to the time of the year, since only clepsydras with one hole have survived to our day, which, according to the fragments of an inscription of Amenemhat, is an improvement of the waterclock of multiple holes. The inventor of this improved clepsydra not only recorded the fact that the king Amenhotep I considered it as «the most beautiful of all things», but also specifies that through its «excellent measuring vessel, the water flew only through a single hole»¹⁷. There are also depictions of clepsydras presenting simultaneously the summer sun and winter sun, the first being represented higher than the second. The use of different types of clock shows us that the Egyptians used alternately the time set by the decans, the equinoctial hour equal to the twenty-fourth part of the time of the rotation of the earth at the moment of equinoxes, and the solar hour, which varied in size according to the months of the year, graduating their different clocks accordingly.

THE DUAL CALENDAR

The Egyptians devaluated the lunar cycles and the mismatch between the counting of the days and the real revolution of the Sun (a solar year of 365.2422 days includes 12 lunar months of 354 days, since the moon takes 29 days and a half to return to the same phase)¹⁸. But they weren't unaware of these issues and didn't ignore them. On the contrary, the solar year marked automatically the astronomical phenomena that governed their agricultural year, and keeping this in mind, the Egyptians celebrated another Opening-of-the-Year on the first day of each solar year, driven by royal enthronizations. This day was determined by the onset of the east brightest star in the sky, Sepedet, Sirius (gr. *Seirios*; lat. *Sirius*) belonging to the constellation Canis Major, and in Latin, commonly called Canicula, what happened systematically around July 19 of each year (*peret sepedet*), when the Nile water level rose¹⁹. Seeing this as a good premonition, they saw in it the female deity Sopdet (the Greek Sothis), goddess of floods, whom they identified both with Satjet (or Satet), the protector of the region of the first waterfall, and with Isis, whose tears shed for Osiris swelled the Nile. The relationship established between the annual cycle and the life of the Nile and, conse-

¹⁷ ERMAN, RANKE, 1976: 449-450.

¹⁸ SAVOIE, 1988: 102; BOMHARD, 1999: 6.

¹⁹ SHAW, NICHOLSON, 1995: 42.

quently, the very survival of the Egyptians, led to the early realization that the eternal return of the flood coincided with the annual cycle of the star Sirius²⁰.

Two calendars were thus in use: one based on the course of the sun and the moon phases – the civil or mobile calendar – and another based on the heliacal rising of Sirius – the sothiac or fixed calendar. However, regardless of some issues that may still remain open about the coordination between the two systems (as the mismatch between the astronomical cycles and the fraction of 1/4 in surplus that the solar year of 365 days has), based on astronomical documents relying on Sirius and Orion – the male counterpart of Sirius²¹ – on various astral personifications and even on non-astronomical texts, the pharaonic calendar assembled the cycles of the sun, moon and Sirius in a single system, a «great year» of 1461 years. Instead of abolishing the civil counting, this system required its maintenance, since the delay of a day each four years, in relation to the astral time, was annulled only after a 1461 years-period, the so-called «sothiac period»²².

Among all stars, Sirius is closer to the tropical solar year: 365.2500 days for the 365.2422 days of the latter. To keep the sothiac calendar along with the lunar calendar, an additional day should be introduced every four years. This procedure prevents the two calendars – the sothiac and the lunar – from evolving independently. Both systems were set after a cycle completed every 1460 years.

Note that both calendars share the same number of units: a small one (the lunar calendar) is composed of four years with 365 days each, plus one day, totaling 1461 days, and a large one (the sothiac calendar) composed of four cycles of 365 years plus one year, making 1461 years.

This dual calendar provided a solid ground both for the technical operations revolving around the reckoning of time, but also for the development of a broader vision for the evolution of time itself. This system didn't have leap years, but the delay of a day every four years, got null after 1461 years²³. Since, because of its movement, the Earth takes the same position in each time of the year, the sothiac year was directly related to the seasons. But if one sothiac year is the time that elapses between two heliacal risings in the same latitude reference, it should be known which reference it was taken for such measurement because the heliacal rising varies with latitude. In ancient Egypt, it would probably be Buto, in the Western Delta.

To clear this question, the small ivory plate of Horus Djer (second or third king of Dynasty I about 3000 B.C.) found in Abydos is of major importance (Fig. 2). In a still very

²⁰ As the conjunction between terrestrial and celestial phenomena was only possible after long observations and data records, the tutelary deities of time and calendar could only be the divine pair Thoth, god of wisdom, writing and moon, and Seshat, goddess of writing and measurement.

²¹ Sirius and Orion always appear together in a central position in the representations of the sothiac calendar.

²² SALES, 2001: 166.

²³ BOMHARD, 1999: 28-30.



Fig. 2: A tablet of Horus Djer, about 3000 B.C., Abydos.

primitive hieroglyphic writing, its reading has received different interpretations. We share the opinion of those who think that it establishes the relationship between the appearance of Sirius and the beginning of the flood, and the reference to the name of Buto is considered to be a possible testimony for the antiquity of the establishment of the dual calendar. The plate presents two columns of text facing the center of the composition where stands an obelisk (*tekhen*), a «sun ray» considered sacred since at least from the 1st Dynasty on and probably evoking the solar manifestation of the king. On the left, top to bottom, figures a *serekh*²⁴ reading *Hor djer Dep*, «Horus the one who helps Dep (Buto)» or «Horus who ends [hunger] in Dep». On the right, we have the inscription *su sepedet Akhet*, literally «the day the floods rose with Sirius», ie, «the opening-of-the-year». The representation of Sirius taking form of a cow is

not unique²⁵, and it is probably associated with the concept of the «Cow of Heaven», the «nurturer» and protector of the Pharaoh and Egypt, a syncretic figure that may appear as Isis, Hathor, Sekhmet, or Sothis Sekhathor. The feather on the cow's horns has connotations with the cyclic return of the flood²⁶ and it often appears in astronomical compositions as part of the headdress of Sothis, usually composed of a solar disk. Moreover, Buto fills the geographic (latitude) and historical (antiquity) conditions required to the sothiac elevation²⁷.

The sothiac cycle was also the starting point for trying to date more precisely the establishment of the calendar. As in the year 139, during the reign of Roman emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161), the heliacal rising coincided with the first day of our present day calendar. Successive subtractions of periods of 1461 years, reach first the year 1322 B.C. at

²⁴ The *serekh* is a hieroglyphic symbol representing the façade of the palace where the Horus Name of the king was inscribed, and usually surmounted by a hawk, illustrating the concept of «Horus is in the palace».

²⁵ A similar depiction also appears in a relief at the entrance of the hypostyle hall at temple of Dendera.

²⁶ In this case it figures as the symbol of Shu evoking his journey to Nubia to bring the flood back to Egypt.

²⁷ BOMHARD, 1999: 46-49.

the beginning of the 19th Dynasty (New Kingdom), then 2783 B.C., in the 2nd Dynasty (Early Dynastic Period), and 4244 B.C. (late Neolithic or early Predynastic Period), which, in the Lower Egypt, corresponded to the cultures of Merimde and Omari, in the Middle Egypt to the culture of the Fayum and, in the Upper Egypt to the culture of Tasa²⁸.

Despite a certain mismatch between them, the Egyptians maintained their two calendars functional, the mobile and the fixed. The occasional references of this event in documents show that the sothiac year never supplanted the civil year in administrative contexts. On the other hand, they were aware of the disadvantages of using the mobile year, which was considered to be «bad», incorrect, as opposed to the «good», correct one. Even so, the later never replaced the fixed year, which was used as an obligation. This was contrary to their theology and rituals, in particular to what concerns the solar cult which found no reflection on the nature of the civil calendar. But this contradiction is only apparent. The use of the mobile year was imperative, since the functioning of the calendar was grounded on two essential facts: the rising of Sirius and the adjustment of the sothiac year. To this end, the star Sirius was always the crucial element.

Although the sothiac period was already known to classical authors, only after Champollion had deciphered the hieroglyphics could such information be confirmed in the Egyptian sources. The *Papyrus Ebers* is the only manuscript presenting a sothiac date and a list of festivals indexed to a mobile year – in this case the ninth year of the reign of Amenhotep I (Amenophis I)²⁹. Other documents, such as the Stone of Elephantine, the Letter of Kahun, the Calendar of Medinet Habu or the Stele of Buto, keep important records to enlighten this issue. Other sources (usually found in royal tombs and funerary temples) combine information related to the planets, Sirius and the lunar deities³⁰.

Especially important for the study of the calendar are two astronomical compositions that figure in the Clepsydra of Karnak (Fig. 3), in a circular layout³¹, and in the Astronomical Ceiling of the Ramesseum (Fig. 4) in a horizontal layout³². Both were organized in three horizontal registers:

- Sirius figures in the upper register, with the decans and the planets (register II in the Ramesseum) thus evoking the sothiac cycle comprising the decans and the planets);

²⁸ RACHET, 1987: 59. If some accept that older date as a starting point of the calendar, others based on the idea that the year originally developed from the lunar calendar, have it as unacceptable. They go back about a thousand years, to approximately 3400 B.C., and attribute their invention to Heliopolitan priests, at a time when Heliopolis was supposedly the capital of a local unified kingdom at the end of the Predynastic Period, before or at the time of the probable unification of Narmer, and therefore at the time of Horus Djer or close to it.

²⁹ RACHET, 1987: 31-33.

³⁰ These depictions evoke the solar, stellar and cosmic destiny of the king. Dating varies from the 8th Dynasty to the Late Period.

³¹ RACHET, 1987: 15-17.

³² RACHET, 1987: 84-85.



Fig. 3: The waterclock of Karnak, dating from the time of Amenhotep III (1402-1364 B.C.).

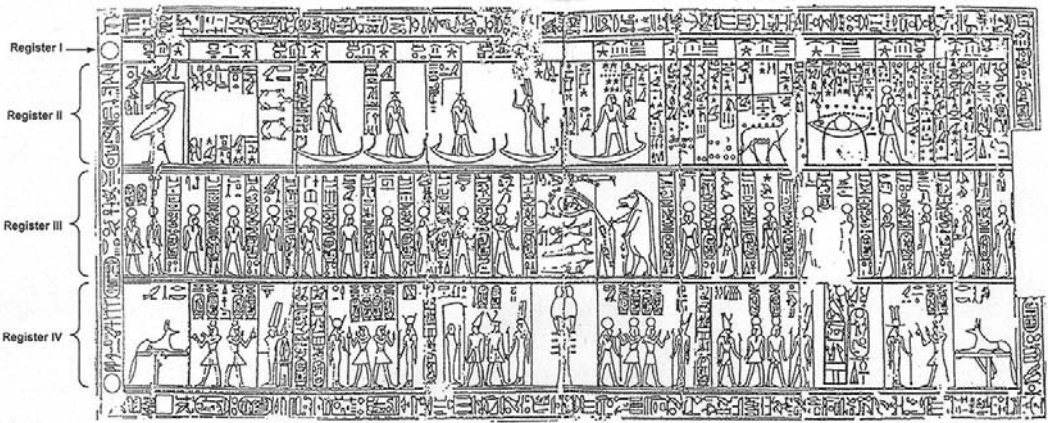


Fig. 4: Horizontal disposal of the astronomical cycles on the ceiling of the Ramesseum (1279-1213 B.C.).

- the second register presents the constellations of the northern sky and lunar deities (register III in the Ramesseum) thus alluding to the lunar year and monthly cycles);
- the lower register figures the pharaoh, sometimes assimilated to the solar deity, honoring the deities representing the months (register IV in the Ramesseum): the Pharaoh celebrating the deities of the twelve festivals evokes year divided into twelve months).

Most representations include only the first two records. In the Ramesseum there is also another one, register I, depicting the mobile year to which all cycles report to.

Presenting themselves at the center of the upper register (register II in the Ramesseum), the depiction of Orion and Sirius seem to dominate the whole composition. The later is placed on a boat personified in the goddess Isis, as indicated by the name inscribed there: Isis (𓆎) Sopdet (𓆏); in front, also standing on a boat, figures the deified (Sah Orion (𓆎)), adorned with the three stars that compose this constellation. Regardless of small dif-

ferences between documents, Sirius and Orion face the progression of the decans, but Orion has the body turned backwards, to Isis, as if to meet her. This position evidences the limit of the periods, the separation of the annual cycles: while Orion announces the end of the preceding year, Isis-Sirius opens the New Year.

Although the Egyptians had a proper term for the planet (*guen-emu*), they commonly used the term *seba* both for star and planet (which prevents us from using this term with the restricted meaning of star), although they distinguished them: the 36 decanal stars were one entity and the planets were another, set aside with the epagomenal days, both located in the upper register, in the representations of the two registers. In pharaonic times, five planets visible to the naked eye were identified.

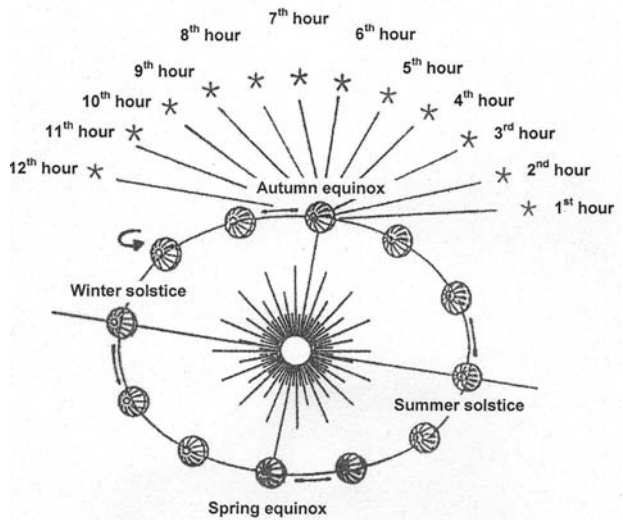


Fig. 5: Rotation: the twelve decans visible each night. Due to the rotation movement of the Earth, each of them indicates one hour of the night. At the equinoxes, each night hour is equal to the 24th part of the day.

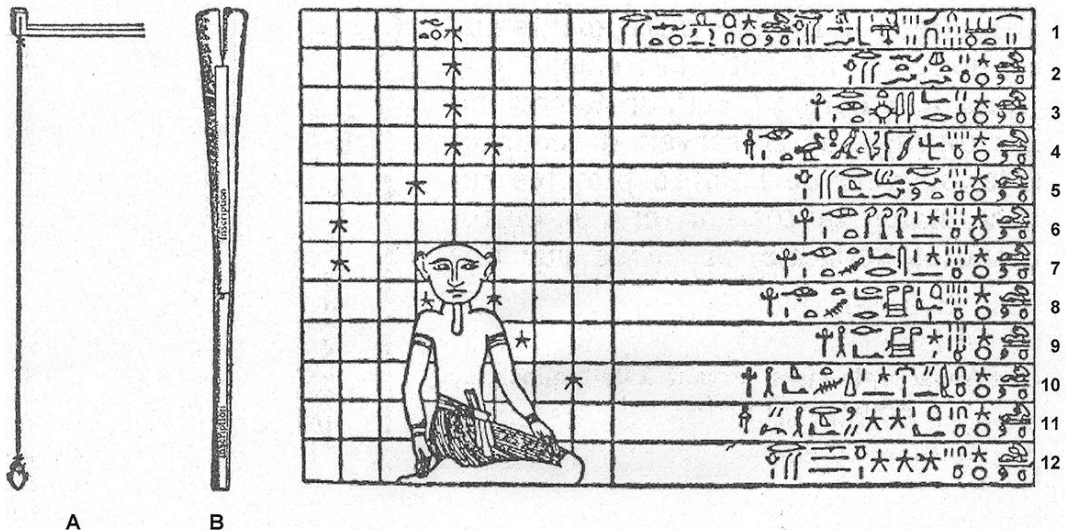


Fig. 6: Stellar clocks: the merkhet (A), the sighting tool (B) and the astronomical table (stars list of the sixteenth day of month Paneipet, the second month of Akhet).

Considering their orbits, they were grouped into internal, Mercury and Venus (*sebeg* and *djai-Bennu*) and external, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn (*hor dechre*, *seba-resi* and *hor-ka pet*)³³. These two groups were represented in epagomenal days.

In the lower register of these compositions figures the moon, the monthly cycle and the lunar year. The ceiling of some tombs, like Senenmut's and Seti I's, show the lunar deities arranged, oriented and integrated with the other represented elements. Each lunar cycle lasts about 29 days and a half, and each phase of the moon, which is identified with a special festival, has its own designation: New Moon – *pechedjenetiu*, Crescent – *shenet*, Full Moon – *shemedt* and Last Quarter – *denit*. The days of the ascending phase of the moon are represented by a ladder of fourteen steps, also rising, each step containing one of the gods of the Great Ennead of Karnak. At the top, Thoth holds the *udjat*-eye the symbol both for the restored eye of Horus and the full moon³⁴.

Apparently, the Egyptians had already understood by observing the movement of the planets and the determination of the periods of their synodic revolution, that the position of one or more planets repeated periodically thus allowing the construction of a dating system. However, there's a question to clarify: Egyptian astronomy, dominated by a priestly elite, was basically a science of religious character that had concerns of a practical nature, which in addition to measuring the time and the beginning of the flood, allowed, for example, the correct orientation of temples and tombs, according to their religious principles. However, it never achieved the brilliance of the astronomy of the Babylonians. Although the Egyptians could determine the North Pole with precision as well as its variation over the years, distinguish the visible planets without the aid of any tool, observe eclipses, realize the existence of meteors and follow a bright celestial body, probably comet Halley³⁵, they were unable to develop scientific explanations for these astronomical phenomena. Despite the good set of observations required for all this, the Egyptian astronomy, as a whole, remained fairly rudimentary.

CALENDAR AND MAGIC

Based on mythic events or grounded on religious festivals, the Egyptians developed a series of superstitions associated with the calendar, which determined or forbade certain tasks on specific days. Although they were typical of the peoples of Antiquity, it was in Classical Antiquity that these ideas were widely spread, the Latin words *fastu* and *nefastu* being used respectively to designate the favorable days and the unfavorable days. While privately oracles and augurs could predict the future of a particular individual, the Julian calendar

³³ RACHET, 1987: 72-74.

³⁴ BOMHARD, 1999: 78-79.

³⁵ SAUNERON, 1970: 30.

established general guidelines for the public life: of its 365 days, 188 were favorable meeting days (favorable to hold public meetings), 39 were simply favorable days, while 132 were unfavorable or holidays (not conducive to public business or mourning) and 16 were mixed, or partially unfavorable and partly favorable (as Saturdays when people only worked in the morning).

However, this Roman practice was already a reality in ancient Egypt. Several papyri, especially from the New Kingdom, list the thirty days of a month or even all the days of one year, including for each single day the designation of «good», «bad» or both «good and bad». For example, Mechir 1 – when the sky was created – or Athir 27 – the day when Horus and Seth made peace among themselves and decided to share the world – were considered favorable days. The unfavorable days were much fewer than the favorable. One of them was the fourteenth day of Tibi, when Isis and Nephthys wept over Osiris.

Other days that were not entirely bad, but were dangerous because they were exposed to particular threats, such as Khoiak 17 and 27: according to the time of the day, those days could be either good or bad. Favorable days did not require special precautions which of course were taken seriously to face unfavorable or dangerous days. For example, on Tibi 12 the eye couldn't stare on a mouse, which in Ancient Egypt was not by all means impossible; in relation to the day when Isis and Nephthys wept over Osiris, Tibi 14, one should prevent from singing or even to listen to music, on Tibi 16 one should not wash oneself, and on Far-muti 24 one should avoid uttering the name of Seth. There were other days – and they were many – when one should not do anything or leave home. In the month of Paofi only, there were four days to avoid any occupation and five others in which one should stay at home all day or at least part of it. Similar situations occurred in the remaining months. In such a scenario, the birth of a child was blessed or cursed, depending on being born on a lucky or unlucky day. For example, if the birth occurred on Khoiak 20, the child would be blind; if it was on Khoiak 3 the child would be deaf. The difficulty for the mother was to determine the right day to give birth! However, we should keep in mind that for the Egyptians superstition was important, as they believed that certain words or actions influenced both the forces of nature and the living creatures – from the smallest animal to the gods – they ruled their whole life by these beliefs³⁶.

THE HELLENIZATION OF THE EGYPTIAN CALENDAR

On settling in Egypt, the Greeks did not see great benefit in maintaining the cosmic calendar, since the mobile calendar, the sun, was quite misaligned. They sought rather to create a mechanism not only to correct this misalignment, but also to avoid it from then

³⁶ ERMAN, RANKE, 1976: 453-454.

on. The drift of one day every four years between the two calendars, thus causing the difference of one month in the beginning of the year every 120 years, led Ptolemy III Euergetes I (246-221 B.C.) to try to resolve the issue by decree (Decree of Canopus, from 238 B.C.), adjusting to the mobile year a sixth epagomenal day every four years. But changing the divine law of Thoth was not easy for the Ptolemies. Only in 25 B.C., with the Romans, was the leap year introduced by Augustus. Anyway, the chosen day was not the one of the Ptolemaic decree – the day when Sirius rose – but the first day of the month of Thoth in the mobile calendar – which in the year of the reform was 41 days after the heliacal rise. With this inclusion, the former mobile year became fixed, and Egyptians started to have two fixed calendars: the sothiac calendar – which started with the appearance of the star Sirius – and the Alexandrian calendar – beginning on the first day of Thoth, 41 days after the rise of Sirius.

The acceptance of this amendment at this time was due, certainly, to the existence of another calendar in Egypt, a solar calendar of 365.25 days to include the leap year: the former Julian calendar, introduced in the Roman empire by Julius Caesar in 45 B.C. The small difference from the actual length of the solar revolution (365.2422 days), would lead Pope Gregory XIII to fix it in 1582, removing the accumulated difference of ten days ahead of the official date (after October 4, 1582 came October 15, 1582). The error was avoided by introducing the rule that only the years ending in zero that were multiples of 400 would be leap years. The Gregorian reform has not only set the present day calendar but has its roots deeply steeped in ancient Egypt³⁷.

The Egyptian calendar was clearly decanal, having star Sirius as the dominant and central element of astronomical representations, around which the civil year was organized, since always the most common year, in a system that included natural methods of self-regulation of astronomical cycles. The equinoctial hour itself was defined according to the length of the year: a new decan appeared every ten days and its revolution advanced one degree a day completing in 360 days. Twelve groups of three decades were the twelve months that coincided with the lunar cycles, adjusting the epagomenal days so that the mobile year could have 365 days. The quarter of day missing was recorded annually in each rise of Sirius, being the day thus generated every four years, diluted. The adjustment between the civil and the sothiac years was done in periods of 1461 years. In fact, a vertical axial reading of the Ramesseum, shows us Sirius as the basis of the system, inaugurating the sothiac year, the sothiac cycle, the decanal cycle and the lunar year, being its accuracy, stability and continuity symbolized by Thoth sitting on a pillar *djed*, whose four steps evoke the sothiac tetrarchy. The Egyptian calendar was designed as a true work of eternity.

The combination of these various elements, allows the parallelism between the different calendars, including the one we use today. Not only documents – such as *Papyrus Ebers*

³⁷ CANHÃO, 2006: 58-59.

– highlight the relationship between the mobile and the fixed year of the Egyptians, but also certain astronomical events, such as equinoxes or heliacal rising, allow fixed references to any calendar. So you can say that to the third month of summer of the Egyptian mobile calendar corresponded the month of the New Year Festival on their fixed calendar; this began on the first day of Thoth, which corresponded to July 19 of the Julian calendar, corresponding to June 15 of our current calendar, at the latitude of Memphis. It is evident that the establishment of the Egyptian chronology is complex and those other elements besides astronomy must be considered: royal lists, historical texts, biographical records, dates of lunar Egyptian festivals, matching lists of Mesopotamian and Hebrew kings... However, none of this prevents many experts from considering the Egyptian calendar as the bedrock of the one that is used currently with a universal character, as the more rational, organized and clear of all that have been created throughout history.

Figures acknowledgements:

Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 adapted from *Le calendrier égyptien. Une œuvre d'éternité*, respectively from pages 65, 48, 16-17, 18-19 and 65; Figure 6 adapted from *La civilisation égyptienne*, pages 449-450.

HYPATIA AND THE IDIOSCYNCRASIES OF CHRISTIANITY IN EGYPT – A STUDY OF THE EVENTS OCCURRED AT EASTER 415 A.D. IN ALEXANDRIA

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Abstract: *When compared with other regions of Roman Empire, Egypt was early and intensively converted into Christianity. In Egypt, Christianity was almost a phenomenon of masses, characterized also by a well distinguished militancy, spirit of martyrdom, and popular adhesion. These particularities can be explained by the social, political and religious background. It is our aim, in this paper, to look closer into the context and events which conducted to the Hypatia's Death, to follow the political response regarding street violence in Alexandria. Far from holding attenuate circumstances to dramatic events, the analysis of literary testimonies and legal documents will frame the Hypatia's death episode in the major conflictive context of social and religious tensions in Late Egypt.*

Since the establishment of the early Christian communities, Egypt has played a prominent role amongst the regions of the Roman Empire in which Christianity was defined by greater popular expression, military display and belligerence. In fact it was in Egypt that Christianity first emerged as a religion on a wide scale, embraced by the masses, a phenomenon in itself greatly determined by the social, political and religious particularities of that region which has welcomed the new religion.

Hypatia of Alexandria was a prominent figure in the classical world. As such this chapter not only takes into account the events surrounding the tragic death of the philosopher but at the same time, through the examination of documents and surviving testimonies, it

attempts to evaluate if the answer for such tragic ending can be found in the special characteristics that defined the city of Alexandria in those days. We do not endeavor to search for lawful reasons that led to her appalling murder through lynching, a form of death which sadly has so often been cited throughout the history of mankind. However the consideration given to the precedents and the motivations behind Hypatia's death and the attempt to scrutinize them, as incomprehensible and unforgiving any act of violence practiced against the defenseless may be, such consideration however might shed another light on what was effectively in question, thus helping voice the truth owed in defense of the victims caught out in this episode.

Born in 370 A.D., Hypatia belongs to the group of distinguished figures of Antiquity whose popularity precedes more from the tragic ending of their lives, in this case in her native Alexandria in the year of 415, than from their lives, in this case a short one dedicated to the diffusion of knowledge, mathematics, astronomy and philosophy. It is rather unfair that the emphasis put on the dramatic events leading up to Hypatia's death has overshadowed, to its detriment, her achievements in life particularly in the field of philosophy.

In this way Hypatia's victimization is double edged: on one hand she has been catalogued and reduced to the status of a martyr in an era of decaying paganism, by being sacrificed to the intolerance of a domineering Christianity, and on the other, she remains a prisoner and an adequate symbol of the ideological conceptions of those who have written about her, despite their admiration for her. This ideology was the dominant posture adopted about Hypatia during the age of Illuminism. Literature, in particular the one diffused during the period of Romanticism, has greatly contributed towards defining Hypatia's image as the heroin of martyrdom, victim of male greed¹. Scientists and contemporary divulgues alike, uphold her as a symbol of free science's fragility, in a world enslaved by ideologies². Eventually only after the Sixties would Hypatia become the bastion of several feminist movements³.

¹ Diodata Saluzzo Roero's (1827), in her *Ipazia ovvero delle Filosofie* wrote that Hypatia converted to Christianity through Cyril's influence and that her death was the result of her denial to give in to the romantic advances of the patriarch. The French poet Leconte de Lisle, in two of his works, named *Hypatie* (1847) and *Hypatie et Cyrille* (1857) tells the story of a damsel of vulnerable authenticity and beauty. Charles Kingsley (1873), *Hypatia of Alexandria*, historical novel of the English romanticism.

² In the twentieth century, Bertrand Russel reemphasized the purpose of her death, uplifting her status to that of symbol of subservience of science to the established social rule: «This way, in the year of 414 A.D. the status of philosophy in the intellectual metropolis of the world was sealed; from then on science will have to endeavour an obscure and subordinate status. Its public display will no longer be tolerated...» (B. Russel, *Hystory of Western Philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from Earliest Times to the Present Day*, London, 1946, p. 387.; also the scientist and writer Carl Sagan, in its well known book *Cosmos*). Further information is available on the internet through his documentary about the city of Alexandria, whose scientific venture culminated with Hypatia's death (episode 13 of the series *Cosmos*, mn. 32-35 – <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zuD-JbAXYI>>).

³ *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*. Center for Humanities: University of Washington.

In fact, in ancient literary sources, the narrative of the death of this singular figure of Antiquity, corresponds to the nucleus of documented conventional information and to some extent the only one to bear factual credibility. Any other personal aspect of hers has been portrayed in a divergent and controversial way: her biography, the nature of her studies, her religious identity and finally the social settings that enveloped her existence. There is no unanimous opinion either with regards to those responsible for the tragic events associated with her death, or even its motivation, in the sense that the narratives concerning Hypatia's death offer more information about their author than the subject in question.

The truth about the real Hypatia has been further veiled by the fact that no work or literary fragment directly attributed to her was ever found or has survived to this day, casting her into that silence that throughout history has been the fate of all the women who dared to take on a role otherwise solely reserved to the male gender. Despite all the studies conducted in the fields of science and history, in order to prove Hypatia's contribution in the areas of mathematics, geometry and astronomy, these have become mere probabilities since they have been painstakingly collected from indirect sources.

The Italian Renaissance artist, Raphael, has included her amongst the philosophers and illustrious figures in his frescoed masterpiece *The school of Athens*, surrounding her with eminent philosophers such as Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Zeno of Elea, Epicurus, Averroes, all of which have their eyes turned to books or documents, or simply aiming their inquisitive and unreserved minds at one of the figures in the painting. Hypatia is the only figure, in this composition, without any book or document where to fix her eyes onto. Of significant importance is also the fact that she is the only figure, in the whole painting, whose eyes are fixated on the observer, and such look arouses in us a double question: on one hand who were effectively her intellectual counterparts in the classical world, which authors did she read and who read the works she wrote? On the other hand, what more can the actual receiver of the figure of Hypatia know beyond the tragic circumstances of her death?

Let us look in brief at her most prominent facets, that of scientist and philosopher and in particular that of mathematician: Hypatia was the daughter of Theon of Alexandria, and as her father's disciple and assistant, she would helped him and gain an insight on the commentaries he dedicated to Euclid's works including his *Elements*, *Data* and *Optics*. Gathered through the Byzantine tradition, we owe it to Theon of Alexandria great part of what is known today not only of Euclid's work but also of Ptolemy's *Handy Tables* and *Almagest*⁴; The *Suda* identifies him as a scholar and member of Alexandria's Museum, one who held great interest in astronomy and who was also capable to predict the eclipses of the sun and the moon from observations conducted in Alexandria. Following on her father's footsteps, Hypatia devoted her life to the study and commentaries of the Alexandrian mathematicians

⁴ Oxford Dictionnay of Byzantium, 1991; ZIEGLER, 1934: 2078-2079; DZIELSKA, 2009: 84-94.

such as Apollonius of Perga (3rd century B.C.), author of *Conic Sections*; and *Diophantus* (3rd century A.D.), author of *Arithmetica* and the most complex mathematician of Antiquity⁵.

Modern scientists and mathematicians have recently tried to identify the parts in these writings that correspond to Hypatia's original contribution, and out of an indepth analysis it has been concluded that both Theon and Hypatia have jointly produced the exegesis of mathematics of Antiquity based on authentic texts, unfortunately lost to us, therefore becoming co-editors of the works of great mathematicians including Ptolemy, Euclid and Diophantus. Additional to their contribution is the fact that the main purpose of such commentaries was to spread the knowledge amidst the pupils and to stimulate the scientific minds, thus conferring an experimental and educational meaning to Hypatia's work⁶.

Hypatia did not focus solely on the theoretical side of science, but also gave way to practical experiments. This we infer from the correspondence with one of her disciples, Synesius of Cyrene (in the Ep. *De Dono Astrolabii* and in the Ep. 15) which shows that scientific devices were used, such as the astrolabe, for astronomic measurements, or even the hydroscope, used for experiments in the area of physics.⁷ To corroborate this, the *Suda* also emphasizes the importance attributed to «other branches of philosophical knowledge» fostered by Hypatia, namely the philosophy of Plato and Aristoteles. Hypatia fits the profile that characterises the eclectic Philosopher of Antiquity.

It is not our intention to examine the identity of the real Hypatia and of the process of recovery from the violence inflicted upon her, or even reiterate her portrait as either a victim, heroine or martyr of Hellenism's scientific culture which still flourished within the environment of religious tumult of late Antiquity. Besides, the knowledge we have today about Hypatia has already some good reports, done by Michael Deakin in his work *Hypatia of Alexandria: Mathematician and Martyr* (2007) and by Maria Dzielska, who in 1995 published her work *Hypatia of Alexandria*, translated and published in Portugal by *Relógio de Água* in 2009⁸.

⁵ *Suda*, the Byzantine dictionary from the 10th century A.D. (s.v. Hypatia 4, 644.1-646.5 Adler= 166 Adler ed. on line (<http://www.stoa.org/solbin/search.pl?login=guest&enlogin=guest&db=REAL&field=adlerhw_gr&searchstr=upsilon,166>, from 2/12/2002) gathers information on several Greek writers: Socrates Scholasticus (4th-5th centuries A.D.), her contemporary and the author of *Ecclesiastical History*; Philostorgius from Cappadocia, her contemporary, also makes several remarks about her in his *Arian Controversy*, is also noted in the *Ecclesiastical History*. Hesychius of Miletus (5th century A.D.), Onomatologus; from the last director of the Academy prior to its closure as ordered by the Roman Emperor Justinian, Damascius, the Life of Isidore (6th century A.D.), from John of Nikiu (7th century A.D.), *Chronicle*. *Suda*'s main sources were Socrates Scholasticus, Hesychius of Miletus and above all Damascius.

⁶ DEAKIN, 1994: 234-243. The «mathematical world of today owes Hypatia a great debt, for without her we would have much less of the works of Diophantus. If what survives for us is Hypatia's Commentary, then some of her work may appear here» (p. 239).

⁷ Synesius of Cyrene (ed. Garzia, *Les Belles Lettres*) Ep. 16, in 413 A.D.: «I face such challenges at present that I am in need of a hydroscope. Try to create me one (...).»

⁸ Adopting a method of rigorous investigation also shown towards the sources used in her work, Maria Dzielska hasn't escaped

Western culture was sympathetic towards Hypatia. During the Age of Enlightenment it fell upon the English scholar Edward Gibbon (1798), through his well known work *The history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire*⁹, the task of relating a narrative that would become the source of the most significant literary traditions and scientific propagation about Hypatia, being the tragic occurrence of her death by lynchment integrated in an episode of wider scope, entitled *The death of Paganism* (chapter. XLVII), one of Bishop Cyril's many displays of his assertion of power in the public arena of Alexandria.

and he soon prompted, or accepted, the sacrifice of a virgin, who professed the religion of the Greeks, and cultivated the friendship of Orestes. Hypatia, the daughter of Theon the mathematician, was initiated in her father's studies; her learned comments have elucidated the geometry of Apollonius and Diophantus, and she publicly taught, both at Athens and Alexandria, the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle. In the bloom of beauty, and in the maturity of wisdom, the modest maid refused her lovers and instructed her disciples; the persons most illustrious for their rank or merit were impatient to visit the female philosopher; and Cyril beheld, with a jealous eye, the gorgeous train of horses and slaves who crowded the door of her academy. A rumor was spread among the Christians, that the daughter of Theon was the only obstacle to the reconciliation of the praefect and the archbishop; and that obstacle was speedily removed. On a fatal day, in the holy season of Lent, Hypatia was torn from her chariot, stripped naked, dragged to the church, and inhumanly butchered by the hands of Peter the reader, and a troop of savage and merciless fanatics: her flesh was scraped from her bones with sharp oyster shells, and her quivering limbs were delivered to the flames. The just progress of inquiry and punishment was stopped by seasonable gifts; but the murder of Hypatia has imprinted an indelible stain on the character and religion of Cyril of Alexandria.

In light of the tragic circumstances surrounding Hypatia's death, let us examine the societal characteristics of Alexandria that may have precipitated the events leading to her murder on that fatal day in March 415 A.D., during the holy season of Lent.

The towns spreading over the Roman Empire during Late Antiquity, especially those located in the Middle East, Alexandria in particular, were prone to urban violence fuelled in many cases by religious conflict either between pagans and Christians or between rival powers adverse to Christianity. In fact, since 312 A.D. and more frequently from 390 A.D. onwards, religion became the reason used to justify the violence and clashes that often erupted.

the limitations intrinsic to the research on a figure like Hypatia: therefore most pages are dedicated to the telling of Hypatia's «literary tale» of which we have retained certain details in n. 1, and in the circumstances surrounding her death.

⁹ Already available to the public (GIBBON, (1782) – *History of the Decline and fall of Roman Empire*. With notes by the Rev. H. H. Milman (1845), cap. XLVII, II. <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/25717/25717-h/files/734/734-h/gib4-47.htm#2HCH-0001>>; references taken on 15/05/2011).

The Tetrarchs, amongst them Theodosius I, were vigilant over such episodes of urban violence against which they passed laws aimed at keeping the religious unrest under control in the towns of Late Antiquity. Some of these reflected the implicit need to remove from the metropolis the conflictive elements, as a way to bringing relief to the economical and demographic burden caused by those citizens of scarce financial resources¹⁰. In order to resolve the issues related to safety and sustainability, though motivated by a more specific scope, laws were passed that limited the freedom of movement of specific groups linked to the Church: the Book 16 of the Codex *Theodosiani*, the section on religious issues, forbids monks from entering the cities, keeping them instead confined to the deserts and inhabited dwellings. Two years later, the dichotomy between a monastic life and a lay status, this associated the right to live in an urban environment, is further reinforced: those who break the law, as well as being punished, (*iudiciariis aluntur iniuriis*), are also forced to give up their monastic status, a condition upon which they are then allowed within the urban enclosures. Though of apparent contradiction, it must be noted that, once become laymen, ancient monks fell under general jurisdiction, not less repressive than the one that interdicted movements to particular human groups:

CTh., 16.3.1 Impp. Valentinianus, Theodosius et Arcadio (2nd September 390 A.D.)

Quicumque sub professione monachi repperiuntur, deserta loca et uastas solitudines sequi adque habitare iubeantur

CTh., 16.3.2 Impp. Valentinianus, Theodosius et Arcadio (17th April 392 A.D.)

Monachos quibus interdictae fuerunt ciuitates, dum iudiciariis aluntur iniuriis, in pristinum statum submota hac lege esse praecipimus; antiquata si quidem nostrae clementiae iussione liberos in oppidis largimur eis ingressus.

The following laws refer to a group of people known as the *parabalaneis*, who could have been directly associated with Hypatia's death, according to E. Gibbon. The sources we will refer to do not mention these laws as a consequence or a direct answer to the events of 415 in Alexandria, but they allow us to infer that the *parabalaneis*' presence was at least perceived as a menace to the security in the restless streets of Alexandria in the year of 415 A.D. The following year, in 416 A.D., Honorius and Theodosius received a complaint from the Alexandrian delegation, as the bishop could not freely move around the city, due to the wave of terror imposed by the *parabalaneis*. In response, the Roman Emperors issued a declaration, determining that *clerici*, or religious orders should be set apart from public affairs and from the curia. The *parabalaneis* must not exceed 500 in total, and must not be picked

¹⁰ GREY, PARKIN, 2003: 284-299. Through this law, Theodosius aimed at keeping the poor and the destitute away from the cities, in order to make the necessary resources available to institutions of the Church so they can accommodate the invalid and the sick.

amongst the rich or those who pay taxes (*hunc locum redimant*). Instead they must proceed from the poor social strata of Alexandria (once again we notice their concern in «establishing control» over the poor by assigning them a role in the city). Their names must first be gathered and proposed to the urban prefect, who in turn will hand them to the Praetorian prefect. They are barred access to areas of leisure, the courts and government buildings, unless they have personal matters to resolve there, such as any pending court procedures, or in case they have been summoned by a third party or even if one of them has been appointed as an advocate for the group he represents. If anyone violates these rules, he must be expelled from the group, bear a punishment in accordance to the offense and never again be admitted amongst the *parabalaneis*¹¹.

Two years later, in 418 A.D., the same Emperors decree an increase in the number of members of *parabalaneis* along with regulations about the attribution and selection processes: they must provide care for the sick, there must be six hundred of them instead of five hundred, specifically selected by the bishop (*pro arbitrio uiri reuerentissimi Antistitis Alexandrinae urbis*) for that role amongst the modest social classes (*exceptis honoratis et curialibus*). In case of death, a replacement must be appointed by the bishop. The law previously issued regarding access to areas of leisure and the courts remains unchanged¹².

According to the information contained in the CTh 16.2.42.1, the *parabalaneis* are responsible for the «terror» instilled in the city. But the decisions of the Empereur reflect his intention to integrate the *parabalaneis* as a group in society, by defining the contours of their hierarchy, not to remove them from the city. A clear delineation is established between the *clerici* (i.e. those who have been ordained, being the Bishop the head of the hierarchy) and this brotherhood which must be submitted to the *Praefectus Augustalis*, a civic author-

¹¹ CTh.16.2.42.1 *Quia inter cetera Alexandrinae legationis inutilia hoc etiam decretis scriptum est, ut reverentissimus episcopus de Alexandrina ciuitate aliquo non exiret, quod quidem terrore eorum, qui parabalani nuncupantur, legationi insertum est, placet nostrae clementiae, ut nihil commune clerici cum publicis actibus uel ad curiam pertinentibus habeant. Praeterea eos, qui parabalani vocantur non plus quam quingentos esse praecipimus, ita ut non divites et qui hunc locum redimant, sed pauperes a corporatis pro rata Alexandrini populi praebeantur, eorum nominibus viro spectabili praefecto Augustali videlicet intimatis et per eum ad vestram magnitudinem referendis. Quibus neque ad quodlibet publicum spectaculum neque ad curiae locum neque ad iudicium accedendi licentiam permittimus, nisi forte singuli ob causas proprias et necessitates iudices adierint, aliquem litem pulsantes uel ab alio ipsi pulsati uel in communi totius corporis causa syndico ordinato, sub ea definitione ut, si quis eorum haec uiolauerit, et breuibis parabalani eximatur et competenti supplicio subiugetur nec umquam ad eandem sollicitudinem reuertatur. (416 sept. 29).*

¹² CTh.16.2.43 *Idem aa. Monaxio praefecto praetorio. Parabalani, qui ad curanda debiliu aegra corpora deputantur, quingentos esse ante praecipimus. Sed quia hos minus sufficere in praesenti cognovimus, pro quingentis sescentos constitui praecipimus, ita ut pro arbitrio uiri reuerentissimi antistitis Alexandrinae urbis de his, qui ante fuerant et qui pro consuetudine curandi gerunt experientiam, sescenti Parabalani ad huiusmodi sollicitudinem eligantur, exceptis videlicet honoratis et curialibus. Si qui autem ex his naturali sorte fuerit absumptus, alter in eius locum pro voluntate eiusdem sacerdotis exceptis honoratis et curialibus subrogetur; ita ut hi sescenti uiri reuerentissimi sacerdotis praeceptis ac dispositionibus obsecundent et sub eius cura consistant: reliquis, quae dudum latae legis forma complectitur super isdem Parabalanis vel de spectaculis vel de iudiciis ceterisque, sicut iam statutum est, custodiendis. Dat. III non. feb. Constantinopoli Honorio XII et Theodosio VIII aa. cons. (418 febr. 3). These dispositions were rewritten in CJ. 1. 3. 16; 1.3. 18.*

ity. The very fact that this aspect was mentioned shows that such ascendancy, exclusively civic, was not established as so before 416 A.D.

They are selected amidst the poorest and those exempt of paying taxes. Two fundamentals are on the basis of these exclusions: the members of these brotherhoods took upon their care the sick, the destitute and those left bereft in the city. This was a risky and repudiated task, one which constantly threatened their lives through the close contact with contagious diseases. However, those endowed with public offices, such as the ordained members of the Church (clergy and monks), benefited from forms of tax exemptions. Theodosius' law establishes that they must be recruited amidst the poorest, those who were already exempt from the payment of taxes, due to their economical fragility, absence of property or occupation to be taxed.

In this way, no one would be lured to this task simply to benefit from tax exemptions and, at the same time, the base of taxable contributions would not be decimated, a sensible matter in Egypt, where the brutality of state taxation was one of the reasons for common people to feel attracted to every kinds of political contest, even to indirect ones, like ecclesiastical power centered in bishop claims against Constantinople and the Emperor. The popularity of the task amongst the crowds of Alexandria was considerable, according to legislation. Since the access of the humble one on to grounds of public intervention was considerably limited, belonging to the *parabalaneis* could fulfill their necessity to participate and to intervene into public life.

The Emperor had an ambiguous task: to profit the opportunity to offer social integration to the poorest, (quieting trouble motivations, and to increase popularity by means of propaganda) but also to control them, reducing opportunities of erratic movements from them.

In our interpretation, the social reintegration of the *parabalaneis* offered the most humble citizens the possibility to climb up the social ladder, enabled through the association and service rendered to the powers above. In fact, the laws concerning these two social groups, triggered by Christianity, express the ambiguity of the political power, which on one hand tried to castrate the number and attributions of these groups (even through expulsions), and on the other uses them to carry out certain tasks in the city. Their dependency in relation to Egypt's governor after 416 A.D. shows that policing duties were also listed amongst them¹³.

13 The *parabalaneis* («the bathing servants») or in the Late Greek version, the *parabolani*, would have come into existence during the great plague of Alexandria, during the episcopate of Dionisius of Alexandria. Their name indicates their primary role: they were in charge of transporting the sickly to their treatments which comprised of cold or hot baths, depending on the illnesses. They were also tasked with removing the corpses from the streets. In their origins, therefore, they were not exactly nurses but merely litter carriers. I believe this is why they were later transferred to the role of police officers and bodyguards. One of their most valuable personal attributes was that of strength and physical stamina, whilst their therapeutic knowledge was of little importance. They consisted of a group of non-ordained Christians, of humble origin, devoted

The Roman Emperors were aware of the problems inherent to social, political and religious cohesion in the cities located in the Eastern provinces of the empire and for that reason Constantine's long reign, succeed by his son Constans, even Julianus short-lived one, was characterized by a permanent strive to maintain an atmosphere of connivance and religious neutrality capable of assuring internal peace. Therefore, Theodosius has only decreed the state's religious adoption of Christianity after this had reached the vast majority of the empire including the elites and the urban masses, once it replaced the administrative structures which could no longer be sustained by a weakened state. In other words, in matters of law, the Roman Empire assumed a position *de facto*, one century after Christianity's progressive infiltration in society¹⁴. The *parabalaneis*, and their inclusion in the state, are a primary example of a compromise needed to preserve the public order. The survival of the Roman Empire depended not only upon an agreement being reached with the Church, of its capability to influence and secure the support of the urban population, but also upon its structures concerning security, social aid and education, which, to its own detriment, the state was unable to keep up with.

Being the religious motif the excuse found to justify the violence; this in turn translated the political, social and economical unrest bore by an empire in decline. Infuriated crowds were a contingency in the cities of the Late Roman Empire, populated by impoverished masses of people to whom the state had in the past guaranteed adequate means of subsistence thanks to a system of social benefits and free distributions of food supply. Towards the end of the 3rd century A.D. the means necessary to keep law and order were already waning. The free distribution of food had already stopped and the military resources needed in order to keep the law domestically were instead used to defend the external boundaries against foreign invasions.

In matters related to peace-keeping, Alexandria was a city of particular vulnerability. Owned by the Roman Prince, the province of Egypt was still the Empire's main producer of wheat since August's Principate in the 1st century A.D. This province was subjected to a hard fiscal regime imposed on its people, who mainly lived of agriculture¹⁵. For this reason, during the 4th century A.D., Alexandria witnessed numerous episodes of religious conflict and political rivalry fought between the two Episcopal headquarters of the Eastern Empire,

to work of social help and assistance to the sick and the burial of the dead. Their sense of obedience made them particularly suitable to fulfil the duties of bodyguards and special police forces. KAZHDAN, 1991: 1582. They were at the forefront of the riots of Alexandria which were responsible for Hypatia's death and equally of those which took place during the 2nd Council of Ephesus (The Latrocinium of Ephesus).

¹⁴ BARNES, 1993: «Athanasius exercised power and protected his position in Alexandria by the systematic use of violence and intimidation».

¹⁵ BAGNALL, 2003: 153-160. The rural population was taxed according to the size of the fields and wheat production. As it happened throughout the Empire, the sales of goods was taxed by the Chrysargyron. The production of wheat in Egypt was vital in order to secure the level of grain stock of Constantinople, Rome and the army.

Alexandria and Constantinople. The former has frequently boycotted the exports of cereals and the payment of taxes as means of political pressure forced on the emperors¹⁶.

It must be noted also the increasing association between national affairs and religious elites, of which bishops such as Athanasius, Theophile and Cyril are a good example for they were renowned for their theological arguments which became progressively intermingled with arguments of nationalistic interest. Being typically urban citizens of a Greek cultural background, their resistance against several movements of religious heterodoxy, sustained by the patriarchs in Constantinople or by its resident Emperor, was welcomed by the Christian communities of Egypt as an act of protest against the oppression levied upon them by Rome and its Eastern counterpart, Constantinople.

History itself explains the roots of this animosity. To the generic elements that define the economical and social history of the Late Roman Empire, we will add the specific factors that altogether turned Alexandria into a place particularly susceptible to urban violence¹⁷, in itself a symptom of a state struggling to assert its power and influence over a province with an increasing nationalistic ideology and progressively isolated from the Empire.

In first instance, since the Roman invasion and the inclusion of Egypt as a province of the Roman Empire, during Emperor Augustus' reign, Alexandria saw its political influence progressively weakened. At the beginning of the 4th century A.D., Emperor Constantine chose Bosphorus as the new capital of the empire. The cities of the Empire, including Rome, Nicomedia, Sirmio, Milan, Trier, Ravenna and Constantinople had been established as capitals in different or simultaneous moments of Late Roman world according to strategic and military criteria. Alexandria, however appeared to be protected from external invasions and for that reason it never enjoyed the capital status. Nevertheless, Egypt played such a vital role in the Roman economy that it was never granted any autonomy otherwise conceded to other provinces. Instead it was ruled with an iron fist by a governor who reported directly to the Emperor. The Egyptian farmers were forced to pay heavy taxes on their production, whose pricing and trading were also dictated and controlled by the Romans.

In second instance, we assist at the particular context of the birth of Christianity in

¹⁶ HARDY, 1933: 188, 191. Sources, Sozomenos, H.E. Socrates, *Life of Constantine* «Athanasius, rich, powerful and capable of everything...». The reason of his exile was the fact that he boycotted the supply of cereals to Constantinople. Exiled at least five times by two emperors, Constantine and his son Constans, the first three times were due to treachery, not to heresy, ie, for disobedience to the political powers in a context of combat against the unorthodox militants and Arians.

¹⁷ Socrates of Constantinople, HE 7, 13, (p. 160) describes the conflict between Christians and Jews straight after Orestes' arrival: «...About this same time it happened that the Jewish inhabitants were driven out of Alexandria by Cyril the bishop on the following account. The Alexandrian public is more delighted with tumult than any other people: and if at any time it should find a pretext, breaks forth into the most intolerable excesses...». In 7, 14, Socrates of Constantinople narrates the descent of five hundred monks from the deserts of Nitria and Alexandria to help in the attack of Orestes, the city praefect. The population however expels the monks and hand over their leader, Ammonius, to the authorities. Jailed and tortured to death, Bishop Cyril decrees that his body be placed in a church and proclaims him as a martyr in defense of the Christian faith.

Alexandria, at the core of the Hellenistic world, and throughout Egypt as well. The arrival of Christianity in Egypt occurred very soon, profiting the geographical proximity with Palestine and its evangelization is traditionally associated with Jesus' apostle, Mathew. The Jewish communities of Alexandria's Diaspora, would have been amongst the first to embrace the new religion, as with many other important places of the Eastern Roman empire. The city of Alexandria, in the 2nd century A.D., however was a city of knowledge and libraries, which gathered conditions for the first systematic development of Christian theology. The first argumentation and philosophical elaboration of the Christian faith, under the influence of the Greek philosophy, more in particular of the Neoplatonic schools, took place in Alexandria. This city became not only the ground of doctrinal speculation and of the first biblical studies but also the stage of the first dogmatic controversies, born out of the attempt to merge the Hellenistic philosophy with the new religion. The theological school of Alexandria stands as the most ancient centre of sacred science in the history of Christianity, singled out by the interest applied to the investigation of the contents of the new faith and in the allegoric interpretation of the Scriptures, bridging Greek philosophy and Christian faith: Clemens, Origen, Dionysius of Alexandria and others from outside Alexandria, such as Gregory Thaumaturgius and Pamphile of Caesarea, who, having settled there, offered great contributions towards the development of the Alexandrian theology¹⁸.

Another interesting note is the fact that this Christian intellectuality, which was open minded towards speculation, preceded the establishment of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, still invisible at large and crippled by the systematic persecutions. Only in 200 A.D would Alexandria see the first monarchic bishop, Demetrius of Bactria.

In par with the Christian erudition, enlightened by Hellenistic philosophy, another characteristic of the Egyptian Christianity starts to emerge, consisting of its exposition to and capacity to resist to persecutions brought upon its believers. Numerous Christian communities of humble citizens were brutally persecuted in Egypt, particularly in the cities, by Roman Emperors such as Septimius Severus (end of 3rd century A.D.), Decius (middle of 3rd century A.D.), Galerius and Diocletian (beginning of 4th century A.D.).

In face of the demands imposed by the authorities, namely, the sacrifices and the swearing of an oath (*libellum*) of renunciation to Christianity, many have disbanded in fear. The problematic destiny of the *traditores* and the *lapsi* is at the source of the non-christological heresies prior to the council of Nicaea, such as the Novatianism and the Meletian Schism, all of African origin. What to do with the Christians who abnegated their faith in order to escape martyrdom? Should they be baptized again or have they definitely been severed from the Church? Others, such as Paul the Hermit, faced the religious persecution by treading on the habitual path of those Egyptians who resisted the fiscal or military authority by fleeing the civilized world of the cities and taking shelter instead in the inhospitable

¹⁸ QUASTEN, Johannes (1960) – *Patrologia I*, p. 316 and following, II, p. 8 and following.

deserts, in an act of *anachoresis*, which, from a methodological perspective, would in time lead to the flourishing of the monastic spirituality. Asceticism, as an impulse, has always been an integral part of Christianity from its very beginnings; however the historical phenomenon of the systematic movement of monasticism, as a pivotal force and element of continuous reinvention of the Church, was birthed in Egypt under the patronage of the Egyptians Saints Pachomius and Anthony.

Many however have faced the path of martyrdom. The Egyptian Church, through the impact caused by the implementation of a heroic character of the faith, elevated the aspect of martyrdom to a characteristic intrinsic to the nature of Egyptian Christianity¹⁹. The «Church of the Martyrs» was the designation given to it by Meletius, who having resisted the persecutions against Christianity, has ordained Arius and Isidorus amongst others as priests, when Peter of Alexandria fled his residence in 305-306 A.D. A futile act, since later on the Roman Emperor Maximinus would reinitiate the persecutions against Christianity in the Eastern side of the Roman Empire, and Peter ended suffering martyrdom in 311 A.D.²⁰. These irregular ordinances, would pave the way for the grave schism of Arianism which, springing from Alexandria, fustigated the recent Peace of the Church, which appears to have been universal only during its probationary days.

It is not our purpose to conduct an in-depth analysis of the theological fundaments that characterized the Christian faith practiced in Alexandria, which in fact wasn't always of a heterodox nature: Arius was a native from Alexandria, but so were the so called «champions of orthodoxy», namely Athanasius, Theophile and Cyril.

Another special reference must be made to the fact that the Church of Alexandria was the initiator of an important current of theological controversy, in aspects related to the Holy Trinity and Christ, which stems above all from the degree of philosophical speculation associated to Christianity, whilst a religion, but also whilst school of thought (which has been inherited from the Hellenistic knowledge). It is but impossible to dissociate the theological controversy from the context of contestation and rivalry towards Constantinople, the new Rome of the East, having the respective patriarchs assumed opposing and hostile stances during the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. In such circumstances, any political agent or emissary sent by the Emperor was viewed as an aggressor, whilst bishops and the Church in general formed the headquarters of local resistance²¹.

¹⁹ GRIGGS, 1990. Until 200 A.C., Egyptian Christianity remained undifferentiated whilst philosophical school until the arrival of Demetrius, the first bishop of Alexandria. There was a tension between the recently established hierarchy and the intellectuals (the catechetical school of Alexandria).

²⁰ The cult of relics and of the sacred locations of martyrdom whilst places of Christianity, in lieu of pagan religious places of cult (including temples, sanctuaries, tombs and idols). On the particularities of Egyptian Christianity (DIAS, 2010 XVII-XXIII; XXXI-XXXV).

²¹ HALL, 1996. Egyptian Christianity became progressively isolated from catholic communion. In 451 A.D., at the Council of Chalcedon, the schism finally took place, upon decades of dogmatic discussion led by Constantinople and Alexandria. The

We have left for the end of our analysis one of the characteristics of the Egyptian Christianity, which, in our opinion has been at the forefront of the dramatic events of 415 A.D.: its shattered sociological and ethnic composition. On one hand there was an impoverished Christian majority based in the countryside, which formed the social pool of influx into the monastic communities, where the Coptic language and culture were predominant; on the other hand, an educated minority based in the cities which formed an elite, half pagan half Christian, joined together by a common denominator, the Hellenistic philosophical tradition. For these knowledgeable elites the transition between a highly purified monotheistic paganism to Christianity was a relatively smooth process. In this manner, the interest towards science, erudition and speculation would be shared, and tertulias gathered pagans and Christians alike, according to ancient sources of information, as the friendship among Hypatia and Synesius was an example. However, for the first ones, Christian identity, (fixed in dogmatic formulas, firmly assumed against the much probation, martyrdoms and the violent acts practiced by an oppressing State) grew up blended with the defense of a national identity.

At this point we can naturally enquire why the Egyptian nationalism, once awakened in the minds of the people, was inspired by a new foreign religion and not by the traditional gods of the Egyptian pantheon.

First of all, it must be considered that the traditional Egyptian religion was in rapid decline, due to the systematic attempts to its disfigurement through a process of fusion with Hellenism. The places that were sacred to the Egyptian religion, including temples and tombs, had been ruined by abandon and successive robberies that took place much prior to the systematic attacks set by the Christians against the monuments that formed Egypt's heritage of its religious traditions. There were, however, certain common elements between the traditional Egyptian religion and Christianity: in the former as in the latter the priestly orders were given managerial and leadership duties concerning access to the religious mysteries; the belief in life after death, depending upon one's earthly existence, was equally present in both forms of religions²².

Let us now analyze the confluence between these factors and the events surrounding Hypatia which led eventually to her death: we strongly believe that the conflict of 415 A.D. had political and ethnic contours, that is, Hypatia's death was the byproduct of a set of cir-

monophysite Christianity conquered its place in the Church of Alexandria. Since then, the calendar of the «Days of the Martyrs», previously established in 303 A.D. (date that marks the beginning of the Christian persecutions by Diocletian), has to this day become the official calendar of the Coptic Church.

²² BAGNALL, 2003: 261-268. The author points at which show that between the 2nd and 3rd centuries A.D., Egypt's traditional religion, along with its temples and priestly orders, reached a point of crisis (p. 268) «the consequences for Egyptian society of the starvation and death of the temples were more far-reaching [...] It may be that this vacuum helped make the spread of Christianity in Egypt so explosive in fourth century: it replaced that lost structure of life».

cumstances beyond her control and whose cause is deeply steeped in the history that forged the relations between the Greek, Jewish and Roman elements with the Egyptian one²³.

So that our explanation becomes more plausible, let us first point at a secondary observation: *hoi hellenes* is the name that is assigned in the biblical texts, originally written in Greek, to non-Jews (e.g. *Maccabeus*) and those who are not followers of Christ (*The Gospels*, *The Epistles of Paul*). The terms of *ho laos* and *ta ethne* can also be found there referring to «people susceptible of being converted». *Hoi hellenes* is the term that will be adopted during the first literary clash between Christians and non-Christians, with the first written Christian polemic literature. Even Athanasius, despite his Hellenistic education and cultural background, rebukes the science and the philosophy of the Greeks (i.e., of the pagans) in favor of the simplicity of the faith of the Egyptian monks, of whose sanctity he becomes a spokesman²⁴.

However, in the Latin translations of the respective texts, the same term *hoi hellenes* appears primarily translated in its Latin counterpart as *gentiles* (meaning the people, the pagans) and secondarily as *paganus*²⁵. We can infer from this data that the designations of the people in question point towards a content not directly associated with religion. The Latin words imply a sociological and geographical differentiation from the other, but not an ethnic one. The term *paganus*, which has become generalized and which figures in modern languages, refers originally to the inhabitant of the *pagus*, of the countryside, later converted by the incoming Christians from the cities. Already the Greek term *hellenes*, used by Greek-speaking followers of a persecuted religion, when referring to non-Christians, in particular by those hostile to Christianity (as used by the *Maccabeus* when referring to the Seleucids who opposed Judaism) is a term of ethnic designation. These *hellenes*, in Egypt, even amongst the Greek-speakers, form the cultural and economical elite, who are close to the political powers, the descendents of the «Greek invaders» who would change the Egyptian culture forever and who would open the door to the Roman domain. This class of citizens, to whom Hypatia and Synesius belonged, was impenetrable to the vigorous and demographically superior movement of the humble ones²⁶. This hypothesis helps us to bet-

²³ For obvious reasons, the imperial legislation recorded the events occurred in 415 A.D. as a period of «terror» triggered by the *parabalanei* but does not make any references to the victims of that terror. This is an issue related to public order which affects the whole city in general.

²⁴ Athanasius of Alexandria, *Lógoj kata* (Ellh/nwn. S. Jerónimo, in *De Viris Illustribus*, 87, translates by *Oratio Contra Gentes*. The *Novellae* of Justinian integrated in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, already written in Greek, also make use of the term *hellenes* to designate the non-Christians. The Latin translation of this compilation uses the term *pagani*. Theodosius' decrees included in the CJ against paganism, also use the term *hellenes* (JOHNSTON, 1999).

²⁵ Rom 2,12; Act. 19, 17.

²⁶ We mention, as an example of the existing gap between the distinctive economical and social orders even if all Christian: The Bishop Synesius of Cyrene, one of Hypatia's disciple and friend, once describes to her, in a letter, the people with whom he shares a journey by boat which near toppled (Ep. 5) «...half of the passengers were Jews, that race excluded from the Alliance, convinced that the killing of Greeks was an act of piety *eusebein*). (...) The remainder, plain country people who

ter understand the tense social context in which Hypatia found herself and whose contours are also specific of the Greek-Roman Egypt.

There is a common denominator in the various narratives pertaining to Hypatia's death. Each of the different versions reflects mainly each author's personal interpretation of the events, and none of those divergences offers proof of validation in of a particular version of the events. We will mention but a few.

The most remote sources can be found in the *Ecclesiastical History* by Socrates Scholasticus (379-450), himself a contemporary of Hypatia, being a Christian as well as a lawyer living in Constantinople. Hypatia emerges as an episode of the opposition between Cyril and Orestes. She is presented as a distinguished figure of vast knowledge, who dedicated herself to teaching others Plato's and Plotinus' principles of philosophy. Her notable character and the proficiency of her teachings quickly turned her into a public figure, regularly mixing with the magistrates, whose company she did not feel abashed to display in public. Her reputation begins to arouse jealousy and a rumor starts to spread that she is the cause of the conflict between Orestes and Cyril. The account is brief and probably authentic as it relies on contemporary witnesses of the events. The attackers are a Christian mob, instigated by an excessive zeal, under the leadership of Peter, the Reader. A modern analysis of this episode shows that each of its contours is an expression of pettiness: she is the perfect escape goat in a society in tension – a woman of high social status, non-Christian, knowledgeable, who uses the public arena to teach and make her voice heard, away from the characteristics that traditionally define the feminine gender²⁷. The *parabanalei* are not mentioned, but it is established the correlation between Hypatia's lynching and the disturbances arisen in Alexandria on the account of the rivalry between Cyril and Orestes.

had never seen the sea (a)gelai=oi gewrgoi\) (...). They all seemed to have physical deformations in parts or across their whole bodies and they addressed mutually as «cripple», «hernia»; «one-armed» ou «cockeyed». (...) such scene made us laugh (...).

²⁷ Socrates Scholasticus *H. E.* 7. 15. (PG 67, 29-872, Col 761); «There was a woman at Alexandria named Hypatia, daughter of the philosopher Theon, who made such attainments in literature and science, as to far surpass all the philosophers of her own time. Having succeeded to the school of Plato and Plotinus, she explained the principles of philosophy to her auditors, many of whom came from a distance to receive her instructions. On account of the self-possession and ease of manner, which she had acquired in consequence of the cultivation of her mind, she not infrequently appeared in public in presence of the magistrates. Neither did she feel abashed in coming to an assembly of men. For all men on account of her extraordinary dignity and virtue admired her the more. Yet even she fell a victim to the political jealousy (o fgo/noj) which at that time prevailed. For as she had frequent interviews with Orestes, it was calumniously reported among the Christian populace, that it was she who prevented Orestes from being reconciled to the bishop. Some of them therefore, hurried away by a fierce and bigoted zeal, whose ringleader was a reader named Peter, waylaid her returning home, and dragging her from her carriage, they took her to the church called *Cesareum*, where they completely stripped her, and then murdered her with tiles. After tearing her body in pieces, they took her mangled limbs to a place called Cinaron, and there burnt them. This affair brought not the least opprobrium, (o)u mi/kron mw=mon), not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian church. And surely nothing can be farther from the spirit of Christianity than the allowance of massacres, fights, and transactions of that sort. This happened in the month of March during Lent, in the fourth year of Cyril's episcopate, under the tenth consulate of Honorius, and the sixth of Theodosius. Also Sozomenus, *H. E.* PG 67 844-1630; Teodoret of Cyr, *H. E.* PG 882-1280.

Damascius, one of the last standing academics in Athens, who retired into exile in Persia after Emperor Justinian ordered the closure of the Academy, and the author of *The Life of Isidorus*, was the first one to formulate Cyril's direct responsibility in this episode²⁸. It is believed that the historical reference to Hypatia in the *Suda* is a reconstruction based on fragments from his work. This is the main source of the events in the memory of future generations. In that testimony, jealousy is again mentioned as the cause for the ensuing events, the only difference consisting in a more romanticized narrative: Cyril, in passing by, noticed the throng of men coming in and out of Hypatia's house and, consumed by jealousy, starts conjuring up the attack whose execution he entrusts to a group of thugs. No mention is made here to any conflict of a religious nature, but the sociological conflict becomes apparent. Hypatia was admired by everyone and the city rulers, i.e. the elites, frequently attended her classes in philosophy «The rest of the city loved and honored her exceptionally, and those who were appointed at each time as rulers of the city at first attended her lectures, as also it used to happen in Athens».

Philostorgius of Cappadocia, born in 368 A.D., was also the author of the *Ecclesiastical History* which survived only through an epitome written by Photius, a Byzantine patriarch. He was a follower of Anomousianism, a divergent branch of Arianism, (the Nicene creed was *homoousian*). As expected, the account it gives of the events portrays Hypatia as a victim caught in the conflict between Christian orthodoxy and arianism²⁹.

The Chronicle written by John of Nikiu is the most recent of the surviving accounts and it corroborates the concept that History belongs more to those who narrate it than to those who play a role in it. John of Nikiu is an author from the Lower Egypt, who lived in the 7th century A.D., and his work survived thanks to an Ethiopian version copied from an Arabic text.

Although there may be some ambiguous traits in Hypatia's character, implicitly mentioned in the previous texts, (a deviation from the traditional feminine archetype of those days; the close association with the elites; the continuous circle of admirers around her) John of Nikiu is the only to show a negative image of Hypatia, as the agent in a conflict of religious and moral demeanor. Here she is described as a pagan philosopher, engaged in practices of black magic, divination, astrology and music. During the unfolding of the con-

²⁸ *Suda*, s.v. Hypatia, 4.645.4-16. Ed. de Adler, *Dam. Frag.* 102, p. 79.18 a 81.10 Zintzen. (ATHANASSIADI, 1999: 403). *Suda*, s.v. Hypatia, 4.645.4-16. «She suffered this because of envy and her exceptional wisdom, especially in regard to astronomy. According to some, [this was the fault of] Cyril,[5] but according to others, [it resulted] from the inveterate insolence and rebelliousness of the Alexandrians. For they did this also to many of their own bishops – consider George and Proterios. Concerning Hypatia the philosopher, proof that the Alexandrians [were] rebellious».

²⁹ Philostorgius *HE* VIII.9. (PG *The Ecclesiastical History* of Philostorgius is a story of the Arian controversy, which appears mentioned in the writings of Photius (856-887) Philostorgius, in Photius, *Epitome of the Ecclesiastical History of Philostorgius*, 9, 9: «Philostorgius says, that Hypatia, the daughter of Theon, was so well educated in mathematics by her father, that she far surpassed her teacher, and especially in astronomy, and taught many others the mathematical sciences. The impious writer asserts that, during the reign of Theodosius the younger, she was torn in pieces by the Homoousian party.

flicts between Jews and Christians, between Orestes and the Episcopate, between the monks in the cities and the surviving pagan sites, she is accused of alienating the Governor from the Church through magical spells. The city rejoices at the annihilation of Hypatia, the last standing pillar of idolatry. Peter, who led the attack is hailed as a «a true believer in Christ» and Cyril is acclaimed as undisputable leader³⁰. In this way, the death of Hypatia contributes to reinforce the Bishop's power and to unite ecclesiastical and political purposes.

We reserved for the conclusion some aspects to consider on the account of the different narratives about Hypatia: first of all, the sources omit the direct action of the *parabalanei*, who do not even appear mentioned in the texts. The responsibility seems to dilute itself in the crowds, cheering at the recent events of violence and in particular at the execution of Ammonius, the Nitrian monk, for previously stoning the Roman Praefect Orestes. Peter the Reader (that is, not a *parabalanus*, but someone invested of a religious ministry of a lower rank under the dependence of a Bishop) points at a target, the one responsible for the acrimonious relations between Cyril and Orestes. Ironically, Hypatia is sacrificed because the population wants to put an end to the distrust between two post-holders of the religious and political powers.

The level of influence that each one of these powers exerts already appeared imbalanced: it is Cyril who enjoys the ascension to power, as the Bishop acclaimed by the population of Alexandria, following the death of his predecessor Theophile. In contrast, there is a Roman Prefect, who receives from the Emperor the responsibility of ruling a complex city. Orestes, as someone perceived as a member of a elite disconnected from the people, has a lot to prove, that he is deserving of the confidence of the people, that he is a baptized Christian, whose public office does not pose any threat to the Christian supremacy, under the pretext of a tolerance and an impartiality, which the State could no longer afford as an excuse. In the end, if the mob was given a choice, it would have been Orestes who they would have lynched, if it wasn't for the fear of the consequences faced for the death of one of the Emperor's officials.

³⁰ CHARLES, 1916: 87-103: «And in those days there appeared in Alexandria a female philosopher, a pagan named Hypatia, and she was devoted at all times to magic, astrolabes and instruments of music, and she beguiled many people through (her) Satanic wiles. 88. And the governor of the city honoured her exceedingly; for she had beguiled him through her magic. And he ceased attending church as had been his custom. But he went once under circumstances of danger. And he not only did this, but he drew many believers to her, and he himself received the unbelievers at his house. [...] . And thereafter a multitude of believers in God arose under the guidance of Peter the magistrate –now this Peter was a perfect believer in all respects in Jesus Christ – and they proceeded to seek for the pagan woman who had beguiled the people of the city and the prefect through her enchantments. 101. And when they learnt the place where she was, they proceeded to her and found her seated on a (lofty) chair; and having made her descend they dragged her along till they brought her to the great church, named Caesaron. Now this was in the days of the fast. 102. And they tore off her clothing and dragged her [till they brought her] through the streets of the city till she died. And they carried her to a place named Cinaron, and they burned her body with fire. 103. And all the people surrounded the patriarch Cyril and named him «the new Theophilus»; for he had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city».

A special reference must also be made to the way in which Hypatia dies, lynched by a furious mob, exposing the philosopher to public humiliation. The fanatical crowd who overthrows her from her chariot or her chair, that tears her clothes apart, mutilates her body with oyster shells, drags her along the streets and finally sets her disfigured body on fire, this is the same crowd who, over the years, has profanated the pagan temples, knocked down sacred effigies, set shrines on fire, trying through that violence to exterminate any visible signs of religions and cultures rival to the Christianity, the only recognized as the legal religion of the State. The various accounts of the way in which Hypatia is tortured to death, all converging to the same details, lead us to think that even in death did Hypatia become a symbol, along the wrecked temples, of the fanaticism and iconoclastic intolerance that thrived in the Eastern Roman empire of Late Antiquity.

THE GREAT ADVANCES IN MATHEMATICS IN THE CONTEXT OF ALEXANDRIAN CULTURE

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Abstract: *This chapter aims to provide an overview of scientific activity in the area of Mathematics and other sciences connected to it (Geography, Astronomy, Mechanics), in Alexandria and also in the broader context of Alexandrian culture, from its golden age to its decline.*

The fact that Mathematics thrived in Greek culture, in the Classical period and in the Hellenistic, was always linked to the mobility of the cultured minds of those times. In Greece, throughout the Classical period, the Academy, founded by Plato (ca. 387-385 B.C.), played an important role in this context, for it became a focal centre of research for the most remarkable philosophers and scientists, who came from Asia Minor or the Eastern Mediterranean islands, influenced by the ancient Mathematics of the Near East, or from the western area of the Mediterranean, Sicily, with different education acquired in their countries of origin¹. At the Academy scholars discussed different advances and methods to approach mathematical issues². *Mathematika* at the time included Arithmetics, Geometry, Astronomy and Harmonics. Aristotle attended the Academy and, soon after arriving in Athens again, founded in 335 B.C. the Lyceum. His methodological principles veer from

¹ It is not my aim to focus on and discuss the major lines of thought of this tradition, such as the complex Pythagorean area. On this subject see CORNELLI, 2011, and the author's bibliographical basis.

² On the mathematical activity at the Academy see, in particular, FOWLER, 1990.

what Lasserre (1964) calls the «ontological mathematics»³ of Plato's circle. For Aristotle the basic methodology is observation and experimentalism, in an effort to apply mathematical knowledge (like mechanics) to Mathematics itself.

Mathematician Hippocrates, who came from the island of Chios to the Academy, in the 5th century B.C., was the first author of a compilation of *Elements*, where there seems to have been early research on the resolution of the duplication of the cube (known in the Antiquity as the problem of Delos⁴) and on the circle quadrature. By the time of Plato's death, one of his disciples, Theudius of Magnesia, wrote a new compilation of *Elements*. There was also a mathematician of unknown origin, Leon, who attended the Academy between 365-360 B.C. and wrote a volume called *Elements*. Euclid's work therefore follows an established tradition and combines a collection of organized mathematical knowledge with the results of his own mathematical activity.

Another name that determined the future of Alexandrian mathematicians' research was Eudoxus of Cnidus, who came to Athens and remained there for some time, establishing a scientific relationship with Plato. He brought some disciples to the Academy from the school he founded in Cyzicus, to where he later returned.

This master-disciple relationship is also a feature of the circle of the Lyceum or Peripatos. It is in fact one of Aristotle's followers, Demetrius of Phaleron, who will come to live in Alexandria, in Ptolemy I Soter's court⁵. He seems to have been the one to encourage the king to create the Library, in the space adjacent to the newly-founded Museum⁶. Awareness of the rich cultural and scientific Greek heritage creates the need to archive, collect, compile, whether in arts and humanities or sciences.

Studies in Mathematics in Alexandria combine two tendencies: emphasizing on the recovery and development of research traditions, and bringing together mathematical research and its practical application. Thus most part of the Alexandrian mathematicians or, in more general terms, the mathematicians of Hellenistic culture, are simultaneously geographers, mechanics experts or astronomers. These studies will flourish during approximately half a millenium.

Later on Aristarchus of Samos (ca. 310-230 B.C.), influenced by the ancient teachings of Pythagorean Philolaus of Tarentum, raised strong indignation and accusations of impiety among the Stoics when he claimed that the earth moves around the sun, which is fixed. However, there is no written account of this perception: on the contrary, his treatise *On the*

³ Pp. 22-23.

⁴ On the origin and nature of this problem, see EVES, 1990: 111-112.

⁵ The first Ptolemy ruled from 305 to 285 B.C.

⁶ Space of culture and cult to the Muses. The tradition of associating cult and culture can be found in the Academy, where there seems to have been also an area for the cult to the Muses. Later in Alexandria another smaller library was founded, near the temple known as Serapeum, devoted to Sarapis.

sizes and distances of the Sun and the Moon, likely written prior to his discovery, assumes a geocentric universe⁷. In it Aristarchus calculated the dimensions of the Sun, the Earth and the Moon, as well as the distance between the three celestial bodies, even though without absolute accuracy, by adequate geometric processes. He calculated the length of the sides of the triangle formed by the three bodies when the Moon is in quadrature, considering that the latter is at the vertex of a right triangle and that the other two vertices correspond to the position of the earth and the sun. Be as it may, this assumes trigonometric calculi. He identified planets of the solar system and observed the solstice of 280 B.C. He attended the Museum and the Library of Alexandria, and due to his prestige the king appointed him as tutor to his son.

But the great pioneer of studies in Mathematics in Alexandria was Euclid, whose work will remain current until Modernity and who is known to have been active during the reign of Ptolemy I, who ascended the throne of Egypt in 330 B.C., two years after Alexander's death. According to tradition, he was invited by Demetrius of Phaleron, after the foundation of the Museum, to create a school of Mathematics there and form disciples. He wrote several works, among which *Data*⁸, *Phaenomena*, *Porisms* (lost)⁹, *Optics*, *Caloptics*, *Division of Figures* (which survived through an Arabic version) and considerations about plans and sections of the cone, a subject which his most outstanding disciple Apollonius of Perge will continue to work on. But Euclid's most important work, which will make him one of the most famous mathematicians in Antiquity bearing repercussions until modernity, is *Elements*, in thirteen volumes (volumes XIV and XV are apocrypha).

Euclid's *Elements* are one of the most remarkable works, combining the compilation of extremely relevant mathematical knowledge inherited from Greek classical tradition, which had begun being recorded at least two centuries earlier as *Elements*, with new studies and advances arising from Euclid's mathematical research. Indeed, since Antiquity only the Bible and perhaps Homer were as disseminated as Euclid's *Elements*: the latter remained the core of mathematical teaching during more than two Millennia¹⁰. As highlighted by Dugac, based on excerpts of Euclid's *Elements*, «il parle une nouvelle langue mathématique»¹¹. *Elements* were part of the 15th century incunabula, with two editions. Only in the 19th century, with Lobachevsky, Bolyai and Riemann, non-Euclidean geometries will come to light.

⁷ MERZBACH-BOYER, 2011: 145.

⁸ MERZBACH-BOYER, 2011: 92 on *Data*: «It seems to have been composed for use at the Museum of Alexandria., serving as a companion volume to the first six books of the *Elements* in much the way that a manual of tables supplements a text-book».

⁹ «The loss of the Euclidean *Porisms* is particularly tantalizing. Pappus later reported that a porism is intermediate between a theorem, in which something is proposed for demonstration, and a problem, in which something is proposed for construction»: MERZBACH-BOYER, 2011: 91.

¹⁰ The edition we use is the HEATH-DENSMORE, 2007, translation.

The four first books deal with plan geometry, namely: book I deals with triangles, parallels and parallelograms and finishes with the famous Pythagoras Theorem; book II deals with the transformation of figures and geometrical shapes and presents the resolution of second degree algebraic equations; book III concerns the circle; book IV concerns regular polygons inscribed in or circumscribed about the circle; books V and VI expound the theory of proportions by Eudoxus of Cnidus. The central concept of the theory is the notion of «equal ratio». Book VI applies Eudoxus's theory of proportions to plane geometry. Euclid's theory on proportion provides the basis for a wide range of studies, in areas such as theory of equations, properties of fractions (although the concept of «fraction» is anachronic when applied to Euclid), the nature of «real number» system¹². Books VII, VIII, VIII cover arithmetic and rational numbers, book VII begins with what would come to be known as the «Euclidean algorithm». Book X is the longest and complex. It contains one hundred and fifteen propositions. It deals with commensurable and incommensurable magnitudes¹³. Mieli (1945)¹⁴ points out that the demonstration, in this volume, of the incommensurability of the diagonal of the square with reference to the side of the square allowed the Greeks of the Hellenistic Period to become acquainted with irrational magnitudes¹⁵. Books XI, XII, XIII contain propositions regarding geometry in space, frequently using the method that Eudoxus of Cnidus had already used before him – that of exhaustion. Book XIII demonstrates that there are five and only five regular solids that can be «inscribed» in or «circumscribed around» the sphere, by studying their construction. They are the cube, tetrahedron, octahedron, dodecahedron and icosahedron.

The versatility involved in the knowledge about these figures is eloquently exemplified by Eratosthenes of Cyrene, considered by some scholars as «perhaps the greatest, and certainly the most comprehensive, of all the Alexandrian scholars»¹⁶. For his versatile knowledge he is comparable to Aristotle¹⁷. He lived between 276-194 B.C. He cultivated what nowadays is called «humanities», theory of music, poetry, as well as mathematical sciences; the latter prevailed over the other activities – marking a new era beginning in the middle of the century. He studied in Cyrene, his city of birth, and was called to Alexandria by Ptolemy III Euergetes; he lived there until Ptolemy V's reign. He was chief librarian of the Library of

¹¹ DUGAC, 2003: 9.

¹² KATZ, 1993: 72.

¹³ FOWLER, 1990: 19 makes an analysis of the significant interrelationship between *Elements* V (theory of proportions) and *Elements* X, very pertinent for the full understanding of Euclid's commensurability/incommensurability. See also MERZBACH-BOYER, 2011: 105-106.

¹⁴ MERZBACH-BOYER, 2011: 97.

¹⁵ For a critical review of the analysis on the significance of the discovery of incommensurables see GONÇALVES-POSSANI, 2009. Drawing on Fowler's (p. 21) authoritative work, the authors argue and demonstrate that this discovery did not bring about a «crisis of fundamentals of mathematics», contrary to what some researchers believe.

¹⁶ MARLOWE, 1971: 70.

¹⁷ PFEIFFER, 1968: 156.

Alexandria. In addition to studies on the early Greek poets and on comedy, he focused on forms of calculus that led him to the measurement and form of the earth, concluding that it is spherical, and wrote, among other works, a treatise called *On the Measurement of the Earth*, and *Geographica*, in three books. Hence he is considered to be the father of mathematical Geography. He calculated the axis of the earth with remarkable precision and the distance between the Earth and the Sun. Application of his knowledge drove him to create instruments to measure longitudes and latitudes, determining distances (he was probably the author of the first geographical chart with indication of longitude and latitude). He worked out the 365-day calendar, adding a day to February every four years. He created instruments for the calculus of proportions: the mesolabium¹⁸, that enabled the resolution of the duplication of the cube (known as the «problem of Delos», a subject of study by the ancient Pythagoreans) and invented the «mathematical sieve», a table that allowed him to identify prime numbers up to a certain limit. Scarce fragments of his work survived.

Archimedes, «the greatest mathematical genius of Antiquity»¹⁹ comparable only to Galileum and Newton²⁰, was born in Syracuse around 287 B.C., the son of an astronomer. In all likelihood he attended the Library and the Museum of Alexandria during his youth, where he became acquainted with scientists of that time. Although his biography is fairly detailed compared to other scientists', thanks to Plutarch's *Life of Marcellus*, there are no biographical data that support his presence in Alexandria²¹. But he was probably there, for the usage and existence in Egypt of one of his inventions, the hydraulical spiral screw, for land irrigation, is well documented (and it has been used until now); besides, some of his works are dedicated to Alexandrian scientists, like his *Method*, dedicated to Eratosthenes²², where he explained how he reached many of his conclusions, which he does not mention in any other work. Nevertheless it was in Syracuse that he established himself and developed his studies and applied them in military engineering, in defense of his city, until his death in 212 B.C., when the Romans besieged and conquered Syracuse. His use of mirrors calculated to reflect solar rays in order to set the Roman ships on fire, as well as a form of catapult based on the principle of levers, is famous.

His invaluable and extensive research, from theory to practical application, covers several fields, making him one of the forefront mathematician-engineer in the history of science. Regarding his work in arithmetic and geometry, through the application of the process of the «quadrature of the circle», Archimedes inscribes in and circumscribes around the circle regular polygons (with up to 384 sides), until he finds an estimation of π , using a method that Eudoxus of Cnidos had already used in Plato's days: the method of exhaustion, which almost led him to the later infinitesimal calculus thanks to Archimedes's

¹⁸ This is an instrument that made it possible to determine mean proportionals mechanically. See HODGKIN, 2005: 59, fig. 2.

¹⁹ PFEIFFER, 1968: 155. Cf. LESKY, 1995: 828

²⁰ MIELI, 1945: 100.

²¹ KATZ, 1993: 97.

application. The calculus of π was perpetuated by Apollonius of Perga and other mathematicians in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Archimedes also calculated the areas of solid figures. That is the subject of his two volume treatise *On the Sphere and the Cylinder*, where he demonstrates that if a sphere is inscribed in an equilateral cylinder the total area and the volume of the cylinder equals $3/2$ of the area and volume of the sphere. He thus implicitly resorted to integral calculus.

His studies on the spiral made him a precursor of differential calculus²³.

Besides being credited by tradition for the *Problem of the oxen*, Archimedes was the author of a vast collection of works²⁴: *On the Equilibrium of Planes* (two books, where the first two principles of statics are established); *Quadrature of the Parabola*; *Method* (on mechanical proportions), dedicated to Eratosthenes; *On the Sphere and the Cylinder* (two books); *On Spirals*; *On Conoids and Spheroids* (designation of solids obtained by revolution – ellipsoid, paraboloid, hyperboloid); *On Floating Bodies* (two Books, where he postulated the principle of hydrostatics, among which the one that became known as the «Principle of Archimedes»); *Measurement of a Circle*; *Arenarius*, the main contribution of which is a preface with informations about Aristarchus of Samos's heliocentric theory. In fact, this is the only source of information on this theory. *Arenarius* deals with the expression of particularly large quantities. Its name derives from the calculation of sand grains required to fill the universe, based on the estimation of its dimension.

Of the manifold practical applications of Archimedes's and other scientists' works not enough is known, since their writings focused mainly on theoretical knowledge.

Two figures of reference among mathematicians-geometricians of Alexandria are Conon of Samos (ca. 280-ca.220 B.C) and Apollonius of Perge (ca. 262. B.C.–190 B.C.). The former, born in Samos, was attracted by the prestige and scientific activity of Alexandria. He would have likely become astronomer to Ptolemy III Euergetes's court. As an astronomer, he identified the constellation named «Coma Berenices», in honour of the queen consort²⁵. In his *Conics* Apollonius mentions that Conon devoted himself to the study of Geometry, especially to the sections of the cone, and that the results of his research contributed to Apollonius's own research and work. This mathematician and astronomer, Euclid's most eminent disciple and possibly his successor at the Museum²⁶, continued his master's research and wrote a treatise on the *Sections of the Cone*. He established geometrical terminology related to the result of his studies, such as «parabola», «ellipsis», «hyper-

²² Archimedes is credited for the presentation of a problem, in the shape of a poem, in honour of Eratosthenes: the «Problem of the Oxen», in the field of theory of numbers, concerning the number of oxen in the Helio's herd and mentioned as early as in *Odyssey*, XII.

²³ MIELI, 1945: cap. XI.

²⁴ Cf. MIELI, 1945: 102.

²⁵ According to MARLOWE, 1971: 74, Conon's astronomy is influenced later by eastern astrology.

²⁶ MARLOWE, 1971: 72.

bole». He carried on the activity of calculus to solve the problem of the duplication of the cube.

There is scarce information about Zenodorus, an astronomer and geometrician who will have lived not long after Archimedes and attended the circles of scientists of contemporary Athens. He is mentioned herein for the mere fact that several of his theorems are cited in Theon of Alexandria's commentaries to Claudius Ptolemy.

Hipparchus of Bithynia, born in Nicaea (ca. 190 -120 B.C.), was considered by Gow as «one of the greatest geniuses of Antiquity»²⁷, who drastically changed the state of the art of Astronomy. This relevant figure, whose biography is little known, developed his scientific activity as a geographer, mathematician and astronomer in Ptolemy VII's reign, spending his life between Alexandria and the island of Rhodes, where cultural life then was also thriving. There he set up an astronomical observatory. He identified 675 stars, determining their position by astronomical coordinates and even elaborating a stellar catalogue. He discovered the precession of the equinoxes and the rotation of the axis of the Earth. Influenced by Babylonian knowledge, he is credited with the division of Earth in parallels spaced along the equator, and meridians drawn using the meridian of Rhodes, thus enabling the calculation and location of places. He rejected Aristarchus's heliocentric theory and instead adopted geocentrism. He invented instruments for measurement like the astrolabe. He created the armillary sphere as an instrument to help in his astronomical calculi.

The development of his studies in Astronomy and mathematical Geography has, of course, a deep interrelationship with the development of his research in the field of geometry; it is also connected with the practical application and theoretical improvement of geometry. Hipparchus is considered to be the founder of Trigonometry, even though the name appeared later and this trigonometry differs from modern one. Hipparchus's basic elements of trigonometry were based on the study of the relation between an arc and its chord²⁸. Hipparchus elaborated a trigonometric table.

His calculi will be continued and developed later on by Claudius Ptolemy.

In our era (ca. 100 A.D.) Menelaus of Alexandria continues the study of the relation between the arc and the chord, according to information left by commentator Theon in a six-volume treatise, *Chords in a Circle*. Greek and Arabic commentators mention others works of his in mathematics and astronomy, but the only one that survived was *Sphaerica*, in an Arabic version. In this treatise, inspired by Euclid's *Elements*, he adapts Euclidean methodology to calculate plane triangles to the calculus of spherical triangles. It may well be said that his aforementioned treatise is the first work on spherical trigonometry. In this context he authored a theorem named after him, the «Theorem of Menelaus»²⁹.

²⁷ Apud MARLOWE, 1971: 75.

²⁸ KATZ, 1993: 135.

²⁹ EVES, 1990: 176-177. Cf. KATZ, 1993: 143.

In the beginning of our era another figure becomes significant: Nicomachus of Gerasa, born in modern-day Jordan, probably lived between around 60-120. Almost nothing is known about his biography. He embodies a new tendency: Neopythagoreanism, a school of thought that searches for the mystical properties of numbers, in deep harmony with music. The presence of Neopythagoreanism in his work leads us to believe that he lived and studied in Alexandria³⁰. There are references to an *Introduction to Arithmetic*, a treatise on the theory of numbers, and to an *Introduction to Harmonics*. According to other sources, he will have written introductions to Geometry and Astronomy, hence covering the *quadrivium* of the ancient Platonic Academic. In his *Introduction to Arithmetic*, which remained an authoritative teaching cornerstone during a millenium, he presents the earliest-known Greek multiplication table. His work was translated into Latin by Apuleius and later by Boetius and was used until Renaissance.

Famous Claudius Ptolemy was of Greek-Roman origin. His biography is barely known. He was born at the end of the 1st century and lived until 168, approximately. He lived and developed his scientific activity in Alexandria, by the under Roman rule. His research, which he recorded, spans the fields of Mathematics, Astronomy and Geography, as well as Optics and Acoustics; his most influential work is called *Syntaxis Mathematica* or *Mathematical Collection*, in thirteen books. This work is referred to as «The Great Treatise» thanks to Ptolemy's fame and prestige in Antiquity and even among the recipients and transmitters of such scientific fields in the West: the Arabs³¹. So the latter continued to call Ptolemy's treatise «the greatest» – derived from the Greek superlative *megistos*, preceded by the Arabic article, hence *Almagest*. Its influence was felt throughout the centuries and not until Nicolaus Copernicus would heliocentrism be definitively adopted, recognizing the movement of the planets, the Earth included, of the solar system.

Ptolemy incorporated a great part of Hipparchus's astronomical and geographical theories and discoveries in his treatise, with the first book and part of the second one dedicated essentially to Mathematics. He developed and consolidated knowledge of plane and spherical trigonometry³². His «Theorem of Ptolemy» is worth quoting: «Given any quadrilateral inscribed in a circle, the product of the diagonals equals the sum of the products of the opposite sides»³³.

Even though Ptolemy did not address the general notion of «function», he provides examples of tables where he establishes a functional relation between sets. The chord is expressed as a function of the arc, the declination of the sun as a function of longitude³⁴.

Heron of Alexandria, a native of this city, lived during the 1st century (ca. 10-70). He

³⁰ KATZ, 1993: 158

³¹ His work was translated into Arabic in 827.

³² KATZ, 1993: 138-144.

³³ I quote Katz's formulation (1993) p. 138. Cf. MERZBACH-BOYER, 2011: 150-151.

³⁴ KATZ, 1993: 147.

became known as a mathematician and engineer, a man devoted to experimentalism and the construction of machines, such a steam-powered machine. He taught at the Museum and devised «Heron's formula» for finding the area of a triangle from the length of its sides.

Diophantus, who lived to be eighty-four years old in his city of birth, Alexandria, during the 3rd century is considered to be the father of Algebra³⁵. Little is known about his life. His major work, *Arithmetika*, was constituted by thirteen books, but only some of them survived into our days (six in Greek, probably the ones commented by Hypatia³⁶, and four in an Arabic translation). However, the teachings in those books influenced significantly later periods, until modernity. His work begins with a general introduction on polynoms and operations between them. He presents several problems of the first and second degree, as well as problems of indeterminate analysis.

Diophantus provided a major advancement in the solution of equations by introducing symbolism. Its worth noting that algebraic symbols begin by corresponding to abbreviations of numerical concepts. He later uses those symbols, associated to the symbol χ reciprocities³. For example Δ^{χ} represents $1/x^2$.

One of the last great mathematicians of Alexandria was Pappus. Nothing is known about his biography and no one even knows for sure the period he lived in. According to different informations, he may have developed his scientific activity in Alexandria either in the last quarter of the 3rd century or in the first half of the fourth century. He was not exactly an innovative spirit, but he fits the profile of the scientist who records and organizes the heritage of scientific information, when there were already signs of the decline of scientific activity in Alexandria. Therefore his was a role of major importance concerning mathematical information and theoretical Mechanics, which was left for posterity in an eight-volume work *Mathematical Collection* (Book I and part of Book II were lost). Citing Marlowe (1971)³⁸, «in this collection he has preserved the analytical method which the ancients employed in their researches, he made use of the centre of gravity, and has preserved the works of a number of otherwise unknown mathematicians». However, as noted by Katz (1993)³⁹, it is somewhat intriguing that Pappus does not cite Diophantus's strictly algebraic *Arithmetika* as an early example of analysis, given that the problems equated in Diophantus's work are solved based on Pappus's model.

At the twilight of this brilliant era of scientific activity lived Theon of Alexandria, of Greek-Egyptian origin. Hypatia's father lived in the 4th century and will have been the last major librarian of the great Library of Alexandria. Like Pappus, and in accordance with the

³⁵ The proto-notions came from Ancient Near East, the name is Arabic ('al.jabr'- usually rendered 'restoring'): HODGKIN, 2005: 110.

³⁶ MIELI, 1945: 251.

³⁷ The example is borrowed from KATZ, 1993: 163.

³⁸ KATZ, 1993: 74.

³⁹ KATZ, 1993: 176.

period he lived in, Theon is essentially a commentator and editor. As such, he edited, with adaptations, and commented Euclid's *Elements*, as well as Ptolemy's *Almagest*, among other works. Mathematical knowledge is now crystallized in the invaluable activity of perpetuating and commenting the outcome of previous mathematicians' activity (some recorded in writing, others orally). There is no doubt that that activity increased with the awareness that such an heritage had to be preserved and to be passed along and commented to future commentators, even outside of Alexandria. Awareness of this fact proved to be correct.

With his activity and his daughter's fate a cycle comes to its end. Hypatia, following Plotinus's path, recaptures the tradition of the Academy – indeed, she was educated in Athens, which indicates that the influence and cultural prevalence of Alexandria had begun to fade away for some time. This woman devoted herself to Mathematics and Astronomy, as well as Philosophy. As we mentioned before, Hypatia perpetuates the tradition of commenting major mathematicians, such as Diophantus and Apollonius of Perge. Her scientific activity in Alexandria is complemented with teaching at the the Museum, no matter its location, after having been destroyed and rebuilt, contemporary to her life (ca. 350/370–415). Her teachings comprehended Mathematics and Philosophy. In fact, Hypatia turned out to be the major Alexandrian figure of Neoplatonism in her days.

In those days Christianity had gone from a persecuted religion to the official religion of the Empire, with Constantine. After the short period of paganism with Julian the Apostate, killed in 363, Christianity once again became the predominant religion, and a new order of logic, of a predominant religion persecuting heretics and pagans had emerged. Hypatia's prestige as a representative of the neoplatonist intellectual class turned her into a target of suspicions, someone to be taken down. She was thus murdered by a mob instigated by Patriarch Cyril's furious persecution. Hypatia's tragic end represents almost symbolically the definitive decline of science in Alexandria – in this particular instance, the end of the brilliant period of Mathematics.

CONCLUDING

BETWEEN THE MUSEUM AND THE LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

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On the 16th October 2012, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt inaugurated a large and modern building bearing the Latin name *Bibliotheca Alexandrina*, displaying on its external wall the characters of approximately twenty-five alphabets. Projected in 1974, its construction began in 1995, funded by 27 countries and institutions, from Norway to Japan, largely supported by UNESCO; it comprises a vast library with shelf space for four to eight million books, three museums, six art galleries, five research institutes, a conference centre capable of seating up to three thousand people, a planetarium and, of course, an Internet Archive. Though not exhaustive, this list conveys the sense of universalism in such an enterprise and the emphasis on the relationship between political power, on the one hand, and science and culture, on the other hand. It is worth noting that the new building is probably located where the ancient one once stood.

This brief description enables us to introduce the subject of this chapter: what is there in common between the city founded by Alexander the Great founded in 331 B.C., after his conquest of Egypt, and chosen by Ptolemy I as his new seat of government, in 323, and the vast cultural goals that their successors set out to achieve? What is this Alexandria of Egypt (let us use this designation to distinguish it from more than sixteen other cities named after it that were later founded in several of the countries conquered by the Macedonian emperor over the years) that lends its name to an entire era of Greek culture (now rightly called Hellenistic)? This is the city that is also the largest cultural centre from the last decade of the 4th century to the second half of the 2nd century. Such a title is transferred to Rome only

in the 1st century A.D., although only in the Antonine Age should Rome be recognized as the capital of Hellenism, as stated by J. Irigoin¹.

A significant difference between Ancient and Modern Alexandria lies in the population distribution. Even though it is not a megalopolis like Cairo (which has more than three million inhabitants and over seventeen million inhabitants in the metropolitan area), Modern Alexandria, the second largest city in the country, has a population that largely exceeds four million. During the Ptolemaic Dynasty the population numbers were much lower, but the variety and proportion between the origins of its inhabitants was remarkable. In fact, the Greeks that lived there, to whom the splendour of culture was owed, were about one hundred thousand, whereas the native Egyptians amounted to seven million; there were also populations of Jewish and Syrian origins. And yet Hellenistic influence prevailed. In an important paper Andrew Erskine emphasizes the significant role of Greek culture and of the Museum and Library, while also stressing the differences between the then new city and the Hellenistic πόλεις, even though the latter were but colonies – they lacked any traditional bond with the motherland and had no participation in any institution resembling a βουλή.

This does not mean that all the Greeks that lived there had the same origin. On the contrary, many prominent scholars came from other cities in the Mediterranean area: from Syracuse (Theocritus, Archimedes), Samos (Aristarchus), Cyrene (Callimachus), Phaleron (Demetrius); from Alexandria came Apollonius of Rhodes (who was granted citizenship of that island as an honour) and Diophantus. One of the most remarkable mathematicians of all times, Euclid, is said to be of Alexandrian origin, for lack of a better hypothesis.

The truth is that many of the data on the greatest scientists and philologists of that period come mostly from late authors and are often contradictory. Most importantly, these authors provide unclear information or no information at all on the two great institutions created by Ptolemy I and II: the Museum and the Library.

Thus, Strabo mentions, in his description of the magnificence of the city and the royal palace, the Museum but not the Library. After comparing the layout of the city to a grid of parallel streets crossing each other perpendicularly – a plan conceived by Deinocrates of Rhodes, the most renowned architect at the time – proceeds (XVII. 1-2):

And the city contains most beautiful public precincts and also the royal palaces, which constitute one-fourth or even one-third of the whole circuit of the city; for just as each of the kings, from love of splendour, was wont to add some adornment to the public monuments, so also he would invest himself at his own expense with a residence, in addition to those already built, so that now, to quote the words of the poet, «there is building upon building». All, however, are connected with one another and the harbour, even those that lie outside the harbour.

¹ «Les éditions de textes». In *Entretiens Hardt* XL. Genève, 1993, p. 72.

The Museum is also a part of the royal palaces; it has a public walk, an Exedra with seats, and a large house, in which is the common mess-hall of the men of learning who share the Museum. This group of men not only hold property in common, but also have a priest in charge of the Museum, who formerly was appointed by the kings, but is now appointed by Caesar.

Our first observation is that the Greek original of the word that we translated as «erudite» is *philologos*. We will return to it later on. We would also like to stress that Strabo, in another passage of his *Geography* (II.5), refers to the Library as being available to Hipparchus, who is known to have been a scientist connected to the Museum. On the other hand, Diogenes Laertius (V. 51-57), nearly three centuries later, speaks of the two institutions on similar terms. Furthermore, several other authors provide information (albeit contradictory at times) about this matter. The oldest and perhaps most reliable reference is found in Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1241, which contains the names of most of the librarians of 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., such as Apollonius of Rhodes, Eratosthenes and Aristarchus.

It is quite surprising to see a scientist's name in this short list: Eratosthenes, an eminent geographer who calculated the circumference of the Earth with remarkable accuracy, by determining latitudes. His treatise was called *Geometry*, a compound noun the etymology of which means exactly «measurement of the Earth».

Whatever the exact location of the Museum and the Library in Antiquity, it is certain that the men of science worked in the former, while the men of letters worked in the latter.

As regards the designation of Museum, it is worth noting that the institution and its purposes bore no resemblance to today's museums. Etymologically it was the Temple of Muses, directed by a priest. From this perspective, its organization was similar to Aristotle's school, which included also a temple with the same name. Speculations about the establishment of the Lyceum and its library by the Ptolemies are generally accepted as impossible to demonstrate nowadays, especially after R. Pfeiffer's famous work *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*, in which the chapter on the Hellenistic period begins with this often cited sentence²: «In the stupendous work of Aristotle the telos of the classical age was reached, the end of the intellectual development of the Attic as well as of the Ionian period».

Therefore we have to exclude Strabo's tradition, according to which the Stagirite would have taught the kings of Egypt how to organize a library. As A. Erskine notes, that would not have been possible for «Aristotle was dead by the time Ptolemy gained control of Egypt»³; probably, it means that the organization of the materials was modelled on Aristotle's private collection and that the idea of forming a community of scholars was modelled on the structure of the Lyceum. According to the same Hellenist, it is more plausible

² ERSKINE, 1968: 87.

³ ERSKINE 1995: 38-48.

that the Peripatetic philosopher Demetrius of Phaleron, ten years after his dismissal as tyrant of Athens, was welcomed by Ptolemy, to whom he would have presented the aforementioned model⁴. Yet another possible explanation lies in the monarchic tradition, dating back to Pindar, of supporting illustrious poets at the court. Erskine further opposes these views: the main reason underlying the creation of the Museum and the Library would have stemmed from the Ptolemies' intent to establish their political supremacy on cultural foundations. There are abundant allusions, either explicit or veiled, to the royal house by the three major poets at the time: Theocritus (*Idyll XVII*), Callimachus (*Hymn to Delos*), Apollonius of Rhodes (in the Argonauts' voyage).

We will not discuss the fate of Aristotle's Library, which presumably was bequeathed to Theophrastus and then to Neleus, as hypothesized by Athenaeus (I. 3a-b) and accepted by contemporary scholars, like J. Irigoin. Instead we will focus on what is generally accepted regarding the acquisition of books by the Ptolemies.

Some references date back to Roman period. The most interesting of them is Galen's, one of the greatest names in the history of Medicine, who discovered that blood, rather than air, circulates in the arteries⁵. He said that, under Ptolemy III's orders, all books aboard the ships docked in the harbour of Alexandria were to be seized in order to be copied; once the books had been copied, the copies, not the originals, were returned, with the excuse that they were written on higher-quality papyrus⁶. It is in this context that the transmission of the text by the three tragedians takes place: Ptolemy III orders from Athens, giving fifteen talents as security, the official edition of their works – the edition that was preserved in the public archives and that actors were compelled to use. After copying the text, the original remained in Egypt and the copy was returned, with careful emphasis on the fact that the copies were made on the best papyrus.

It should be noted that that material was easily obtained from the stems of a plant that was once abundant on the banks of the Nile. Meanwhile another kingdom dismembered from Alexander's empire, that of the Attalids of Pergamus, began to rival Alexandria. That is why, according to Pliny the Elder (*N. H.* XIII, 70.), the Ptolemies quickly forbade the export of the plant. The Attalids then resorted to a writing material obtained from prepared animal skins, the name of which derives from the city it came from: parchment. While the authenticity of this story is not recognized by all scholars, the fact is that the new material was used in Europe until the 14th century.

Let us focus on a specific stance in our small digression: rivalry, which in its simplest form is envy. Early on this feeling was manifested by Timon of Phlius in an hexameter satire

⁴ ERSKINE, 1968: 39-40.

⁵ Galen, Comm.II in Hipp. Epid.III, CMG 5.10.2.1 (1936), 79.8 apud PFEIFFER, ERSKINE, 1968: 82, 192.

⁶ ERSKINE, 1968, who refers to this text in the aforementioned article published in «Greece and Rome», p. 39 and 47, n. 8, believes that the famous doctor's opinion is tied to the fact that he was born in the rival city of Pergamus.

mocking the scholars of the Museum, that «crowd of bookish scribblers [...] they argue away interminably in the chicken coop of the Muses»⁷.

We would like to point out that, according to another tradition, the kingdom of Pergamon had also attempted to entice Alexandrian erudites, like the famous Aristophanes of Byzantium, but a cruel penalty was imposed for him: the famous librarian was imprisoned in Alexandria for life⁸.

But the main issue is that, although that there are many questions unanswered and others that the discovery of new papyri (like the one containing the list of librarians) may eventually shed light upon, there is no doubt whatsoever about the splendour of two institutions supported by the magnificent Ptolemaic Dynasty – the Museum and the Library – where the most distinguished scholars and writers at the time met and worked. As regards the Museum, it is well attested that scholars received money, there were feasts and banquets, discussions in which the kings took part, and the facilities for such activities was also provided, as well as a peripatos lined with trees. There were also botanical and zoological gardens.

We mentioned Eratosthenes above. Pfeiffer stated that he was the first sage and poet to be above all a scientist. It is worth noting that he was the first to call himself a φιλόλογος⁹, rather than a γραμματικός, as Suetonius wrote. The latter designation was also used by Praxiphanes and later by Dionysius Thrax, the author of the first Greek grammar in the sense currently attributed to the word denoting that kind of compendia¹⁰.

There were many prominent names in several branches of science, particularly in Medicine, Mathematics and Astronomy. For instance, the great physicians of the 3rd century B.C. like Herophilus, who for the very first time differentiated between cerebrum and cerebellum, and tendons and nerves, and his disciple Erasistratus, who distinguished between sensory and motor nerves¹¹. Also the three notable Alexandrian mathematicians, among whom Euclid, who laid the grounds for the Geometry named after him and learned nowadays (though other non-euclidian geometries exist since the 19th century); Apollonius of Perge, who studied the sections of cones; and the greatest of them all, Archimedes of Syracuse, the discoverer of the buoyant force principle and the inventor of so many mechanisms. In Astronomy, Aristarchus of Samos, who presented the first heliocentric theory (immediately contradicted, definitively corroborated by Kepler at the beginning of the 17th century); and Hipparchus of Nicaea, who discovered the precession of the equinoxes and the nutation motion of the Earth's axis¹².

⁷ Fr. 60 Wachsmuth.

⁸ Cf. ERSKINE, 1968: 46, note 43.

⁹ Op. cit., p. 152.

¹⁰ *De grammaticis et rhetoribus*, cap.10, *apud* Pfeiffer, op. cit., p. 158 and n. 8.

¹¹ See MARLOWE, 1971: 79-80.

¹² MARLOWE, 1971: 74-75.

The list is far from complete but nonetheless shows how science is rooted in Antiquity.

We cannot omit literary studies, an area wherein the edition of remarkable texts, like Homer's, was brought about. This type of activity was initiated by the first librarian, Zenodotus, but the most prestigious one was Aristarchus of Samothrace, who lived between the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. and became known as Ὁ Ὀμηρικὸς, because of his detailed work on those texts. However, we should note that he also produced exegetical work on other epic poems, poetry and drama; moreover, he was the first scholar to comment on a prose writer, Herodotus. He also established the terminology, colometry and metrical analysis (widely accepted during many centuries, although it would change in our age). While Aristarchus's name became a synonym for rigorous sustained criticism, we should not exclude his teacher's name, Aristophanes of Byzantium, for he was the first scholar to comment upon manuscripts of multiple literary genres (not just epic), to create punctuation and accentual marks, to compose arguments for tragedies and to establish a canon of writers (though the term canon was only coined David Ruhnken in 1768)¹³.

These two illustrious names should be joined by other figures' names, such as the poets Apollonius of Rhodes and Callimachus. The latter wrote, under Ptolemy III's orders, the so-called *πῖνακες* in one hundred and twenty books, which were essentially a catalogue of the Library of Alexandria. However, this catalogue was much more than a mere alphabetically ordered list of the books stored in the Library: the catalogue was organized into genres, contained the incipit of each book, brief biographical information and sometimes even authenticity remarks about the works.

Both Callimachus and Apollonius of Rhodes, along with Theocritus, are deemed the greatest Alexandrian poets. Because the first two were librarians and also tutors of the Prince, it is difficult to determine their relationship. For instance, we cannot be sure that Apollonius was Callimachus's disciple, although some passages of the *Argonautica* seem to suggest it, as Pfeiffer observed¹⁴. There are some doubts whether Theocritus worked at the Library, although he certainly received the patronage of Ptolemy.

Some quarrels between the two may be presumed. The doctrines and poetic work of Callimachus and Apollonius are contradictory, as observed by several scholars. Some of Callimachus's verses are well-known, such as the following, which highlight his taste for erudition (fr. 612 Pfeiffer):

I sing of nothing unattested.

or the epigram beginning (XXVIII. 1-2):

I loathe the Cyclic poem, nor do I like

The road which carries many to and fro.

¹³ PFEIFFER, 1968: 204 sqq.

¹⁴ PFEIFFER, 1968: 141. See also HUTCHINSON, 1990: 85-91.

Concerning Apollonius, Pfeiffer noted that he followed closely epic tradition, as regards the unity and continuity in the organization of the poem, and the length of the books was similar to that in epic¹⁵. Furthermore, Alexandrian epic depicts the main characters rigorously analyzing strong emotions (Medea's awakening passion, in Book III, as well as Jason's hesitations, which sometimes render him into an anti-hero, in Gilbert Lawall's words¹⁶).

Theocritus's work is quite different; he is known as an author of bucolic poetry, dealing with challenges between shepherds, echoed in Roman and Renaissance poetry, and the so-called mimes or imitations of real life, the most famous of which is mime XV, *The Syracusans*: it depicts domestic scenes between two women friends, then public scenes while they walk through festive Alexandria before entering the splendid royal palace to listen to the lament for Adonis. This is the poem that gives us a lively picture of the city that we described at the beginning.

It goes without saying that these were certainly not the only Hellenist poets. Our focus on them stems not only from their worth and projection but also from the fact that their work is intertwined with Alexandria as a centre of intellectual life and cultural patronage.

We have seen that the distinction between the activities in the Museum and the Library is not always clear. Nonetheless the two institutions are a whole and mark a brilliant age, one that became a beacon in the history of science and culture.

¹⁵ Op. cit., p. 146-148. On this subject see also Irigoin, «Les éditions de texte», op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁶ AWAL, 1966: 111-169.

EPILOGUE

BIBLIOTHECA ALEXANDRINA: BEGINNING ANEW

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So much was said about the ancient library, and its legend lived throughout the ages as an unprecedented center of learning and a place of culture and science. Like its illustrious predecessor, the New Library of Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, was built not far from where the ancient library once stood to become a new center of learning in the Alexandria of the 21st century.

Inaugurated in October 2002, the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA) aspires to be more than a meeting place for peoples of different cultures, and to become a house of wisdom that fosters dialogue with the other and encourages inquiry and exploration.

In its mission statement, the BA envisions itself as «a center of excellence for the production and dissemination of knowledge, and a place of dialogue and understanding between cultures and peoples»¹.

In pursuing its mission, the new Library seeks to recapture the spirit of the ancient one and desires to become:

- The world's window on Egypt;
- Egypt's window on the world;
- An instrument for rising to the challenges of the digital age; and
- A center for dialogue between peoples and civilizations.

¹ <http://www.bibalex.org/aboutus/mission_en.aspx>.

Such a grand vision was created to honor the illustrious past, celebrate the present and embrace the future. The careful selection of the BA objectives is quite admirable; to be the window of Egypt on the world and the world's window on Egypt carries an image that is vivid and easy to understand.

The Library building was designed by the Norwegian firm Snøhetta and built by Egyptian contractors with local and imported materials. The Library complex comprises three buildings: the Main Library building, the Planetarium, and the Conference Center which was built earlier. The main building is designed in the shape of a slanting disk. The disk symbolizes the sun rising from the Mediterranean; an appropriate image for the emergence of a new beacon of learning. The larger sphere of the sun is facing the smaller sphere of the Planetarium which resembles a moon, while the Conference Center acts as a counter point in the overall massing. The plaza that connects them all is open and inviting, with olive trees to symbolize the Bibliotheca Alexandrina as the underlying premise of peace, openness to the other, dialogue, rationality and understanding.

The building exterior is covered with a large gray granite wall on which letters (not words) from the alphabets of some 120 languages are carved, and the unique roof structure is reminiscent of the contemporary computer. A slim and elegant pedestrian bridge runs through the Library from the edge of the University of Alexandria campus in the southeast towards the open sea on the northwest. It symbolizes the knowledge transfer from the halls of academe into the Library where information is processed and transferred into the larger world across the Mediterranean Sea as was the case in the ancient world. Water surrounds the whole building and provides a reflecting motif from various angles, and a reflecting and separating medium for the main complex, creating a unique separateness and a hint of «floating» the building out of reach of the surroundings, other than the plaza entrance side.

While the building looks massive on the outside, the Entrance hall looks surprisingly austere and does not quite reveal the grandeur to come. When you delve into the Main Hall, the building in its entirety unfolds before your eyes and the space gradually expands. As you move inwards, you reach a viewing balcony, named in honor of Callimachus, the great Hellenistic poet who created the first catalog of the ancient library's holdings organized by subject and author, thus becoming the father of Library Science. There, one is overwhelmed by the great size of the Reading Area: spectacular, soaring, and elegant. The main Reading Area spans 7 open cascading floors where each has a portion of the Library collection, and entries to either museums, special libraries, meeting rooms, or administrative offices.

The Bibliotheca Alexandria is an amalgamation of lively entities. It consists of a library that can hold millions of books; an Internet Center and an Internet Archive; six specialized libraries; four Museums; a Planetarium; an exploratorium for children; a Culturama, which is an interactive three-dimensional digital presentation of heritage material over nine screens; a Virtual Immersive Science and Technology lab; fifteen permanent exhibitions; two art galleries for temporary exhibitions; a conference center with a large theater for

1,700 people, and nine academic research centers involved in studying and developing Alexandria and Mediterranean research, art, manuscripts, calligraphy and writing, information sciences, cultural and natural heritage, Scientific Research, Hellenistic Studies, Democracy and Social Studies, and Development studies.

While it is unusual for a library to have all these components, it is important to emphasize that the ancient library's ideology of learning encompassed many of the human activities that involve most of our senses. Learning does not happen solely through reading but through hearing, speaking, and experimenting as well. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a learning platform where users with their different cognitive styles are able to learn with a pace that suits them most.

In order for the Library to emphasize its role as an international entity that facilitates the exchange of culture, it hosts a number of international entities such as the International Federation for Library Associations (IFLA) Regional office, the Secretariat of the Arab National Commissions of UNESCO, the Middle East and North Africa Network for Environmental Economics (MENANEE), and many more.

The Main Library collections and services are organized to meet the needs of adult learners while the specialized libraries are created to either serve specific groups of users such as Taha Hussein Library for the blind and visually impaired, the Young People's Library and the Children's Library, or to facilitate the usage of different formats such as the Arts & Multimedia Library, the Map Library and the Rare Books and Special Collections Library.

In its endeavor to reach excellence and create an impact, the BA has been working to set Egypt as a leading center for Arabic bibliographic studies and research through the establishment of the Arabic Union Catalog, the translation of internationally accepted standards, and the establishment of the first Arabic Manual of Style.

Living the mission has been the passion and the challenge that drive the everyday activities at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. In less than a decade, the Library has proven its leadership in the digitization, preservation and management of heritage. It has digitized more than 300,000 volumes of its Arabic monographs and millions of documents, and is in the process of digitally documenting the modern history of Egypt beginning with Napoleon's mission to Egypt until the time of President Sadat.

The Library has been an actor in the sustainable development of Alexandria and has been working with the Ministry of Education and with the culture and museum sectors of both the government and the not-for-profit organizations as well as many foreign consulates in Alexandria. It has sponsored many art shows, exhibitions, performances and festivals that were open to the public and free of charge.

The BA has also taken upon its self the responsibility of becoming an incubator for children's talents. It offers children and young people extensive collections of books, magazines, videos, films, games, and a plethora of activities and competitions. It facilitates the

children's entry into internationally sponsored competitions and creates a space where children are able to learn about art, science, and technology and assist in schoolwork. Many of Alexandria's children have had the opportunity to enter these competitions for the first time, and this was a life-changing experience for many.

The Library is also a promoter of science and technology. It hosts a number of internationally renowned science conferences such as the BioVision where key scientists from across the world meet in Alexandria to discuss the many advances in biological science. Through these events, young Egyptian scientists get the chance to meet with renowned scientists and Nobel laureates from all over the world, and enrich their experience with the exposure and communication every scientist needs.

The BA has also been a catalyst for reform in the region. It sponsors a number of conferences that discuss reform in many of the vital sectors such as health, education, economy, and difficult topics such as political challenges, freedom of speech and expression, youth employment, separation of religious institutions from the state, and many more.

The Library activities extend beyond the geographical boundaries of Egypt, for it enjoys the patronage of more than 1.7 million visitors a year. It not only conducts its basic activities, opens branches in other Egyptian cities, and enriches the cultural scene in Egypt; it also collaborates with a number of international organizations where many of the Library staff have taken leading positions, and with which the Library has been a partner on projects such as the *Memory of the World* project of the Library of Congress and UNESCO, and The Virtual International Authority Files which is a joint project with the Library of Congress, the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

The Library is recognized as an apex for networks and partnerships. It houses the offices of 12 international organizations and offers multilingual collections to the public. It also thrives with the friendship of so many citizens around the world through the BA International Friends Associations.

The impact of the Library after a decade of service is breathtaking, and it has truly proven itself worthy to be heir of the Ancient Library of Alexandria.

ILLUSTRATIONS

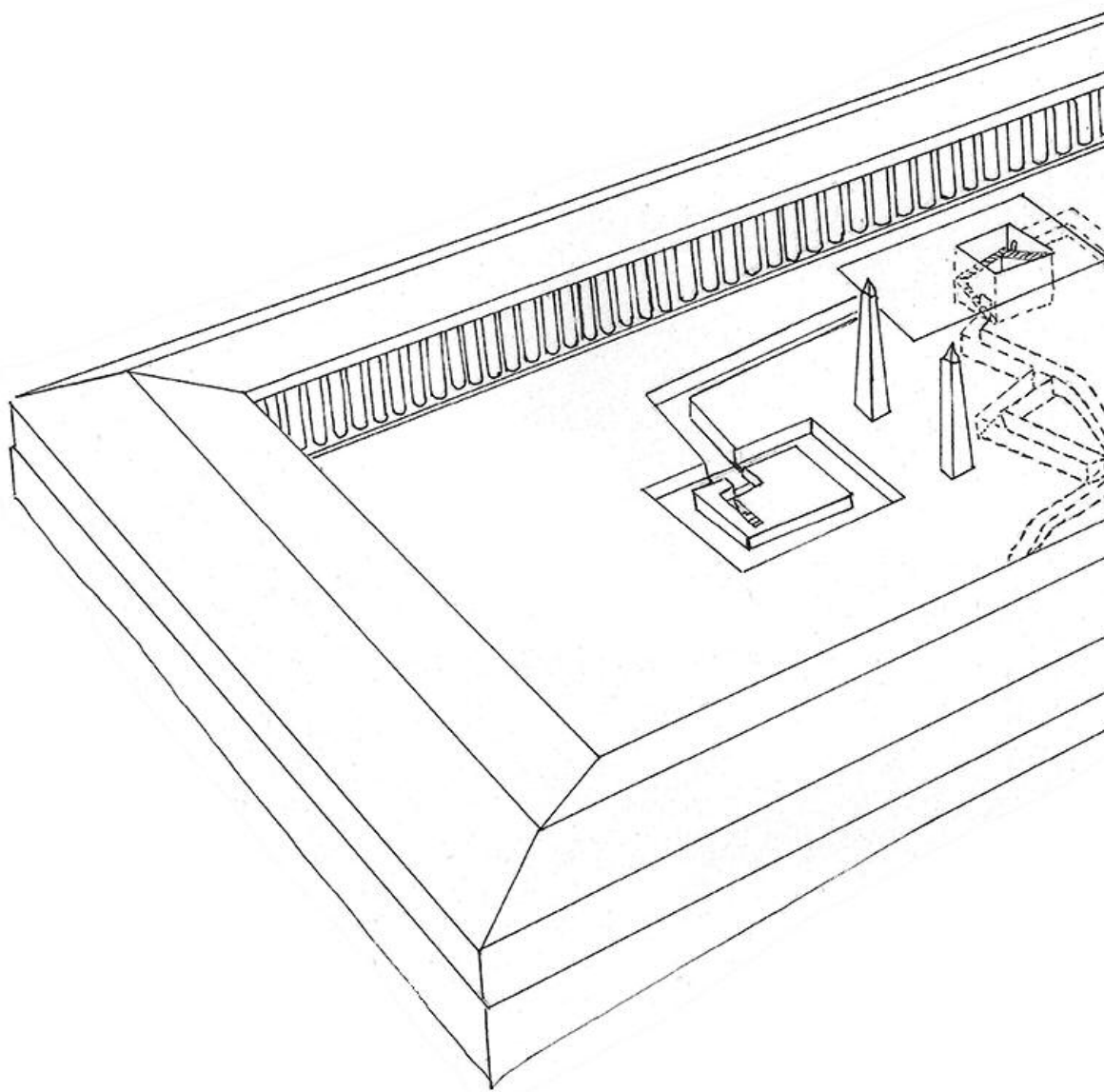


Fig. 1: *Serapeum of Alexandria: Reconstruction of the complex, Roman Period* (drawing by Rogério Sousa after MCKENZIE, 2003: 55).

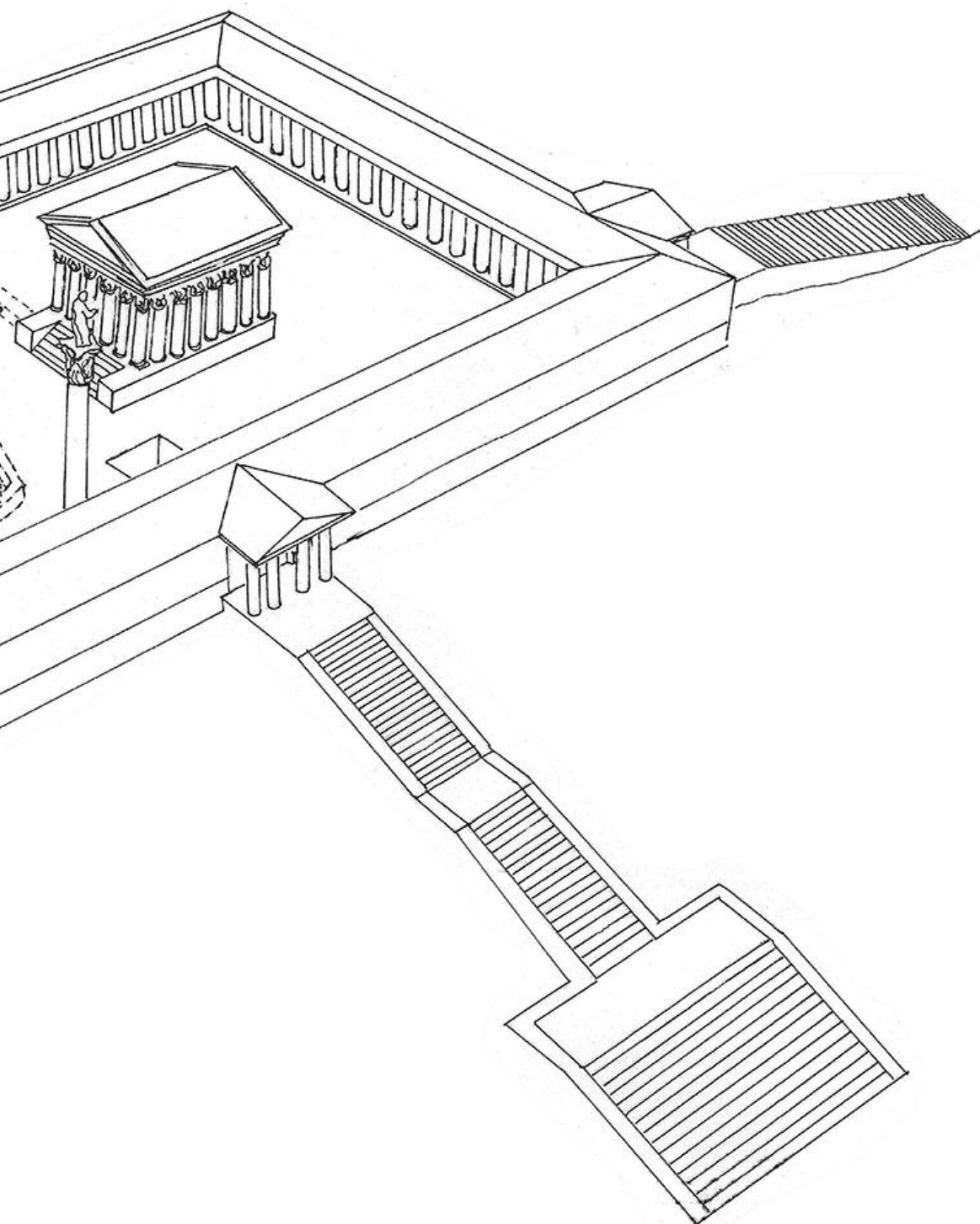




Fig. 2: *Serapeum of Alexandria: The Column of Diocletian* (photo by Julia Harvey).



Fig. 3: *Serapeum of Alexandria: The underground galleries* (photo by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 4: *Kom el-Dikka*, Greco-Roman Period (photo by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 5: *Alexandria*. The underwater archaeological site (photo by Cristina Pimentel).



Fig. 6: *Fragment of a black basalt Egyptian-style statue of Ptolemy I, Ptolemaic Period. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*



Fig. 7: *Ptolemy III, Evergetes. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (photo by Rogério Sousa).*



Fig. 8: *Study for a Royal Relief.* Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisboa. Copyright: Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (Photography by Catarina Gomes Ferreira).



Fig. 9: *Colossal statue of a Greco-Roman ruler.* Cairo Egyptian Museum (photo by Rogério Sousa).

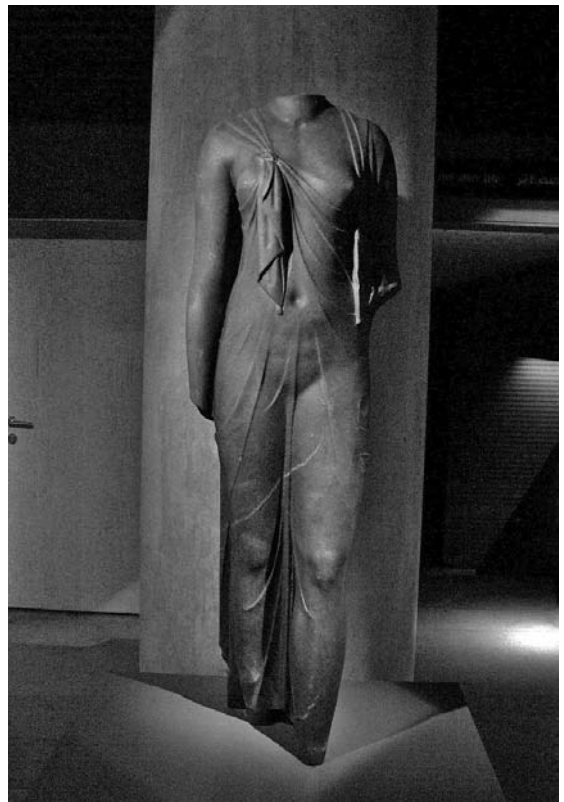


Fig. 10: *Statue of Isis (or a Ptolemaic Queen),* Greco-Roman Period. Museum of Antiquities – Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Copyright: Bibliotheca Alexandrina.



Fig. 11: *Head of a woman resembling Cleopatra VII (50 B.C.-30 B.C.).* British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 12: *Group statue of Cleopatra Selene and Alexander Helios, Ptolemaic Period.* Cairo Egyptian Museum. With permission of the Museum.

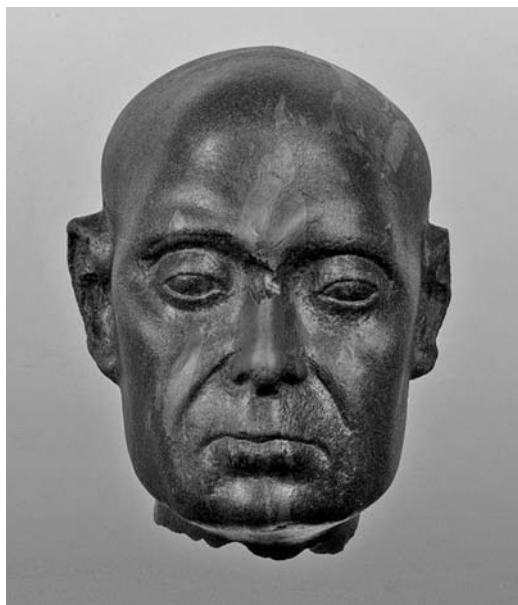


Fig. 13: *Male head, Greco-Roman Period.* Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisboa. Copyright: Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (photo by Catarina Gomes Ferreira).

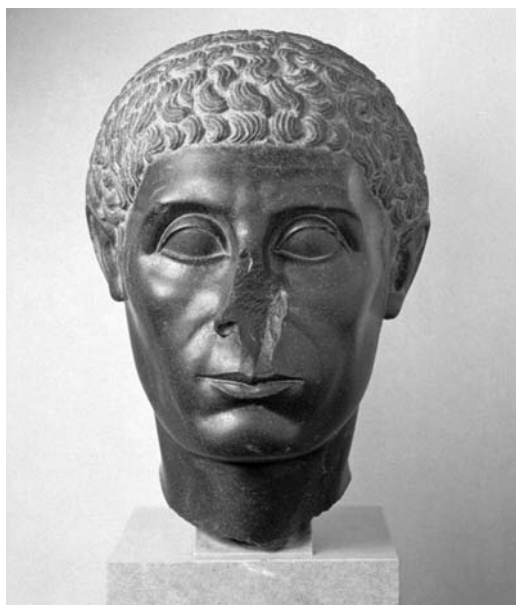


Fig. 14: *Brooklyn black head, Ptolemaic Period.* Brooklyn Museum, New York. Copyright: Brooklyn Museum.



Fig. 15: Statue of the god Horus-Zeus Casios of Pelusium. From Tivoli (Cassius Villa). Vatican Museums (drawing by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 16: *Naophoros* statue of an unnamed officer, Greco-Roman Period (?). Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisboa. Copyright: Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (photo by Catarina Gomes Ferreira).



Fig. 17: *Funerary statue of a priestess of Isis*, Roman Period. Brooklyn Museum, New York. Copyright: Brooklyn Museum.

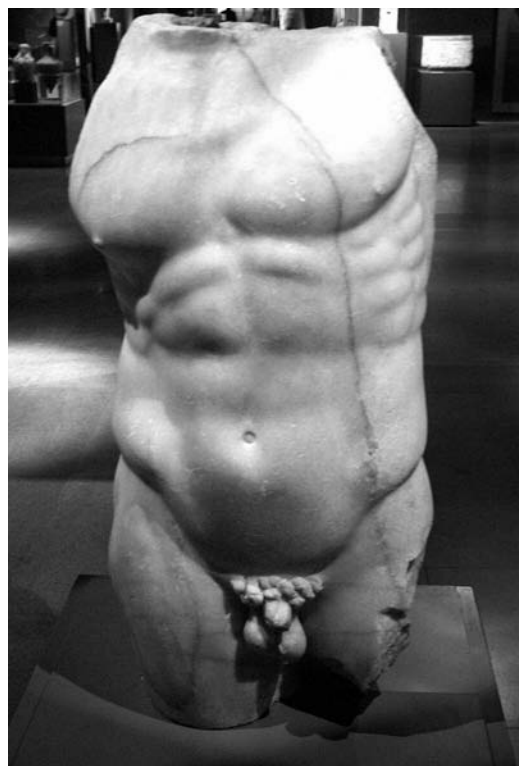


Fig. 18: *Male torso*, Greco-Roman Period. Museum of Antiquities – Bibliotheca Alexandrina (unknown number). Copyright: Bibliotheca Alexandrina (photo by Rogério Sousa).

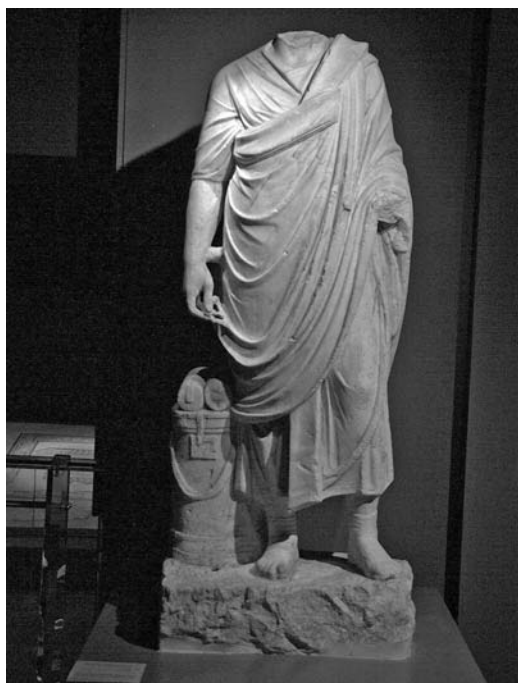


Fig. 19: *Statue of a Philosopher*, Greco-Roman Period. Museum of Antiquities – Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Copyright: Bibliotheca Alexandrina (photo by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 20: *Green basanite head from a statue of a youth, Greco-Roman Period. From Alexandria. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*



Fig. 21: *Funerary mask, Roman Period. Brooklyn Museum, New York. Copyright: Brooklyn Museum.*

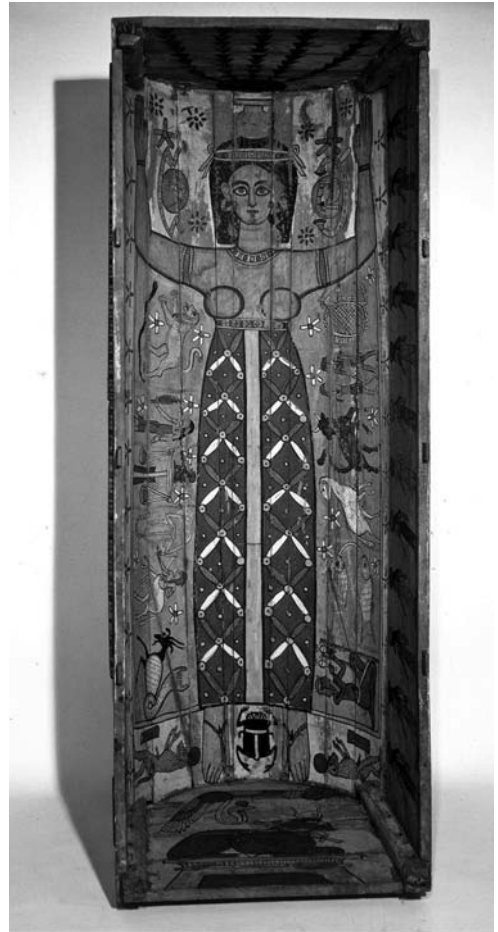


Fig. 22: *Wooden coffin of Soter, Roman Period. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.*



Fig. 23: *Tomb of Petosiris, Tuna el-Gebel, Ptolemaic Period* (photo by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 24: *Cat and kittens, Greco-Roman Period (?)*. Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisboa. Copyright: Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (Photography by Reinaldo Viegas).



Fig. 25: Limestone stele, Ptolemaic Period. Cairo Egyptian Museum.

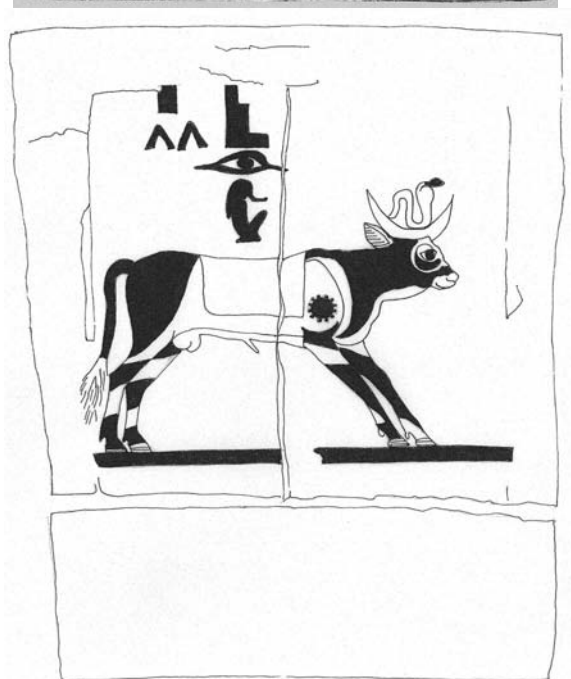


Fig. 26: Coffin of Pabasa (foot-board of the lid), Ptolemaic Period. Lisbon Archaeological Museum. Drawing by Rogério Sousa.



Fig. 27: Rosetta Stone, Ptolemaic Period (196 B.C.). British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 28: Papyrus of the Demotic Tale of Setne Khaemwas, Ptolemaic Period. Cairo Egyptian Museum.

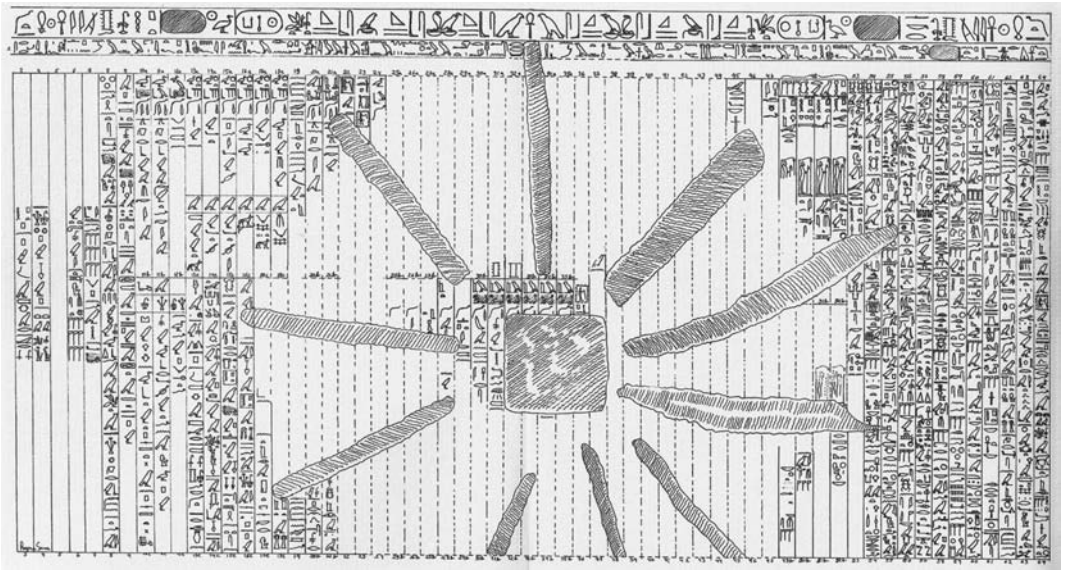


Fig. 29: Shabaka Stone, British Museum (drawing by Rogério Sousa).

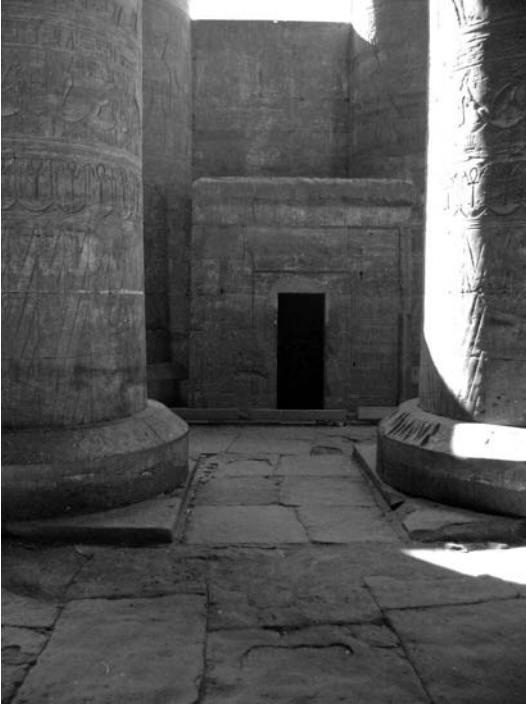


Fig. 30: *Sacred Library, Temple of Horus, Edfu, Greco-Roman Period* (photo by Rogério Sousa).

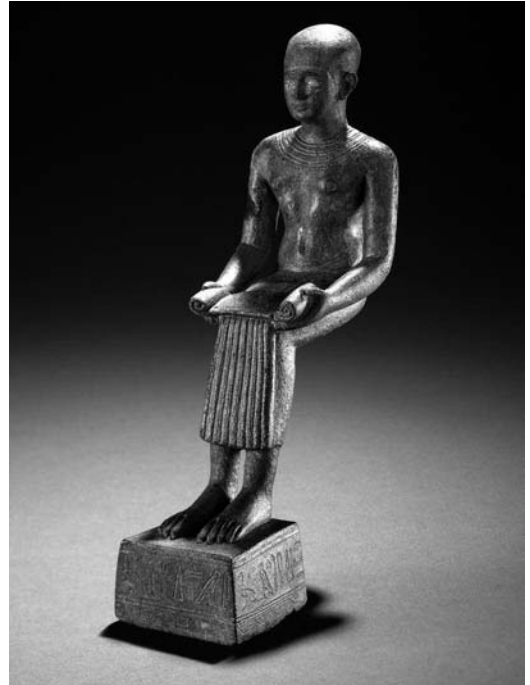


Fig. 31: *Bronze seated figure of Imhotep, Late Period. British Museum.* © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 32: *Colossal head of Sarapis, Greco-Roman Period. Museum of Antiquities – Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Alexandria.* Copyright: Bibliotheca Alexandrina.



Fig. 33: *Marble bust of Sarapis.* Antikmuseum på Kungliga Slottet (drawing by Rogério Sousa).

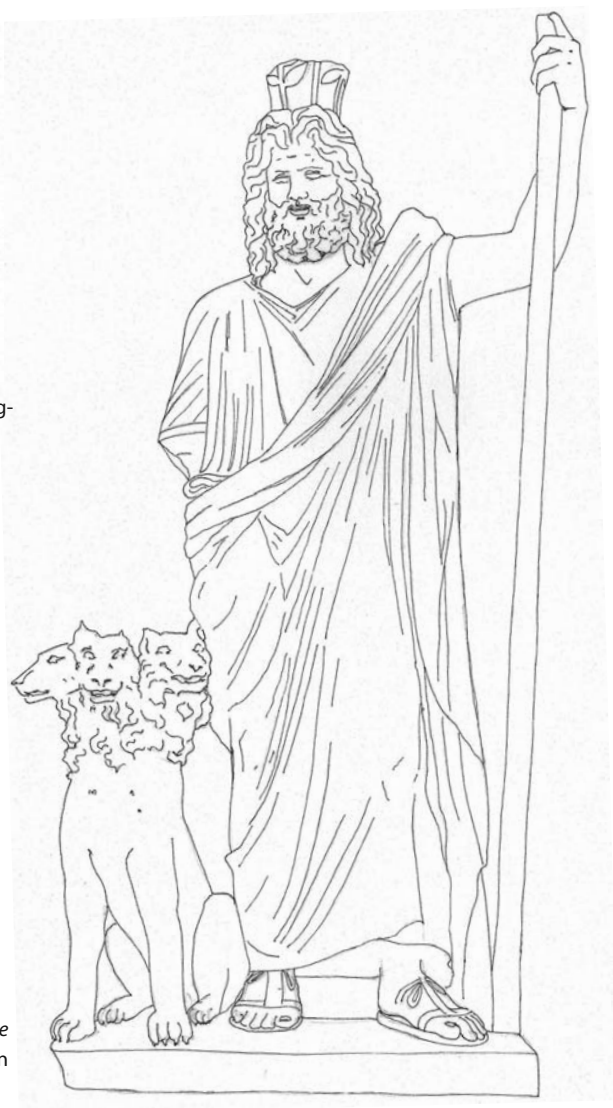


Fig. 34: *The god Sarapis and Cereberus.* From the *Serapeum of Gortyn (Crete)*, Roman Period. Heraklion Museum (drawing by Rogério Sousa).

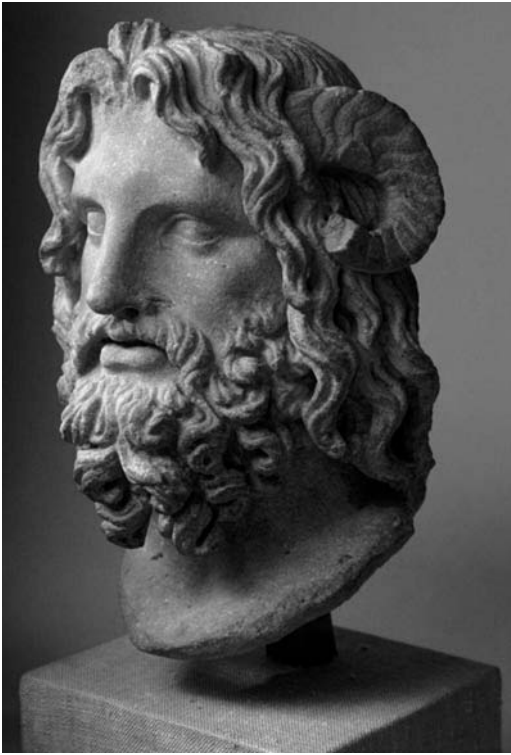


Fig. 35: *Sarapis head*, Roman Period. Brooklyn Museum, New York. Copyright: Brooklyn Museum.



Fig. 37: *Fragment of a colossal statue of Sarapis, from Alexandria*. Greco-Roman Period. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 36: *Bronze statue of Sarapis sitting on the throne*, Greco-Roman Period. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 38: *Enthroned Sarapis, Greco-Roman Period.* Archaeological National Museum of Lisbon. Copyright: Archaeological National Museum of Lisbon (photo by José Rubio).



Fig. 39: *Isis and Sarapis, Greco-Roman Period.* Archaeological National Museum of Lisbon. Copyright: Archaeological National Museum of Lisbon (photo by José Pessoa).



Fig. 40: *Unveiled Isis-Aphrodite, Greco-Roman Period.* Archaeological National Museum of Lisbon. Copyright: Archaeological National Museum of Lisbon (photo by José Rubio).



Fig. 41: *Farnese Isis*. Archaeological Museum of Naples. With permission of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture – Special Superintendence for Archaeological Heritage of Naples and Pompeii.



Fig. 42: *Limestone stela with snake-bodied figures of Isis and Dionysos*, Ptolemaic Period. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

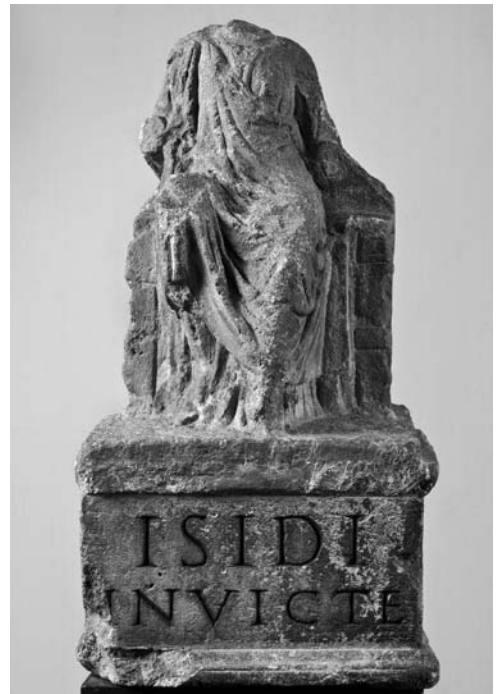


Fig. 43: *Isis Invicta*. Römisch-Germanisches Museum, Cologne. Copyright: Römisch-Germanisches Museum.



Fig. 44: *Stele of Isis and Harpocrates*, Ptolemaic Period. Cairo Egyptian Museum.



Fig. 45: *Isis and Harpocrates*. Wall painting from Karanis, Greco-Roman Period (drawing by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 46: *Roman Mammisi, Temple of Hathor, Dendera* (photo by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 47: *Harpocrates*, Greco-Roman Period (?). Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisboa. Copyright: Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (photo by Catarina Gomes Ferreira).



Fig. 48: *Magical stele of Harpocrates (Cippus)*, Ptolemaic Period. From Alexandria. Cairo Egyptian Museum.



Fig. 49: *Harpokrates riding a goose*, Roman Period. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

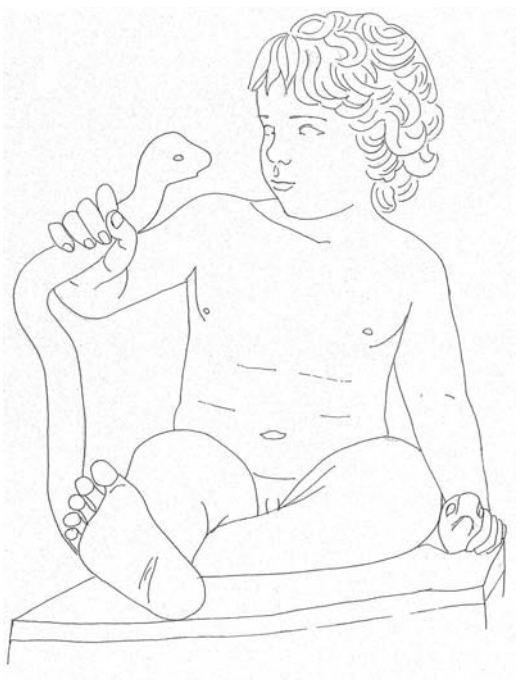


Fig. 50: *Child strangling a goose*, Roman Period. Vatican Museum (drawing by Rogério Sousa).

Fig. 51: *Herakles and the cobras*. Capitolin Museums, Rome (drawing by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 52: Depiction of Horpakhred-Herakles from a ritual garment found at Saqqara, Greco-Roman Period. Cairo Egyptian Museum. Drawing by Rogério Sousa.



Fig. 53: Bronze figure of Horus, in Roman military costume, Roman Period. British Museum. © The Trustees of the British Museum.



Fig. 54: *Serapeum at Luxor, Roman Period* (photo by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 55: *Temple of Isis, Philae* (photo by Rogério Sousa).



Fig. 56: *Venus Anadiomena*, Greco-Roman Period. Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisboa. Copyright: Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (photo by Catarina Gomes Ferreira).

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