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Fra Oriente e Occidente, 80 Years Later

— Nino Luraghi —

The essays that follow mostly originate from the one-day conference *Fra Oriente e Occidente: Le vie della cultura e le vie del potere*, organized on April 14th, 2023, at the Fondazione Firpo, in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Turin, with the support of the History Department of the University of Turin and of the Turin Humanities Programme. A group of scholars who had been exchanging thoughts about Mazzarino's book, in some cases for decades, decided that, in light especially of the enormous progress in our understanding of Iron Age Anatolia, a shared discussion might be productive. Often praised, rarely engaged with, *Fra Oriente e Occidente* was a trailblazing contribution that failed to have the impact it could have had. Preaching with example, Mazzarino demonstrated that early Greek history needed to be studied in a broader framework, including not only the Mediterranean, as many scholars would admit without objection, but also the peri-Mediterranean world: Anatolia, Egypt, Mesopotamia. This was of course a tall order, that went well beyond the normal toolkit of ancient historians who constituted Mazzarino's main readership. After eight decades, it would be otiose to treat Mazzarino's book as if it had just been published. His ideas are now part of the intellectual history of the study of antiquity and need to be addressed as such. At the same time, the authors gathered here, whose main shared characteristic is being themselves passionate readers of Mazzarino, give examples of how engaging with the many insights and hypotheses embedded in *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, often in endless footnotes or large chunks of small print within the text, can be a fruitful and exhilarating proposition.

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Les Phéniciens de Santo Mazzarino

— Corinne Bonnet —

Abstract

This article examines the place of the Phoenician and Punic world in the historical thought of Santo Mazzarino, focusing on two major works published in 1947: Fra Oriente e Occidente *and* Introduzione alle guerre puniche. *Although Phoenicians were not central to Mazzarino's research agenda, they played a significant role in his interpretation of Mediterranean interactions between East and West. The study analyzes how Mazzarino conceptualized the "Phoenician route" as a key channel of commercial and cultural exchanges during the archaic period, while contrasting it with the Anatolian–Ionian route, which he regarded as more influential in the formation of Greek political and intellectual traditions. The article reassesses Mazzarino's views in light of subsequent developments in Phoenician and Mediterranean studies. Ultimately, it argues that Mazzarino's work, despite its essentialist assumptions and some outdated conclusions, anticipated later debates on cultural transfers, connectivity, and intercultural dynamics across the ancient Mediterranean.*

Keywords

Archaic Greece, Anatolia, East–West dynamics, Punic wars, cultural transfers

On peut affirmer d'emblée que les Phéniciens, y compris dans leurs prolongements occidentaux, ne constituent pas un enjeu majeur de l'œuvre de Santo Mazzarino. Il ne les ignore évidemment pas, mais, s'agissant de ce qu'il appelle « l'Orient », son attention se porte bien davantage vers l'Asie mineure et le monde perse que vers le monde sémitique qu'il ne maîtrise pas vraiment, dans la mesure où il n'a pas accès, de première main, aux sources qui en émanent. En 1947, alors qu'il est âgé de 31 ans, Mazzarino publie les deux ouvrages qui vont retenir notre attention : d'une part, son étude majeure intitulée *Fra Oriente e Occidente. Ricerche di storia greca arcaica* (Florence, La Nuova Italia), un volume de plus de 400 pages dont la *Premessa* est datée de juillet 1947, et, d'autre part, l'*Introduzione alle guerre puniche* (Catane, G. Crisafulli), en 179 pages[1]. Ces deux livres n'affichent pas la même

[1] En 1994, Sabatino Moscati publie également une *Introduzione alle Guerre Puniche* (Turin), où il propose un cadre renouvelé du développement de Carthage en recourant aux résultats des fouilles et aux analyses récentes sur le monde phénicien et punique, afin de sortir d'une perspective romano-centrée. Le choix délibéré du titre,

ambition quoique, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, les pages initiales visent à situer la recherche — ponctuelle, spécialisée — dans un contexte historique et historiographique plus ample qui embrasse ambitieusement des questions d'histoire ancienne et contemporaine. C'est une sorte de marque de fabrique de Santo Mazzarino sur laquelle nous reviendrons au terme de notre analyse. Dans un premier temps, nous examinerons donc la place et le rôle que Mazzarino assigne aux Phéniciens dans le contexte de l'histoire archaïque grecque telle qu'elle se déploie en Méditerranée, avant de nous pencher sur d'autres dynamiques géopolitiques méditerranéennes, celles qui débouchèrent sur les affrontements entre Carthage et Rome. On s'efforcera de comprendre, dans les deux cas, comment Mazzarino met en lumière les Phéniciens, mais aussi comment le discours de Mazzarino sur les Phéniciens éclaire sa méthode et ses questionnements d'historien.

Les étapes de la vie et de la production intellectuelle de Santo Mazzarino ont été retracées, notamment, par Andrea Giardina dans la notice nécrologique qu'il lui a consacrée en 1990, peu de temps après sa mort en 1987, dans la revue *Gnomon*[2]. Deux volumes collectifs lui ont été dédiés[3], tandis que Fulvio Tessitore a scruté son « storicismo »[4] ; pourtant, le regard porté par Mazzarino sur le monde phénicien et punique n'a pas encore retenu l'attention de ses interprètes, sans doute par la position relativement secondaire de cette thématique, alors que, dans d'autres reconstructions plus récentes des dynamiques qui traversent le monde méditerranéen — on songe par exemple aux travaux de Martin Bernal, Nicholas Purcell et Peregrine Horden, ou encore Irad Malkin[5] —, la part des Phéniciens est bien plus importante. Quel est au juste le projet de Mazzarino dans *Fra Oriente e Occidente* et quelle est sa perspective ? On se souviendra d'abord qu'il a publié, deux ans auparavant, en 1945, un ouvrage consacré à Rome archaïque : *Dalla monarchia allo stato repubblicano. Ricerche di storia romana arcaica* (Milan, Rizzoli). Si l'on remonte encore un peu en arrière, on rencontre la première monographie, issue de sa thèse soutenue en 1936 sous la direction de Luigi Pareti, parue en 1942 et intitulée *Stilicone. La crisi imperiale dopo Teodosio* (Rome, Signorelli), ce qui donne immédiatement la mesure de

qui fait écho à celui de Mazzarino, vise à souligner le chemin parcouru depuis 1947 et l'adoption d'une perspective nouvelle, comme le signale Baiocchi (1994) dans son compte rendu.

[2] Giardina (1990) et (2009). Très enrichissant aussi Mazza (1991).

[3] Giardina (1998) ; AA.VV. (2003).

[4] Tessitore (2003).

[5] Bernal (1987–2006) ; Horden et Purcell (2000) ; Malkin (2011).

l'ampleur de ses intérêts, du monde grec au monde romain, de l'époque archaïque à l'Antiquité tardive. Comme plusieurs de ses élèves l'ont souligné, il n'était pas un antiquisant érudit, mais un historien sans frontières, qui analysait le passé à la lumière des questions du présent, et vice versa, un intellectuel nourri de culture et de philosophie, passionné de politique, observateur aigu des évolutions de son temps et des tensions qui traversaient l'histoire. Celle qui habitait la Méditerranée archaïque, il l'exprime et l'examine à travers un binôme *Oriente-Occidente*, qu'il appréhende comme un espace de dialogue, d'échange entre deux pôles majeurs auxquels il s'agit précisément, par-delà une vision romantique de l'Antiquité, de donner une substance historique[6].

Mazzarino déploie son enquête en sept chapitres, dont le premier pose le décor historiographique et les termes du problème (« Per la storia e l'impostazione del problema »). Il affiche, dès la *Premessa*, l'exigence d'une approche historique, une « impostazione storica » : « mi pareva oggi necessaria, già per la stessa esigenza di sintesi che essa implica » (p.viii). Si les savants de la mouvance romantique ont permis d'abattre les idoles du classicisme, l'approche symbolique de l'orientalisme à la Creuzer, par exemple, a fait la part belle avant tout à l'art et à la philosophie. Avec Droysen, et le concept de *Hellenismus*, avec Eduard Meyer surtout, l'histoire a regagné du terrain et fait émerger l'exigence d'une nouvelle synthèse dépassant l'histoire compartimentée des divers peuples, défendue encore par Helmut Berve. Une synthèse qui tournera le dos à l'idéologie du Troisième Humanisme allemand (de Jäger, Berve et Ehrenberg), défenseur d'un hellénisme pur, indo-européen, dont les affinités électives sont à chercher du côté du monde germanique et nordique, et non pas de l'Orient[7]. Or, affirme d'emblée Mazzarino, les traces de relations intenses et séminales entre la Grèce et l'Orient sont désormais incontournables ; à l'historien, il revient de les analyser pour les comprendre, au-delà de toute intention polémique ou idéologique.

Dans cette perspective, l'apport de nouvelles connaissances sur l'Anatolie, en particulier sur l'Ionie, sur Chypre et la Syrie *lato sensu* permet de cerner plus précisément les territoires intermédiaires entre Orient et Occident (qu'il faut ici comprendre comme le monde grec, dont l'Occident contemporain se pense l'héritier). Dans ces marges ont eu lieu échanges et emprunts, rencontres et influences qui ont forgé les siècles archaïques, entre le Xe et le VIe siècle, au lendemain de la fin de l'Âge du Bronze, quand surgit une nouvelle *koinè* méditerranéenne, après un

[6] Cf. les pages éclairantes du regretté Corsaro (2003).

[7] Sur ces affinités, voir Andurand (2013).

prétendu « Moyen Âge » grec qui résulte surtout de la difficulté qu'éprouvent les historiens à penser ce temps de crise et de transition, pourtant hautement créatif[8]. C'est donc avec des questions concrètes d'historien que Santo Mazzarino entreprend de se mesurer à cette période archaïque, difficile, débattue, fantasmée aussi : quelle connaissance avaient les Grecs de l'Orient, et vice versa ? à travers quelles catégories, quels noms appréhendaient-ils l'autre rive de la Méditerranée ? à quelle cartographie mentale et concrète les termes d'Asie, d'Europe, d'Ionie, de Phénicie, d'Arabie, etc. renvoyaient-ils ? par quelles voies les échanges commerciaux et culturels sont-ils passés ? qui en étaient les acteurs, où et quand ? quels produits, quelles pratiques, quelles idées ont circulé de part et d'autre, et avec quel impact sur la vie et l'organisation des communautés concernées ? peut-on tracer l'origine de la *polis* grecque en Orient, ou celle de la tyrannie ? en quels termes, en définitive, faut-il exprimer la singularité du parcours historique du monde des cités grecques à l'époque archaïque ?

À la *via fenicia*, la « voie phénicienne », est dédié spécifiquement le chapitre VI du volume intitulé *Commerci fenici e colonie greche* (255–79), une vingtaine de pages, ce qui représente somme toute peu de choses dans un livre de 400 pages, qui contient de longs et riches développements consacrés à l'Ionie, à la Lydie (chapitres II à V) et à *L'altra via fra Oriente e Occidente,* celle qui passe par l'Asie Mineure (traitée comme telle au chapitre VII, 281–305). Reparcourons brièvement les étapes de l'analyse qui conduisent aux Phéniciens. Les chapitres II et III forment un diptyque sur les connaissances qu'avaient les Grecs des Orientaux et les Orientaux des Grecs. Que recouvrent au juste le concept d'Asie et celui d'Europe ? Comment situer la notion de Barbares, qui apparaît dès le prologue d'Hérodote et semble englober précisément les Phéniciens, responsables du déclenchement des hostilités (I, 1–4), outre que les Perses, les Lydiens, etc. Remontant à l'épopée homérique, Mazzarino note que les Phéniciens y sont mentionnés à plusieurs reprises, parfois comme « Sidoniens », en écho à un tableau des activités maritimes et commerciales qui ne remonterait pas au-delà du IXe siècle av. n.è. Les Grecs acquièrent aussi une certaine connaissance de l'Égypte qui devient, avec la Phénicie, un « concept géographique cardinal ». C'est

[8] À ce sujet, constatant comme nous l'avons fait l'ampleur des espa1ces parcourus par Mazzarino, Andrea Giardina écrit (Giardina [1990] 377) : « Dal tardo impero all'arcaismo greco e romano, per ritornare al tardo impero. Questo procedere oscillante, nelle sue opere maggiori, da un capo all'altro della storia antica, qualifica l'attitudine di uno storico interessato principalmente alle fasi genetiche o dissolutive dei sistemi, quelle in cui le strutture prendono corpo oppure, sottoposte a tensione, meglio si rivelano. »

ainsi que, selon Mazzarino, le dieu Baal[9] serait devenu Belos, figure d'ancêtre des populations sémitiques, que le Phoinix grec (que Mazzarino qualifie de « dieu ») aurait été mis en relation avec la Phénicie, donnant naissance au mythe du rapt d'Europe, une princesse phénicienne, de même que, à la faveur de la colonisation grecque en Libye, ils auraient eu vent de l'existence de Carthage[10]. Bref des connaissances et des récits circulaient, des liens s'étaient tissés anciennement et la notion d'Asie, à la suite de l'unification achéménide, en vint à désigner un vaste Orient comprenant notamment les Phéniciens. Depuis l'Asie, on dispose de plusieurs regards sur la Grèce : celui de l'Ionie et plus globalement du monde micro-asiatique, celui de la Mésopotamie et celui que Mazzarino qualifie improprement de *siriaco*, c'est-à-dire depuis la Syrie, la partie septentrionale de cet espace se rattachant à la voie terrestre, anatolienne, de contact avec le monde grec, le secteur méridional promouvant plutôt la voie maritime qui passe par les îles. Pour l'époque archaïque qui intéresse Mazzarino, aucun document phénicien n'est connu qui fasse référence au monde grec (avec des ethnonymes comme Achéens, Ioniens, Hellènes, Grecs…) ; seul l'Ancien Testament, avec la Table des peuples descendant de Noé et de ses fils Japhet, Cham et Sem, fournie par le livre de la Genèse, au chapitre 10, mentionne un descendant de Japhet du nom de Yavân (10:2) qui lui-même engendra « Elisha, Tarsis, les Kittim, les Dananéens » (10:4). Mazzarino estime que cette appellation, qui renverrait à l'Ionie (aussi appelée Yauna par les Perses et les Assyriens), et même la cartographie proposée par la Table des peuples trouveraient leur source dans les connaissances géographiques et nautiques des Phéniciens remontant au VIIe siècle av. n.è.[11], dont, peu après, le prophète Ézéchiel (en particulier dans son oracle contre Tyr, au chapitre 27) serait aussi le reflet. Mazzarino va même jusqu'à trouver chez le prophète des indices d'une colonisation grecque en Arabie.

[9] En réalité, *b'l* est un substantif signifiant « maître », utilisé pour désigner le « citoyen », mais aussi comme titre dans des noms divins : « Baal de Byblos », « Baal Shamim », c'est-à-dire « des cieux »… Il n'existe donc pas à proprement parler de dieu « Baal » (sauf très rares exceptions), si ce n'est dans le discours polémique et englobant des rédacteurs de la Bible hébraïque. Voir Garbati et Porzia (2024).

[10] Dans la note 266 de la p. 341, au sujet du nom grec de Carthage, Καρχηδών, déjà mentionné par Hérodote (3.19), Mazzarino fait référence à la notice « Cartagine » de Levi Della Vida (1931). Cf. Amadasi Guzzo (2021).

[11] Au sujet de Yauna, utilisé dans les sources assyriennes dès le VIIIe siècle av. n.è., voir récemment Radner et Vacek (2022), qui montrent que Yauna et les Yaunéens, situés sur la côte orientale de la Méditerranée, étaient initialement plutôt localisés sur le territoire de Hamath et dans la province assyrienne de Ṣimirra. Ensuite, en raison des similitudes entre leur culture matérielle et celle des Grecs, les Assyriens auraient utilisé cet ethnonyme pour un ensemble de territoires et de populations bien plus large.

Conscient de s'aventurer sur un terrain glissant, dès lors qu'il est question d'historiciser les données bibliques ou de faire parler les Phéniciens, dont la production lettrée a entièrement disparu, Mazzarino rappelle (119) : « agli antichi bisogna avvicinarsi con la coscienza della nostra lontananza e della nostra ignoranza — non già con la presunzione, che fu proprio del secolo scorso (e non poteva non essere, giacché quel grande secolo scopriva, quasi, la storia). » Ainsi, les données prétendument issues des savoirs phéniciens[12] n'étaient-elles pas le témoignage d'une science ethnologique ou linguistique. « Il Fenicio, poursuit Mazzarino (121), vive immerso nel Mediterraneo, ma sempre più guarda verso il Mediterraneo meridionale, non già verso l'Egeo. » Selon lui, actifs en Égée, notamment en Ionie, aux IXe et VIIIe siècles, les Phéniciens et leur commerce subissent ensuite un coup d'arrêt, de sorte que les Grecs, peu à peu, tendent à les supplanter, voire à les supprimer (120). Le VIIe siècle voit donc la voie phénicienne se restreindre, tandis que la voie anatolienne s'ouvre au monde mésopotamien. Quant au VIe siècle, il correspond aux derniers et remarquables feux de l'ionisme en Asie Mineure, promoteur d'une *koinè* culturelle gréco-lydienne ; c'est aussi l'âge d'or de la colonisation grecque, y compris en Libye et en Égypte où les contacts entre Grecs et « Orientaux » sont intenses, juste avant que les Perses ne fassent tomber Babylone et s'emparent de la Lydie, bientôt de l'Ionie.

Les chapitres IV et V, particulièrement substantiels, se concentrent sur la Lydie comme plaque-tournante des contacts entre Orient et Occident. Il y est question de la dynastie des Mermnades et de leurs liens avec celle des Héraclides, puis du concept de « tyran » et de l'organisation/évolution des communautés civiques entre Grèce et Orient. En Grèce s'impose et perdure une conception « personnelle » du « métier de citoyen », si l'on peut dire, là où, en Orient, s'impose une conception « territoriale ». Dès lors, en dépit du long voisinage entre Ioniens et Lydiens, la conception même et le fonctionnement des institutions politiques sont foncièrement différents. Mazzarino affirme à juste titre (208–9) que « il confronto burckhardtiano fra città fenicia e *polis* greca non regge »[13], mais il simplifie sans doute les choses en enfermant la cité phénicienne dans le modèle étroit de la cité « commerciale », à finalité purement mercantile, alors que la cité grecque remplirait des fonctions plus diversifiées. Les citoyens phéniciens, les *baʿalim*, ne seraient pas

[12] À cet égard, Mazzarino se rattache, sans les mentionner, aux hypothèses si critiquées de Victor Bérard ; cf. Bonnet (2015).

[13] Burckhardt (1898–1902) ; Mazzarino fait référence au tome I de l'édition de 1930, p. 59.

comparables aux *politai* du monde grec, ce que l'on peut aisément admettre, sans tomber cependant dans le travers du « tout commercial », qui était déjà très présent chez Mommsen[14]. D'ailleurs, reconnaît Mazzarino, « esistono vari Orienti » (234) et, en matière de transmission de l'alphabet, un élément majeur des relations entre Orient et Occident, cette fois, les protagonistes ne sont pas à chercher en Ionie ou en Lydie, mais bien dans le monde insulaire crétois et cycladique méridional, là où émergent des trouvailles phéniciennes, absentes en revanche en Ionie[15].

Parvenu à ce point de son enquête, Mazzarino entame le chapitre VI qui entend comparer l'emprise des commerces phéniciens et celle de la colonisation grecque, car, sur le plan politique, institutionnel, les choses sont claires : « Dinanzi alla elaborazione di una originale esperienza costituzionale, si è fermato l'influsso dell'Oriente » (255). Telle est la phrase initiale du chapitre, qui donne le ton d'une mise à distance ferme de l'Orient par rapport à la Grèce. Le commerce les avait rapprochés, mais l'émergence d'une culture politique isonomique et démocratique les éloigna. Reste donc à analyser et comprendre un « generico influsso culturale » qu'il convient de situer entre le Xe et le VIIIe siècle et qui emprunte deux voies : la voie phénicienne et la voie qui met en relation l'Ionie et le reste de l'Asie Mineure. Mazzarino choisit de partir du problème de l'existence ou non d'une antique « thalassocratie » phénicienne, qui remonterait au Bronze Récent et dont il retrace l'historiographie en partant de Samuel Bochart, mais surtout des historiens allemands du XIXe siècle, comme Movers et Beloch[16], sans négliger les apports de Paolo Orsi et Luigi Pareti. Il en ressort que, si cette thalassocratie est une illusion, il est néanmoins nécessaire de qualifier les activités des Phéniciens en Méditerranée, tant à l'époque mycénienne que durant la période archaïque. Contrairement à Beloch que la critique radicale du panphénicisme avait conduit à minorer la présence des Phéniciens en Méditerranée[17] et à la décrire comme un phénomène tardif, ne remontant pas au-delà du VIIe siècle, Mazzarino estime, en analysant les passages homériques, en revenant sur la Table des peuples, mais surtout en convoquant divers apports archéologiques, comme ceux

[14] Cf. Bonnet (2013). Cette vision d'une Phénicie commerçante en fait un trait d'union entre Orient et Occident (ici entendu comme Grèce et Rome), mais néanmoins une réalité historique marginale : « Placée au milieu des peuples de l'ancien monde classique, la famille sémitique est restée pourtant en dehors de lui. Elle a l'Orient pour centre, tandis qu'il a le sien dans la Méditerranée » (I, p. 359 éd. Nicolet).

[15] Constat encore largement valable en 2024. Voir cependant Bernardin (2020).

[16] Sur Beloch, Bonnet (2018).

[17] Beloch est, à cet égard, un digne représentant du courant antisémite de l'historiographie allemande.

issus des fouilles de Tell Abu Hawam, près de Haïfa, à savoir la présence de céramique grecque (thessalienne selon lui) datant du Xe siècle, ou encore les ivoires phéniciens et syriens légèrement postérieurs découverts en Crète et dans d'autres sites grecs. Il s'agit là à ses yeux, avec l'adoption de l'alphabet phénicien en Grèce, qu'il date du Xe–IXe siècle, de traces indubitables de commerces phéniciens impliquant le bassin égéen. Pas de « thalassocratie », notion abstraite et polémique qu'il faut abandonner, mais des échanges dont il faut s'efforcer de cerner le fonctionnement et la portée, en prenant un peu de recul et en travaillant sur les traces historiques disponibles.

Celles-ci remonteraient au Nouvel Empire égyptien, époque qui témoigne de l'existence d'une flotte phénicienne déjà puissante. Après la rupture de la fin de l'Âge du Bronze et les migrations qui s'ensuivirent, la vie reprit dans les cités phéniciennes, en particulier à Tyr, avec un vaste mouvement d'expansion en direction de la Méditerranée occidentale qui emprunta certes la voie méridionale (par la Libye) mais aussi la voie égéenne, donc insulaire, qui passait par la Crète et ouvrait au commerce phénicien les portes de la Grèce entière jusqu'aux régions centrales et septentrionales. Mazzarino est très clairvoyant sur le rôle crucial de la Crète, à une époque où les trouvailles de Kommos ou de Tekké n'avaient pas encore vu le jour[18]. Les objets au centre de ces échanges favorisèrent la pénétration en Grèce du style dit « orientalisant », tout comme la gestion du commerce entraîna l'adoption de l'alphabet. Sur cette question cruciale, Mazzarino s'arrête longuement : si une chronologie au IXe siècle s'impose à ses yeux, il s'interroge, dans le sillage des travaux de Frantz Miltner[19], sur la possibilité d'une médiation anatolienne entre l'alphabet phénicien et son adaptation grecque, pour conclure qu'en réalité, les médiateurs furent les Grecs de Crète ou des Cyclades méridionales, Théra en particulier (où s'élabora l'alphabet « vert », selon Mazzarino), qui, initiés à l'alphabet par les Phéniciens, transmirent cette nouvelle technique graphique aux populations micro-asiatiques (Phrygiens, Cariens, Lydiens…). Le VIIIe siècle est dès lors celui de la diffusion, dans toute la Grèce, des produits culturels[20] et commerciaux phéniciens, avec des retombées importantes dans le domaine de l'art ; les contacts avec l'Asie

[18] Sur Kommos : Shaw *et al.* (1990–2012) ; sur Tekké : Ioannou (2019).

[19] Archéologue autrichien, Miltner (1901–1959) participa aux fouilles d'Éphèse ; écarté de son poste à Innsbruck en raison de ses sympathies pour le régime nazi (il adhéra au NSDAP dès 1938), il reprit ses activités de fouilles à Éphèse en 1954 jusqu'à sa mort en 1959. Mazzarino fait référence au court article Miltner (1938).

[20] Y compris des produits « religieux », comme les Cabires de Lemnos et Samothrace, patrons de la navigation, dont le nom s'explique par le phénicien (267), nom appliqué à des divinités locales « chthoniennes » bien différentes au départ.

Mineure sont alors médiés par les Grecs et l'Ionie s'ouvre aux influences orientales.

Bien qu'il ait eu une *importanza rivoluzionaria* aux IXe et VIIIe siècles, le commerce phénicien connaît cependant deux limites majeures aux yeux de Mazzarino. Tout d'abord, il serait « exclusif » dans le sens où les circuits de diffusion des produits seraient courts et limités, ce que la recherche archéologique récente a largement remis en question[21]. D'autre part, ces échanges, impliquant essentiellement des *athyrmata*, des *gingilli* en italien, recherchés par les élites, n'ont pas débouché sur une véritable colonisation « à la grecque », mais sur une transformation du « goût »[22] qui conduisit au « triomphe de l'art orientalisant ». Le VIIe siècle, dans le prolongement, est celui d'une double émancipation, artistique et politique. Contrairement à Beloch qui voit dans l'expansion phénicienne et la colonisation grecque deux processus parallèles et contemporains, Mazzarino les place en séquence : les Phéniciens précèdent les Grecs, puis s'effacent devant eux ; quant à l'extension du territoire carthaginois, elle est postérieure (au VIe siècle) et autonome par rapport à la métropole phénicienne. Par conséquent, le témoignage des aèdes homériques se rapporte à un passé lointain et non à leur présent. Les colonies grecques qui s'implantent en Occident — Libye, Espagne, Tunisie, Italie — s'inscrivent pour certaines dans le sillage des entreprises phéniciennes (l'antique route de Tarshish, selon Mazzarino), mais ouvrent, pour d'autres, des connexions nouvelles, comme celle qui relie la Grèce à la Grande Grèce. La Sicile, estime Mazzarino, pas plus que la Sardaigne, ne furent des zones d'expansion phénicienne, mais furent plutôt touchées par un phénomène de « sous-colonisation » punique (Carthage, Utique), analyse très contestable à la lumière des données actuelles[23]. Dans tous ces développements, faute de mieux sans doute, Mazzarino s'appuie sur Homère et l'Ancien Testament, qu'il aborde

[21] Voir différentes contributions dans López-Ruiz et Doak (2022).

[22] La notion a été récemment au centre d'une vaste enquête pluridisciplinaire et internationale dans le cadre du projet AGEMO, « Archéologie du goût en Méditerranée occidentale dans les sociétés phéniciennes et puniques » : https://agemo.hypotheses.org/presentation. Cf. Bonnet et D'Andrea (2023) ; D'Andrea, De Jonghe et Tahar (2024).

[23] Il revient sur cette question dans son Appendice 2 (317–19), intitulé « Sui primi stanziamenti fenici nelle isole italiane ». Il s'appuie sur les travaux de Pareti, qui exploite, pour sa part, la vision belochienne d'une colonisation phénicienne tardive. Mazzarino y prend notamment en compte l'inscription archaïque de Nora (*KAI* 46), mais donne plus de poids à la tradition issue de Timée selon laquelle Nora aurait été fondée par des colons venus d'Espagne. Son argumentation fait encore une fois grand cas de la Table des peuples du livre de la Genèse qui ignore les établissements de Sardaigne et de Sicile, qui ne seraient donc pas phéniciens, mais puniques.

cependant sans naïveté[24], à une époque où les données épigraphiques et archéologiques concernant l'expansion phénicienne en Méditerranée centrale étaient encore rares. Son traitement de l'autre Occident[25], si l'on peut dire, n'est pas un point fort de l'ouvrage ; au lieu d'articuler expansion phénicienne et colonisation grecque, il tend à les mettre à distance chronologiquement, mais aussi qualitativement, même s'il admet que les Grecs parcoururent simultanément les anciennes routes phéniciennes et les nouvelles voies qu'ils avaient initiées. Ses analyses sur la présence grecque, eubéenne en particulier, en Tunisie et en Espagne sont très novatrices[26], même si son socle documentaire est fragile. Le rôle de Phocée est à ce point mis en avant que Mazzarino en vient à écrire qu'en suivant la voie tartessienne des Phéniciens, les Phocéens ont découvert l'Espagne, conduisant la Table des peuples à faire de Tarshish le fils de Yavân.

Le dernier chapitre du livre se concentre dès lors sur l'autre voie entre Orient et Occident, la voie ionienne, moins visible dans nos sources, parce que moins portée sur le commerce, les biens matériels, mais fondamentale pour ce qui touche aux échanges culturels et à l'émergence d'une *koinè* dont la poésie épique est une manifestation grandiose. C'est dans ce creuset micro-asiatique que des formes artistiques orientalisantes originales, inspirées par celles qui étaient nées en Grèce continentale et insulaire, voient le jour. Les formes d'emprunt sont multiples, variées, particulièrement fructueuses. Mazzarino conclut son analyse en rappelant la coexistence de deux chemins, phénicien, donc maritime, et anatolien, donc terrestre, qui conduisent de l'Orient à la Grèce, la connaissance de l'aire mésopotamienne n'arrivant que plus tard, après la

[24] Voir en particulier ses remarques p. 274–75 sur la difficulté de localiser l'île de Scheria mentionnée par Alcinoos s'adressant à Ulysse.

[25] Gras (1995), note judicieusement, au sujet du livre de Mazzarino (120–21) : « l'Occident, au sens où nous l'entendons ici, n'est présent que de manière allusive et indirecte : ainsi l'Espagne de Tartessos ou la Tunisie des Eubéens. Cette absence n'est évidemment pas due à l'ignorance : Mazzarino n'a pas voulu intégrer dans la discussion « orientalisante » les données archéologiques produites par l'immense activité d'un Paolo Orsi ».

[26] Mazzarino se concentre en particulier sur la présence grecque à Bizerte (272–74). Sur la présence grecque archaïque en Espagne méridionale, voir Sanmartí-Grego (1995) ; Antonelli (2006). Il montre que les Eubéens ont laissé des traces de leur présence non seulement dans la culture matérielle, mais aussi dans la tradition mythique. Après les Eubéens, ce sont les Phocéens qui ont pris le contrôle de cette route commerciale. Sur les nouveautés épigraphiques, voir De Hoz (2014), en particulier l'inscription 343, l'« anneau de Tartessos » chez Mazzarino, qui est en fait une amulette d'époque romaine.

chute de Ninive, à l'époque néo-babylonienne et surtout perse[27]. Avec Hérodote et son *Enquête*, peu après les Guerres médiques, le modèle de l'affrontement entre Orient et Occident, entre Barbares et Grecs s'impose. Mazzarino y voit le signe d'une approche différente des faits, de l'histoire : d'une part, en Orient, un récit continu, placé au service des pouvoirs en place, de l'autre en Grèce, l'attention rationnelle aux actes dans leur singularité et à la *libera personalità* dont l'action s'articule harmonieusement avec l'action collective de la cité ; telle serait l'origine de la pensée historiographique grecque que Mazzarino approfondira en 1966 dans *Il pensiero storico classico*. Tel serait fondamentalement le legs grec à l'Occident contemporain, à l'histoire mondiale, qui le différencie de l'Orient. Mazzarino n'échappe pas ici à une certaine essentialisation des deux pôles dont il a exploré les relations, héritage du discours classiciste et idéaliste, en dépit du fait qu'il reconnaît dans sa brève conclusion finale (307–9) qu'il n'a jamais existé d'hellénisme pur, mais que celui-ci a précocement été *barbarizzato*. La Grèce a néanmoins le monopole du *logos*, de la raison, qui lui permet d'accomplir un parcours constitutionnel hautement significatif, avec l'isonomie et la démocratie comme aboutissements, dont notre culture politique contemporaine serait le fruit.

Comme l'a noté Filippo Cassola, dans l'Introduction (vii–xx) de la réédition de 2007, les deux voies identifiées par Mazzarino ne reçoivent pas dans son livre la même attention. Il est doublement fasciné par la voie ionienne : c'est de là que surgit la *koinè* culturelle qui le fascine et c'est aussi dans les cités ioniennes que le modèle politique et constitutionnel de la *polis* isonomique, comme bien commun, est peu à peu expérimenté, à l'initiative des milieux aristocratiques, en contre-pied des régimes monarchiques orientaux. Par ailleurs, ainsi que l'a mis en évidence Walter Burkert[28], auteur d'un volume retentissant intitulé *The Orientalizing Revolution*[29], la nette distinction entre deux voies, l'une commerciale et l'autre culturelle, appelle des nuances et demande à être affinée en fonction de la chronologie. Dans l'attention majeure que Mazzarino porte aux Ioniens, deux facteurs ont sans doute joué : le prestige de l'épopée homérique, d'une part, l'impact du récent déchiffrement du hittite et de l'acquisition par ce biais de nouvelles connaissances sur les dynamiques anatoliennes que l'auteur du livre de 1947

[27] Sur la possibilité qu'Hécatée, Hérodote et Chérilos de Samos aient eu une connaissance (au demeurant limitée) des Hébreux, voir Mazzarino 1947a, 300–2, une hypothèse qui ne convainc guère.

[28] Burkert (1998 ; réimpr. 2003).

[29] Burkert (1992).

est soucieux d'intégrer à sa synthèse. Les textes d'Ugarit aussi apportaient des éclairages nouveaux, mais plutôt en ce qui concerne les échanges internes à l'aire sémitique, sans grande répercussion pour l'Occident grec. En revanche, les acquis les plus récents sur la présence (de céramique) grecque en Orient, à Sukas ou Al Mina notamment, renforcent la vision « commerciale » qu'a Mazzarino de la voie phénicienne. On rejoindra donc W. Burkert sur les deux corrections majeures à apporter au tableau dressé par Mazzarino, à savoir que 1) la voie maritime n'implique pas uniquement les Phéniciens, mais plus largement une communauté levantine qui va de la Syrie septentrionale à la Judée, Philistie comprise ; et que 2) le monde mésopotamien était connu des Grecs dès avant le VIIe siècle et en tout cas dès le VIIIe, même si les échanges directs entre ces deux pôles sont encore extrêmement sporadiques. On ajoutera un troisième élément essentiel, à savoir qu'expansion phénicienne et colonisation grecque ne se suivent pas chronologiquement, mais coexistent largement à l'époque archaïque, même si les traces de contact entre monde grec, oriental et occidental, et monde oriental sont, comme le pensait Mazzarino, très précoces, comme le prouvent les trouvailles des nécropoles de Lefkandi et de Pithécusses[30]. C'est pourquoi il semble réducteur de faire de la voie phénicienne celle qui répand en Grèce et en Méditerranée uniquement des « bibelots », alors que, comme le note W. Burkert, elle a permis l'essaimage de personnes et de biens, de techniques, savoir-faire et savoirs, de capacités artistiques et de modèles, sans oublier l'écriture et probablement des récits, pratiques et rituels.

Il n'en reste pas moins que *Fra Oriente e Occidente* est un livre majeur de Mazzarino, qui a apporté une contribution fondamentale à la compréhension des dynamiques interculturelles qui ont animé la Méditerranée orientale d'époque archaïque. Moins de vingt ans plus tard, avec son essai intitulé *La questione fenicia*, paru en 1963, Sabatino Moscati inaugurait une nouvelle saison des études phéniciennes et puniques ; bien que philologue de formation, il allait miser fortement sur l'archéologie pour renouveler l'approche du rôle des Phéniciens dans l'histoire de l'Antiquité[31]. Les comptes rendus de cet ouvrage furent pour certains élogieux, mais plus critiques pour d'autres[32] ; on s'arrêtera un instant sur

[30] Cf. Bourogiannis (2018) ; Stampolidis (2022).

[31] Moscati (1963). Sur cette contribution, voir Xella (2014).

[32] Cf. la recension de Roebuck (1950) qui conclut : « The general impression left on the reader is the need for more careful study of individual problems so that the general conclusions may be accepted with more assurance. Signor Mazzarino has cleared some valuable ground. Perhaps we can hope not only for more archaeological evidence but for a correlation of that which exists and the views being based on it with historical and philological studies. ». On notera aussi la discussion serrée de Heubeck (1954) qui

celui que rédige Arnaldo Momigliano dans la *Rivista Storica Italiana* en 1948[33]. Momigliano (né en 1908, huit ans avant Mazzarino) concède à l'auteur, dont il commence par saluer les hautes qualités[34], une parfaite maîtrise du sujet, mais il regrette une « tendenza alla congettura fantasiosa che (…) sembra pericolosissima » et il conteste sa méthode[35], en commençant par lui reprocher de formuler des hypothèses incertaines, présentées comme probables, puis de construire des « drames spirituels » sur celles-ci. Il poursuit en ces termes (581–82) :

> Appunto perché Mazzarino ha un'assoluta padronanza del suo argomento e non dà luogo a critiche minute, è necessario dire chiaro che il metodo non va: esso eredita dal Vico le bizzarie dell'erudizione combinatoria, non l'austerità del pensare.

Selon Momigliano, tous les défauts dérivent du fait que Mazzarino travaille sur *un problema-fantasma* (583) qui l'oblige en quelque sorte à zigzaguer[36] pour recueillir des indices, alors que le problème serait déjà résolu. Sur la question Orient-Occident, ajoute Momigliano, le mieux que l'on puisse faire est de se taire, puisque le mythe d'une civilisation indo-européenne ne tient plus. Il n'y a plus d'âme grecque ni d'âme orientale. Ce que l'historien peut et doit en revanche faire, c'est se mesurer à des questions précises, comme celle de l'origine de la *polis*, sujet très présent dans le livre de Mazzarino, mais parmi d'autres. À ce sujet, dans la mesure où Mazzarino prend en compte la question d'un modèle phénicien (pour le rejeter), Momigliano s'insurge : « Ma insomma, quanto noi sappiamo veramente delle costituzioni delle città fenicie? » (584), et on ne peut que lui donner raison[37]. La suite du compte rendu énumère les nombreuses

reconnaît les apports novateurs de Mazzarino, tout en contestant certaines analyses et en apportant de nouveaux matériaux en provenance de Cilicie.

[33] Momigliano (1948 ; réimpr. 1969) ; reproduit dans l'édition de 1989 de Mazzarino (1947a) 397–403, suivi de la réponse de Mazzarino, « Per un discorso sul metodo », 405–15, dans lequel Mazzarino réagit au compte rendu de Momigliano.

[34] Le compte rendu commence en ces termes (Momigliano [1969] 581) : « Tra gli studiosi italiani e stranieri di storia antica emersi negli ultimi dieci anni Santo Mazzarino occupa ormai una posizione di preminenza, tale è la sua dottrina, la vastità e la compattezza della sua ricerca, l'acume. Non c'è da esitare a considerarlo una figura di eccezione ».

[35] La critique porte également sur le volume de 1945 : Mazzarino (1945). Voir le compte rendu spécifique de Momigliano (1946).

[36] Sur la relation de Mazzarino à Vico, voir Tessitore (2003) 49–50.

[37] Même s'il attribue à Mazzarino une affirmation sur le fonctionnement des assemblées (phénicienne et grecque), alors qu'il est question plus globalement de

conjectures de Mazzarino qui ne convainquent pas parce qu'elles sont peu et mal étayées, donc irrecevables. Momigliano conclut sur l'Ionie en affirmant que, si l'on veut connaître son histoire archaïque, il faut s'y prendre autrement en travaillant sur sa structure politique, son organisation économique, ses cultes, ses liens avec Athènes… Et il conclut sur Mazzarino par une note très positive en dépit de ses critiques : « In ogni caso l'indomito spirito di discussione e di ricerca che noi amiamo nel Mazzarino accompagnerà il futuro storico — forse Mazzarino stesso. ».

La réédition de *Fra Oriente e Occidente* de 1989 (405–15) contient une réponse de Mazzarino, intitulée « Per un discorso sul metodo » et demeurée inédite[38]. Il avoue sa réticence face à ce genre d'exercice, mais souhaite revenir sur les objections de méthode, en repartant nécessairement des sujets traités, car comment affirmer, comme le fait Momigliano que les arguments sont insuffisants sans revenir à leur examen… « O vogliam tornare al concetto di autorità ? », ajoute-t-il non sans malice (p. 405). Mazzarino rappelle qu'il avait jadis, en 1939, dans le *Bollettino storico catanese*, « ancora ragazzo » (il avait 23 ans !), publié un long essai pour démonter la thèse de Momigliano selon laquelle un passage de Philistos était dépourvu de valeur face au récit parallèle de Thucydide[39]. Là, à la différence de « l'amico Momigliano », il ne s'était pas contenté de jugements péremptoires, mais il avait argumenté longuement sur les sources, ce que ne fait pas Momigliano, qui, au demeurant, commet plusieurs erreurs, par exemple en parlant de colonisation grecque « pré-phénicienne » alors que Mazzarino la qualifie systématiquement de « post-phénicienne ». Ce dernier rappelle en outre, comme nous l'avons fait aussi, que la documentation est ce qu'elle est et qu'elle impose dès lors une approche pointilliste qui rend la synthèse malaisée, donc fragile. À ses yeux, les relations Orient-Grèce ne sont en aucune façon un problème résolu, dont il ne faudrait plus parler ; c'est une question majeure dans l'histoire de l'humanité, de l'Antiquité en particulier, que l'on peut enfin aborder délestés des présupposés raciaux[40]. Il est intéressant de noter que Mazzarino avoue ne pas comprendre la remarque critique de Momigliano sur la non existence de l'âme orientale et de l'âme grecque (408). Sur le reste, il réaffirme la

l'organisation politique, comme le note Mazzarino dans sa réponse à Momigliano (cf. *infra*, p. 192–93).

[38] On comprend, en la lisant, que Mazzarino la destinait à la *Rivista Storica Italiana* où était paru le compte rendu critique de Momigliano.

[39] Mazzarino (1939).

[40] Sur la question des contacts entre Orient et Grèce, et la circulation de savoirs les concernant, Momigliano (1975), *Alien Wisdom. The Limits of Hellenization*, qui se concentre cependant sur l'époque hellénistique.

validité et la prudence de certaines des argumentations visées par Momigliano, non sans quelque aigreur, parce que Momigliano les condamne sans les discuter et en se trompant à plusieurs reprises[41].

Que reste-t-il, au fond, de l'ouvrage de 1947 ? Le lecteur moderne, intéressé par les dynamiques interculturelles en Méditerranée orientale au début de l'âge du Fer — et non pas à la question « Orient — Occident », une formulation à bien des égards inconcevable aujourd'hui — dispose à la fois d'un cadre conceptuel renouvelé, qui doit beaucoup à l'anthropologie culturelle, à l'étude des transferts culturels, à l'approche par les réseaux et l'histoire connectée, aux réflexions sur le métissage, l'hybridisation, le *middle ground* — et d'un socle documentaire bien plus fourni et relativement moins discontinu que celui de Mazzarino en 1947. Cela dit, des zones d'ombre, nombreuses, subsistent pour qui veut évaluer les apports phéniciens au monde égéen entre la fin de l'âge du Bronze et les premiers siècles de l'Âge du Fer, ne serait-ce parce que les grands sites phéniciens, Tyr en premier, restent très mal connus pour ces époques. Contraint à faire flèche de tout bois, l'historien court encore le risque, comme Mazzarino, de verser dans les « bizzarie dell'erudizione combinatoria », même si « l'austerità del pensare » a nettement gagné du terrain. En particulier, la récente monographie de Carolina López-Ruiz, *Phoenicians and the Making of the Mediterranean*, parue en 2021, propose un cadre d'ensemble érudit et nuancé, qui revisite en profondeur ce qu'elle appelle l'« orientalising kit », un ensemble d'objets, d'acteurs, de pratiques et de relations qui se déploient dans toute la Méditerranée.

Si Mazzarino prête une attention limitée à l'Occident méditerranéen dans le livre que nous venons d'examiner, c'est peut-être aussi parce que, la même année, en 1947, il planchait parallèlement sur son *Introduzione alle guerre puniche*. Là aussi, il prend soin de situer son sujet dans un large contexte historique ; l'histoire mondiale, écrit-il, connaît divers « slanci epocali creativi » (1). Celui qui vit Rome unifier d'abord l'Italie, puis la Méditerranée au sein d'une vaste communauté impériale mérite qu'on s'y arrête, en prenant en considération le rôle de Carthage dans ces évolutions, entre continuité et innovation. Pour cela, il faut remonter aux « connessioni lontane » (6) et se pencher sur l'histoire de la Méditerranée entre le Ve et le IIIe siècle av. n.è., en prêtant attention, entre autres, comme le fait Polybe, aux traités romano-carthaginois qui configurent la géopolitique méditerranéenne. Par manque de sources, la vision proprement carthaginoise nous est largement inaccessible, sinon par quelques échos, très fragmentaires, d'auteurs proches d'Hannibal.

[41] Sur les relations bonnes, mais tendues entre les deux hommes, voir Mazza (1991).

Dans l'analyse de Mazzarino, les racines phéniciennes de la puissance punique sont prises en compte pour rendre compte des dynamiques géopolitiques qui la caractérisent dans la longue durée. Car, au seuil des Guerres puniques, Carthage apparaît comme une réalité largement autonome par rapport à Tyr, avec ses intérêts propres, un État entreprenant, projeté en Espagne, et en Sicile, qui vise une certaine hégémonie en Méditerranée centrale et occidentale, et construit un « territoire », entre terre et mer, susceptible d'assouvir ses ambitions foncièrement mercantiles. Mazzarino (26) souligne le contraste entre le modèle oriental de l'empire territorial, à la manière perse, et celui, grec, des formations politiques que sont les cités (*poleis*) et les alliances (*symmachia*) « che dell'anima greca, e solo di questa, sono purissima espressione », parce que fondées sur la volonté des citoyens et des communautés politiques. Ce vocabulaire essentialiste hérité de la science allemande (le *Geist*) et cette rhétorique de la pureté contrastent, il faut l'admettre, avec le discours sensiblement plus fluide que le même auteur proposait dans *Fra Oriente e Occidente* ; on y retrouve cependant une idée-phare de la pensée de Mazzarino, à savoir que l'humanité est redevable aux Grecs d'une certaine idée « républicaine » de l'organisation politique et qu'il s'agit là d'un apport autant culturel, donc intrinsèque, qu'historique, donc contingent[42]. En héritiers des empires d'Orient, les Carthaginois seraient donc du côté du territoire (et non des citoyens), les éparchies (en Espagne et en Sicile) faisant écho aux satrapies achéménides. Leurs opposants grecs, qu'il s'agisse de Marseille ou de Syracuse, tout en conservant une architecture constitutionnelle grecque, s'adaptent à ce nouveau contexte et territorialisent, eux aussi, leur domination afin de créer une sorte de « balance of powers »[43] en Méditerranée occidentale. Mazzarino défend donc l'idée d'une sorte de parenté structurelle entre Phéniciens et Carthaginois : leurs visées mercantiles, donc territoriales, ont orienté les relations avec Syracuse d'abord, Rome ensuite en direction de la délimitation de zones de contrôle exclusif, ce qui, *stricto sensu*, est différent d'une politique impérialiste. De même que dans *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, Mazzarino se penche sur une Grèce « barbarisée » au contact des Phéniciens, Cariens, Lydiens…, de même, dans l'*Introduzione alle guerre puniche,* il fait écho à l'angoisse des cités grecques de Sicile d'être « barbarisées » par les Carthaginois, voire éliminées, puisque, dans ce

[42] Il n'hésite d'ailleurs pas à parler au sujet de la *polis* de « questo miracolo che non può ripertersi da alcuna precedente cultura », mais il ajoute « e che pur è al centro della cultura antica, ossia di una cultura permeata dalla tensione fra Oriente e Occidente » (*Mazzarino* [1947a] 15).

[43] L'expression est utilisée par Mazzarino (1947b) 27. Elle entre dans le domaine public dès le XVIIe siècle. Cf. Andersen (2016).

cas, il n'est plus simplement question d'emprunts et d'influences, mais d'hégémonie territoriale, maritime et terrestre. L'issue de cette politique des zones d'influence fut *in fine*, dans le courant du IIIe siècle av. n.è., le face à face avec Rome et son expansionnisme que Mazzarino qualifie de « militare e continentale » (98) au contraire de celui de Carthage « mercantile e marinaro ». Là aussi, il s'agit d'une opposition binaire héritée de la tradition antérieure — elle est déjà chez Mommsen qui parle, à propos des Phéniciens de « maisons flottantes » (*schwimmenden Häusern*) — que les recherches récentes ont battu en brèche. Carthage était certes une puissance maritime, mais aussi agricole[44], et Rome apparaît très tôt comme une puissance navale[45]. Avec l'épisode de Sagonte (150–51), la logique des sphères d'influence et des traités atteint ses limites : à la volonté d'expansion romaine en Espagne, Hannibal répond par sa volonté de guerre qui vise à réduire Rome au statut de puissance italique, et non pas méditerranéenne, à revenir à la situation que les traités du IVe siècle garantissaient, laissant à Carthage le soin d'unifier la Méditerranée occidentale. L'échec d'Hannibal mit cette mission dans les mains de Rome.

Paru en 1947, peu après le « ventennio fascista », l'ouvrage de Mazzarino traitait un thème majeur de l'historiographie fasciste[46]. L'élève d'Ettore Pais, Emanuele Ciaceri (1869–1944) avait notamment analysé le conflit romano-punique à la lumière de la soi-disant « avidité mercantile » de Carthage, aggravée par la tendance à pratiquer la tromperie (la célèbre *fides punica*, nourrie de lectures homériques) et à recourir aux mercenaires pour imposer son hégémonie. À l'opposé, Scipion l'Africain est magnifié comme l'incarnation de la haute idée d'empire qui caractérise Rome[47]. Paradoxalement, Ciaceri n'agite pas l'épouvantail antisémite, mais rattache les Romains, Latins et Carthaginois à une même « stirpe mediterranea » qu'il distingue des Indo-Européens originaires des Alpes[48], pour mieux souligner la divergence de destin qui les sépare.

[44] Cf. van Dommelen et Gómez Bellard (2008). Pour le versant phénicien, Guillon (2020).

[45] Cf. Loreto (2007).

[46] Voir, en dernier lieu, Oppedisano, Salvatori et Santangelo (2023), en particulier la contribution de Schiano (2023).

[47] Voir la leçon finale de Ciaceri à l'université de Naples, en 1940 : « Scipione l'Africano e l'idea imperiale di Roma », prononcée le lendemain de l'entrée en guerre de l'Italie. Sur l'historiographie allemande et italienne relative à Carthage, voir Bonnet (2005).

[48] Peu avant, en 1932, Jérôme Carcopino avait, pour sa part, défendu l'idée de racines celtiques partagées entre Romains et Gaulois dans la Zaharoff Lecture qu'il avait donnée à Oxford (Carcopino [1932]).

Plus cultivée, plus unie, plus vertueuse, Rome s'impose sur Carthage. On mesure, avec ces quelques éléments de comparaison, ce qui sépare cette littérature de propagande nationaliste de l'analyse aiguë de Mazzarino, même si elle n'échappe pas à quelques poncifs de son époque.

Pour conclure, on a vu que, dans les deux volumes publiés en 1947 par Santo Mazzarino, les Phéniciens et les Puniques trouvent une place non négligeable, même si la focale de l'enquête est la Grèce dans *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, et Rome dans l'*Introduzione alle guerre puniche*. Encore marqué par les discours essentialistes et idéalistes, qui faisaient de la Grèce et de Rome quelque chose d'autre, de plus achevé, de plus admirable, de plus important pour l'histoire de l'humanité, Mazzarino appartient néanmoins à une nouvelle génération d'historiens qui s'efforcent de dépasser les clivages académiques entre orientalisme et classicisme. Sans connaître les langues orientales, Mazzarino fait cependant preuve d'une érudition remarquable pour ce qui touche aux domaines hittite, lydien, carien, phénicien, araméen, assyrien et biblique. Ses analyses ne sont pas exemptes de naïvetés et d'erreurs, mais elles ont ouvert la voie — *pace* Momigliano qui estimait que ce dossier était clos — à une nouvelle saison de recherches historiques sur les transferts culturels et les influences réciproques entre les mondes grecs (égéen et occidental) et proche-orientaux (eux aussi dans toute leur expansion). Le développement historiographique considérable des *Mediterranean studies* doit sans doute beaucoup à l'exigence pressante de Mazzarino de comprendre — cette *austerità del pensiero*, qu'injustement Momigliano lui reproche de ne pas déployer —, en dépit de l'incomplétude et de la complexité des sources, ce qui s'est passé en Méditerranée après l'effondrement des systèmes palatiaux de l'Âge du Bronze, lorsque les *phoinikeia grammata* trouvent le chemin des ports grecs.

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Formazione e sviluppo del confine politico tra Oriente e Occidente in Anatolia centrale tra il X–VII sec. a.C.

— Lorenzo d'Alfonso —

Abstract

This paper argues that well before the 5th century BC divide deriving from the Persian Wars, an initial demarcation of a border separating the Aegean and western-central Anatolia from the rest of Asia emerged in the context of the formation of the Phrygian political identity at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. After the formation phase of an Early Phrygian identity built upon the cultural interaction with the post-Hittite city-states in east-central Anatolia — beginning in the second half of the 9th century BC and increasingly so with the charismatic figure of Midas in the 8th century BC — this border was activated in a contrastive way until it evolved into a frontier which was decisive in defining the political boundaries of the East as depicted in the Iliad. *In turn, the spread and adoption of the Homeric epos in Anatolia helped reinforce a division between East and West during the process of redefining of political and social identity that took place during the 8th century BC. This study relies on a close reading of Santo Mazzarino's* Fra Oriente e Occidente *and on the tenacity with which he identified, in the centuries preceding the Persian Wars, a rich formative phase in the process of defining the contrasts between the two regions.*

Keywords

Iron Age Anatolia, Phrygia, Iliad, border studies, post-Hittite canton states

Questo contributo propone una nuova ricostruzione dell'origine del confine tra Oriente e Occidente, che ancora oggi definisce le identità politiche più che mai attive nello scenario globale. Anche se quasi dimenticato ai giorni nostri, questo confine, rappresentato dalle élite occidentali dell'età moderna come uno scontro di civiltà, si definì nel processo di costruzione dell'identità greca — ellenica — durante e dopo le guerre persiane di inizio V sec. a.C. (Luraghi, 2014)[1]. La tesi qui presentata suggerisce che ben prima del V sec. a.C. si assistette a una prima

[1] Questo contributo offre una versione aggiornata e rivista di un contributo ora in stampa negli atti del convegno *Phrygia between the East and the West* (ANES 61). Per un'introduzione relativa all'attuale percezione del 'confine' tra Oriente ed Occidente

definizione di un confine che divideva l'Egeo e l'Anatolia occidentale dal resto dell'Asia e che emerse nel contesto della definizione dell'identità politica frigia all'inizio del I millennio a.C. Si sosterrà che, dopo un'identità frigia costruita sull'interazione culturale con gli Stati cantonali post-ittiti nell'Anatolia centrale, a partire dalla seconda metà del IX sec. a.C. e in maniera crescente con la figura carismatica di Mida dell'VIII sec. a.C. questo confine divenne contrastivo fino a trasformarsi in frontiera. Tale frontiera arrivò dunque a determinare un'espansione verso est di simboli e istituzioni legate alla Frigia e alla conseguente scomparsa di simboli e sopravvivenze dell'identità degli Stati cantonali post-ittiti.

Dopo aver presentato le evidenze testuali e archeologiche anatoliche, tali evidenze, nella parte finale del saggio, saranno messe in dialogo con Omero e l'*Iliade*. In particolare, ci si riferirà alla cosiddetta "società omerica" e alla definizione dei confini politici dell'Oriente nell'*Iliade* da un lato e dall'altro all'adozione del ciclo omerico in Anatolia nel percorso di ridefinizione dell'identità politica e sociale durante l'VIII sec. a.C.

Mentre i risultati qui presentati sono stati ispirati, sul piano storico, dal lavoro puntuale di Robert Drews sull'identità frigia (Drews, 1993) e più in generale da quelli di Jonathan Hall (Hall, 1997, 2002), la mia linea di ricerca sull'origine della definizione di un confine culturale tra Oriente e Occidente deriva interamente dalla frequentazione dell'opera *Fra Oriente e Occidente* di Santo Mazzarino e dalla tenacia con cui individuò nei secoli che precedettero le guerre persiane una ricca fase formativa del processo di definizione contrastiva delle due aree (Mazzarino, 1947).

Evidenze archeologiche relative alla fase formativa dell'identità politica frigia

La ricerca dei prodromi di un confine tra Oriente e Occidente richiede un'attenta analisi di fonti scritte e rimanenze archeologiche inerenti all'Anatolia dei primi secoli del I millennio a.C., con particolare attenzione ai siti guida dove esse sono state rinvenute **(Fig. 1)**. Durante il IX e poi l'VIII sec. a.C. si andò formando un confine che attraversava l'Altopiano Anatolico da nord a sud, lungo il corso occidentale del Kızılırmak (Halys) e le sponde del Tuz Gölü (Lago Salato). Si trattava del confine che emerse lungo il limite orientale di un'entità politica composita, definibile in termini moderni confederazione o più prosaicamente, alleanza di comunità sedentarie e mobili, le quali abitavano la parte occidentale dell'altopiano, note in letteratura da un lato attraverso il

rimando dunque all'introduzione di quel lavoro (d'Alfonso, 2024a, pp. 11–13), ma anche alla recente monografia di Mario Liverani (Liverani, 2021).

toponimo Frigia per il mondo greco-romano e dall'altro Muški/Mus(a)ka per il mondo vicino-orientale. Le fonti classiche e orientali che ci informano su questa entità politica sono state oggetto di una monografia e diversi studi (e.g. Wittke, 2004; van Dongen, 2014; Payne, 2023), ma di recente la riedizione dell'iscrizione in geroglifico anatolico di TOPADA (d'Alfonso, 2019) e l'edizione della nuova iscrizione di TKH1 (Goedegebuure et al., 2020), hanno prodotto una nuova messe di studi al riguardo (vd. oltre). Da una prospettiva archeologica, invece, la formazione di un'identità politica che per convenzione chiameremo *frigia* si desume dai risultati degli scavi del sito di Yassı Höyük Gordion. Altri siti, infatti, come ad esempio Kerkenes Dağ, Böğazköy e Şarhöyük Dorylaion, hanno portato alla luce resti associati alla diffusione dell'identità frigia, i quali però risalgono a una fase successiva dell'Età del Ferro, da datarsi a partire dal VII sec. a.C. (Büyükkale I) e verso i secoli centrali del I millennio a.C. (Schachner, 2011, pp. 319–329; Sivas Tüfekçi, 2018; Summers, 2018, 2023a; Genz and Seeher, 2023). L'unico sito che ci permette di indagare lo sviluppo diacronico dell'identità sociale e politica frigia è dunque per ora Yassı Höyük Gordion.

In questo sito, il lavoro svolto a partire dalla fine degli anni '80 da Mary Voigt ha definito gli strati di occupazione del primo periodo frigio. Nel recente volume scritto insieme a Lisa Kelahofer e Peter Grene (Kealhofer et al., 2022), si ricostruisce la sequenza dell'età del Ferro nella cittadella del sito che, in estrema sintesi, può essere presentata nel modo seguente:

– YHSS 7B (ca. 1150–1000 a.C.): si tratta della prima occupazione dopo la fine della Tarda Età del Bronzo; questa presenta le rimanenze di povere capanne monolocali probabilmente appartenenti a un piccolo villaggio caratterizzato da un'economia di sussistenza e da un basso grado di complessità sociale **(Fig. 2a)**. La cultura materiale mostra ceramica a ossidoriduzione fatta a mano simile a quella di Troia VIIa suggerendo, dunque, un rapporto diretto tra gli abitanti del villaggio di Yassı Höyük e l'Egeo settentrionale / Tracia. Questa produzione divide l'orizzonte ceramico di Ferro antico di Yassı Höyük da quello degli altri siti portati alla luce in Anatolia centrale, a est del Kızlırmak. Per diversi studiosi, i *comparanda* con produzioni di Tracia e Anatolia nordorientale offrirebbero supporto alla tradizione classica di una migrazione frigia a partire da quelle regioni fino alla parte occidentale dell'Altopiano Anatolico (Voigt and Henrickson, 2000). Tale ipotesi migratoria è supportata dal dato linguistico che ha appurato come il frigio sia una lingua indoeuropea esterna al gruppo delle lingue anatoliche, più vicina invece al greco e in ultima analisi intrusiva in

Anatolia. Di contro, sono stati evidenziati elementi ideologici nella tradizione classica della migrazione che ben si sposano con una sua formazione di parte persiana al tempo della guerra, nel V sec. a.C. (Kotsonas, 2024). Quel che va sottolineato con forza in ogni caso è che l'identità che noi definiamo frigia si riferisce ad un livello di complessità politica che non corrisponde con le rimanenze portate alla luce a Gordion per il livello di occupazione YHSS 7B (Morgan, 2024);

– YHSS 7A (ca. 1000–875 a.C.): si registra una seconda occupazione caratterizzata da un cambiamento dei materiali da costruzione e della produzione ceramica con l'introduzione del tornio per la produzione della ceramica grigia (e quindi a ossidoriduzione), ma anche per una produzione di ceramica color camoscio. M. Voigt e L. Kealhofer hanno recentemente suggerito che vada assegnata a questa fase di occupazione la presenza di una prima fase costruttiva della fortificazione posta a difesa della cittadella del sito, costituita da una muratura a sacco spessa 2,5 m e definita da due paramenti di blocchi squadrati in arenaria (Voigt and Kealhofer, 2024). Sebbene non vi siano prove di investimenti nella monumentalità o di altri elementi indicativi di un'autorità politica forte e l'occupazione sia ancora caratterizzata da produzione e consumo su scala domestica **(Fig. 2b)**, le mura e la produzione ceramica al tornio identificano archeologicamente questa occupazione come la premessa o addirittura la prima fase della formazione dell'identità politica frigia;

– YHSS 6B (ca. 875–850 a.C.): si osserva la prima occupazione caratterizzata da monumentalità, complessità sociale e disuguaglianza, presenza di ampi spazi pubblici, simboli di potere, rituali funerari e di banchetto, il tutto espressione di un'élite politica **(Fig. 3)**. Mura, piazze lastricate, scalinate, edifici monumentali con uso di blocchi di pietra di diverse tipologie, colori e provenienze, affermazione della produzione ceramica al tornio di color grigio e camoscio — la seconda con decorazioni geometriche — caratterizzano questo periodo. L'occupazione mirabile è tuttavia di breve durata.

– YHSS 6A (ca. 850–820 a.C.): si arriva dunque all'ultima occupazione del primo periodo frigio terminante con la conflagrazione nota come *Livello di Distruzione*. Come YHSS 6B, anche questa occupazione è di breve durata, coprendo pochi decenni, ma presenta almeno 3 fasi insediative **(Fig. 3)**. L'organizzazione dello spazio all'interno della cittadella del sito è profondamente trasformata rispetto all'occupazione precedente: nuove mura, una nuova organizzazione dello spazio

aperto e la collocazione dei *megara* intorno a una vasta corte nella porzione orientale della cittadella assieme alla costruzione di una terrazza con un quartiere produttivo di *megara* a ovest, sono i tratti distintivi di questa fase di occupazione.

– YHSS 5 (ca. 800–550 a.C.): corrisponde all'occupazione del periodo medio-frigio. Ben nota e tuttavia ineguagliata e di grande valore è la costruzione di una nuova cittadella che riproduce la pianta generale della precedente, posta su circa 5 m di macerie e terra, l'insieme delle quali seppellisce i resti bruciati dell'occupazione 6A. Non solo l'architettura, ma anche i simboli del potere e la cultura materiale della nuova fase di occupazione sono in sostanziale continuità con quella precedente. Molto significativa è la continuità dell'uso delle sepolture a tumulo attorno al sito per i membri dell'élite politica, tra il periodo che corrisponde all'occupazione YHSS 6A e quello dell'occupazione YHSS 5. Rose ha sottolineato il cambiamento di orientamento della porta verso la cittadella, con l'asse ora direttamente in linea con il Tumulo MM (Rose, 2021a). A partire dalla nuova cronologia dell'età del Ferro a Gordion (Rose and Darbyshire, 2011), YHSS 5 è ora l'occupazione associata alla figura storica del re Mida.

A dispetto dei chiari cambiamenti che distinguono un livello di occupazione dell'età del Ferro dall'altro, ci sono elementi di cultura materiale che concatenano ciascun periodo al successivo.

Di grandissimo significato sono anche la distribuzione ed i materiali che emergono dai tumuli attorno a Gordion e nel resto della Frigia. Le ricognizioni archeologiche in Anatolia centro-occidentale e gli scavi di alcuni -pochi- siti, come il tumulo di Bayındır, non hanno dato controindicazioni all'immagine che emerge dal sito.

Evidenze archeologiche relative alla fase formativa degli stati cantonali post-ittiti

La ricostruzione offerta dalla stratigrafia che copre i secoli XII–IX del sito di Yassı Höyük Gordion va ora con quella dei siti a est del Kızılırmak e del Lago Salato. Durante gli stessi secoli si assiste qui a uno sviluppo parallelo, ma differente.

La tradizionale ricostruzione storico-archeologica per cui dopo il crollo dell'impero ittita l'intero Altopiano Anatolico sarebbe stato caratterizzato dalla scomparsa di insediamenti, popolazioni e complessità politica per circa 400 anni, fino a nuovi sviluppi di entità politiche secondarie che dipesero dall'impatto dell'espansione assira, deve oggi

essere definitivamente superata. Tracce di occupazione e quindi della presenza di comunità che abitavano la regione sono emerse un po' dovunque negli ultimi quarant'anni. In particolare, oggi siti come Kaman-Kalehöyük, Ovaören e Niğde-Kınık Höyük individuano a partire circa dal 1000 a.C., per l'area che corrisponde grossomodo all'attuale Cappadocia, un processo di profonda riorganizzazione caratterizzato dalla presenza di centri urbani i quali avevano mantenuto alcune infrastrutture locali e la relativa organizzazione del territorio in continuità con l'esperienza amministrativa ittita; di contro, tali centri avevano optato per cambiamenti significativi per quel che riguarda il regime politico e la sua rappresentazione (d'Alfonso, 2024b, 2024c). L'archeologia dei primi due secoli del I millennio a.C. è ancora nelle sue fasi iniziali, e tuttavia gli scavi nei siti di Zeyve Höyük Porsuk, Niğde Kınık Höyük, Ovaören Yassı Höyük, Kaman-Kalehöyük e Alişar Höyük mostrano la presenza di città con cittadelle fortificate a proteggere abitazioni a vano unico con un piano almeno in parte interrato; di contro, si registrano assenza di edifici monumentali e ampi spazi pubblici. Per Niğde-Kınık Höyük ci sono evidenze di granai sotterranei pubblici che, pur riprendendo modalità di raccolta, stoccaggio e redistribuzione di epoca ittita, furono edificati proprio attorno all'inizio del X sec. a.C. (Bittel, 1983; Castellano, 2018; Şenyurt and Akçay, 2018; d'Alfonso, 2024d). Significativamente in nessuno dei centri urbani sono stati portati alla luce edifici monumentali o ortostati a rilievo con iscrizioni o apparato figurativo. Iscrizioni e apparato figurativo si trovano invece su stele o roccia in aree adibite al culto nel paesaggio fuori dai centri urbani (d'Alfonso, 2020). Questo fa pensare a una relazione più equilibrata e integrata tra comunità cittadina e comunità transumante dispersa nel territorio circostante. Proprio basandomi su questo aspetto, ho proposto la definizione di *stati cantonali post-ittiti* per queste entità politiche, in modo da differenziarle dalle città stato siro-ittite caratterizzanti l'alto Eufrate e la regione a sud del Tauro (Osborne, 2021; d'Alfonso, 2023)[2]. Sono questi stati cantonali che gli Assiri a partire dalle campagne di Salmanassar III di metà IX sec. a.C. chiamarono Tabala, distinguendoli chiaramente dalle città-stato siro-ittite che nella geografia assira erano definiti Hatti (e più ad ovest Patina, Quwe etc.). Le fonti scritte locali, ma anche assire e urartee indicano a partire almeno dalla metà del IX sec. a.C. la presenza di una casata, la quale aveva acquisito preminenza nella regione: la casata di Tuwati (d'Alfonso, 2012).

[2] La definizione delle entità politiche che si generarono a seguito della caduta dell'impero ittita non è unanime ed è soggetta a dibattito. Si vedano tra le altre le recenti trattazioni in Gilibert, 2011; Osborne, 2021.

Come per l'ambito frigio, tuttavia, le stesse fonti interne indicano la presenza di alleanze tra entità politiche di dimensione ridotta e sostanzialmente in rapporti di *peer polities*.

Archeologicamente la presenza di diversi cantoni indipendenti, ma alleati, sembra trovare la sua massima espressione nella definizione di una nuova ritualità associata al consumo di bevande alcoliche, molto probabilmente vino, che si riconosce nella diffusione esclusiva in tutta la regione a est del Kızılırmak di un set ceramico definito in letteratura come Alişar-IV e caratterizzato da metope con figure a silhouette di cervi e stambecchi e cerchi concentrici come motivo riempitivo **(Fig. 4)**. La diffusione si definisce esclusiva perché in tutti i siti dell'Anatolia centrale dove ceramiche di Alişar-IV sono state rinvenute, la loro quantità non raggiunge mai l'1% dell'assemblaggio complessivo. L'assenza di ritrovamenti in contesti di carattere cultuale porta a ritenere che il set individuasse, invece, un aspetto rituale genericamente associato alla definizione delle élites degli stati cantonali. Lo studio materico del vasellame Alişar-IV dei siti di Niğde-Kınık Höyük e Alişar Höyük ha dimostrato che in entrambi i siti 2/3 dell'assemblaggio Alişar-IV è di produzione locale, ma 1/3 invece è di importazione. Se ne è desunto un modello in cui giare che contenevano bevande alcoliche, ma anche crateri decorati venivano prodotti e sia utilizzati localmente, sia messi in circolazione tra i diversi centri urbani (Şenyurt et al., 2019; d'Alfonso et al., 2022; Kealhofer et al., 2023). Il modello di produzione e circolazione è molto diverso da quello dei grandi regni con un'autorità politica fortemente centralizzata come Assiria e Urartu ed evoca relazioni egalitarie continue e negoziate tra i diversi cantoni, rafforzate dalla reciproca circolazione di ceramica decorata e, con ogni probabilità, di vino, associato a un rituale regionale di consumo elitario di alcol.

Il confine come area di scambio e interazione culturale

La presentazione del dato relativo a Yassı Höyük Gordion e l'Altopiano nord-occidentale da un lato e la regione a est del Kızılırmak e del Lago Salato dall'altro, semplifica e riassume in maniera schematica il dato archeologico allo scopo di rendere evidenti due punti principali:

1) nell'Altopiano Anatolico, sia a ovest che a est del Kızılırmak ci sono evidenze di entità e identità politiche complesse a partire dai decenni attorno al 1000 a.C.;

2) a partire dal X sec. a.C. si assiste a una polarizzazione in due macrogruppi, di cui uno occidentale con una cultura materiale vicina

> a quella dell'Egeo nord-orientale (repertorio ceramico a ossido-riduzione, *megara*) che chiamiamo frigio e un altro orientale, contraddistinto dal repertorio ceramico geometrico a decorazione monocroma e dall'assenza di edifici monumentali nelle cittadelle dei centri urbani, che chiamiamo cantonale e post-ittita. La diffusione degli elementi caratteristici delle due diverse culture materiali rende visibile un confine definito dal corso occidentale del Kızılırmak e dal Lago Salato che emerge durante il X sec. a.C.

L'analisi archeologica dimostra che il confine attivo in Anatolia centrale durante il X sec. a.C. e ancor di più nel IX sec. a.C. fu produttivo nello sviluppo di contatti e interazioni culturali. In particolare, l'arredo dello spazio pubblico e alcune modalità di svolgere riti conviviali nel sito di Yassı Höyük Gordion vanno interpretati come elementi derivanti dall'attiva interazione con la zona centro-orientale dell'altopiano anatolico, quella degli stati cantonali post-ittiti. Ne menziono due in particolare.

Per la prima metà del IX sec. a.C. l'adozione di ortostati con bassorilievi figurativi appartenenti alla tradizione iconografica post-ittita è fortemente indicativa dei contatti con gli stati cantonali. Mentre i frammenti più notevoli di questi ortostati provengono da contesti secondari, la loro associazione con il "Post And Poros Building", appartenente all'occupazione della prima metà del IX sec. a.C. (YHSS 6B), è stata confermata dal ritrovamento nel 1993 di un piccolo frammento raffigurante le piume di un'ala di un rapace, la cui pietra bianca porosa è la stessa di tutti gli altri ortostati scolpiti (Voigt and DeVries, 2011, pp. 27–31).

Nella sua dettagliata analisi dell'iconografia di questi ortostati Kenneth Sams aveva suggerito paralleli con i monumenti dei centri urbani siro-ittiti del X e IX sec. a.C. a sud del Tauro, come Zincirli Höyük e Karkemiš (Sams, 1989). Per il X ed il IX sec. a.C., tuttavia, non ci sono evidenze epigrafiche o archeologiche di alcuna interazione tra l'Anatolia nord-occidentale (Frigia) e la Siria settentrionale. Ciò rende più plausibile che la ricezione della tradizione iconografica post-ittita sia stata mediata: essa fu con ogni probabilità il risultato dell'interazione delle élites dell'Anatolia nord-occidentale (Frigia) con gli Stati cantonali post-ittiti dell'Anatolia centrale e non con gli Stati siro-ittiti delle regioni a sud del Tauro. Recenti studi dimostrano infatti che una serie di stele e rilievi rupestri rinvenuti in Cappadocia meridionale e databili stilisticamente tra il XII e il IX sec. a.C. indicano la ricezione nell'Anatolia post-ittita di motivi iconografici e stilistici dagli ortostati di centri siro-ittiti di

Arslantepe-Malatya, Zincirli Höyük e Karkemiš (Balatti, 2012; d'Alfonso, 2020; Lanaro, 2015).

Vale la pena sottolineare che le figure e le scene rappresentate su almeno due degli ortostati di Yassı Höyük trovano paralleli puntuali nell'Altopiano Anatolico. Ad esempio, il frammento rappresentante un genio con testa di rapace in posa atlantica, il quale supporta un giunto tra un elemento verticale posto alla destra del genio e uno orizzontale posto al di sopra del genio (Museo di Gordion n. 3908) può essere interpretato come elemento figurativo di un pannello esterno posto tra le gambe di sostenimento e la seduta. Sia il genio in posa atlantica, sia la sua rappresentazione in pannello legato a sedia o trono trovano confronto puntuale e geograficamente più prossimo con la stele di Tavşantepe in Cappadocia meridionale (**Fig. 5**: Lanaro 2015). Similmente, la figura con corto gonnellino e calzari a punta ritorta verso l'alto, che combatte con la testa frammentaria di una creatura mostruosa, trova un parallelo puntuale nel rilievo del dio della tempesta che combatte un mostro con corpo di serpente da Arslantepe Malatya **(Fig. 6)**.

Oltre agli ortostati, all'inizio del IX sec. a.C. si incontrano i primi importi e poi imitazioni locali di ceramica monocroma dipinta a motivi geometrici (*DMGP ware*) caratteristica della regione a est del Kızıl Irmak. Tra questi si incontrano anche frammenti del set ceramico di Alişar-IV (vd. sopra), tutti importati e non prodotti localmente (Sams, 1994, 2013). Ancora una volta è significativo come non siano stati rinvenuti a Yassı Höyük importi di set per consumo di bevande in contesto di élite o di qualsiasi altro set ceramico associato alle produzioni siro-ittite, a conferma del fatto che gli elementi post-ittiti riscontrati nella rappresentazione del potere e dell'autorità all'inizio del IX sec. a.C. furono il risultato di contatti con gli stati cantonali post-ittiti dell'Anatolia centrale, e non con le città-stato siro-ittite della Siria settentrionale.

Questi due elementi suggeriscono come durante la prima parte del IX sec. a.C., quando il confine tra l'Altopiano occidentale e quello orientale era attivo, la modalità di rappresentazione del potere nella cittadella di Yassı Höyük Gordion, caratterizzata da una monumentalità e organizzazione urbanistica propria e ignota in ambito urbano ad est del confine, adottava tuttavia elementi caratteristici dell'identità politica degli stati cantonali post-ittiti quali un apparato iconografico per l'arredo architettonico e una ritualità del consumo di bevande alcoliche.

La trasformazione contrastiva del confine centro-anatolico

È stato recentemente dimostrato che il passaggio tra la fase 6B e 6A nell'YHSS 6 avviene in un tempo molto breve, forse una generazione,

intorno all'850 a.C. (Kealhofer et al., 2019; Rose, 2021b; Kealhofer et al., 2022). Sebbene vi sia una somiglianza nella monumentalità e nella complessità politica tra le due fasi, uno dei principali elementi di differenza è la fine dell'uso degli ortostati con immagini figurative post-ittite. Nessuno di essi è stato trovato riutilizzato nell'architettura dell'occupazione 6A, nemmeno nel suo livello di distruzione molto ben conservato. Ancora più significativa è la loro assenza nell'occupazione YHSS 5, quella che corrisponderebbe alla figura storica di Mida di Muški. La fase più antica di YHSS 5 corrisponde all'VIII sec. a.C., un periodo caratterizzato dal picco di produzione e diffusione dei bassorilievi post-ittiti su pietra nell'Anatolia centrale sia nel paesaggio sia in contesto urbano. Questi rilievi associati a iscrizioni geroglifiche anatoliche appartengono al complesso culturale siro-anatolico, come recentemente definito da J. Osborne (2021). Essi sono il prodotto di una rinnovata e diretta influenza del mondo siro-ittita verso quello degli stati cantonali anatolici (Summers, 2017). L'assenza di ortostati figurativi a Yassı Höyük Gordion in questo stesso periodo — pur presenti e utilizzati fino all'850 a.C. circa — non può essere dunque casuale, e andrà interpretata come una scelta deliberata di allontanamento/opposizione alla rappresentazione del potere delle regioni a est e a sud-est della Frigia.

In coincidenza con il passaggio da 6B a 6A e la fine dell'uso degli ortostati con apparato figurativo, si colloca la costruzione del Tumulo W, il primo tumulo eretto nelle vicinanze di Yassı Höyük e il primo tumulo in assoluto dell'Altopiano Anatolico. B. Cordivari ha dimostrato in modo convincente che non è possibile collegare la tradizione dei primi tumuli di Gordion Yassı Höyük con la Tracia e i Balcani; allo stesso tempo, sottolinea l'originalità della tecnica di costruzione di questi primi tumuli, così come il loro *Sitz am Leben* nella società gerarchizzata che emerge a Yassı Höyük attorno alla metà del IX sec. a.C. (Cordivari, 2024). Alternativamente, il tumulo come monumento, così come i rituali funerari a esso associati, potrebbero venir letti come ulteriore espressione del potere e della gerarchia che dividono Yassı Höyük e la sua regione da qualsiasi altro sito del IX e VIII sec. a.C. nella parte orientale dell'Altopiano oltre il Kızıl Irmak, per non parlare della Siria settentrionale. Si può a buon diritto interpretare la costruzione dei primi tumuli nella seconda metà del IX sec. a.C. e la loro continua produzione nel secolo successivo come un'ulteriore modalità di produrre nel paesaggio una rappresentazione di un'identità politica contrastiva e opposta rispetto a quella delle entità politiche post-ittite a est della Frigia, siano queste gli stati cantonali post-ittiti o le città-stato siro-ittite. Sono questi gli elementi che definiscono archeologicamente un confine contrastivo tra le due aree, emerso durante la seconda metà del IX sec. a.C. **(Fig. 7)**.

Abbiamo a oggi poche fonti scritte che ci informano sulla situazione politica dell'altopiano anatolico prima dell'VIII sec. a.C. Le due iscrizioni in geroglifico anatolico di TOPADA e di Turkmen Karahöyük 1 (TKH1) sono ora al centro di un dibattito che propone varie interpretazioni storiche con diverse datazioni, tutte al momento molto ipotetiche: unico aspetto che trova consenso comune è che le due iscrizioni si riferiscano a episodi di uno stesso conflitto. Senza entrare nel dettaglio, ho proposto per motivazioni storiche e paleografiche che gli episodi di guerra narrati nelle iscrizioni si riferiscano a questo periodo, il quale precede le campagne e la successiva presenza assira nella regione (d'Alfonso, 2019; d'Alfonso and Pedrinazzi, 2021; vd. ora anche James, 2022; Mora, 2024) e non alla seconda metà dell'VIII sec. a.C. come tradizionalmente ritenuto (Hawkins, 2000, pp. 452–460; Weeden 2010, 2023; Massa and Osborne, 2022). Seguendo Forlanini e altri, sembra possibile riconoscere nel toponimo Purušhanda, Prizuwanda/Parzuwanda e (Bīt) Burutas il sito stesso di Türkmen Karahöyük, che forse, durante il XIII sec. a.C., fu utilizzato da Muwatalli II come nuova capitale dell'impero ittita sotto il nome di Tarhuntassa (Forlanini, 2022; Osborne et al., 2020).[3] Quale che sia la datazione dell'episodio bellico, se nell'iscrizione di TOPADA il sovrano di Prizu(wa)nda, identificata con il sito di Türkmen Karahöyük, e i suoi otto alleati combattono contro'alleanza degli stati cantonali post-ittiti guidata dal Gran Re Wasusarma, sembra opportuno che, nell'isxrizione TKH1, i primi siano associati al paese di Musaka con i suoi tredici re, i quali, vengono sconfitti dal Gran Re Hartapus. Secondo questa interpretazione, le due iscrizioni si riferiscono a diversi episodi di una guerra tra una coalizione di stati cantonali post-ittiti guidati da Grandi Re, i quali adottano il geroglifico anatolico e nomi anatolici, e una seconda coalizione di 8 sovrani posti sotto l'egida dell'uomo di Prizu(wa)nda, in TOPADA, o 13 re del paese di Muska, come ricordato in TKH1. Prizu(wa)nda e Musaka si riferirebbero alla coalizione occidentale combattuta da due Grandi Re post-ittiti, rafforzando l'associazione Prizu(wa)nda, Frigia e Muški (d'Alfonso, 2024a; James, 2022; Santini, 2024; contra: Hawkins and Weeden, 2021; Massa and Osborne, 2022).

[3] Z. Simon ha recentemente dimostrato che l'ipotesi di derivare il toponimo anatolico Prizuwanda/Parzuwanda dal toponimo occidentale di Frigia e suoi cognati (Bryges etc.), come da me proposto (d'Alfonso 2019), risulta impossibile all'interno del passaggio da fonetica frigia a fonetica luvia (Simon, 2022). Nel prenderne atto rimane la possibilità di intermediazione di altre genti e di mutamenti legati alla pronuncia dei toponimi che spesso devia dalle regole fonetiche ricostruite per le lingue anatoliche.

Se le molte evidenze archeologiche associate al IX sec. a.C. e alla sua parte terminale, così ben conservata nel livello di distruzione di Yassı Höyük, permettono la ricostruzione di un quadro di insieme ben definito, è più difficile definire archeologicamente cosa avvenne durante l'VIII sec. a.C., un periodo su cui invece le fonti Assire sono particolarmente ricche di informazioni.

Dal punto di vista archeologico nuovi elementi di cambiamento emergono solo per la fase finale dell'VIII ed il VII sec. a.C. A partire da questo momento si interrompe la produzione di arte figurativa post-ittita e di iscrizioni monumentali in geroglifico anatolico, assieme alla produzione e circolazione del set di Alişar IV.

A Niğde-Kınık Höyük, contestualmente alla scomparsa delle ceramiche Alişar-IV, si afferma da questo periodo un nuovo set per il consumo di bevande alcoliche questa volta in ceramica grigia e nera di ispirazione frigia sia importata sia imitata localmente. L'origine occidentale di questa nuova produzione è indubbia. Ancora più evidente è la diffusione su stele o rappresentazioni su roccia di idoli di tradizione occidentale e di statue e rilievi del culto di Cybele o Matar, non solo in ambito occidentale ma anche nella regione a est dell'Halys.

Di recente B. Rose ha presentato nuovi indizi a sostegno di una datazione del monumento di Mida alla fine dell'VIII sec. a.C., facendolo di fatto coincidere con il periodo di regno del re Mida di Mus(a)ka attestato nelle fonti assire (Rose, 2021a; *contra* Summers, 2023b, che presenta però argomenti tradizionali). Seguendo la sua datazione del monumento, l'iscrizione che corre sulla sommità della facciata sarebbe la prima iscrizione monumentale in frigio alfabetico. Mentre l'adozione della scrittura alfabetica a Yassı Höyük nel IX sec. a.C. segnala un'interconnessione con l'Occidente e il sud e le rotte marittime, piuttosto che con l'Oriente e le rotte terrestri, il suo uso monumentale implica una scelta deliberata da parte del potere frigio di adottare questa scrittura come forma di rappresentazione politica e simbolo di potere in opposizione dialogica all'Oriente e al sud-est. Tale scelta è espressione di una forte identità politica, che ha senso solo come risposta all'uso del cuneiforme nelle iscrizioni monumentali di Urartu e dell'Assiria e all'uso del geroglifico anatolico nel mondo siro-anatolico (Schnell, 2024). In questo momento, grazie alle fonti assire e anche alle iscrizioni in luvio-geroglifico di Karkemiš, abbiamo chiare prove dell'interazione diretta tra la Frigia di Mida e questi tre potentati. L'iscrizione su pietra nera di Tuwana e le nuove iscrizioni monumentali rinvenute a Kerkenes Dağ mostrano come questo nuovo *medium* si diffuse anch'esso rapidamente nella regione ad est dell'Halys dalla fine del VIII sec. a.C. in poi.

Tutti questi elementi sono indicativi di una trasformazione del confine in una frontiera che portò durante il VII sec. a.C. alla cancellazione dell'esperienza politica degli stati cantonali post-ittiti in Anatolia e all'affermazione di una nuova rappresentazione del potere, ma anche a un nuovo sistema di riferimento religioso di ispirazione anatolica occidentale (**Fig. 8**).

L'ultima parte dell'VIII sec. a.C. per la storia della Frigia è definita dalla comparsa della figura del re Mida di Mus(a)ka nelle fonti assire (fonti raccolte in Wittke, 2004). Data la sua interazione diretta con l'Assiria in Cilicia *aspera*, ci si aspetterebbe che Mus(a)ka in quel tempo si estendesse verso sud fino alla pianura di Konya. Da quanto ci è dato sapere dalle fonti assire, Mida caratterizzò la sua attività politica in forte senso anti-orientale. Egli è prima presentato nelle fonti sargoniche come massimo nemico occidentale dell'impero, dopo la pace tuttavia viene visto come potente alleato assiro per porre fine a tenaglia all'esistenza degli stati cantonali post-ittiti:

> Messaggio del Re ad Assur-šarru-u[ṣur]: Io sono in salute, l'Assiria è in salute, che il tuo cuore sia felice!
> Ciò che mi hai scritto: "Il messaggero di Mita di Mus(a)ka è venuto al mio cospetto, mi ha consegnato quattordici uomini di Quwa che Urik aveva inviato come ambasciata ad Urartu". Molto bene! I miei dei Aššur, Samas, Bel e Nabu hanno agito, senza uno scontro armato o altro, il Muskano ci ha dato la sua parola ed è passato alla pace con noi.
> …
> Ciò che mi hai scritto: "A fronte del fatto che l'Atunano e l'Istundano si sono mossi e si sono portati via centri abitati di Bit-Baruta, Urbala'a […] dal Re mio signore". Ora il Muskano ha stretto pace con noi e […]: che cosa faranno da qui in poi tutti i re del paese di Tabala? Tu di qua, il Muskano di là lì presserete di modo che tu stringerai il cappio al loro cuore. Ora i miei dei Aššur, Samas, Bel e Nabu hanno agito, questo paese sarà continuamente calpestato sotto i tuoi due piedi.
>
> (mia traduzione basata sulla trascrizione in Parpola, 1987, testo nr.1)

Se ora ribaltiamo completamente il punto di vista sull'attività politica di Mida dalla prospettiva assira a quella di Mida stesso, la nota adozione di titoli come *wanax* e *la(wa)getaes* può essere vista non come la semplice adozione di un vocabolario frigio direttamente ereditato dalla tradizione micenea, ma come il desiderio di Mida di presentarsi come campione di un orizzonte culturale occidentale in fase di formazione, il quale trovò poi espressione nei cicli omerici, in particolar modo l'Iliade (vd. i.a. Grace,

2019, pp. 60–61; Rose, 2021a, pp. 57–61, 68–70 con rimando alla letteratura). Nel contesto delle sue guerre e nella deliberata formazione di un'identità politica oppositiva rispetto all'Oriente, ossia l'Assiria prima e gli stati cantonali post-ittiti poi, l'adozione da parte di Mida di titoli associati all'autorità di più alto rango nei cicli omerici rappresenta un modo per allinearsi a un mondo le cui aristocrazie erano definite dalla rivendicazione di ascendenza con gli eroi dei cicli omerici. Mida potrebbe, dunque, aver adottato titoli indicativi della sua adesione alla "società omerica". Questa società avrebbe condiviso banchetti e spettacoli d'élite con un ruolo centrale dei bardi che narravano i cicli epici, d'altro canto non avrebbero ovviamente condiviso una cultura materiale.

Identità politiche e confini nell'*Iliade*

Anche se mette in scena un conflitto assegnato alla fine del periodo miceneo, il contesto dell'Iliade di Omero è oggi direttamente o indirettamente associato agli sviluppi sociali e politici delle comunità egee durante il periodo arcaico. L'apparizione archeologica dell'*heroon*, così come le offerte votive alle tombe della tarda età del Bronzo, la diffusione dei tumuli e la definizione delle élite arcaiche attraverso i beni esotici vicino-orientali trovati come corredi funerari nelle sepolture o come votivi nei santuari, sono considerati possibili testimonianze di un mondo che Omero impiegò nella creazione del contesto della narrazione dell'*Iliade* e, al contempo, dell'impatto sulla cultura materiale di cicli epici diffusi per l'Egeo e l'Anatolia attraverso le esibizioni itineranti dei bardi nei raduni d'élite, che in seguito divennero l'Iliade di Omero.[4]

Le rappresentazioni orali dell'epos di Omero si sarebbero diffuse nei raduni d'élite dell'Egeo e dell'Anatolia occidentale, contribuendo così all'incontro con i culti, i miti, l'*ethos* e i costumi delle élite del periodo arcaico. Sebbene questo aspetto che definì le élites dell'VIII–VII sec. a.C. sia studiato come aspetto precipuo alla fase iniziale del processo di formazione dell'identità greca, nell'Iliade esso non definisce costumi di Achei, Argivi o Danaoi, in opposizione ai Troiani e ai loro alleati dell'Asia minore. Più in generale, la guerra di Troia narrata nell'Iliade è la storia di

[4] La questione sulla società omerica è complessa e oggetto di dibattito, per cui si rimanda a Hall, 2013, pp. 24, 126–164; Whitley, 2019. Crielaard associa la rappresentazione delle comunità proto-urbane descritte nell'Iliade (e nell'Odissea) alla crescita di superficie e complessità negli insediamenti nell'Egeo tra l'VIII ed il VII sec. a.C. e la loro produzione di nuove identità comunitarie (Crielaard, 2020). Questi autori, come gran parte di coloro che hanno partecipato al dibattito, muovono da una prospettiva egea o panellenica da cui risultano gran parte delle criticità, che vengono a cadere se si adotta invece una prospettiva microasiatica come in questo contributo.

una guerra di una coalizione di capi carismatici (*basilēes*) di piccole comunità dell'Egeo occidentale contrapposta a *basilēes* e popoli dell'Egeo orientale e dell'Anatolia. È stato, però, ampiamente sottolineato come i due eserciti fossero costituiti da individui e gruppi che condividevano la stessa visione del mondo per quanto riguarda i culti, l'etica guerriera e organizzazione militare, l'uso della memoria e della genealogia mista per definire status e identità dell'élite aristocratica, per citare solo alcuni ambiti. Il poema non è interessato ad affermare identità etniche o di gruppo opposte, mostra invece diversi elementi indicativi dell'esistenza di un forte intreccio interculturale tra il mondo egeo e quello anatolico (Hall, 1997, 2013, p. 301; Haubold, 2014; Bachvarova, 2016, p. 421 ff.).

In un certo senso, il mondo omerico dell'Iliade consiste molto più nell'insieme di tutti i personaggi principali e dei gruppi che partecipano alla guerra sotto le mura di (W)ilio su ambo i fronti che nella definizione di un confine tra loro basato su identità politica o etnica. Un confine identitario però esiste ed è quello che definisce chi fa parte di questo mondo e chi ne rimane al di fuori. Dato l'ampio e variegato pubblico che i poemi omerici richiedono, questa è una domanda cruciale. Per essere chiari, per la trama dell'epos il confine geografico rappresentato dalla riva occidentale dell'Anatolia divide le due parti che lottano per Elena e gli *agalmata* che lei ha portato da Micene a (W)ilio. Tuttavia, se si cercano confini che caratterizzano la narrazione dell'*Iliade*, il confine principale non è quello che divide le due parti in conflitto a Troia, ma quello che divide i popoli e le entità politiche che si trovano nel cono di luce della narrazione omerica da quelli che ne sono esclusi.

Al di fuori della narrazione ci sono comunità ai margini del mondo conosciuto, alcune mitiche come le Amazzoni e i Pigmei, altre remote come i Sidoni, che vengono solo menzionate (Haubold, 2014). Di contro, i principali attori politici e le potenze geografiche dell'Anatolia occidentale dei primi secoli del I millennio a.C. sono comunque rappresentati sulla scena.

Le occorrenze della Frigia e dei Frigi nell'Iliade, che sono in effetti le prime occorrenze testuali di questo toponimo ed etnonimo nella tradizione greca, rappresentano un caso cruciale. Essi sostengono inequivocabilmente il fronte guidato dal re Priamo. La regione di provenienza dei Frigi rimane non ben definita, negli altopiani dell'Anatolia centro-settentrionale, ma significativamente associata al Sangario (Drews, 1993; Gandini, 2024). Mentre il posizionamento della Frigia come alleata sodale di Troia può essere stato sottolineato con maggior enfasi nel V sec. a.C. e interpretato come modello anatolico e orientale di alterità nella definizione del mondo ellenico (Bachvarova, 2016, pp. 418–419; Kotsonas, 2024), nella trama dell'*Iliade* la Frigia ha un ruolo minore,

nessuna impresa notevole e una localizzazione di fatto al confine del mondo narrato. Questo è implicito, ad esempio, in Hom. Il. 3 184–187, quando Priamo, dopo i puntuali ritratti da parte di Elena dei capi dell'esercito d'oltremare riuniti sotto le mura di (W)ilio, da ultimo Agamennone, offre un suo commento:

> Il vecchio l'ammirava e parlò: "Oh beato Atride, nato con buona fortuna, con nume benigno! Davvero molti giovani Achei sono sotto il tuo cenno. Io fui in Frigia, una volta, ricca di viti, e vidi là moltissimi Frigi, eroi dai cavalli lucenti, l'esercito di Otreo e di Migdone simile ai numi; essi avevano accampamento sulle rive del Sangario. Ed io quale alleato fui nominato tra loro, il giorno che vennero le Amazzoni forti come guerrieri. Ma essi non erano tanti quanti gli Achei occhi vivaci".
>
> (1991, p. 99)

Lo scontro con le Amazzoni a cui si fa riferimento in questo passo è indicativo di una vicinanza geografica con una regione abitata dalle Amazzoni, un gruppo che rimane invece fuori dal cono di luce della narrazione.

Se i Frigi fanno parte dei popoli rappresentati nell'*Iliade*, l'assenza di menzione di qualsiasi elemento ittita, post-ittita e siro-ittita può essere poco sorprendente solo per chi ha una scarsa conoscenza della storia e dell'archeologia dell'Anatolia della fine del II e della prima metà del I millennio a.C. La mancata menzione di Babilonesi e Assiri è di certo sorprendente, visto l'impatto che soprattutto gli ultimi ebbero ben oltre l'Egeo, su tutto il Mediterraneo durante il VII sec. a.C. (Aruz et al., 2014). I due imperi, tuttavia, non furono mai in diretto contatto con le aree al centro della narrazione dell'*Iliade* o della definizione e circolazione del suo canto. La completa assenza di riferimenti alle entità politiche ittite e post-ittite che controllavano o interagivano con regioni uguali o vicine a quelle dell'ambientazione e poi della circolazione come epos dell'Iliade richiede una spiegazione, perché non è affatto scontata come fino ad ora ritenuto. Se Micene e diverse vestigia del mondo miceneo sono conservate nell'Iliade, mentre la loro controparte anatolica, l'impero degli Ittiti, i nomi dei loro potenti grandi re come Suppiluliuma, Mursili, Muwatalli, Hattusili, i loro vassalli (a parte Wilusa e Taruwisa) e i loro monumenti non ricevono una sola menzione nel poema, l'assenza deve essere il risultato di una scelta deliberata. Una simile selezione, tesa a escludere quella parte di Oriente, appare necessaria anche per il completo silenzio sui nomi di luoghi post-ittiti come Tabal, il paese di Tuwadi, Tuwana o dei Grandi Re dell'Anatolia centrale del I millennio a.C. come Tuwadi, Wasusarma e Hartapu.

L'esistenza di una ragione per la mancata menzione dell'eredità ittita o post-ittita nell'Iliade è ancora più evidente se si considera che alcuni nomi e titoli della tradizione ittita e post-ittita raggiunsero il mondo egeo orientale tra il VII e il VI sec. a.C. (i.a. Rizza, 2001; Dale, 2015). Recentemente, nel suo libro del 2016 *From Hittite to Homer: The Anatolian Background of Ancient Greek Epic*, Mary Bachvarova ha proposto che i cicli omerici abbiano ereditato ed elaborato materiali anatolici derivanti dalla tradizione ittita e, in una certa misura, da quella post-ittita, sia nella trama sia nella parte formulaica (Bachvarova 2016, 5–46 e 426–429). Seguendo le orme di C. Watkins (Mellink and Watkins, 1986; Watkins, 1995), Bachvarova ha proposto l'esistenza di una prima versione anatolica dell'*Iliade* che avrebbe circolato oralmente per circa 300 anni prima di essere recepita e integrata insieme a diverse tradizioni dell'Egeo orientale in una nuova versione, durante VIII–VII sec. a.C. L'autrice immagina un ruolo attivo e di primo piano della Frigia e di Mida nel passaggio dalla prima alla seconda versione.

La tesi che si presenta in questo contributo è che il confine orientale del mondo rappresentato nella narrazione dell'*Iliade* corrisponda al confine orientale politico frigio in Anatolia centrale durante i secoli IX–VIII a.C. come esso emerge dal dato epigrafico, archeologico e storico-artistico (vd. sopra). Più precisamente, la polarizzazione e il successivo sviluppo di un'identità politica frigia in contrasto con le entità politiche presenti a est del Kızıl Irmak e del Lago Salato ebbero un ruolo determinante nella definizione del confine orientale del mondo dell'Iliade. Il ruolo della Frigia nell'attivazione di un confine con l'Oriente e la sua trasformazione in una frontiera avrebbe determinato l'assenza di qualsiasi riferimento nell'*Iliade* a gesta storicamente note attraverso le fonti geroglifiche anatoliche post-ittite e cuneiformi assire. A partire dalla fine del IX sec. a. C., e soprattutto con il regno effimero ma dirimente di re Mida, le élites della Frigia si ricollocarono all'interno del mondo microasiatico occidentale, prendendo le distanze dal mondo orientale post-ittita e assiro e contribuendo alla formazione del paesaggio politico dell'*Iliade*.

Conclusioni

Il confine tra Oriente e Occidente è un costrutto politico generato dalle comunità e soprattutto dalle loro élite dirigenti nel processo di definizione delle loro identità e collocazione, a fronte di un conflitto imminente di vasta scala. Da Erodoto in poi, la posizione geografica di questo confine tra Europa e Asia è stata collocata sulla costa occidentale

dell'Anatolia, rivisitando la guerra di Troia insieme alle guerre persiane come eventi che determinarono l'indipendenza e la libertà di una civiltà.

Questa geografia contrastiva emerse però nel V sec. a. C. e non è coerente con la precedente geografia umana dell'inizio del I millennio a.C. e con la geografia umana dell'*Iliade*, che presenta i due fronti contrapposti della guerra di Troia come appartenenti a un unico orizzonte culturale fortemente interconnesso.

Di questo aspetto fu certamente conscio Santo Mazzarino quando decise di intraprendere la stesura della sua opera *Fra Oriente e Occidente*. L'opera, come molte altre, apporta diversi contributi alla comprensione dei contatti culturali nel Mediterraneo centro-orientale e in Anatolia durante i secoli X–VI a.C. Anche se le conclusioni a cui giunse Mazzarino nelle indagini discusse nei singoli capitoli —e nelle molteplici digressioni —sono per lo più confutate o confutabili oggi, è l'impianto dell'opera e il suo respiro che la rende ancora unica e potente: è l'idea di mettere al centro l'analisi dalle evidenze non tanto dei contatti culturali o degli apporti, ma delle definizioni di luoghi e genti espressi nelle testimonianze della parte opposta. Muovendo da cosa significhi Asia a ovest, nell'Egeo, e da cosa Yauna e simili a est, in Mesopotamia e nel Mediterraneo orientale, nei secoli fino al VI sec. a.C., Mazzarino produce un'analisi delle evidenze dei contatti culturali e delle istituzioni che, proprio per questa sua paritaria premessa, è fortissima ed unica. Io non conosco un altro libro che abbia un impianto così aperto e genuinamente paritetico nello studio dei due poli che tratta, Oriente e Occidente.

Scritto in un'epoca in cui c'era una necessità impellente di ritrovare identità forti e positive nel passato fondativo dell'Europa e su tutte si offrivano a stendardo la libertà e democrazia paradigmaticamente espresse dall'esperienza della *polis* greca, Mazzarino decise di scardinare il confine che isolava la grecità dall'Oriente, proponendo di indagare integralmente, non solo e non tanto quali fossero gli apporti, ma quali fossero state le condizioni preesistenti alla definizione di quel confine tra Oriente e Occidente inteso come rapporto tra *polis* greca e despotismo orientale. L'idea di una *koiné* di genti che condividevano alcune istituzioni senza avere un'unità politica o linguistica, ma che erano percepiti dall'esterno come simili e indicate, magari impropriamente, con l'etnico Yauna e simili, è un'intuizione potente che offre ancora enormi possibilità di sviluppo. I limiti geografici e cronologici di questa *koiné* proposti da Mazzarino, come i suoi elementi caratterizzanti, possono essere discussi, ma quanto poco sia stata sfruttata nel suo potenziale questa definizione lo rivela già l'opposizione a Yauna che propose R.D. Barnett nella sua recensione rispetto ai "*semi-barbaric half Greek states*" (Barnett, 1950).

Il punto è che Barnett neppure si chiedeva se avesse un senso parlare di *Greek states* nell'VIII sec. a.C. e quindi di barbari, per intero o a metà; anche se lungo l'opera di Mazzarino ricorre l'idea di Yauna come riferimento ai 'Greci di età arcaica', lo studioso pone come domanda centrale se essi avessero avuto un'identità propria e, se sì, quale. Da qui il mio debito con l'opera.

Nella famosa e durissima recensione al libro, Momigliano, al netto di critiche di metodo, afferma che il cuore dell'opera, il problema tra Oriente e Occidente, sia un problema fantasma: "l'unica cosa da fare sul problema Oriente-Occidente è di non parlarne più" (Momigliano, 1948, p. 129). Oltre l'anima greca, oltre l'anima orientale e le ombre di questioni etnico-razziali che le avevano definite, con questa affermazione Momigliano tradisce un disinteresse per i processi di interazione in età arcaica e di definizione del confine, proprio in assenza di identità etniche e nazionali precostituite. Invece, la questione che Mazzarino ha aperto e si pone ancora oggi è quella di ridefinire quell'idea di *koiné* che precede e supporta lo sviluppo della grecità antica e della sua contrapposizione agli sviluppi a Oriente.

Da queste premesse della ricerca di Mazzarino prende spunto il presente contributo. L'Anatolia occidentale non sarebbe espressione di un mondo ellenico né egeo, né anatolico, ma tutti e tre farebbero parte di un 'costrutto culturale' condiviso. Questo emerge innanzitutto dall'*Iliade*. Al di fuori di qualsiasi sovrapposizione di identità nazionali odierne, l'*Iliade* divenne 'greca' a partire dal V sec. a.C., e quindi occidentale in termini moderni (Morris, 2001).

Prima del V sec. a.C., tuttavia, il suo ciclo apparteneva a un mondo in cui semplicemente non esisteva un'identità esclusivamente greca o anche solo egea. Le comunità che vivevano intorno all'Egeo costituirono la porzione occidentale del mondo dell'*Iliade*, senza che il confine occidentale di tale porzione fosse realmente definito, forse non essendo stato realmente attivato. Il confine orientale, invece, è posto ad est del Sangario e presentato come una frontiera oltre la quale non c'è nulla se non popoli semi-mitologici come le Amazzoni, espressione di alterità.

Si propone qui che questo confine orientale presentato nell'*Iliade* venne a definirsi storicamente sulla base del confine politico creatosi quando emerse e si strutturò la Frigia. Le evidenze archeologiche provenienti da Yassı Höyük Gordion e dintorni, databili al IX sec. a.C., indicano come risalisse a quel tempo la formazione del centro principale di una complessa entità politica che definiamo Frigia/Mus(a)ka. Le evidenze relative allo stesso periodo sottolineano l'interazione con gli

stati cantonali post-ittiti dell'Anatolia centrale, come dimostrano l'adozione di ortostati figurativi di tradizione post-ittita e di un tipico set da bevande alcoliche associato a banchetti d'élite.

La scomparsa di questi ortostati e l'edificazione dei primi tumuli sembra indicare che già nel passaggio tra le occupazioni YHSS 6B e 6A, attorno alla metà del IX sec. a.C., il confine tra la Frigia e il mondo post-ittita stesse diventando rigido e contrastivo. A questo periodo suggerisco di associare l'episodio di una guerra tra Musaka/Prizu(wa)nda/Frigia e i sovrani post-ittiti che rivendicavano l'eredità della Grande Regalità ittita, riportato nelle due iscrizioni geroglifiche anatoliche di TOPADA e TKH 1.

Un livello ancora più marcato di separazione dall'Oriente può essere associato al regno di Mida di Mus(a)ka. Come nel caso della fittizia guerra di Troia nell'*Iliade*, l'alternanza di ostilità, battaglie, pace e alleanze che caratterizza il regno di Mida dice molto poco sulla definizione delle identità di gruppo e dei confini sul territorio, per i quali in questo caso i resti archeologici offrono una visione molto più definita. Seguendo la datazione presentata da B. Rose e G. Darbyshire (2011), in Frigia assistiamo alla definizione di un nuovo programma di monumenti diffusi nel paesaggio associato alla scrittura alfabetica, che si contrappone alla diffusione dei monumenti extra-urbani siro-anatolici in scrittura geroglifica sull'Altopiano, ma anche e più in là a quelli in cuneiforme di ambito assiro e urarteo. Nella parte orientale dell'Altopiano, durante il regno di Mida e nei decenni successivi, la visibilità del nuovo potere politico frigio provocò la fine di una tradizione ittita e post-ittita di rappresentazione del potere dalla storia quasi millenaria, e l'adozione di una rappresentazione delle élite tipica del mondo frigio.

La cristallizzazione di questo confine e la sua successiva trasformazione in una frontiera divisero per i secoli a venire la tradizione della Frigia e dell'Occidente da quella delle regioni est-anatolica e nord-mesopotamica dell'Oriente. Per quanto riguarda la questione della memoria dell'Anatolia ittita e post-ittita, questa frontiera offre una spiegazione del perché la terminologia, la mitologia, l'onomastica e alcuni elementi di substrato di quella tradizione siano stati accolti nell'Anatolia occidentale, mentre manchi nei cicli omerici e, in ultima analisi, nell'intera tradizione greco-romana qualsivoglia narrazione, o anche menzione o cenno all'esperienza politica al Grande Regno di Hatti e agli stati post-ittiti.

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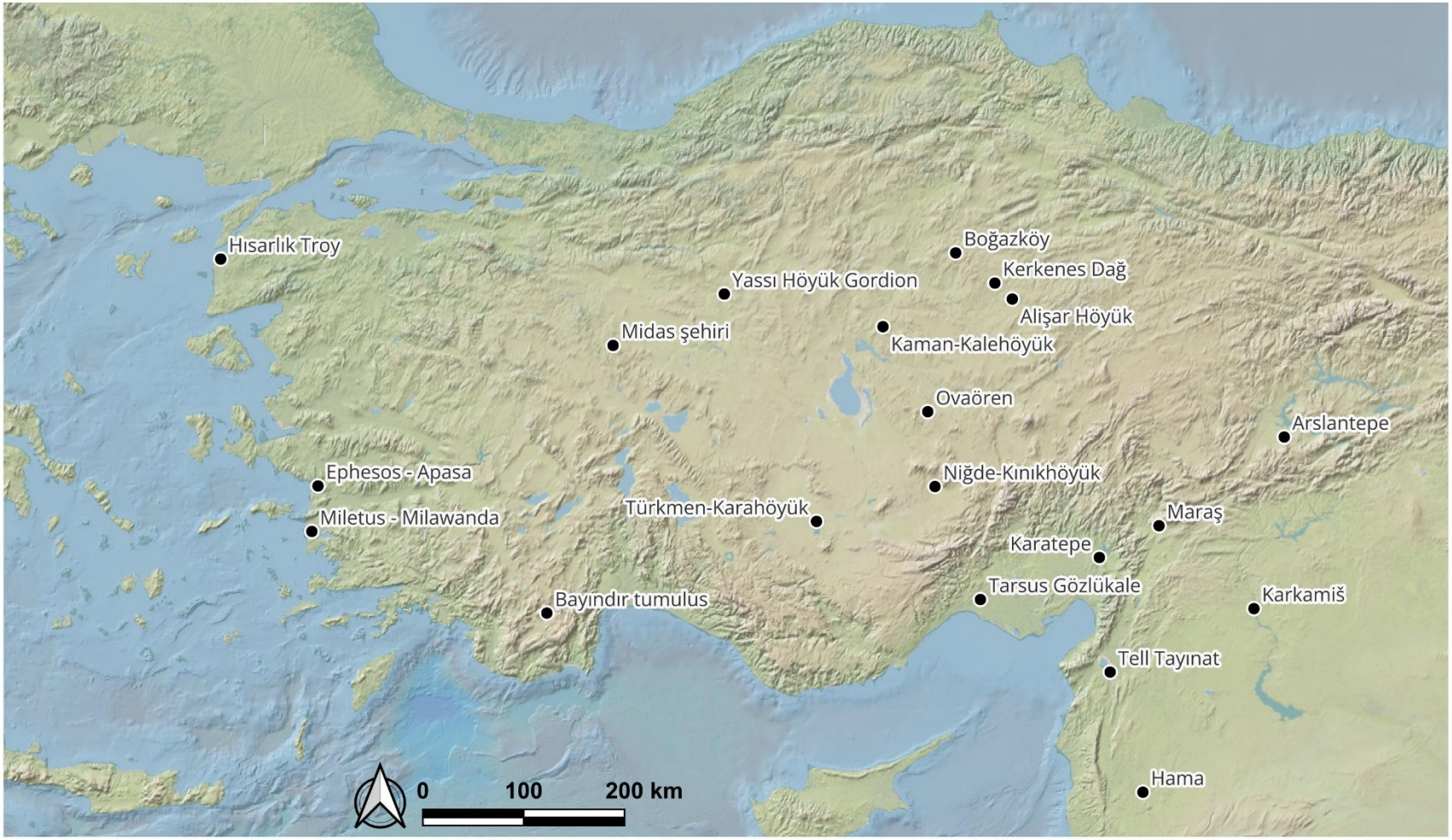

Fig. 1

Mappa dell'Anatolia e del Levante settentrionale con indicazione dei siti più di rilievo o menzionati in questo contributo (prodotta da L. d'Alfonso con software QGIS 3.40.7)



Fig. 2

Edifici di Ferro Antico dal saggio stratigrafico di M. Voigt al centro della cittadella di Yassı Höyük Gordion.
a) Immagine della pit house CKD della fase YHSS 7B; b) Immagine della grande pit house BRH della fase YHSS 7A
(si ringrazia il Penn Museum Gordion Archive).

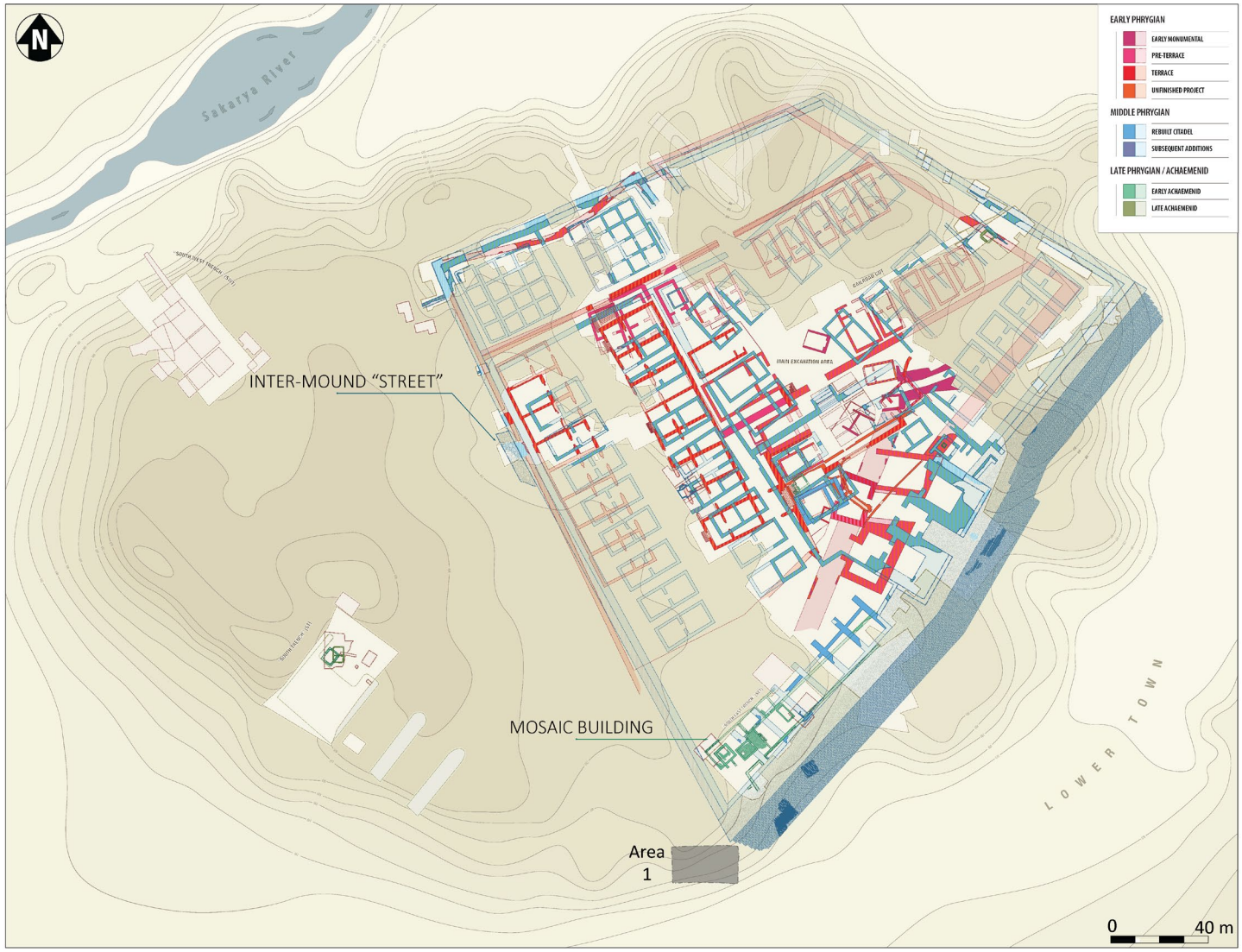

Fig. 3

DEM del sito di Yassı Höyük Gordion con pianta delle fasi monumentali YHSS 6B; 6A o Destruction Level; 5 (si ringrazia il Penn Museum Gordion Archive).

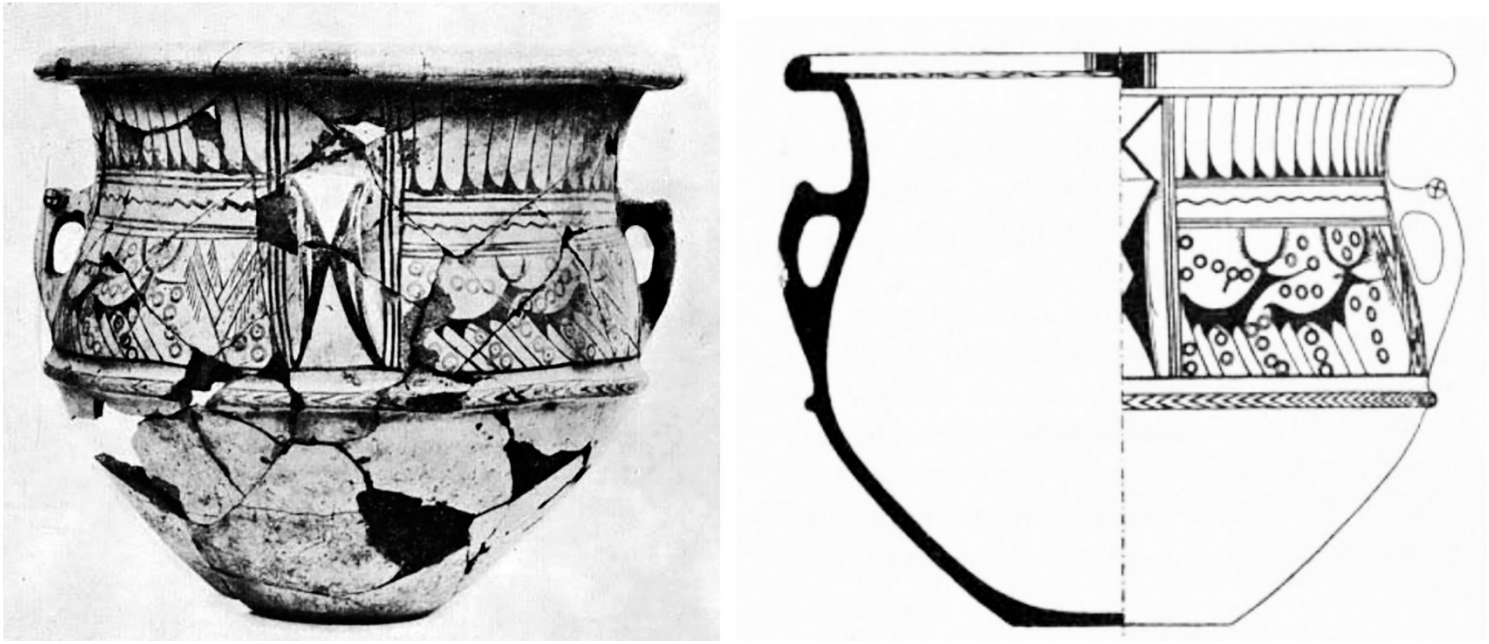

Fig. 4

Cratere in stile Alişar IV dal sito di Alişar Höyük (da Akurgal 1955: Abb. 3, Taf. 1a).



Fig. 5

Rilievi su pietra rappresentanti il genio alato con testa di rapace in posa atlantica. Sulla destra: frammento di ortostato da Yassı Höyük con genio in posa atlantica che supporta un'architrave di un edificio o il giunto di una gamba di una sedia o trono (Gordion inventory, S44 image no. 2015_03859. Foto di Gebhard Bieg: si ringrazia il Penn Museum Gordion Archive); sulla sinistra: dettaglio della stele di Tavşantepe a nord di Kınık Höyük con rappresentazione del genio in posa atlantica che supporta la seduta del trono su cui siede la divinità (foto di A. Lanaro, archivio missione archeologica di Kınık Höyük).



Fig. 6

Rilievi su pietra rappresentanti il dio della tempesta che froneggia un serpente gigante (probabile riferimento al mito di Illuyanka): a sinistra: frammento di ortostato di cui si conservano il gonnellino e le gambe con calzari di tradizione ittita di una figura maschile che affronta la testa gigantesca capovolta di un mostro (Gordion inventory S46, image no. R328–41: si ringrazia il Penn Museum Gordion Archive); a destra: dettaglio dell'ortostato dalla porta dei Leoni di Arslantepe Malatya che rappresenta il combattimento tra il dio della tempesta e il mostro-serpente (Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara, Turkey).

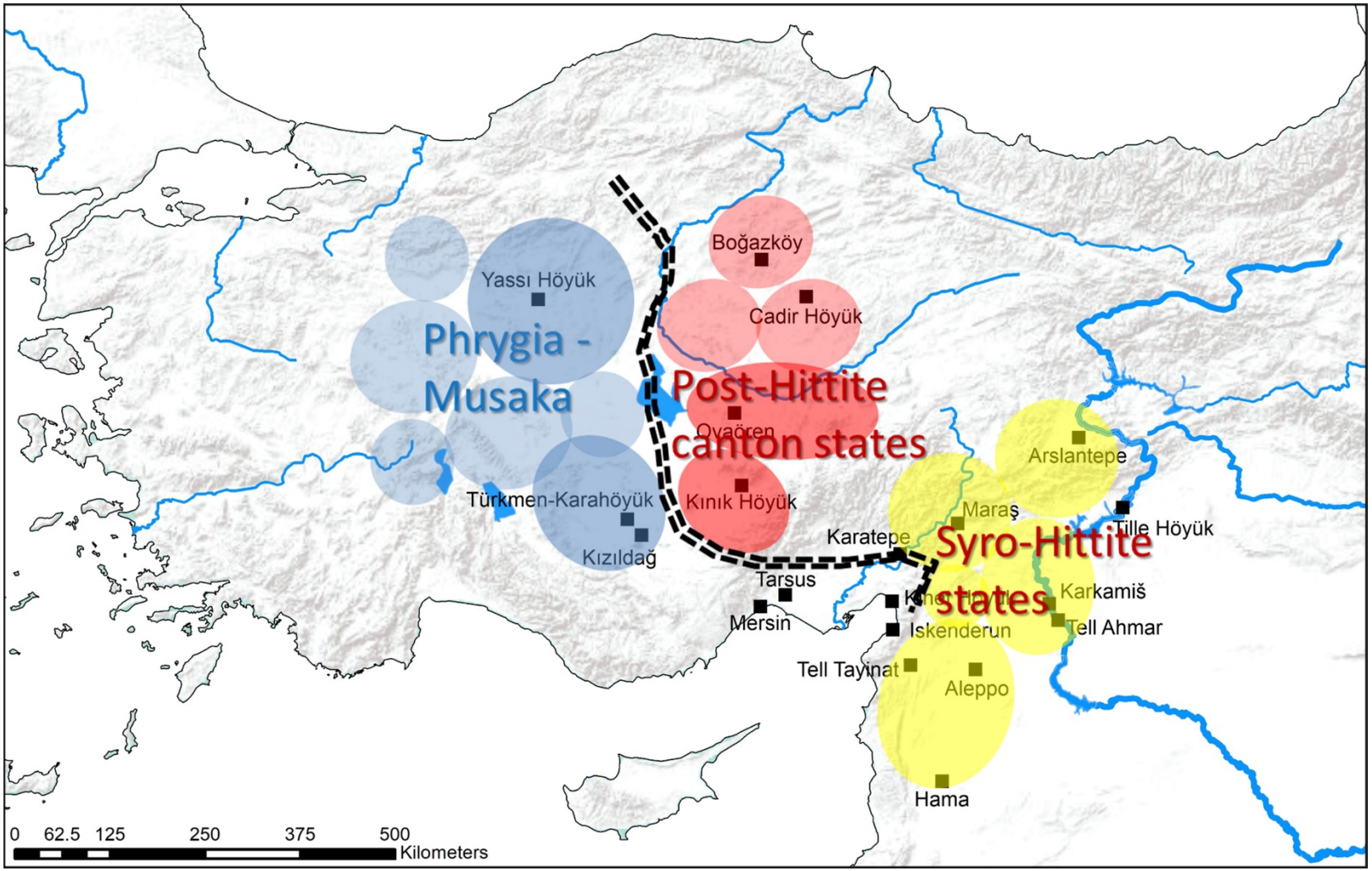

Fig. 7

Carta geografica della situazione politica in Anatolia attorno all'850 a.C., con rappresentazione del confine politico contrastivo emergente fra le entità che compongono Mus(a)ka / Frigia e gli stati cantonali post-ittiti (prodotta dall'autore).

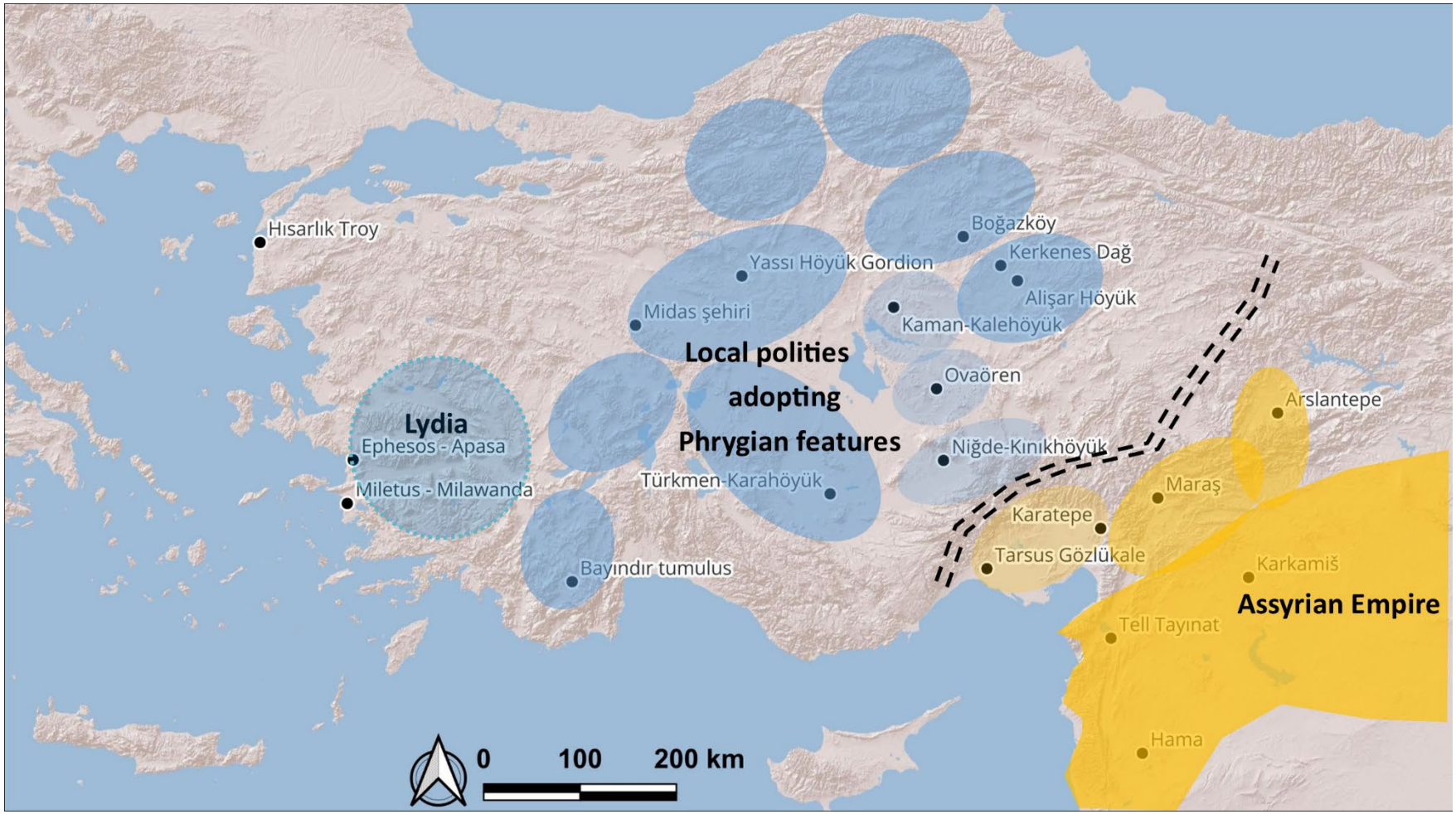

Fig. 8

Carta geografica della situazione politica in Anatolia nella prima metà del VII sec. a.C., con rappresentazione della frontiera in espansione verso est che ha sostituito il confine politico contrastivo e ha promosso la diffusione di diversi aspetti legati a culto e cultura materiale frigia a discapito di quelli associati in precedenza agli stati cantonali post-ittiti. Si noti per altro lo sviluppo continuo dell'impero assiro a sud del Tauro a cui si contrappone l'assenza di un entità territoriale estesa a nord del Tauro (prodotta dall'autore).

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^{URU}Puṭu-ia-a-man. Cyrene Between Babylon, Egypt, and Libya — According to Mazzarino: A Reassessment

— Maurizio Giangiulio —

Abstract

This article revisits Mazzarino's identification of the toponym ^{URU} Buṭujaman in the cuneiform tablet BM 33041 with the polis of Cyrene. New evidence and new research confirm Mazzarino's thesis, making it possible to reassess Nebuchadnezzar's war against Egypt and to gain a clearer understanding of Amasis' alliance with Cyrene against Apries, while simultaneously substantiating the reliability of the story of Amasis' marriage to Ladice, the daughter of the Cyrenaean king Battus II, as narrated by Herodotus. Furthermore, the chronology of the kings of Cyrene can be more accurately defined. In broader historical terms, the history of Cyrene during the 6th century BCE appears indeed defined, as Mazzarino had argued, by its relationship with Egypt, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Near East.

Keywords

Cyrene, Amasis, Nebuchadnezzar, Herodotus, Lybia

At least two significant reasons recommend revisiting the pages of *Fra Oriente e Occidente* in which Mazzarino identified as Cyrene the ^{city}Buṭujaman (^{URU}Puṭu-ja-a-man) recorded in the cuneiform tablet BM 33041.[1] First, more evidence has become available (and better understood): this makes it possible to assess Mazzarino's argument more thoroughly than before. The second, more general point is even more important. The current understanding of Babylonian history at the time of Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 605–562) and of Saitic Egypt under the Pharaohs Apries (r. 589–570) and Amasis (r. 570–526) vindicates Mazzarino's attempt of viewing the history of Cyrene in the 6th century BCE in the light of Ancient Near Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean history.

[1] Mazzarino (1947) 144–153; 345–347; 391–392 n. 901; 393; 411–414.

The Cuneiform Tablet BM 33041: Cyrene between Babylon, Egypt and Libya

Mazzarino's starting point was the geopolitical landscape of the years following the demise of the Assyrian Empire. The role played by Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar II (r. 605–562) was crucial to his argument. This polity was plugged into a tight-knit mosaic of powers spanning Lydia, the Levant, and Egypt. Against that backdrop, he situated the text of BM 33041, which was available to him in the *Neubabylonischen Königsinschriften* edited by Stephen Langdon.[2] The tablet unquestionably refers to a military endeavor against Amasis' Egypt dated in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar (568/67 BCE). Mazzarino's attention was caught by the words «...] -ku of ^{city}Buṭujaman» (l. 16=2r.). The problem concerned the location of the city Buṭujaman,[3] and the identity of ...] -ku, in his view, referring to its «lord». Hugo Winkler had suggested that the tablet mentioned Lesbos and Pittacus.[4] Against this view, Mazzarino discussed the word Puṭu against the background of the Old Testament, the Achaemenid inscriptions referring to Putiya, and Posener's remarks about the equivalence with Punt (the Egyptian designation of the Horn of Africa region), at the time commonly taken for granted, which Posener deemed unlikely.[5] Following Posener, Mazzarino concluded that Puṭu stood for «the Libyan world» and that ^{city}Buṭujaman could not refer to anything but Cyrene. Until then, only Albright had supported such a view (in 1926), but apparently unbeknownst to Mazzarino.[6] As for ...] -ku, Mazzarino's argument assumed that it rendered in Akkadian a Greek personal name ending in -*χος*, arguably Learchos (Herodotus 4.160.4).[7] This was the brother (and murderer) of king Arcesilaus II.[8] Furthermore,

[2] Langdon (1912) no. 48: 206–207. For a previous edition of the tablet, see Langdon (1905) 180–183.

[3] According to Mazzarino (p. 147) Buṭujaman meant «Jaman (Javan) of Buṭu (Puṭu)» and it was «the city's very same name».

[4] Winkler (1897).

[5] Mazzarino (1947) 147; see also 411–412. Cf. Posener (1936) 186–187 (Puṭu = Libya).

[6] Albright (1926) 227 (« the compound Pûtu-Yaman, that is, Pût of the Ionians (Greeks), an expression which can only refer to Cyrene»).

[7] The name appears as Learchos also in Nic. Dam. *FGrHist* 90 F 50. However, Polyaenus, *Strat*. 8.41 and Plut. *Mor*. 260e, 261a have Laarchos, maybe the original (Doric) form of the personal name (discussed in Soldati 2012).

[8] Learchos was the brother of Arcesilaus II in Herodotus and Nicolaus Damascenus. According to Plutarch he was a *philos* of the king. Jacoby (1925) and Momigliano argued (unconvincingly) to prioritize Plutarch over Herodotus. Mazzarino's treatment

Mazzarino noted that Plutarch (*mor*. 260e–261b) suggested that Amasis backed Learchos and that Cyrene at the time found itself «so to speak, under Amasis' protectorate».[9] Following his brothers, Learchos may have taken sides against Arcesilaus and with the Libyans at the time of the foundation of Barce. Then, with Amasis' support, he may have led the Libyans to victory against Arcesilaus in the battle of Leukon (Herodotus 4.160.3). Finally, he presumably got rid of his brother, as suggested by the role he played as Amasis' Cyrenean supporter in the cuneiform text of the tablet. Accordingly, the reign of Arcesilaus II ended in 567 BCE. Mazzarino concluded that «The story of Buṭujaman or Cyrene hence moved between Egypt and Greece; Nebukadnezar's inscription sheds light on the moment in which Cyrene tilted towards Egypt. Indeed, as can be evidenced from Plutarch, Learchos was backed by Egypt. Hence, from this standpoint, Buṭujaman is part of the competition between Egypt and Babylon for the Eastern Mediterranean».[10] Finally, Mazzarino focused on the mention in the tablet of «far away countries in the middle of the sea». He argued that, like in other cuneiform texts, the reference was to Cyprus, also subordinated to Amasis (Herodotus 2.182). In Mazzarino's eyes, Cyrene and Cyprus were embedded «in the Ancient Near Eastern states system around 568/7».[11]

In the decades following the publication of *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, neither Egyptologists nor Assyriologists paid attention to Mazzarino's ideas. Historians of Archaic Greece also consistently ignored them. Indeed, starting with a notoriously scathing review by Arnaldo Momigliano,[12] various insightful propositions put forward by Mazzarino in this work have not received the scholarly attention they merit.

Yet, it is possible today to say that Mazzarino's interpretation of URUPuṭu-ja-a-man mentioned in the tablet BM 33041 is most likely correct. The most thorough scholarship on the text does, in fact, interpret URUPuṭu-ja-a-man very much in the same way,[13] albeit without ever referring to Mazzarino. This is true for the distinguished Egyptologist Elmar Edel (1978) and for Terence Croft Mitchell (1992), then Keeper of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum. Especially in the case

of the issue (Mazzarino (1947) 148 and 346–347 n. 425) ought to be taken as conclusive.

[9] Mazzarino (1947) 149.

[10] Mazzarino (1947) 150–151.

[11] Mazzarino (1947) 153.

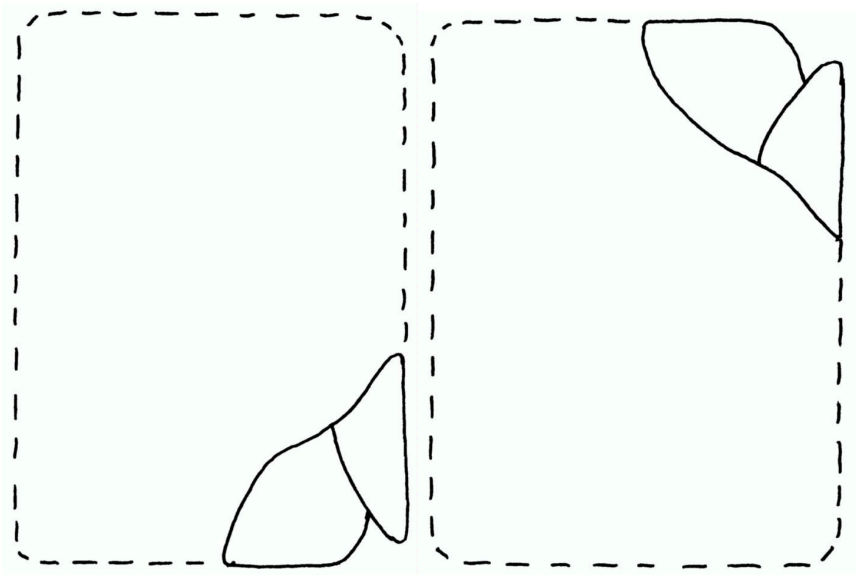
[12] The review (*Rivista storica italiana* 60, 1948, 127–132) was reprinted in Mazzarino 1989 (1947) 397–403.

[13] Edel (1978); Mitchell (1992).

of Mitchell, the argument rests on several linguistic observations comparable to those put forward by Mazzarino. For Edel and Mitchell, ^{URU}Puṭu-ja-a-man, "the Libyan city of the Greeks" undoubtedly referred to Cyrene.

A closer look at BM 33041

The text was collated on the document itself by Edel and Wilfred G. Lambert in the 1970s and 1980s. It was also carefully discussed by Mitchell,[14] but currently no newer edition is available.[15]



obverse reverse

Mitchell estimates that the tablet may have been 15 cm wide and 18 cm long. The two preserved fragments constitute the obverse's right bottom corner and the reverse's upper left corner. It follows that the text is much more lacunose than usually thought.[16] Indeed, no more than 1/10 of the original text is likely to have survived. Yet, where reconstruction is

[14] Leahy (1988) 191 n. 30 informs on the reading of the text by Lambert.

[15] The tablet is not published in RINBE 1/1, and apparently will not be published in RINBE 1/2 (Giulia Lentini, University of Turin, personal communication). On the online platform *electronic Babylonian Library* (eBL) an excellent color photograph is available (https://www.ebl.lmu.de/fragmentarium/BM.33041?tab=photo). For a copy of the cuneiform text, see Wiseman (1956) tables XX–XXI.

[16] For example, it is precisely the extent of the lacuna between l. 2r and l. 3r what prevents from linking the expression «[a dis]tant region which (is) in the middle of the sea» (l. 3r) with $^{(URU)}$pu/bu-ṭu-ia-a-man (l. 2r) as argued by Weisberg (2012) 90.

possible, the overall gist is by and large established.[17] From ll. 6–9 of the obverse it is possible to recognize the style of a "Letter to the God": somebody addresses a deity in the 1st person saying, for example, «you caused to capture», or «you gave rest». From line 10, the text switches to the 3rd person. There, references are made to «his soldiers», «his army» (11), «the road». A military expedition is a logical hypothesis. In the last two lines appear a dating in the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar king of [Babylonia] (13) and the wording «…] Egypt to make a battle he c[ame] » ([… Mi̯-sir a-na e-piš taḫazi il-[lik] […). In the first line of the reverse (15 = 1r), following a lacuna, one reads «[Amas]is king of Egypt called up [his troops]» (…] [Aḫm]a-su šar Mi̯-sir ipḫir [NIGIN] ma- [….). In the second line (16=2r) …]-ku-ú šá alu (URU)pu/bu-ṭu-ia-a-man should most likely be read as «…]-ku-ú of the city Pu/Buṭuiaman». …], and -ku- may stand for the ending of a personal name. One would think of the ruler of the city, but the determinative is strikingly absent. Reading the name as Learchos/ Laarchos involves considerable challenges for an historical reconstruction, which shall be discussed further below. Arguably, Wilfred Lambert had a point when he suggested ša-ku-ú — (another rendering of šaqû?) with the sense of «chiefs» (Lambert, Mitchell), or, alternatively, «Obersten» (Edel). In the next line (17 = 3v.) it is possible to read the expression «[a dis]tant region which (is) in the middle of the sea» (…] [na]-gi-i- ni-su-tú šá qí-rib tam-tim), which cannot be connected with CITYPu/Buṭuiaman in the previous line because of the lacuna. Next, lines 18–20 (4–6 v.) record (troops?) «numerous which are in Egypt», then «weapons, horses», maybe even [chariots], and the following sentence goes «he summoned to his [he]lp». This is clearly a reference to Amasis' mobilization maneuver. Making sense of the few words still legible in the ll. 21 and 22 is currently impossible.

Despite the lacunae, it is possible today to take as established some key aspects. One concerns the identification of URUPuṭu-ja-a-man with a toponym referring to a city as 'Puṭu of the Greeks': the determinative is critical in this respect. Whether or not the first part of this compound name stood for the Libyan region has been debated for a long time. This is because many argued in favor of equating Puṭu with Punt, the Egyptian name for the Horn of Africa region. In fact, it is now certain that Punt

[17] The most significant breakthrough in the understanding of the text has been achieved by Edel (1978), Leahy (1988) and Mitchell (1992). Berger (1973) no. 321 and 6, 68–69, 72, 100, 108, does not believe the reference to a Babylonian military campaign in Egypt, and Ladynin (2006) doubts that the tablet mentions Amasis. Both are off the mark.

vocalizes (wrongly) the Egyptian place name *pwn.t*.[18] Accordingly, it only remains to discuss the ethnic name *pd*, one among four attributed to people West of the Nile,[19] and the Hebrew *pûṭ*, featuring in the Old Testament and translated in the Septuagint as Libues. Finally, there is the Old Persian form *put[i]ya* (also *pūṭu*), referring to Egypt with Libya and Cyrene within the Achaemenid Empire. In Babylonian, ^{mātu}*pu-u-ṭa* designated the 'land of Libya'.[20] Against this backdrop, it is likely that the compound Puṭujaman indeed meant 'Libya of the Greeks', and ^{URU}Puṭu-ja-a-man indicated 'the city of the Libya of the Greeks', hence Cyrene.[21]

The war of Babylon against Egypt and Amasis' stele from Elephantine

Another crucial point concerns how to interpret the geographical references and the place names. Cyrene, «[a dis]tant region which (is) in the middle of the sea», as well as Egypt (mentioned in the final preserved part of the text) ought to be understood as the places from which troops and weapons were sent to Amasis as he fought against the Babylonian king. Furthermore, it is now clear that the picture of the conflict emerging from the text by and large overlaps with the one referenced in the second edition (dated in Amasis' 4th year: 567 BCE) of Amasis' stele from Elephantine. This is a complex and poorly preserved hieroglyphic text carved on a pink granite stele commissioned by Amasis and known since the beginning of the 20th century. However, only recently could it be read and understood properly.[22] The stele discusses the 'civil war' fought by Amasis against Apries. «It is self-evidently a partial, retrospective account from the victor's standpoint».[23] Details related to the armies' movements and the geography of the campaign(s) do not concern us here. With an eye of the accounts provided in Herodotus (2.162–169) and

[18] Mitchell (1992) 74.

[19] On the ethnic name *pd* (p(j)d(j) see also Graefe 1975; an overview of the Egyptian designations of Libyan people is provided by Winnicki (2002).

[20] Mitchell (1992) 75–76.

[21] Besides Edel (1978), Leahy (1988), Mitchell (1992), see Zadok (1985) 252; Brinkman (1989) 60 with n. 35; Haider (1996) 71; Niemeier (2001) 19; Kuhrt (2002) 12 n. 24; Winnicki (2002) 214; Rollinger (2007) 281.

[22] After the ragtag edition by Daressy (1900), the often-mentioned stele has been correctly understood by Edel (1978). He could identify two sections, the first, dated to Amasis' first year (570), and the second one dated in his fourth (567). It was also extensively commented upon by Leahy (1988). Jansen-Winkeln (2014) provides the most extensive study of the text currently available.

[23] Leahy (1988) 190.

Diodorus of Sicily (1.68.2–5), the following scenario can be suggested. Amasis was crowned Pharaoh by the army. Then, during the year 570, he defeated Apries' troops in the Northwestern Delta. He was acknowledged across several areas of Lower and Middle Egypt and took residence at Sais. Meanwhile, arguably as late as October, Apries was still recognized as Pharaoh in Thebes.[24] Sometime in the fall, Apries pushed forward against Sais. He may have set out from Memphis, supported by Greeks boarded on ships.[25] However, he was defeated by Amasis in a battle which is likely the same Herodotus situates at Momemphis (2.169.1). Contrary to Herodotus' account, Apries was not captured and disposed of in Sais.[26] This is because stele's text has him fighting again against Amasis in 567: only then he dies. Apries is nowhere to be found in the Egyptian record of the previous three years,[27] and this has frequently resulted in the assumption that he departed from Egypt, which is however far from certain.[28] The Elephantine stele suggests that he made a comeback around 567, while the «Asiatic» 'invaders' were active (those being the Babylonian army). Apries entered the Delta with a fleet, but he drowned in the wreckage of the expedition. Amasis buried him with all honors in Sais. This is unquestionably the timeframe of the 'civil war' mentioned in the tablet BM 33041, dated in the year 37 of Nebuchadnezzar (567 BCE). In this year, the Babylonian king attacked Amasis, and the latter resorted to military support from Cyrene, Egypt itself, and «a faraway region in the midst of the sea».

Cyrene and Amasis

As for the military collaboration between Cyrene and Amasis, Ockham's razor prompts one to think that the Pharaoh sealed a formal alliance with Cyrene right at this time (during the years of the 'civil war') and not later. Amasis was busy fighting Apries, who allied himself with the Libyans and set to clash with Cyrene in the battle of Irasa. It stands to reason that Amasis wanted to take advantage of Cyrene's hostility towards Apries, who was still a considerable threat. Herodotus' account of Amasis' diplomacy, henceforth, is of crucial importance. The Pharaoh secured a close

[24] P. BM 10113: cf. Leahy (1988) 188.

[25] «[A]t least coterminous with the Greek mercenaries whom Herodotus describes as providing Apries' support»: Leahy (1988) 190 n. 29; see also Quack (2007) 349–350.

[26] 2.169.2–3.

[27] Leahy (1988) 192 with n. 36.

[28] Edel 1978; Leahy (1988) 192.

relationship (*philotes*) and an alliance with Cyrene. Moreover (and also because of the *philotes*) he wedded Ladice of Cyrene, daughter of Battus, son of Arcesilaus. According to others — Herodotus remarks — she was the daughter of a city's notable.[29] The ensuing story of the Ladice's wedding with Amasis develops as a legend-like story replete with folklore and fairytale motives. It is evidently a traditional tale embedded in orality, yet this does not mean that the Pharaoh's marriage and especially his alliance with Cyrene are to be discarded as fictional. Herodotus' text strongly suggests that both were part and parcel of Amasis' diplomatic and military strategy. Moreover, it is hardly surprising that a political alliance was sanctioned through marriage.

Much more unlikely is the hypothesis according to which we are dealing with events from the reign of Battus III, some 20 years later than the facts of 567. In this scenario, of course, Ladice would be his daughter. Even leaving aside the chronological conundrum, such a scenario lacks the historical logic underpinning the diplomatic and military relationship between Amasis and Cyrene. The decisive point, of course, is that in 568/67 Cyrene's military support to Amasis is actually recorded: it is moreover in that year that Amasis needed it, in order to gain the upper hand over Apries and resist the Babylonian onslaught. All told, there is every reason to think that Amasis allied himself with Cyrene in 567 BCE at the latest. He did not marry a daughter of Battus III, but a daughter of Battus II. Ladice's descent from a commoner, furthermore, is likely to be slander aimed at her and indirectly at Amasis. It may have originated in Cyrene, resulting from an anti-Battiad and anti-Egyptian doctoring of the oral tradition. After all, marrying Ladice closely tied Amasis to Battus II, Ladice being both his daughter and the sister of his son Arcesilaus (II), who was meant to follow him on the throne. Amasis' dedication of a golden statue of Athena (the Pharaoh was closely attached to the Neith of Sais) may date from around this time. The same goes for a portrait of himself (Herodotus 2.182.1). Finally, Ladice's gift to Cyrene of a statue of Aphrodite still standing while Herodotus was alive (181.5) may be a narrative device resulting from a case of 'iconatrophy'.[30]

In a nutshell, key to the history of the period is the strong connection between Cyrene and Amasis from the early 60s of the 6th century. During this period, there was a hostile Babylonian presence and civil war throughout Lower Egypt involving Amasis and Apries, the Pharaoh who

[29] Hdt. 2.181.2.

[30] As Jan Vansina pointed out, the term refers to that class of spurious explanations devised retrospectively by oral tradition to explain the existence of a monument, especially a statue (Vansina 1985, 10); on iconatrophy in Herodotus, see Luraghi (2006) 78 and David (2006).

had defeated Cyrene at Irasa around 570. This connection lasted until the internal turmoil in Cyrene during Demonax's time in the 40s.

The broader picture: Egypt in the Levant

At this point, it may be useful to sift through the history of the Levant in the previous decades to locate Amasis' early years within an international context.[31] Starting from the 630s, Egypt under Psammetichus I was actively present in the Levant, taking advantage of a waning Assyrian presence. During the 610s, the Northern Levant was made tributary of Egypt, whose military presence can be spotted in the Middle Euphrates basin. However, in 605 Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish and pushed forward, reaching the Eastern borderlands of the Saitic kingdom. Next, he attempted a full-scale invasion between December and January 601/600.[32] Defeated, he withdrew, and the Egyptians reached as far as Gaza. A few years later (598/97) Nebuchadnezzar cut their ambitions once again. However, in 588, barely after ascending to the throne, Apries came to the aid of Jerusalem, then allied with Egypt, to repel Nebuchadnezzar's attack. His intervention delayed, but could not prevent, Jerusalem's fall and the destruction of its temple in 587.[33] In 582 Nebuchadnezzar tried to surprise Apries in Egypt but failed.[34] It remains unknown when Apries sent an expedition against Sidon and fought at sea against Tyre.[35] In 567, year fourth of Amasis' reign, the invasion of Egypt mentioned in BM 33041 and in the Elephantine stela took place. It seems evident that this represented the outcome of the battle for the Levant involving Apries' Egypt and Babylonia.

In 567, Nebuchadnezzar's foe was Amasis. However, this does not necessarily entail that, following the defeat of 570, Apries switched sides to the Babylonian king, taking refuge with him after fleeing Egypt, even though scholars have put forward this hypothesis.[36] He may well have

[31] See Khan (2018) for the most updated discussion, followed in the text. On Apries' foreign policy see now Forshaw (2019) 146–148.

[32] Glassner (2004) 227.

[33] Ezekiel 17.17; Jeremiah 37.5, 7–8; 11; Jos. 10.109.10; see now Forshaw (2019) 146–147.

[34] The evidence is now represented by an Apries stela published in 2013: Kahn (2018) 72–73.

[35] Hdt. 2.161.2 and Diod. 1.68.1, also recording an attack against Cyprus. Lloyd (1993) 170 ff. argues that the campaign took place between 574 and 570.

[36] Edel (1978) and Leahy (1988) 192. Lloyd (1988) 45 claims that there existed «a plan of Nebuchadrezzar II to re-establish him on the throne as a pro-Chaldean puppet», vd. Lloyd (1988) 45.

stayed in Egypt, perhaps even in his palace at Memphis.[37] Remarkably, in the Elephantine stela Apries moves of his own initiative. This is at odds with his alleged status as Babylonian *protegé*. This is not least true because his naval campaign, mentioned in section XII of the text,[38] seems only vaguely related to the land invasion, through the Sinai Peninsula, by the Babylonian army. Otherwise put, Apries likely tried to take advantage of the challenges faced by Amasis. He failed, and according to the Elephantine stela, he died in the shipwreck of his fleet. The Babylonians were initially successful, but Amasis eventually got the upper hand and chased them away.

Amasis received critical support from Cyrene. However, in the tablet the phrase «a far away region in the middle of the sea» seems to refer to further military support for Amasis.[39] Mazzarino took it for granted that Cyprus is referenced here, following the tradition of Assyrian royal inscriptions. In his view, the island already was Amasis' «vassal».[40] However, the picture is more complex. To begin with, it is unlikely that in 567 Amasis controlled Cyprus. The challenging internal situation of Egypt cannot be squared with the scale of the human capital and economic resources required by a naval expedition against the island. Alternatively, the phrasing of the cuneiform text may imply, without excluding Cyprus, a wider geographical context, embracing the Southern Anatolian world, Greece, and Caria.[41] Amasis did not need to hold Cyprus to ensure the flow of troops from that region to Egypt. The movement of mercenaries towards the Nile was arguably more intense and diversified than scholars are inclined to admit: Babylonians, too, relied on paid armed service from Greece and Caria.[42] Hence, the involvement of Cyprus and other polities from Asia Minor in support of Amasis cannot be ruled out. Once again, Mazzarino was on the right track. Amasis, however, took control over Cyprus only later. This was the outcome of a story that quickened during the 'civil war' against Apries and represented the pinnacle of a century-old relationship between Egypt and the island.

If one looks at the broader picture, the history of Cyrene in the 6th century indeed is marked by «the question of its relationship with Egypt»

[37] Leahy (1988) 197 and n. 68.

[38] Jansen-Winkeln (2014) 137.

[39] BM 33041 (l. 3 of the reverse).

[40] Reyes (1994) considers it plausible that the text was, in fact, evoking Cyprus.

[41] Rollinger (2001) 237–240.

[42] Rollinger (2007) 290, 292, 296 e n. 153.

and it is also embedded in the history of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean, as sensed by Mazzarino.[43]

Learchos and the chronology of the kings of Cyrene

A thorny problem remains in the history of the Battiad monarchy. The question is whether the usurper Learchos fits into the historical context of the 'civil war' between Apries and Amasis and, consequentially, whether the traditionally accepted chronology of Cyrene's kings still stands. Mazzarino's suggestion never found wide acceptance. Revisiting the issue seems advisable.

Once again, the core of the matter is the equation between cityPuṭujaman and Cyrene and the alliance with Amasis. L. 2r in the text of BM 330141 reads [.....]-ku-ú šá ālu (URU)Pu/bu-ṭu-ja-a-man. As already mentioned, Mazzarino saw -ku-ú as the remains of the Akkadian rendering of Learchos' name. Hence, the reign of Arcesilaus II would end in 567 with his death at the usurper's hands.

This scenario implies a chronology which is problematic in many ways. Arcesilaus would have succeeded Battus II two or three years before 567. According to such a scenario, within no more than three years after 570, the following is supposed to have taken place: king Arcesilaus' brothers rose against him, then departed from Cyrene and organized the founding of Barce. The Western Libyans rebelled and linked up with the Eastern Libyans. Their mobilization is supposed to have happened next (Mazzarino saw it unfolding at the behest and through the involvement of Learchos himself). An army marched against Cyrene, resulting in the clash at Leukon and the devastating defeat of Cyrene (7000 men fell).[44] Learchos' court putsch would have ensued, resulting in Arcesilaus' death and, finally, in the usurper's takeover with his alliance with Amasis. The alliance had allegedly been sealed through a diplomatic marriage between the Pharaoh and the sister of the murdered king Arcesilaus. It is hard to deny that such a picture appears rather unlikely.

The alternative is to follow Lambert in reading ša]-ku-ú in BM 33041. This would be a generic term covering pivotal (military?) positions at Cyrene. The acting king may still have been Battus II, which would make the marriage alliance with Amasis easier to understand. If Learchos disappears from the picture implied by the tablet, Arcesilaus' rise to the throne could be dated to the end of the 560s or the beginning of the 550s. The murky events caused by the brothers' revolt and everything cascading

[43] Mazzarino (1947) 149.

[44] Hdt. 1.160.3.

from those (from the foundation of Barce to the battle of Leukon and finally Learchos' disposal of Arcesilaus II) should be placed in the following years. Against Mazzarino's view,[45] it does not necessarily follow that Learchos had already planned for the Leukon drama. He may just have seized the moment. Cyrene stayed closely linked to Amasis (who may even have supported and protected the settlement) under Learchos and his murderer Polyarchus, the latter being the son of Arcesilaus' widow.[46] The alliance between the troubled Cyrene of the 6th century and a Pharaoh like Amasis could not be one among equals. One could wonder why Learchos did not reverse the course established by his predecessors concerning Egypt. It may be argued that, even more than them, he needed Amasis' backing (and perhaps his protection). At any rate, he neither had the strength nor the interest to give up both.

In light of all the above, the chronology of the Battiad kings may be defined (with some adjustments to the one established by Chamoux) roughly as follows.[47] Battus II reigned from 580 until, at the latest, the late 60s. Arcesilaus II followed from the late 60s until the late 550s. Some years are then taken up by the events related to Learchos' takeover, his assassination at the hands of Polyarchus, and the handing over of power to the by-now adult son of Arcesilaus II. So, the throne passed to Battus III 'the lame', maybe during the first half of the 540s. However, under him the king's power never regained strength vis à vis the family and the court. Some years later, likely in the late 540s, the time became ripe for the 'reforms' under Demonax of Mantinea. This solution to the crisis of the monarchy was by no means a gift to the people. On the contrary, it heralded the renewed power of the court élites and the land's notables against the king's might. Arguably, the relationships with Amasis' Egypt built over the years by Cyrene's kings appeared to those who took power after them as one reason more to curb their power. The civic pride strategically mobilized by élites striving to tame the king's role in society looked with suspicion upon the oversized role of the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Arcesilaus III likely succeeded Battus III not in 535/530 (as usually argued) but in the early 20s.[48] Starting in 525, Cyrene and the Battiad monarchy faced another Eastern force. This time, the invader of Egypt did not come from Mesopotamia but from Iran. In a way, Cambyses

[45] Mazzarino (1947) 150.

[46] Plut. *Mor*. 261 b–d.

[47] Chamoux (1953) 151 n. 2 and 210 (Battus I: 639–599; Arcesilaus I: 599–583; Battus II: 583[also 580/75: see 123]–post 570; Arcesilaus II: post 570–555/50; Battus III: ?–?; Arcesilaus III: ante 525–520/15; Battus IV: ca. 515–470/65; Arcesilaus IV: ante 462–ca. 440).

[48] Giangiulio (2023) 9 with nn. 11–12.

looked like a new Nebuchadnezzar.[49] This impacted the history of Cyrene considerably, once again within a horizon embracing Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean, with Cyprus at the forefront.

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[49] See Habaj (2018).

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Santo Mazzarino's Cultural *Koiné* of Asia Minor and Its "Limits": New Perspectives on Old Greek Miracles*

— Marco Santini —

Abstract

The article assesses the legacy of Santo Mazzarino's Fra Oriente e Occidente *with respect to the author's views on the emergence of the Greek* polis *against broader phenomena of cultural interaction between Greece and ancient Near Eastern civilizations. It argues that, eighty years after the publication of Mazzarino's otherwise pioneering work, modern scholarship has not yet overcome the prejudice, central in Mazzarino's thought, whereby Greek political culture constitutes the most important exception to the numerous cultural experiences that the Greeks shared with their eastern neighbors. Yet, the article also posits that a way to solve this prejudice can be found in Mazzarino's work itself, namely among the author's formulations of the concept of cultural* koiné.

Keywords

Santo Mazzarino, Greece and the Near East, Greek miracle, polis*, tyranny,* koiné

1. Reading Mazzarino Today: Unresolved Tensions

Almost eighty years have passed since its publication, but the present time seems most appropriate for a new reflection on Santo Mazzarino's *Fra Oriente e Occidente*.[1] I shall begin by briefly looking at current debates on the status of Classical Studies as a discipline. Over the last couple of decades, Classical scholars have been

* A shorter version of this paper was presented at the roundtable *Fra Oriente e Occidente: le vie della cultura e le vie del potere*, held in Turin on 14 April 2023 and organized by the Department of History of the University of Turin and the Luigi Firpo Foundation, with the contribution of Fondazione 1563. I am grateful to Nino Luraghi for inviting me to participate in the event and for his feedback on the present paper. I read Santo Mazzarino's *Fra Oriente e Occidente* for the first time when I was a twenty-year-old undergraduate student. Ever since, that book has never ceased to be a source of inspiration. All translations in this paper are my own unless otherwise noted.

[1] The book was published by La Nuova Italia, Florence, in 1947 (Mazzarino [1947]). In the present paper, all citations and quotations follow the page numbering of the edition published by Bollati Boringhieri, Turin, in 2007 (Mazzarino [2007]).

calling for greater inclusivity in the discipline and for an expansion of its research and teaching horizons. The concept of the "Classics" is being revised: the canon of Greek and Latin authors sometimes expands to Akkadian epic poetry, while the study of Greek and Roman history — which, somewhat forcibly, alone constitutes the discipline called "Ancient History" — is often accompanied by a need for wider perspectives that emphasize the relations between those civilizations and neighboring ones in the Mediterranean basin and beyond.[2]

Those who have read *Fra Oriente e Occidente* will find this debate quite familiar.[3] In the introductory chapter of the volume, Mazzarino addresses with irritation the tendency of some scholars to deny *a priori* any connections between the Greek world and the Near East:

> [O]gni aprioristica "insistenza" su arbitrari pregiudizi classicistici, e ogni denegazione dei rapporti fra Grecia e Oriente, si deve considerar ingiustificata e (se anche presentata sotto il manto di una scientifica "prudenza") ostinatamente "imprudente."[4]
>
> Any aprioristic "insistence" on arbitrary classicist prejudices, and any denial of the connections between Greece and the Near East, must be considered unjustified and (even if presented under the mantle of scientific "caution") stubbornly "incautious."

On the other hand — Mazzarino argues — the Classicists' skepticism towards postulating Near Eastern influences on the Greek world proves to be methodologically sound as long as it does not end up being sheer

[2] Cf. Horden and Purcell (2000) 9–15; Raaflaub (2000) 51–52, 60; Bagnall (2005) 342–43; Vlassopoulos (2007) esp. 101–122; Haubold (2011); Broodbank (2013) 25; Adler (2020); López-Ruiz (2021) 4–9; López-Ruiz (2022); Murray (2024) 12–27, 353–54; Scheidel (2025). See further Mac Sweeney (2023) and Quinn (2024) for these questions within the debate on what constitutes "Western Civilization." A controversial, notoriously flawed attempt to deconstruct the myth of "Classical Civilization" was carried out by M. Bernal in his *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (3 vols. 1987–2006); see Lefkowitz and Rogers (1996) for reactions.

[3] Some fifty years ago, Arnaldo Momigliano also pointed out the limits of European education, sphere of knowledge, and system of values, intrinsically conditioned by the legacy of Hellenism; see Momigliano (1975a) 11–12 and Momigliano (1975b); further comments in Santini (2021) 287. For Momigliano's reaction to Mazzarino's work, see below, note 36.

[4] Mazzarino (2007) 26.

skepticism but leads to in-depth analyses that aim to establish motivations, contexts, and consequences of said influences — in other words, historical explanations.[5]

Mazzarino's effort to interpret cross-cultural interactions on the historical level manifests itself into his adoption of the concept of cultural *koiné*. Mazzarino identifies at least four areas of cultural *koiné*, corresponding to zones of peripheral "Greekness" where Greeks came into contact with non-Greek civilizations. One can distinguish among the different zones of *koiné* by their respective remoteness from the Greek mainland, the complexity of the societies in which they have their roots, and the antiquity of those roots. The most remote and least complex *koiné* zones are those of Ukraine, Cyrenaica, Spain, and Gaul. Then comes the Italic cultural *koiné*, where the "Greekness" of Sicily and Magna Graecia came into contact with Latins, Etruscans, Oscans, and Umbrians, and from which Rome emerged. Finally, the cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor — which encapsulates relations between Ionians, Phrygians, Lydians, Lycians, and Carians — stands out as it is rooted in interactions that occurred during the Bronze Age between civilizations by then already characterized by a high degree of social and political complexity.[6]

The cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor is the prime location for studying relations between East and West and for understanding the nature of "Greekness" itself. Asia Minor is where the "soul" of the Greeks manifested more evidently than anywhere else. According to Mazzarino, the *koiné* of Asia Minor witnessed the "miracle" of Ionian culture, the most distinctive culture of the archaic Greek world, which expressed, in its *poleis*, the fundamental traits of Greek collective life.[7] Therefore, it appears that the "intimate collaboration" between Greeks and non-Greeks within the *koiné* of Asia Minor coincides with the Greeks standing out for the peculiarity of their political culture.[8]

This tension, unresolved in Mazzarino's work, seems to me particularly worthy of reflection.[9] Almost eighty years later, the question is

[5] Mazzarino (2007) 25–26; cf. also 5–18 for his history of scholarship. The question translates into an opposition between "universal history" and "national histories." See also Ampolo (1997) 5–12, 42–57, 85, 88–93, 113–27.

[6] Mazzarino (2007) 21–22; for the argument about the deep roots of the *koiné* of Asia Minor, see *ibid.* 31–39. For Mazzarino's concept of *koiné*, cf. Corsaro (2003) 28–32 and Mazza (2023), Chapters 1, 5, and 6.

[7] Mazzarino (2007) 20–22, 26–27.

[8] Mazzarino (2007) 23 ("intima collaborazione").

[9] On Mazzarino's unresolved tension, see the remarks of Giarrizzo (2003) and especially Corsaro (2003); cf. also Mazza (1991) 328, more generally on certain aspects

still timely: the most recent studies on early Greek political development, the widespread "Mediterraneanist" approach to the Classical world, and today's drives to broadening the horizons of Classical Studies have largely failed to tackle the tacit assumption whereby Greek political culture is intrinsically different from the political culture of neighboring Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies — certainly incommensurable with it, if not implicitly superior to it. Despite a growing interest in various kinds of cultural interaction between Greece and its eastern neighbors, research on this subject is still underdeveloped. This is an elephant in the room that urgently demands our attention.

Starting from the tension that features in Mazzarino's seminal work, this contribution aims to outline new directions for future research on this problem.

2. The Limits of *Koiné*

Mazzarino himself is aware of the tension he posits and tries to define its causes. This endeavor translates into an attempt to identify the "limits" of the concept of *koiné*.

In Mazzarino's treatment, the "limits" of the *koiné* of Asia Minor are of a political nature, specifically institutional and constitutional. They are represented by the presence, in the Ionian world, of the "typical Greek experience," the *polis*, which was absent in the Phrygian, Lydian, and neighboring worlds sharing that common cultural experience.[10] In Mazzarino's view, any aspect of cultural-political *koiné* has its own evolutions, nuances, and limits: the "constitutional travail" that gave birth to the *polis*, according to a metaphor frequently employed by the author, corresponds to a moment when the effects of the cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor on the development of the Greek world proved to be of "the least importance."[11] In the experience of the *polis* — Mazzarino writes — one sees the "leap" from the "barbarian" world of Asia Minor to the Ionian one.[12]

Thus, the *polis* stands outside the common cultural experience of Greeks and non-Greeks in Asia Minor. However, upon closer examination, Mazzarino fails to provide historically convincing explanations for this limit of the cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor — a limit which rather

of Mazzarino's work: "… le sue audacie filosofiche, i suoi ragionamenti sottili, certe prospettive innovatrici si risolvono nella conferma della tradizione."

[10] Mazzarino (2007) 26.

[11] Mazzarino (2007) 30 ("il minimo di importanza").

[12] Mazzarino (2007) 26–27 ("il 'salto' dal mondo micrasiatico 'barbaro' allo ionico").

appears to be a preconception. In the pages dedicated to the origins of the *polis*, in chapter five of the book,[13] Mazzarino firmly argues for the incommensurability of the Greek political experience with other political experiences, foremost among them that of Lydia, co-protagonist with Ionia of the *koiné* of Asia Minor:

> Di fronte alla *polis* in quanto organismo costituzionale, si è fermato l'influsso della Lidia. Dal punto di vista costituzionale, nulla i vassalli potevano insegnare ai cittadini; nulla i Lidii potevano dire agli Ioni. Né la crisi che noi indichiamo generalmente come fenomeno "tirannico," né, tanto meno, un qualche impulso verso ordinamenti democratici. La *polis* è un organismo ellenico, ed ellenico soltanto: *tutta* la sua storia, *tutta* la sua evoluzione si commisura solamente con la storia culturale e sociale dei Greci.[14]
>
> Faced with the *polis* as a constitutional organism, Lydian influence stopped. From a constitutional point of view, the vassals could teach nothing to the citizens; the Lydians had nothing to say to the Ionians. Neither the crisis we generally refer to as the "tyrannical" phenomenon nor, much less, any impetus towards democratic arrangements. The *polis* is a Hellenic organism, and Hellenic only: its *entire* history, its *entire* evolution is coextensive only with the cultural and social history of the Greeks.

This stance, which can undoubtedly be described as aprioristic, betrays an essentialist vision of the notion of *polis* and is in open conflict with the need for an "anticlassicist" approach which Mazzarino had expressed in the introduction (see above, § 1). The essentialism informing Mazzarino's vision of the *polis* is even more evident a few lines later:

> [È] probabile che il problema dell'"origine della *polis*" si risolva su un piano sociologico piuttosto che su un piano propriamente storico: la *polis* non ha origine precisa da questo o quel fenomeno contingente — ma piuttosto trae caratteristiche e aspetti propri da un'esigenza generica dell'anima greca. Di un tale fenomeno non si dà origine; esso *è*; …[15]
>
> [It is] probable that the problem of the "origin of the *polis*" be resolved on a sociological rather than on a properly historical level: the *polis* does not have a precise origin from this or that contingent phenomenon

[13] Mazzarino (2007) 199–208.

[14] Mazzarino (2007) 199–200 (original emphasis).

[15] Mazzarino (2007) 200 (original emphasis).

> — rather, it draws its own characteristics and aspects from a general need of the Greek soul. Such a phenomenon has no origin; it *is*; …

In short, the *polis* is an ahistorical product of a "general need of the Greek soul." No other city-state culture contemporaneous with the Greek one — such as the Phoenician, Philistine, or Neo-Hittite city-state culture[16] — can be considered a source of influence for the Greek one. Although Mazzarino identifies common denominators explaining the spread of this type of political organization, such as the dissolution of great empires, migrations of peoples, and the resulting tendency towards "civic atomism,"[17] the constitutional essence of the Greek *polis* remains irreducible to other experiences:

> [L]e forme costituzionali proprie della grecità sono creazione dello *spirito* greco; questo è il più semplice, ma anche l'unico modo d'intenderne la genesi …[18]

> The constitutional forms peculiar to Greekness are creations of the Greek *spirit*; this is the simplest, but also the only way to understand their genesis …

One might ask where the essence of this "spirit" of the Greek people lies. For Mazzarino, it resides in an "isonomic need" arising from the crisis of the aristocratic state.[19] The formulation of this concept is influenced by a scheme, ultimately of Aristotelian origin, that interprets the constitutional evolution of the Greek state as a transition from kingship to aristocracy to democracy — a scheme now largely surpassed and not worth delving into further,[20] except to note that for Mazzarino the final stage of the evolutionary process is not necessarily represented by democracy but rather by "isonomy" (*isonomia*) itself, which can also occur in an oligarchic context (the so-called "isonomic oligarchy," *oligarchia isonomos*). The transfer of power to collegial institutions ensuring equal laws for all is the culmination of the process.[21]

[16] For the notion of "city-state culture" in a comparative perspective, see Hansen (2000a), Hansen (2000b), Hansen (2002). Cf. now Osborne (2021) for the Neo-Hittite (or Syro-Anatolian) world.

[17] Mazzarino (2007) 203–204 ("atomismo cittadino").

[18] Mazzarino (2007) 205 (original emphasis).

[19] Mazzarino (2007) 205–216 ("esigenza isonomica," *passim*).

[20] See e.g., for kingship, Drews (1983), Luraghi (2013a), and Luraghi (2013b); for aristocracy, Duplouy (2006) 11–35, esp. 12–16, and van Wees and Fisher (2015).

[21] Mazzarino (2007) 215–16.

Where does this "isonomic need" come from? It arises from the need to curb the *habrosyne*, the ostentation of luxury which characterized archaic aristocracies, and its deleterious effects on the state's life, particularly the oppression of the "free of inferior condition," the *kakoi*.[22] However, the aristocracy itself first moved in this direction through the institution of tyrannies. For Mazzarino, tyranny is a crucial moment in the evolution of the Greek state towards isonomy, but it is also a source of embarrassment due to the difficulty of determining its origins and its relations with Near Eastern autocracies, especially Lydian autocracy. The fundamental issue on which Mazzarino's discussion hinges is the theory of the Lydian origin of tyranny.[23] It is worth dwelling on the treatment of tyranny because it is here that Mazzarino most strongly appeals to the "limits" of the cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor:

> Ci si dirà: com'è lecito porre da una parte un problema ionico in termini di *koiné* culturale micrasiatica, e viceversa porre in discussione, d'altra parte, quell'origine lidia della tirannide, la quale, anzi, dovrebbe, se mai, postularsi proprio da chi insiste su una *koiné* culturale micrasiatica? Alla quale obiezione va risposto, in genere, che, come già si accennava, ogni fenomeno di *koiné* culturale presuppone varie "sfumature," e ha limiti ed aspetti vari; e che, in ogni modo, l'evoluzione costituzionale in un momento "creativo" (come è questo in cui si trapassa dallo stato aristocratico greco alla *polis*) è un processo caratteristico, e come tale va studiata.[24]
>
> One might say: how is it legitimate, on the one hand, to pose an Ionian problem in terms of a cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor, and on the other hand, to question the Lydian origin of tyranny, which, if anything, should indeed be postulated by those who insist on a cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor? To this objection, it must be answered, generally, that, as already hinted, every phenomenon of cultural *koiné* presupposes various "nuances" and has several limits and aspects; and that, in any case, constitutional evolution in a "creative" moment (such as this, in which the Greek aristocratic state transitions to the *polis*) is a distinctive process, and it must be studied as such.

[22] Mazzarino (2007) 215 ("liberi di condizione inferiore"). For Mazzarino, *habrosyne* and its social and political consequences define the Archaic Age as a historical period; see further below, § 4, and cf. Kurke (1991) and Murray (2024) 224–25.

[23] The theme of tyranny is addressed at different points in the book; see Mazzarino (2007) 29–30, 185–96, 216–25, 230–37.

[24] Mazzarino (2007) 30.

The obstinate denial of any influence from Asia Minor or more generally from the Near East in the "constitutional travail" that led from the crisis of the aristocratic state to isonomy underlies Mazzarino's categorical refusal to look for the origins of tyranny in Asia Minor, and specifically in Lydia — despite his belief that the term *tyrannos* belonged to the "Asiatic" linguistic heritage.[25] Mazzarino's demonstration that tyranny cannot have Lydian origins is fundamentally based on three arguments: several tyrants of Asia Minor were enemies of the Lydians; the aristocratic families of *lydizontes* documented in the *poleis* of Asia Minor did not aim to establish tyrannies; in Asia Minor, especially in Ionia, tyranny opposed the conservatism of aristocratic families and limited their *habrosyne*, which was indeed based on their relations with Lydia within the framework of the cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor.[26] It is hardly necessary to emphasize that none of those arguments is compelling, as Mazzarino seems to confuse the issue of the origins of tyranny as a political phenomenon or form of government with the issue, irrelevant in this specific case, of the relations of the tyrants of Asia Minor with the Lydian ruling class or with Lydianizing aristocracies in Greek *poleis*.[27] More interesting for our purposes are the consequences of the reasoning: tyranny is a constitutive part of the evolutionary process of the *polis* — a process, let us reiterate, exclusively Greek — because, by opposing aristocratic *habrosyne*, it effectively pursues the same objectives as isonomy. However, it manifests itself as the non-ethical and violent moment in the establishment of isonomy, which finds its ethical and non-violent counterpart in the figure of the lawgiver.[28]

Excluding any possibility of influence in the political-constitutional domain, in the remaining chapters Mazzarino addresses the routes of the "generic cultural influence"[29] of the Near East on archaic Greece, identified in a maritime route dominated by the relations among Phoenicians, Cretans, and mainland Greeks,[30] and in a land route centered on Ionia

[25] Mazzarino (2007) 195–96, 367 note 572. For the linguistic background of the term *tyrannos* see further below, § 5.

[26] Mazzarino (2007) 185–93.

[27] That Mazzarino's reasoning is flawed does not mean that its opposite is true, that is, that tyranny originates from Lydia; for the problem of the origins of tyranny see now Santini (2024), esp. 42–44 for the Lydian question.

[28] Mazzarino (2007) 215.

[29] Mazzarino (2007) 247 ("generico influsso culturale").

[30] Mazzarino (2007) 245–70 (chapter six, "Commerci fenici e colonie greche"). See further Bonnet in this volume.

and more widely Asia Minor.[31] In this framework, what were initially defined as the "limits" of the cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor become the "limits" of any relationship between the Greek world and the Near East: East–West relations — the relations between the Greek "West" with any kind of "East" — are reduced to a "generic cultural influence" to which the political sphere remained immune. Precisely in the political sphere, by contrast, Greek identity expressed itself in peculiar forms:

> Dinanzi all'elaborazione di un'originale esperienza costituzionale si è fermato l'influsso dell'Oriente: presente agli inizi di questa esperienza, connesso con l'intensificarsi della vita commerciale ed economica, quell'influsso si arresta dinanzi al peculiare travaglio per cui la *polis* passò dalle forme costituzionali aristocratiche all'isonomia ed infine agli ordinamenti democratici. L'evoluzione costituzionale dello stato lidio nulla poté insegnare all'evoluzione costituzionale delle *poleis* greche, anche delle ioniche; a maggior ragione, nulla poté insegnare ad esse l'evoluzione degli altri stati orientali — anche degli stati-città: ci poté essere […] un parallelismo iniziale, ma nulla di più.[32]
>
> Before the elaboration of an original constitutional experience, Near Eastern influence stopped: present at the beginning of this experience, connected with the intensification of commercial and economic life, that influence stops before the peculiar travail through which the *polis* transitioned from aristocratic constitutional forms to isonomy and finally to democratic arrangements. The constitutional evolution of the Lydian state could teach nothing to the constitutional evolution of the Greek *poleis*, not even the Ionian ones; a fortiori, the evolution of other Near Eastern states — even state-cities — could teach nothing to them: there could be […] an initial parallelism, but nothing more.

At the end of the book, Mazzarino concludes that the constitutional evolution proper of the Greek *poleis* is precisely where "Western Civilization" was born and manifested itself for the first time:

[31] Mazzarino (2007) 271–92 (chapter seven, "L'altra via fra Oriente e Occidente"). For the land route, cf. also Birmingham (1961); Burkert (1998); van Dongen (2013); Liverani (2021a) 364, 370. For the importance of land routes in a Mediterranean context more generally, cf. Horden and Purcell (2000) 130–33, 151.

[32] Mazzarino (2007) 247. For the difference established by Mazzarino between (Greek) "city-states" ("città-stato") and (Near Eastern) "state-cities" ("stati-città") — driven by an unwillingness to apply the category of city-state, normally used for the Greek *polis*, to city-states that were not *poleis* — see Liverani (2021a) 375.

> Il travaglio costituzionale ci è apparso, dunque, opera di tutti i Greci; ed è un travaglio gelosamente, diremmo, greco, senza nessun "emprunt" lidio o comunque straniero. In esso l'anima dell'Occidente si è, la prima volta, rivelata. Partendo da condizioni economiche e sociali analoghe a quelle delle città-stato orientali, i Greci hanno tuttavia "scoperto" qualcosa che gli Orientali non sospettavano: l'esigenza isonomica. Questa fu la nascita dell'Occidente.[33]
>
> The constitutional travail has thus appeared to us as the work of all the Greeks; and it is a travail that is, as it were, jealously Greek, without any Lydian or otherwise foreign "borrowing." In it, the soul of the West has, for the first time, revealed itself. Starting from economic and social conditions similar to those of the Oriental city-states, the Greeks, however, "discovered" something that the Orientals did not suspect: the isonomic need. This was the birth of the West.

Mazzarino reached these conclusions eighty years ago.[34] And yet, although the problem of the relations between East and West has been approached anew from many different angles and much work has been done to deconstruct the myth of "Western Civilization,"[35] today the view that the Greek political experience is incommensurable with the political experiences of other ancient Mediterranean or Near Eastern societies still holds sway — and this is especially true for the Classicists' side of things.[36]

[33] Mazzarino (2007) 296.

[34] In *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, what ultimately seems to distinguish the achievements of the Greeks as opposed to those of Near Eastern societies is the "rational" nature of the "Greek soul" as opposed to the "spiritual" nature of Near Eastern thought. This stance is most evident in the parallel drawn by Mazzarino between rational *historiē* and Greek political life; see Mazzarino (2007) 287–92; 295–97. In later works, Mazzarino came to more nuanced formulations and the initial dichotomy between "rational" and "spiritual" forms of thought is blurred. On this question, see now Corsaro (2003) 42–44; cf. also Liverani (2021a) 374, 376–77.

[35] See above, note 2, and further below, § 3.

[36] In a vitriolic review of *Fra Oriente e Occidente* which appeared one year after the publication of Mazzarino's book, Arnaldo Momigliano quite paradoxically claimed that the problem of East–West relations no longer deserved treatment ("L'unica cosa da fare intorno al problema 'Oriente e Occidente' è di non parlarne più"), while expressing skepticism on the putative originality of the Greeks in terms of political institutions ("Vorrei essere meno reciso sulla originalità dei Greci in materia di istituzioni politiche"). See Momigliano (1948), now republished in Mazzarino (2007) 394–403 (quotes from 399 and 400 respectively).

3. Current Approaches: Limits and New Directions

Let us briefly go back to my starting point. If we look at the directions in which the attempt to broaden the horizon of Classical Studies has moved in recent decades, we will easily notice that — with some exceptions on which I will focus in a moment — the political problem has remained at the margins of the debate on the relations between Greece and the Near East or on the "Mediterranean" dimension of the Greek world. Influential works such as *The Corrupting Sea* by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell[37] and *The Making of the Middle Sea* by Cyprian Broodbank[38] have brought to the forefront structural factors that unite the varied and multifaceted world of the ancient Mediterranean.[39] Although their subject matter is the entire Mediterranean basin in a *longue durée* dimension, these works have significantly contributed, too, to reorienting the investigation towards phenomena of connectivity within various sectors of the Mediterranean, on a regional or supra-regional level and over shorter, discrete periods of time.[40] On the one hand, questions posed on a pan-Mediterranean scale can retain their heuristic potential when they are simultaneously posed on a smaller scale *within* the Mediterranean; in fact, research on Mediterranean antiquity could benefit even more from a multiscalar approach that does not dilute regionalities into a Mediterranean uniformity, but takes into account multiple levels of integration.[41] On the other hand, it has been recognized that Mediterranean integration is not an absolute constant, but rather the result of a process that unfolded for millennia and reached a peak around the eighth century BCE, with periods of intensification and abatement and with different regions within the Basin following different timings and tempoes.[42] Another

[37] Horden and Purcell (2000).

[38] Broodbank (2013).

[39] For reactions and responses, cf. Harris (2005a) and Horden and Purcell (2020). For the influence of Braudel's vision of the Mediterranean in modern historiography, see Murray (2024) 341–55. For a Mediterranean reading of Mazzarino's work, see Aymard and Galasso (2004) 9–10; cf. Aymard (2004); Galasso (2004).

[40] Cf. e.g. van de Mieroop (2005); Hodos (2020); Arrington (2021); Osborne and Hall (2022). As has been pointed out, however, attention should be paid so that the label "Mediterranean studies" does not just become "a politically correct alternative to Classics;" see Broodbank (2013) 25 (quote); cf. Harris (2005b) 2, 16 ("let our answers not be too Greek"); Herzfeld (2005) 49; Bagnall (2005) 342; Horden and Purcell (2020) 8.

[41] See e.g. Dietler (2022) 233–36; Riva and Grau Mira (2022); cf. also Harris (2005b) 7.

[42] A process called "Mediterraneanization"; see Morris (2003) and Broodbank (2013) esp. 15–53, 506–12, 600–605. On the importance of historical change in

important corollary of the "Mediterraneanist" approach has been the dissolution of the conceptual barrier that opposes "East" and "West," simultaneously challenged by the debate on the "Orient," "Orientalism," "Orientalizing," and similar concepts.[43] In short, in the "Mediterraneanist" approach, East and West belong to a broader "Mediterranean" perspective worthy of a unified analysis.[44]

However, the political element remains largely absent from this type of investigation, both on a pan-Mediterranean scale and on a smaller scale. For Horden and Purcell, the unity of the Mediterranean, or rather the Basin's structural characteristic of being a "continuum of discontinuities,"[45] ultimately lies in its ecological conformation. In the framework they outlined, there is no room for the analysis of shared structural factors of a political-institutional order.[46] In Broodbank's treatment, states and institutions feature as the protagonists of major historical events that triggered dynamics of rise and abatement, acceleration or

accounts of Mediterranean history, see also Shaw (2001) 426–27 and Harris (2005b) 8–10, 24–25, 37–38.

[43] See e.g. Riva and Vella (2006); Gunter (2013); Fales (2021); Liverani (2021a); Liverani (2021b); Arrington (2022). The debate goes back to Said (1978). For this debate in the context of Mediterranean studies, cf. Broodbank (2013) 23, 53, 500–502, 518, 604; Hodos (2020) 1–34; López-Ruiz (2021) 1–89; López-Ruiz (2022); for the traditional East–West orientation of Mediterranean studies, cf. Bowersock (2005). Still, some authors have warned that "Mediterraneanism" may run the risk of becoming just an avatar of "Orientalism;" see Harris (2005b) 2, 38; Herzfeld (2005) 48, 51.

[44] Cf. Purcell (1990) and Horden and Purcell (2000) 9–25, though in the end the Near East plays little role in the book, as has been pointed out by Shaw (2001) 420. It plays a more extensive role in the integrated histories of Broodbank (2013) and Quinn (2024). For the "Mediterranean" dimension of different parts of the Near East and moments of Near Eastern history, cf. also van de Mieroop (2005); Haubold (2012); and Bagnall (2005) for Egypt. This question should be contextualized within the debate on the "boundaries" of the Mediterranean; see esp. Shaw (2001) 423–24; Morris (2003) 45; Galasso (2004) 34; Harris (2005b) 4–5, 11–12; Broodbank (2013) 25, 54–60; Murray (2024) 354. For a reaction to early criticism, cf. Purcell (2003) (= Horden and Purcell [2020] 42–60).

[45] Horden and Purcell (2000) 53.

[46] Horden and Purcell (2000) 2, 20–25. A partial exception is their treatment of the typologies of "town" and "city," but even in this case the political-human aspect of settlement is set to the background as different typologies of settlements are conceptualized from an ecological point of view ("microecologies"); see Horden and Purcell (2000) 90–122, with the comments by Shaw (2001) 444–45 and Harris (2005b) 29–34. Cf. already Purcell (1990) esp. 49–54.

deceleration, in Mediterranean connectivity.[47] Yet, those who made interconnectedness possible were traders rather than political actors.[48] Similarly, the numerous studies that in recent years have revisited the problem of the relations between East and West — whether from a "Mediterraneanist" perspective or in a more traditional sense, up to the very recent volume *The Connected Iron Age* edited by Jonathan Hall and James Osborne[49] — have done so from a literary and linguistic perspective,[50] from the point of view of trade and material culture,[51] population movements and ethnogenesis (too often uncritically associated),[52] religion,[53] and other aspects of culture and society more broadly,[54] while little attention has been paid to the role played by political thought, practice, and institutions in the formation of shared cultural experiences.[55]

As I mentioned, there are some exceptions. The first case to be mentioned is that of the so-called "international system" of the Late Bronze Age, best documented by the Amarna letters and diplomatic

[47] See, for example, the role of Assyria's imperial interests in triggering Mediterranean-wide connectivity: Broodbank (2013) 491, cf. also Purcell (1990) 38–44. For different views on this question, see e.g. Frankenstein (1979); Sherratt and Sherratt (1993); Aubet (1993) 78, 90–96; López-Ruiz (2021).

[48] Not differently from Horden and Purcell (see above, note 46), for Broodbank the essential traits of the "Mediterranean polity" are not of a political nature but concern the relation of the "state" with the environment: polities of a "Mediterranean" type encompass an ecologically diverse territory; see Broodbank (2013) 604. For some criticism to the absolute prominence of the trader or seafarer as the main representative of economic activity in the Mediterranean, see already Purcell (1990) 53–54; Horden and Purcell (2000) 30.

[49] Hall and Osborne (2022).

[50] See e.g. López-Ruiz (2010); Louden (2011); Haubold (2013); Metcalf (2015); Bachvarova (2016); Bianconi (2021); Myerston (2023); Metcalf (2025). This and the following lists are not exhaustive but purely indicative.

[51] See e.g. Gunter (2009); van Dommelen and Knapp (2010); Aruz et al. (2014); Aruz and Seymour (2016); Knapp and Demesticha (2017); Martin (2017); Hodos (2020); Arrington (2021); and several contributions in Hall and Osborne (2022).

[52] See e.g. Yasur-Landau (2010); Fischer and Bürge (2017); Driessen (2018); Demetriou (2023).

[53] See e.g. Metcalf (2015); Nissinen (2017); Blakely and Collins (2019); Rutherford (2020); Kelly and Metcalf (2021); Ulanowski (2021).

[54] See e.g. Collins et al. (2008); Rollinger et al. (2010); Rollinger and Schnegg (2014); Rollinger (2017); von Bredow (2017); Halpern and Sacks (2017); D.M. Lewis (2017); D.M. Lewis (2018); Stevens (2019); Payne et al. (2021).

[55] Absence of political factors from the narrative has been a point of criticism to the Mediterraneanist approach since its inception; see e.g. Morris (2003) 51; Harris (2005b) 6–7, 36–37.

correspondence from other archives. It is widely recognized that in the 14th and 13th centuries the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East were largely part of an integrated system characterized by shared political ideologies and practices as well as modes of political organization and a hierarchical structure of society attested across multiple regions in analogous forms.[56] Yet, while no scholar would question the participation in this system of the regional polities traditionally considered to be part of the Near East (Ḫatti, Egypt, Mitanni, Assyria, Babylonia, Elam), the degree of participation of the Greek world — that is, of the Mycenaean palatial states — is a matter of debate. Leaving aside the question of economic integration or cultural interaction more generally,[57] what is at stake here is whether the political culture of Mycenaean Greece can be considered part of the shared political culture of the "international system" more broadly. Answers to this question range widely, primarily due to the scarcity of evidence from Mycenaean Greece compared to the other regions of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East — the absence of royal inscriptions, royal iconography, and the elusiveness of Mycenaean political institutions in local records hinder comparison.[58] While some scholars emphasize their incommensurability with the political infrastructures of their eastern neighbors,[59] the inclusion of the Mycenaean polities in the "international system" depends on the weight and significance one is willing to attach to the so-called "Ahhiyawa documents," a group of Hittite texts attesting to a political entity called "Ahhiyawa," identified by most scholars with (some part of) the Mycenaean world. These texts show that Ahhiyawa often proved to be a challenge for the Hittites, but the latter occasionally entertained diplomatic relations with it on a peer-to-peer basis.[60] However, that this should suggest that Mycenaean Greece had the same form of political organization as the Hittite empire, as some have argued, seems to be far-

[56] See e.g. Liverani (1990); Cohen and Westbrook (2000); van de Mieroop (2005). Peer-polity interaction has been invoked as an explanatory model for this system.

[57] For economic integration, see e.g. Mountjoy (1998); Sherratt (2001); Murray (2017). For cultural interaction, see e.g. Bachvarova (2016); Rutherford (2020).

[58] See e.g. Blakolmer (2019); Dickinson (2019a); Shelmerdine (2024). For a detailed documentary overview of the socio-political organization of the Late Bronze Age Aegean, see Carlier (1984) 40–116.

[59] Cf. e.g. Sherratt (2001); Knodell (2021) 100–115.

[60] For overviews of the Ahhiyawa question, see Fischer (2010); Gander (2015); Bryce (2018); Weeden (2018); Dickinson (2019b); Blackwell (2021), all with further literature. The "Ahhiyawa texts" have been collected in Beckman et al. (2011). Linguistic arguments for the identification of "Ahhiyawa" with some notion of "Achaea" have been advanced by Finkelberg (1988); the identification is rejected, for example, by Ünal (1991); Steiner (2007); Schürr (2020); Egetmeyer (2022).

fetched.[61] In my opinion, the problem should rather be set on the structural level, and the question to be asked is whether ideologies, practices of power, and principles of legitimacy in Mycenaean Greece betray any typological analogies to their Near Eastern counterparts — differences in scale and in forms of political organization notwithstanding. In other words, the focus should be on inner structures that underlie outer manifestations, and our challenge as historians is to develop a method to access them.

The case of Mycenaean Greece's integration in the Late Bronze Age "international system" may seem not to be of immediate relevance to students of the world of the *polis*, given the hiatus — "collapse," "crisis," or whatever we may want to call it — that separates the latter from the former. However, there is now growing awareness that the emergence of the *polis* is a process that needs to be investigated in a long-term dimension, which includes the transformations that affected the Greek world after the collapse of the palaces, with all continuities and discontinuities involved.[62] Mazzarino himself shows an attention to the long-term dimension of historical processes when he emphasizes that the *koiné* of Asia Minor had its ultimate roots in the interactions between Ahhiyawa and the Hittites[63] — even though, as we have seen, the conclusions he reaches as to the political sphere draw a firm line between the world of the Greek *polis* and everything else, whether contemporary or not.[64] When it comes more specifically to the Iron Age and to what is considered the "archaic" period of Greek history — that is, the formative period of the *polis* and Mazzarino's main focus — voices that advocate for a joint analysis of political development in Greece and the Near East have directed their investigation to figures of power, forms of political organization, political institutions, and political ideas. Interestingly enough, those voices come more often from the field of Near Eastern Studies than from Classical Studies.

For example, in a seminal study which was published posthumously in 1983, Franco Pintore offered the first coherent historical explanation

[61] This theory, already advanced a few decades ago, has received new attention in more recent years: see Kelder (2008); Kelder (2010); Kelder (2013); Kelder (2018); Eder and Jung (2015); Kelder and Waal (2019); Waal (2019). For earlier criticism, see Carlier (1984) 132–34; Dickinson (2006) 26–35.

[62] See e.g. Dickinson (2006); Crielaard (2011); Davies (2018); Eder and Lemos (2020); Whitley (2020); Knodell (2021); and lastly Ma (2024) 21–24, 26–68 (cf. esp. 28–29).

[63] Cf. Mazzarino (2007) 21–22, 31–39, 203–204. Note that Mazzarino locates Ahhiyawa in Asia Minor and not on the mainland; see *ibid.* 36, 314 note 49.

[64] Cf. the comments of Liverani (2021a) 373.

for the existence of forms of monarchic, though not traditionally royal, power in the southern Levant, Anatolia, and Greece in the first half of the first millennium BCE.[65] These forms of power are identifiable in the figures of the Philistine *seren*, the Neo-Hittite *tarwannis*, and the Greek tyrant. The Neo-Hittite *tarwannis*[66] — the "just" leader beloved by the gods who seizes power but not necessarily institutional authority — is characterized, in Pintore's words, as "the cousin of the Greek tyrant,"[67] in a historical framework where it was not an institution but a political concept that passed from the Neo-Hittite world to the Greek one. This framework has recently been revisited by Maurizio Giangiulio with a focus on Cypselus of Corinth.[68] As Giangiulio argues, the legitimizing rhetoric of Neo-Hittite rulers, primarily centered on the notion of justice but also on divine election and force, must have found actual resonance among political actors who, like Cypselus, sought new bases of power in the Greek world.

Remaining within the realm of political agents, Lorenzo d'Alfonso has suggested that a similar historical development characterized the figures of the Hittite *tabariyalli-* and the Aegean *basileus* in the transition from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age — low-ranking figures in the socio-political hierarchies of the second millennium BCE who then rose to positions of command at the dawn of the first millennium.[69] More generally, in considering forms of political organization, Mario Liverani has proposed to interpret the reorganization of communities in the Levant, Anatolia, and the Aegean world in the aftermath of the Late Bronze Age crisis according to the political typologies of "ethnic state" and "city-state," both present in each of the three areas due to parallel developments.[70] Besides some points that I consider debatable, such as the rigidity of the distinction between "ethnic state" and "city-state,"[71] the

[65] Pintore (1983); cf. also Pintore (1979).

[66] See further below, § 5, for more details on this question.

[67] Pintore (1983) 306.

[68] Giangiulio (2020).

[69] See d'Alfonso (2023); cf. also Gerçek and d'Alfonso (2022).

[70] Liverani (2002). This categorization has been further developed in subsequent studies; see e.g. Liverani (2003) 37–87 and *passim*; Liverani (2011) 539–65; Liverani (2021b) 119–30. For further comments, see d'Alfonso (2023), with a special focus on the notion of "canton state," also introduced by Liverani to classify political entities in Early Iron Age south-central Anatolia.

[71] One major issue of these typologies is that they run the risk of reproducing old, superseded dichotomies, such as that between "tribal" and "urban" for the Levant, or that between *polis* and *ethnos* in the Greek world. For a critical approach to these dichotomies in the Levant, see e.g. Porter (2004); Porter (2010); Benz (2016) 11–14, 17–46, 111–25, 278–302; for the Greek world, see e.g. Roussel (1976); Morgan (2003).

attempt to frame these three areas of the Eastern Mediterranean along lines of parallel historical-political development remains important.

There is one case on which I would like to focus more in the present context as it — perhaps unconsciously — shows echoes of Mazzarino's arguments. Following a proposal initially formulated by Klaus Seybold and Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg to explain analogies in the social criticism of Amos and Hesiod,[72] the late Kurt Raaflaub posited the existence of a *koiné* of political thought that united various Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies in the early first millennium BCE.[73] This concept of *koiné* has been formulated by means of a cross-cultural comparison of ideas of political significance, especially that of justice: by identifying similarities in the ideas of justice in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Hebrew, and early Greek thought, Raaflaub notes that during a certain period of time, those societies were aligned on parallel patterns of political thought.[74] However, the rise of the *polis*, with its representative institutions and decision-making mechanisms entrusted to collectives of citizens, marks the moment when the Greek world made a leap forward compared to the other societies participating in the initial *koiné*. As Raaflaub writes in his essay *The "Great Leap" in Early Greek Politics and Political Thought*:

> My comparative research has forced me to emphasize Greek particularism. […] [T]he main result of my investigation remains firm and clear:

For the use and abuse of the concept of ethnicity in these contexts, cf. e.g. London (1989); Skjeggestad (1992); Finkelstein (1996); Hall (1997); McInerney (2001).

[72] Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (1993), featuring in the edited volume Raaflaub (1993). Cf. also Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (2007), on Josiah and Solon, esp. 150–51.

[73] The problem was widely discussed by a number of scholars in Raaflaub (1993), even though the specific concept of an *ostmediterrane Koine des 8. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.* features only in the contribution by Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (see previous note, esp. 233–36); cf. Raaflaub's own comments in the final *Diskussionen* (Raaflaub [1993] 425–26). (The concept of *altvorderasiatische Kulturkoine* employed by Haas [1993] 135–36 in the same volume refers to the cuneiform literary culture of the Bronze Age Near East and is not relevant to the present discussion.) Raaflaub himself has further explored the concept in later contributions; see e.g. Raaflaub (2000); Raaflaub (2007a); Raaflaub (2009); Raaflaub (2013); Raaflaub (2018). The concept is also employed in the same sense by Horst (2019); Horst (2020b); Oswald (2020).

[74] See esp. Raaflaub (2018), republished in German as Raaflaub (2020); cf. also Raaflaub (2000); Raaflaub (2013). Comparison of other ideas yields, in Raaflaub's view, less promising results; see the works cited in the previous note. For further comparative work on ideas of justice in the ancient world, cf. Irani and Silver (1995); de Boer (2023).

> nobody in the whole wide world of early Iron Age antiquity [...] except the Greeks entrusted the responsibility for enacting normative communal laws to a collective of citizens [...] that met in public assembly and determined in open debate what the law of the town was to be. This is a remarkable turning point or point of origin in world history, the "needle's eye" from which western traditions of politics and political thought developed.[75]

Although Raaflaub does not cite Mazzarino in his contributions, one cannot help but observe an analogy with the conclusions of *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, especially considering how Raaflaub's "great leap" echoes Mazzarino's "leap" from the "barbarian" world to the "Ionian" one[76] — which, against the broader context of the cultural *koiné* of Asia Minor, is precisely identified in the peculiarity of the *polis* experience. Moreover, Raaflaub employs the concept of cultural *koiné* — of which Mazzarino was so fond — experimenting with it on the political level — unlike Mazzarino. However, Raaflaub's *koiné* is, so to speak, a static one: it is given as a fact, but we see neither its formative processes nor the relations between the cultures that participate in it. The comparative method which lies behind its formulation does not inquire into the individual processes that led to the forms of thought and practice whose similarity is acknowledged, nor does it allow us to establish whether those processes themselves can be understood in terms of *koiné*. At best, the dynamic aspect is limited to interactions that happen before the *koiné*, elsewhere defined as a "a pool of ideas and knowledge that emerged from intense interaction among various cultures in the eastern Mediterranean."[77] The advantage of this formulation is that it proposes a model alternative to the quest for individual Near Eastern influences on Greek thought, which risks reducing the problem to a *Quellenforschung* — however sophisticated it may be.[78] Yet, no *koiné* of historical processes is envisioned here — only

[75] Raaflaub (2018) 45–46. For a similar conclusion, cf. Arnason (2013). These conclusions essentially confirm the fundamental thesis of Meier (1980), with correctives informed by subsequent debates on the Axial Age, for which see Eisenstadt (1986) and Arnason et al. (2005).

[76] Mazzarino (2007) 26–27 (see above, § 2 and note 12).

[77] Raaflaub (2009) 38, cf. 47.

[78] As a matter of fact, most of Raaflaub's work on this topic is presented as an attempt to assess Near Eastern influences on Greek political thought; see esp. the programmatic essay Raaflaub (2000). However, Raaflaub himself recognizes the advantages of the *koiné* model over the search for influences; cf. *ibid.* 64 and esp. Raaflaub (2018). On the relation between the two approaches, see also Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (2007) 150–51: "Im Rahmen der ostmediterranen *Koiné* sind aber kulturelle und politische *Einflüsse* natürlich nie und nirgends einfach

of their ultimate consequences. All in all, this method results in identifying entities that are only partially commensurable, and from this perspective, Raaflaub's conclusion about the "great leap" of the Greek world, which in some way reproduces Mazzarino's, seems rather obvious and predictable.

I should immediately clarify that the intention here is not to deny elements of originality in the Greek political experience by forcibly reducing it to an indistinct copy of Near Eastern political experiences.[79] It is, however, possible to address the question of the existence of a political-institutional *koiné* from a different, more "historical" perspective. The contribution by Raaflaub that I have just discussed takes its cue from an article by Mario Liverani entitled *Nelle pieghe del despotismo: organismi rappresentativi nell'antico Oriente*, published in *Studi Storici* in 1993.[80] In that article, by surveying documentary traces of the existence of representative and collegial institutions in the Near East between the second and first millennia BCE, Liverani argues, with particular reference to the period between 750 and 550 BCE, that the political debates on representation and collegiality that took place in the emerging Greek *polis* must not have been so different from the debates — largely lost but inferable thanks to traces they left in the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere — that animated the contemporary communities of the Syro-Anatolian and Phoenician-Palestinian regions. However, it was the Assyrian imperial conquest, followed by the Babylonian and Persian ones depending on the area, that suppressed those debates in the Levant and prevented more concrete institutional developments from unfolding:

> [N]el periodo tra il 750 e il 550, le condizioni di partenza della Grecia e di quelle zone che ho definito l'Occidente del Vicino Oriente potevano essere abbastanza simili sul piano politico e sul piano culturale. Poi il diverso esito dell'impatto imperiale ne determinò la sorte diversa, coi centri orientali stroncati dalla conquista imperiale (perdita dell' autonomia, deportazioni, deculturazione, colonizzazione, crollo verticale economico e demografico) e quelli greci decollati verso le loro realizzazioni culturali e filosofiche. Infine la perdita (quasi totale) delle formulazioni politiche orientali le ha rese storicamente irrilevanti,

auszuschließen" (my emphasis), though in this case the "influence" takes place after the *koiné*. An attempt to explain the *koiné* by Phoenician mediation can be found in Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (1993) 233–36.

[79] Cf. Vlassopoulos (2007) 122.

[80] Liverani (1993).

> mentre quelle greche si trasmettevano e andavano a costituire in prosieguo di tempo l'asse portante del dibattito istituzionale che e giunto sino a noi.[81]

> [D]uring the period between 750 and 550, the starting conditions of Greece and those zones that I have called the West of the Near East could have been quite similar on both the political and cultural levels. Then the different outcome of the imperial impact determined their different fates, with the eastern centers crushed by the imperial conquest (loss of autonomy, deportations, deculturation, colonization, vertical economic and demographic collapse) and the Greek centers taking off towards their cultural and philosophical achievements. Finally, the (almost total) loss of Near Eastern political formulations rendered them historically irrelevant, while the Greek ones were transmitted and subsequently became the main axis of the institutional debate that has reached us.

Liverani has recently come back to this question precisely within the context of a reflection on *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, published under the title *Orienti e Occidenti* in *Studi Storici* in 2021.[82] The most significant issue raised by Liverani in this contribution seems to me to be precisely that of the devaluation — Mazzarino's, but not solely his — of the ancient Near Eastern city as a venue of political action and debate, even in a collective or collegial form.[83] On the contrary, although monarchy prevails in the Near East as a form of government, the existence of — I quote — "that residual city, a true civic community, with its general assembly, its elders, its fixed-term officers," often forgotten by the "Occidentalists," remains evident, showing "abundant traces of collegial institutions and political debate."[84] The valorization of these traces aims to make the Near East commensurable, or at least more commensurable,

[81] Liverani (1993) 32–33.

[82] Liverani (2021a).

[83] Liverani (2021a) 373–77; cf. Liverani (2021b) 61–71.

[84] Full passage in Liverani (2021a) 375: "Oggi anzi diremmo più esplicitamente che la città orientale, e in buona misura anche quella levantina, era centrata [...] sui due poli pubblici del tempio e del palazzo reale [...] ferma restando peraltro quella città residuale, vera e propria comunità civica, con la sua assemblea generale, coi suoi anziani, coi suoi magistrati a termine, che gli studiosi 'occidentalisti' tendono spesso a dimenticare." A few lines later, commenting on the alleged lack of political debate in the ancient Near East, Liverani notes that "abbondanti tracce di istituzioni collegiali e di dibattito politico sono state a più riprese individuate e valorizzate." See further below, with literature at note 86.

with the Greek world. Commenting on the conclusions of *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, Liverani writes:

> In ultima analisi, l'apporto greco consiste nel dispiegamento della "libera personalità," che è "nuova e irriducibile alla orientale." Sarà pur vero; ma se la Grecia viene storicizzata, datando in maniera piuttosto precisa questo dispiegamento, le sue fasi preparatorie, il suo contesto politico, le sue conseguenze istituzionali, perché non provare a storicizzare anche l'Oriente? Perché mantenerlo (quando si arriva al dunque del giudizio finale) come un'entità immutabile e compatta? Purtroppo ancora oggi, mezzo secolo dopo il volume del Mazzarino, […] siamo ancora in grave ritardo, e il pregiudizio che traspare dalla conclusione del Mazzarino è ancora diffuso.[85]

> Ultimately, the Greek contribution consists in the unfolding of the "free personality," which is "new and irreducible to the Eastern." This may be true; but if Greece is historicized, dating with a certain precision this unfolding, its preparatory phases, its political context, its institutional consequences, why not attempt to historicize the Near East as well? Why maintain it (when it comes to the final judgment) as an immutable and compact entity? Unfortunately, even today, half a century after Mazzarino's volume, […] we are still severely behind, and the prejudice that emerges from Mazzarino's conclusions is still widespread.

In the last few decades, several scholars have emphasized aspects of collegiality and political debate in the civic institutions of the ancient Near East, while others have pointed out how these find parallels in *polis* institutions.[86] This is a huge step forward towards the solution of the prejudice that opposes East and West and their political experiences. Nevertheless, the approach that envisages "historicizing" the Near East alongside the Greek world might not yield the desired results if the two processes of "historicization" remain separate — that is, if they are not accompanied by a "historicization" of Greece *and* the Near East (or relevant areas thereof) as part of a *single and coherent* historical system.

[85] Liverani (2021a) 376–77.

[86] See Liverani (2021a) 375 note 36 for an extensive bibliography. See further Seri (2005); Vlassopoulos (2007) 101–122; Kõiv (2011); van de Mieroop (2013); Momrak (2013); Momrak (2014); Benz (2016); Raaflaub (2018); Horst (2019); Woolmer (2023); Quinn (2024) 33–35, 143–45; the volume Horst (2020a); and various papers in Wilhelm (2012), esp. in the sections "Collective Governance and the Role of the Palace in the Bronze Age Middle Euphrates and Beyond," and "The Public and the State." Cf. also the comparative project on city-state cultures directed by M.H. Hansen (cited further below in the text and notes).

In other words, while studying the historical development of forms of political thought and practice that feature both in Greece and in the Near East increases their commensurability, an additional effort is needed to interpret on the historical level any common processes that produced said similar, parallel, or shared forms of political thought and practice. Such an effort requires us formulating a heuristic tool that allows us to locate those processes in a coherent historical framework, defined by co-ordinates of space and time.

This problem was seen, too, by Kostas Vlassopoulos in *Unthinking the Greek Polis*, published in 2007.[87] Here, Vlassopoulos advocates for a "connected history" that views Greek history "within the changing history of the Eastern Mediterranean." Yet, lamenting that, by the time he was writing, "[t]he lack of research and methodological tools" made a similar endeavor "impossible," the author went on the avenue opened by comparative studies on popular participation in the ancient Near East.[88] The same avenue is indicated by John Ma's recent, comprehensive history of the *polis*,[89] which programmatically tries to avoid offering an image of the *polis* as a "miracle." The existence of forms of popular government in ancient Near Eastern history is briefly mentioned at the end of the volume in the context of a call for a global-scale comparative history of the city-state on the model of the enterprise directed by Mogens Herman Hansen between the late 1990s and the early 2000s.[90]

In response to calls for widening comparative research even further, I wonder whether we should rather start looking closer. That is to say, instead of taking the *polis* as a self-contained entity[91] that participates in taxonomical comparisons with similar entities found in different geographical contexts and time periods, let us try to conceptualize its early development as a part of a broader, though coherent, historical framework. Comparative work, whether on a contained scale or on a global horizon, is certainly beneficial in that it helps us relativize our objects of research and decenter our perspectives. However, this also poses the risk of losing the historical dimension of our object of research — which in some cases paves the way to confusion. Some studies that strive to make the Near East more commensurable to the Greek world,

[87] Vlassopoulos (2007).

[88] Vlassopoulos (2007) 101–122 (quotes from 101–102).

[89] Ma (2024).

[90] See esp. Hansen (2000b) and Hansen (2002); the specificity of the Greek *polis* is outlined in the volume Hansen (2006). Cf. Ma (2024) 543–46, esp. 545 for the ancient Near East.

[91] Cf. Ma's "postulate of the unitary existence of *the* Greek city-state, in the singular and the absolute"; Ma (2024) 410, original emphasis.

for example, show an excessive emphasis on the alleged "democratic" nature of collective political action, public gatherings, and critique to rulers in certain Near Eastern societies[92] — as if the comparison between Greece and the Near East could hold water only if we found "democratic" features in the latter. Unless we want to subsume any form of power sharing and collegiality under the label of "democracy," in these cases the concept of democracy is too loosely employed and proves to be misleading: even in the Greek world itself, power sharing, collegiality, participation, and dissent do not *per se* suggest democracy; not even *isonomia* is necessarily equivalent to democracy, as Mazzarino appropriately noted (see above, § 2).[93] Such confusion is partially due to an implicit overlap between defining characteristics of the Greek *polis* — first and foremost political participation and power sharing — and the concept of democracy, likely catalyzed by a long-standing Athenocentric bias.[94]

[92] See Jacobsen (1943); Jacobsen (1957); Evans (1958); more recently Horst (2019) esp. 239–40, 249–50; and Horst (2020b), with an attempt to legitimize the comparison between Greece and the Near East under the lens of *Agonale Demokratie*, which obscures the distinction between monarchy and democracy as institutional arrangements (see esp. xiv–xvi, xix). Similar claims advanced by political scientists — that is, by scholars who do not specialize in the ancient world — are summarized in Momrak (2013) 37–41, with references. Other scholars formulate the problem in more balanced ways; see the following note.

[93] Cf. Brock and Hodkinson (2000), esp. 14; Vlassopoulos (2007) 117–22, esp. 122; Raaflaub (2007b); Raaflaub and Wallace (2007); Raaflaub (2018); Haubold (2020) esp. 38, 41, 43, 51; and, for the Near Eastern side, Fleming (2004) esp. 235–41; Momrak (2013); van de Mieroop (2013) esp. 285–87; van de Mieroop (2020) esp. 6–8. The "sliding scale of popular participation" proposed by Momrak (2013) is a useful analytical tool, as long as one does not turn it into an assessment of the "degree of democracy" of the polities involved. For power sharing and collective decision-making in democratic and non-democratic constitutions alike, see now Esu (2024).

[94] See e.g. titles like *The Greek Polis and the Invention of Democracy* (Arnason et al. [2013]), mostly focused on Athens, or *Der Alte Orient und die Entstehung der Athenischen Demokratie* (Horst [2020a]). A corrective to Athenocentrism is sought by Robinson (1997) and Robinson (2011) with an attempt to identify democracies outside Athens in the archaic and classical periods respectively. However, the definition of "democracy" adopted in both volumes has been criticized for being too loose; see resp. Hölkeskamp (2000) esp. 493, and Canevaro (2014) esp. 426. In his recent study, Ma (2024) posits a generalized tendency of the *polis* towards forms of democracy starting from the sixth century BCE (121–27, 139), notwithstanding the political experimentation of earlier periods (*ibid.* 18, 21–24) and in spite of several elements that counterbalance the democratic ideal throughout the entire history of the *polis* (*ibid.* 480–538). Acknowledging the existence of forms of popular government in the ancient Near East, Ma concludes that "[t]he history of the *polis* represents a discovery (and consolidation) of democracy, not *the* discovery of democracy" (*ibid.* 544, original emphasis). What "democracy" means in all these contexts can be a matter of debate.

Yet, democracy is just one of the manifold outcomes of political experimentation that took place in the Greek world and were characterized by the traits listed above.[95] We do not need to find democracy in the ancient Near East at all costs to solve the prejudice about its incommensurability with the Greek world — on both sides, there is much else that deserves our attention.[96]

All this is to say that the solution to the prejudice regarding the peculiarity of the Greek political experience cannot be given solely on a comparative level, nor can it be limited to the issue — however examined on the level of historical processes — of the existence of representative or collegial institutions in the Greek world as well as in the Mesopotamian, Anatolian, Levantine worlds, and so forth. The valorization of the existence of such political experiences in the Greek world and in various parts of the Near East in different periods of time certainly makes Greece and the Near East more commensurable with each other, but it does not help determining whether the Greeks walked alone on the path that led to their alleged political "miracle," or whether on that path they were accompanied by peoples and communities who, like them, found themselves facing the same kind of problems in the same historical circumstances.

A possible way out from the impasse is traced in the conclusions drawn by Liverani in *Nelle pieghe del despotismo*: "[D]uring the period between 750 and 550, the starting conditions of Greece and those areas I have defined as the West of the Near East could have been quite similar on both the political and cultural levels."[97] Here we see an attempt to make the Greek world commensurable — on the historical and not purely comparative level — with those areas of the Near East that shared with the Greek world historically definable "starting conditions," and which, like the Greek world, found themselves during that period on the periphery of great empires. In his recent volume *Oriente Occidente*, Liverani renews his proposal to interpret the areas in question — the

[95] See above, note 93, for more balanced positions on this question.

[96] For a comparative investigation of structural similarities in social issues and legal responses, irrespective of forms of government, see D.M. Lewis (2017), with reference to archaic Attica and Israel. Also interesting is the attempt to investigate the notion of citizenship beyond the Classical world; see e.g. the volume Filonik et al. (2023), even though most chapters, including the theoretical ones, focus on the Graeco-Roman world. Concepts of freedom, traditionally ascribed to the Classical world or more generally to "Western Civilization," have also been identified in ancient Near Eastern societies; see von Dassow (2018) and von Dassow (2011), but cf. Raaflaub (2009) 50–51. On both questions, see also Vlassopoulos (2007) 101–122.

[97] Liverani (1993) 32 (full passage quoted above).

Aegean, Anatolia, and the Levant — as a single, coherent macro-area, which he calls "the Levant" in a broad sense.[98] Although Liverani's analysis largely focuses on the Levant proper and concentrates on the end of the parallel political experiences — that is, the turning point of imperial expansion[99] — I believe that the question to be asked is similar. Yet, unlike Liverani, I believe the issue should be considered for a much longer period, starting from the ashes of the Late Bronze Age political systems. These, in my view, constitute the "starting conditions" from which the analysis should begin, and the question to be posed is whether we can identify lines of parallel or shared historical-political development across those areas of the Eastern Mediterranean where the Late Bronze Age collapse exhibited its most enduring consequences — the Aegean, Anatolia, and the Levant.[100]

4. Back to Mazzarino: *Koiné* Reconsidered

We arrived at this point starting from the need to overcome the "limits" of Mazzarino's *koiné*, that is, Mazzarino's — and not only Mazzarino's — prejudice regarding the peculiarity of the Greek political experience compared to that of contemporary Eastern Mediterranean and Near Eastern societies. The way out appears to be the formulation of a dynamic *koiné*, historically situated in space and in time, which encompasses the political element without preconceptions and focuses on historical processes rather than on their final products only. To use Mazzarino's metaphor, a *koiné* that considers the "constitutional travail" of the Greek world and all other societies involved, their debates on the organization of newly formed or reconstituted communities, and their experimentation with new and diverse solutions. Now, in our attempt to "overcome" Mazzarino's approach, it is intriguing to note how Mazzarino himself indicates at least two ways to formulate scenarios of dynamic *koiné* that

[98] Liverani (2021b) 100–218, esp. 100–118, 131–32.

[99] Cf. also Liverani (2021b) 56–60, 140–60.

[100] For an overview of the Late Bronze Age collapse and its outcomes, see e.g. Cline (2014); Knapp and Manning (2016); Cline (2024). More specifically for the Levant, see e.g. Liverani (1987), Fischer and Bürge (2017), and Maeir et al. (2019); for the Aegean, see Murray (2017) and Middleton (2020); for Anatolia, see de Martino and Devecchi (2020) and d'Alfonso (2024), all with further literature. The recent volume Masetti-Rouault et al. (2024) collects several contributions focusing on Anatolia, Assyria, and the Levant.

include the political sphere and at the same time overcome both obsolete diffusionist perspectives and purely comparative approaches.[101]

The first is found in a work that developed concurrently with *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, forming, as has been said, a diptych that looks at the entire archaic Mediterranean.[102] I am referring to *Dalla monarchia allo stato repubblicano*.[103] The subject of this book — published in 1945, two years before *Fra Oriente e Occidente* — is the history of Roman magistracy, or the process, defined by Mazzarino as the "Roman miracle," that led from the "irresponsible" — that is, unaccountable — king or leader to the "responsible" — that is, accountable — magistrate.[104] Put in other words, from the concentration of power in a single individual to its collegial management. The key to understanding this process lies, according to Mazzarino, in the existence of an Italic cultural *koiné*, in which "proto-Latin" experiences merged with those of other peoples of ancient Italy, Greeks included, to form "a culture that was neither Etruscan nor Latin nor Umbrian-Oscan nor Greek, but only and above all 'Italic'" — as he puts it.[105] The crucial point of the argument is the emergence, in the second half of the sixth century BCE in various centers of ancient Italy such as Velletri, Chiusi, or Perugia, of systems of power management that were no longer monarchic but collegial, or at least tending toward collegiality even within a conception of power that was still partially personal. From this analysis, Mazzarino concludes that the problem of power management was felt as "a common problem in cities of common culture."[106] We are thus facing a "travail," a political debate entirely "Italic" to which the constitutional evolution of Rome cannot be considered foreign.[107]

[101] It should be noted that the concept of *koiné* has also been employed to describe shared patterns of material culture, religion, or literature: for material culture, see e.g. Lemos (1998); Gadolou and Handberg (2017); D'Agata (2022); for religion, see López-Ruiz (2023); for literature, see Ziemann (2019). As some of these works show, the use of this concept is not uncontroversial, and this is especially true for material culture studies. It is not among the goals of the present paper to delve into this debate, but rather to discuss the applicability of the concept of *koiné* — and of *which* particular notion thereof — in the sphere of political development.

[102] See Fraschetti *apud* Mazzarino (2001) ix–x.

[103] Mazzarino (1945). In the present paper, all citations and quotations follow the page numbering of the edition published by Rizzoli (Milan) in 2001 (Mazzarino [2001]).

[104] Mazzarino (2001) 9–18, esp. 11.

[105] Mazzarino (2001) 37 ("una cultura che non fu etrusca né latina né umbro-osca né greca, ma solo e soprattutto 'italica'").

[106] Mazzarino (2001) 75 ("un problema comune in città di comune cultura").

[107] Mazzarino (2001) 76, 83–84, 90, 102, 123. On the question of Rome's participation in an Etruscan-Latin-Italic *koiné*, see also Ampolo (1986), esp. 451–62 for the

The definition of cultural *koiné* adopted in *Dalla monarchia allo stato repubblicano* is very similar to that which Mazzarino's readers would find a couple of years later in *Fra Oriente e Occidente*. Unlike *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, however, in *Dalla monarchia allo stato repubblicano* the concept of *koiné* operates not only from a broadly cultural perspective but also and above all from a political one. The political-institutional "limits" of the concept of *koiné* that inform *Fra Oriente e Occidente* are absent in *Dalla monarchia allo stato repubblicano*. Indeed, Mazzarino makes it clear from the Preface that the purpose of the work is precisely to demonstrate that in the Italic area the application of the concept of *koiné* cannot be limited to the cultural sphere. Explaining his use of the term "Italici," Mazzarino points out that the term

> abbraccia tutti i popoli dell'Italia antica, in quanto partecipi a quella *koiné* culturale "italica" che in questo libro si vuol mostrare attiva e operante nella formazione del diritto pubblico, come nell'evoluzione religiosa e culturale in genere appare ormai [...] certamente operante e decisiva.[108]

> encompasses all the peoples of ancient Italy, as participants in that "Italic" cultural *koiné* that in this book is intended to be shown as active and operative in the formation of public law, as it certainly appears now [...] active and decisive in religious and cultural evolution in general.

On the other hand, the "limits" of this *koiné* — if one can speak of "limits" at all — reside more in a methodological caveat. A historically valid application of the concept of *koiné*, Mazzarino warns, is possible only if one refrains from seeking identical forms of thought and political institutions across the cultures involved, but instead looks at the analogy of processes, the parallel direction of constitutional developments, and the shared "travail" towards the resolution of common problems:

> Vive, negli istituti della *koiné* italica, iniziale e fondamentale somiglianza; non assoluta e morta identità. Analoghe le forme dello sviluppo costituzionale — ma non identiche, che sarebbe tutt'altra cosa e concezione antistorica.[109]

political problem; Ampolo (1987); Ampolo (2009); Ampolo (2018), all with further literature.

[108] Mazzarino (2001) 6–7.

[109] Mazzarino (2001) 108.

> Within the institutions of the Italic *koiné*, there exists an initial and fundamental similarity; not an absolute and dead identity. The forms of constitutional development are analogous — but not identical, which would be something entirely different and an ahistorical conception.

And again:

> Il passaggio dalla monarchia alla magistratura collegiale ha dunque varie sfumature nei vari centri della *koiné* culturale italica: eppure è, nel processo generale, alcunché di affine e di similare, qualcosa che lascia sentire un comune travaglio e un interesse culturale comune.[110]
>
> The transition from monarchy to collegial magistracy thus has various nuances in the different centers of the Italic cultural *koiné*: yet it is, in the general process, something akin and similar, something that lets one sense a common travail and a shared cultural interest.

Here we encounter a dynamic *koiné* immersed in historical processes, which distinguishes itself not only from the corresponding concept of the *koiné* of Asia Minor by incorporating the political dimension, but also from the more recent concept of *koiné* developed by Kurt Raaflaub, which is also political but static and somehow ahistorical. In *Dalla monarchia allo stato repubblicano*, this approach is presented as an antidote to the romantic idea of the "Roman miracle," based on the centrality of Rome in the evolution of public law.[111] But while the concept of a "Roman miracle" is downscaled, the Hellenocentric prejudice of the "Greek miracle" also makes its appearance in Mazzarino's interpretation of archaic Roman history:

> La Grecia scoprì l'uomo; il mondo italico e romano scoprì ad esso forme caratteristiche di organizzazione. Ma, senza la Grecia, queste prime forme italiche di organizzazione sarebbero, nei loro inizi, inconcepibili.[112]
>
> Greece discovered man; the Italic and Roman world discovered characteristic forms of organization for him. But, without Greece, these early Italic forms of organization would be, in their beginnings, inconceivable.

[110] Mazzarino (2001) 119.

[111] Mazzarino (2001) 5, 11.

[112] Mazzarino (2001) 139. For the relation between Greek and Roman "miracles" in Mazzarino's work, see Tessitore (2003) 37.

Paradoxically, however, it is precisely Mazzarino's explanation of the "Greek miracle" that offers, between the lines, a second way to formulate a dynamic *koiné* of political processes. We are again in the fifth chapter of *Fra Oriente e Occidente*, in the section dedicated to the question of the evolution of the *polis*, and more precisely to the debate on the priority of Ionia or of the mainland.[113] Asking whether the concepts of *isonomia* and tyranny originated in Ionia and then spread to the mainland or vice versa, Mazzarino excludes the Ionian origin, although this conclusion once again betrays his desire to remove any suspicion that tyranny, and the constitutional evolution it triggered, could have any ties with Lydia.[114] Therefore — Mazzarino continues — the experience of the crisis of the aristocracies that gave rise to tyrannies and thus to the need for *isonomia* must be reconsidered outside of Ionia, particularly in the context of that love for luxury that emerged out of trade relations between the Phoenicians and the Greek mainland, which happened to be more intense than those between the Phoenicians and the communities of Asia Minor.[115] Can we say, therefore, that the crisis of the aristocracies began on the mainland and on the islands and later spread to Ionia? This formulation, in Mazzarino's view, is not fully satisfactory either.[116] The reason is that, in the sixth century BCE, the cultural concept of "Ionia" was not limited to the region called Ionia in Asia Minor: instead, Ionia was a unity that extended from Attica to Euboea to Ionia in the strict sense.[117] Now, if we set aside the evident awkwardness of this argument, it is nonetheless interesting to focus on the conclusion to which Mazzarino is led by this reasoning:

> In queste condizioni ambientali, sarebbe imprudente dire che p. es. Atene è modello a Chio, così come è assurdo affermare il contrario. […] Il 7° secolo […] aveva creato quei presupposti economici e culturali che, parallelamente svolgendosi, davano paralleli fenomeni costituzionali.[118]

> In these circumstances, it would be hazardous to say, for example, that Athens is a model for Chios, just as it is absurd to affirm the opposite. […] The 7th century […] had created those economic and cultural

[113] Mazzarino (2007) 216–34.
[114] Mazzarino (2007) 216–25.
[115] Mazzarino (2007) 217, 226–27.
[116] Mazzarino (2007) 227.
[117] Mazzarino (2007) 227.
[118] Mazzarino (2007) 228.

> premises which, developing in parallel, gave rise to parallel constitutional phenomena.

The implications of this statement are extremely significant. It is not just a rejection of the diffusionist paradigm but a framing of the problem of the existence of "parallel constitutional phenomena" — albeit confined to Greek or, more precisely, Ionian culture — in the same terms in which the dynamic cultural (and political-institutional) *koiné* of the Italic area was framed in *Dalla monarchia allo stato repubblicano*. While it makes no sense to ask whether the motherland preceded and influenced Ionia in the process of constitutional evolution, the existence of "parallel constitutional phenomena" is explained by the existence of common starting conditions, or "economic and cultural premises" that developed "in parallel." And this discourse concerns not only Ionia in the broad sense but the entire Greek world, since an aristocracy attracted by luxury characterizes the entire Greek world throughout the sixth century BCE:

> Tutta la grecità ha un suo problema da risolvere: conciliare la *habrosyne* con la creazione di uno stato secondo il diritto; evitare che la *habrosyne* aristocratica si configuri come riduzione dei liberi meno abbienti in istato di servitù [...] La distinzione fra Greci e Greci è nella soluzione del problema. Ed ogni stato dà la "sua" soluzione.[119]

> The entire Greek world faces a common problem: reconciling *habrosyne* with the creation of a state governed by law; preventing aristocratic *habrosyne* from resulting in the subjugation of the free poor into a state of servitude [...] The difference among Greeks and Greeks lies in the solution to this problem. And each state provides "its own" solution.

Again: just as in the Italic cultural *koiné*, where Latins, Etruscans, Oscans, and Umbrians faced the same "constitutional travail" that led them — at different paces and with varying solutions — from monarchic institutions to collegial institutions, so all the communities that were part of the Greek world confronted the problem of aristocratic *habrosyne* and formulated different solutions at different times.

Although confined to a sort of "Hellenic cultural *koiné*," the path followed by Mazzarino here, just as in the case of the Italic *koiné*, adheres to the same principle as the main path for formulating a politico-cultural *koiné* of the Eastern Mediterranean in the Iron Age: on the historical

[119] Mazzarino (2007) 229.

level, it is possible to overcome the Hellenocentric prejudice, as well as diffusionist and comparative approaches, by looking at the political-institutional "travail" — with all its nuances, speeds, and variations — of those societies that found themselves to share the same starting conditions. By putting center stage the "travail" of the communities involved, this notion of *koiné* recognizes their individual agency and thus departs from models where emphasis on external inputs risks relegating individual agency to the background. At the same time, this model postulates that shared starting conditions constitute a common structural background that, producing a "travail" that unfolds along similar yet different lines, also fosters exchange and facilitates receptivity. Thus, this model of dynamic *koiné* operates on two levels — the structural one and that of interconnections — both observed in a historical, processual dimension.

In the next, and final, section, I shall discuss some practical implications of this model.

5. *Koiné* to the Test: The Case of Tyranny

I would like to devote the concluding section of this paper to exploring some potentialities of the model outlined here within the historical context of the Eastern Mediterranean during the Iron Age. I will briefly examine the case of tyranny, so central to Mazzarino's argument for the existence of "limits" to the *koiné* of Asia Minor, but in fact one of the most evident examples of the contrary.[120]

As already recognized by Franco Pintore and now confirmed by a more recent study by Craig Melchert, the term *tyrannos* reached Greece from the Neo-Hittite world: it is a loan from Luwian *tarwanni-*, an adjective or, when substantivized, an epithet meaning "the just, righteous one," unattested in the Bronze Age but widespread throughout the chronological span covered by the Iron Age Hieroglyphic Luwian documentation.[121] The term does not identify any institutional position

[120] The Anatolian background of the concept of tyranny has been treated in greater detail in Santini (2024).

[121] See Pintore (1983); Melchert (2019); and lastly Santini (2024). Following a recent discovery by E. Rieken, presented at the 3rd workshop *The Gods of Anatolia and Their Names* (Santiago de Compostela, 21–23 May 2025) and to be published in the relevant proceedings for the *Barcino. Monographica Orientalia* series, the reading *tarrawanni-* adopted in Melchert *loc. cit.* and Santini *loc. cit.* is now superseded in favor of the (older) reading *tarwanni-*. Accordingly, Greek *tyrannos* is derived from the base form *tarwanni-* via the syncopated form *tarunni-* (syncope of /a/ in the syllable *-wan-* yielding *-un-*; reflected in the spelling *tara/i/u-na* attested in ARSUZ 1,

but rather expresses a personal quality and describes a wide variety of individuals occupying different roles and positions within society: from kings to other high-ranking political actors, to individuals who proclaim themselves "servants" of rulers, as well as scribes, wives of rulers, and other members of the middle and upper classes without any evident connection to the political sphere. Alongside the adjective-epithet *tarwanni-*, there is also a homophonic abstract noun meaning "justice, righteousness," and employed equally widely.[122]

Given the characteristics of the Luwian term, when addressing the origins of tyranny one must ask how a term of such meaning and diverse usage came to Greece specifically to denote the autocrats of archaic *poleis*. Although the phenomenon of tyranny is attested only from the mid-seventh century BCE onwards,[123] the answer to this question should be sought precisely in the political experimentation that characterizes the Eastern Mediterranean during the formative period of the Iron Age, following the crisis of the palatial systems. In this context, the Greek and Neo-Hittite worlds — as well as the Southern Levant, which I cannot delve into here for reasons of space[124] — developed parallel forms of political thought, arising from a common need to find a solution to the problem of political legitimation that accompanied the emergence of new political actors. The world of the Iron Age is an unstable one where traditional criteria such as the hereditariness of the office, a royal ancestry, or divine election were not always sufficient — or simply not available — to guarantee full legitimacy to new political actors.[125] As new leaders were closer to the people than their Late Bronze Age counterparts,[126] there arose a need for criteria of legitimacy being more widely shared between the rulers and the ruled, whereby those in power were expected to meet generalized expectations. It is in this context that a new rhetoric of justice and righteousness spread out, both in the Neo-Hittite world and in the

§ 2) and further vowel metathesis giving *turann-*. My thanks to C. Melchert for pointing this development out to me and to E. Rieken for sharing her material.

[122] For a full list of attestations with references, see Santini (2024) 4–7.

[123] The earliest attestations are in poems of Archilochus, resp. frgs. 19 and 23 W.

[124] See e.g. Liverani (1971); Cazelles (1973); Pintore (1983); Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (1993). For further social and legal implications, see Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (2007); Raaflaub (2007a); and esp. D.M. Lewis (2017).

[125] For continuities and transformations in the criteria of political legitimation in the Late Bronze Age-Iron Age transition, see Liverani (1971); Liverani (1987); Pintore (1979); Pintore (1983); Masetti-Rouault (2004); d'Alfonso (2023); d'Alfonso and Lovejoy (2023).

[126] Cf. Pintore (1979); Raaflaub (1988); Haubold (2000); Masetti-Rouault (2004).

Greek world, at various levels of society and not only within the ruling class.[127]

In the Neo-Hittite world, rulers share the epithet *tarwanni-*, "just, righteous," with their "servants" but also with their subjects:[128] being "just, righteous" constitutes a shared expectation for holding a legitimate role in society. Save a couple of exceptions,[129] generally the term does not point to the judicial sphere, that is, to the administration of justice, but identifies a *moral* quality of the individual. As such, it may encompass several nuances ranging among "justice, righteousness, uprightness, loyalty, fairness, honesty, equity, integrity," and so on.[130] Nevertheless, when discussing the social and political significance of the term, it is a pointless exercise to try to establish what specific nuance may be implied from time to time. What matters emically is the consistency of the terminology employed by a wide variety of social agents: whether kings, scribes, rulers' servants, or commoners, the universally recognizable flag of their moral integrity is consistently the concept of *tarwanni-*, and it is precisely its quality of being universally recognizable that makes this term a powerful tool of socio-political legitimation.[131] The quality of being *tarwanni-* ultimately guarantees success in the political arena: the justice or righteousness of rulers ensures them the benevolence of the gods, which in turn ensures the fertility of the region, the prosperity of the state, and the well-being of the subjects — as clearly implied, for example, in king Kiyakiya's inscription from Aksaray:

> [… Tar]hunza prospered the NISA(?), and m[uch] came down from the sky, and much came up from the earth. In those years for one sheep 30 measures? of barley stood?, 20 measures of oil? […]ed, […] measures? of wine stood?. Because of my justice (*amiyadi tarwannadi*) I was dear to Tarhunza and to all the gods here, and great kings (and) kings all admired? this city. And who gives this position to me? Tarhunza gave it

[127] Cf. Santini (2024) 4–20, with ample literature.

[128] For sources and discussion, see now Santini (2024) 5–6, 19.

[129] Discussed in Santini (2024) 7–10.

[130] Cf. Pintore (1979); Melchert (2019) 342–43.

[131] This is why I think it is preferable to translate *tarwanni-*, whether the adjective/epithet or the abstract noun, with the same English word in all circumstances, be it "just, justice," or "righteous, righteousness." These two options seem to me to be more appropriate as they can encompass a wider array of nuances. Another option may be to leave the concept untranslated throughout and to gloss it according to what aspect of its usage one wishes to point out, whether any specific semantic nuances or its socio-political significance or else.

> to no one, but to me he gave it, Kiyakiya the just king (*tarwanni hantawatti*)…[132]

A similar cause-and-effect chain operates in the world of Homer and Hesiod, although, in contrast to the Neo-Hittite world, here more emphasis is placed on the judicial element, that is, on the administration of justice and on the straightness or crookedness of judgments. A well-known passage from the *Odyssey* (19.107–114), spoken by Odysseus himself, testifies to how the well-being of the people is tied to the justice of a god-fearing *basileus*:

> Lady, no one of the mortals on endless earth could question you: for your fame reaches the vast heaven, as that of a blameless *basileus*, who, fearing the gods (*θεουδήϛ*) and ruling over many and valiant men, upholds justice (*εὐδικίαϛ ἀνέχῃσι*); and the black earth produces wheat and barley, the trees are laden with fruit, the flocks give birth continually, and the sea gives fish because of his good leadership (*ἐξ εὐηγεσίηϛ*), and the people prosper under him.[133]

An equally well-known passage of Hesiod's *Works and Days* (225–51) similarly shows how the justice or injustice of individuals, especially rulers or political leaders, were believed to affect the entire community in opposite ways: "Those who give straight judgments (*δίκαϛ … ἰθείαϛ*) to strangers and native fellows and who do not deviate from what is just (*μή τι παρεκβαίνουσι δικαίου*), for them the city blossoms and the people flourish in it" (225–27), while "for those who care of evil insolence (*ὕβριϛ … κακή*) and wicked deeds (*σχέτλια ἔργα*), for them far-seeing Zeus son of Cronus ordains a punishment. Often even a whole city suffers from an evil man, who sins and devises reckless things (*ἀτάσθαλα*)" (238–41). An admonition to community leaders — *basileis* — clarifies that the consequences of justice and injustice laid out in the previous lines define the expectations against which their activity as leaders is checked: "You, *basileis*, consider this punishment yourselves: for, being close among mortals, the immortals mark out those who wear out one another with crooked judgments (*ὅσοι σκολιῇσι δίκῃσιν ἀλλήλουϛ τρίβουσι*) without minding the vengeance of the gods" (248–51).[134] Here it is important to remark that while the judicial element is explicitly emphasized and

[132] AKSARAY §§ 1–9, tr. slightly modified from Hawkins (2024) 264–65; see also Hawkins (2000) 475–77 and Melchert (2019) 341–42.

[133] My translation. On this passage, cf. Haubold (2000) 27, 102, 118–19.

[134] My translations.

basileis are warned against giving crooked judgments, the moral element is also encompassed in the concept of justice laid out in the passage: the various calamities — including famine, pestilence, infertility, ruin, and shipwrecks — experienced by the people as a consequence of "evil insolence," "wicked deeds," and "reckless things" (242–47) represent a reversal of the well-being and prosperity experienced by the people when their leaders "give straight judgments" and "do not deviate from what is just" (228–38).[135] The judicial and moral aspects of the concept of justice are therefore intrinsically related.[136]

In these passages we see in the negative what Neo-Hittite sources only show in the positive: in the Greek world, a discourse on justice is accompanied, by way of contrast, by a parallel discourse on injustice, which — due to the nature of the Hieroglyphic Luwian evidence, mostly consisting of inscriptions with celebratory purposes — we do not see in the Neo-Hittite world. However, the strong analogy of contexts and images allows us to assume that even in the Neo-Hittite world, if the justice of rulers ensured well-being and prosperity, their injustice was seen by way of contrast as the cause of malaise and ruin. Furthermore, just as in the Neo-Hittite world justice is a central value not only in the public discourse of rulers but also in the public or private discourse of the ruled, so too in the Greek world it is configured as a shared value and an object of expectation: the Homeric and Hesiodic poems testify to the existence of a political debate on good governance and the characteristics of a good ruler, called upon to ensure the well-being of the people; such a debate included a critical reflection on rulers when expectations were not met.[137] Once again, given the nature of the evidence, in the Neo-Hittite world we only see the "positive" side of the coin, but it would be illogical to think that such a critical debate on expectations of the rulers' justice as an essential element of good governance was absent in that society.

Thus, the Greek and Neo-Hittite worlds developed a parallel discourse on justice as the foundation of political legitimacy, notwithstanding the different aspects of the concept — whether the moral or the judicial one or both — that were emphasized in each society from time to time. In the Greek world, this discourse assumed further importance during the period of the archaic tyrannies: in a number of cases, archaic

[135] Cf. also *Il.* 16.384–93; Hes. *Erg.* 35–39, 219–24, 263–64; Hes. *Theog.* 81–93. For the moral aspects of justice in early Greece, see the literature cited below, note 138.

[136] The same can be said, to some extent, for the Neo-Hittite world, too; cf. Santini (2024) 7–11, with references.

[137] Cf. Raaflaub (1988); Seybold and von Ungern-Sternberg (1993) 219–24; Hammer (1998); Haubold (2000); Raaflaub and Wallace (2007) 24–43; Ma (2024) 57–61.

Greek communities were willing to grant special powers to individuals who presented themselves, among other things, as champions of justice, with the aim of resolving crises and internal conflicts and "straightening" injustice, often understood in moralizing terms such as insolence (*hybris*), wickedness, or greed.[138] However, while in the Neo-Hittite world this discourse revolved around the concept of *tarwanni-*, the source of the Greek term *tyrannos*, the Greek world does not appear to have been familiar with this concept while developing its initial reflections — testified to by Homer and Hesiod — on justice in political action, even though these reflections were analogous to those developed in the Neo-Hittite world of the *tarwanninzi*. In what context and through what modalities, then, did the transmission of the concept of *tarwanni-* to Greece occur?

The reception of this concept among the Greeks was, so to speak, selective: the concept of *tyrannos* neither captures the semantics of *tarwanni-* nor expresses its rhetorical function within the discourse on justice. What *tyrannos* does capture, however, is the political significance of *tarwanni-* as a means to flag the legitimacy of power positions regardless of their institutional make-up, thus including ones that are weakly institutionalized or that have an ambiguous relationship with pre- or co-existing institutions. Several political actors who define themselves as *tarwanni-* occupy positions of power in unconventional ways, either because they exercise royal powers without filling the relevant office, as in the case of the Country Lords of Karkamiš; or because they claim top-ranking positions without holding any precise institutional office, but by attributing new meanings to generic appellatives, as in the case of Saruwanni, "Lord" of Nahidiya. Others, such as Tarhunazza, "servant" of Warpalawa of Tuwana, share the quality of justice with the holder of royal authority, which allows them to present themselves — like the king! — as legitimate absolute lords, albeit at the local level.[139]

Similarly, Greek tyrants appear to take up ruling positions either in the absence of well-defined institutions, reviving titles suitable to the occasion, as in the case of Cypselus "*basileus* of illustrious Corinth";[140] or

[138] See e.g. McGlew (1993) 52–86; Wallace (2009); Luraghi (2015); Ma (2024) 141–43. For the various aspects subsumed under the concept of (in)justice in early Greece, see e.g. Nagy (1985); Nagy (1995); Raaflaub (2013); Stein-Hölkeskamp (2018) 133–37; Canevaro (2022) 382–85. For the social, other than moral, relevance of *hybris*, see now Canevaro (2024), esp. 27–30, 33 for *hybris* and justice in Hesiod (cf. above).

[139] For a detailed discussion of these examples, see Santini (2024) 20–29, with references.

[140] Hdt. 5.92ϵ.2. On Cypselus see further Giangiulio (2020), with previous bibliography.

within existing constitutional frameworks to which they do not bring substantial alterations. As has been widely noted, there are indeed several examples of tyrannies, from that of the Orthagorids to that of the Pisistratids or that of Pittacus in Mytilene, which did not modify existing constitutions in archaic *poleis* but coexisted with them.[141] However, this coexistence places the tyrant in an ambiguous relationship with the institutions: even where the tyrant does not formally alter the existing constitutional arrangement, it is precisely his absolute power that represents the main alteration.

Beyond the semantic sphere of justice, it is the structural characteristics inherent both to the power of *tarwanninzi* and to that of early Greek autocrats that explain how and why the concept of *tarwanni-* gave rise to that of *tyrannos*. The latter emerged from what the concept of *tarwanni-* signified politically within a *koiné* of political thought and practice rooted in the Iron Age: the same starting conditions, namely the crisis of the palatial systems and of associated notions of legitimacy, confronted the Greek and Neo-Hittite worlds with the same political problem of reorganizing communities around credible institutions and forms of power. From these starting conditions, both worlds developed a new rhetoric of justice as the basis for legitimizing political action — each according to its own needs and in its own forms and timing, yet on a common ground that facilitated the circulation and reception of ideas, debates, and new concepts. It is on this shared ground, where a *koiné* of political thought based on ideas of justice and righteousness had long been operative, that the concept of *tarwanni-* found fertile soil to spread into the Greek world and there give rise to a new political concept, that of *tyrannos*.

Although ideas of justice and righteousness constitute the common substratum within which to contextualize the spread of the concept of *tarwanni-* to the Greek world, the reception of this concept is, however, inseparable — to borrow Mazzarino's famous metaphor — from the "constitutional travail" of the emerging *poleis*. It did not occur when the Greeks started formulating, in their own terms, their own discourse on justice, but rather when the Greek world began to establish new institutions, at the moment when political debates on good governance were starting to take an institutional form — a process that had already been underway in the Neo-Hittite world for some time. Once again: *tyrannos* does not capture the semantics of the Neo-Hittite concept of

[141] See Anderson (2005) 198–201; Kõiv (2021) 147–48; S. Lewis (2021). For the low degree of institutionalization of tyrannies, cf. Luraghi (2013a) 138; Dreher (2017) 179–85.

tarwanni-, but rather its suitability to describe supreme power holders irrespective of institutional constraints, and more specifically to define para-institutional forms of power, whether they were newly created or informally insinuated themselves into pre-existing institutions.

Rather than a conclusion, these reflections on the case of tyranny aim to be a starting point for a comprehensive reevaluation of the historical and dynamic concept of *koiné* from a political perspective. I hope to have demonstrated that the Iron Age is the period at which we should look to begin this re-evaluation.

6. To Be Continued

I would like to conclude these reflections by recalling the words with which Mazzarino closed the Preface to *Fra Oriente e Occidente*. They reveal his awareness of the complexity of the investigation he had undertaken and the risks he faced in undertaking it. At the same time, however, Mazzarino emphasized the need for that investigation, and I believe that his words remain valid today for us, who have the responsibility to continue it:

> Io so bene che un'indagine di questo genere, per la varietà dei problemi che implica, non sempre può esser considerata definitiva: e l'archeologo e il grecista e l'assiriologo e il biblicista avranno, per proprio conto, da dire su singole questioni la loro parola. Ma un'impostazione "storica" mi pareva oggi necessaria, già per la stessa esigenza di sintesi che essa implica: con questa fiducia ho iniziato, con essa termino il mio lavoro.[142]

> I am well aware that an investigation of this kind, due to the variety of problems it implies, cannot always be considered definitive: the archaeologist, the Hellenist, the Assyriologist, and the biblical scholar will each have their own say on individual issues. But a "historical" approach seemed necessary to me today, if only for the need for synthesis it implies: with this confidence I began, and with it I conclude my work.

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[142] Mazzarino (2007) 4–5.

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