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Modern Expressions of the Past

Edited by Helena Trindade Lopes,
Isabel Gomes de Almeida and Maria de Fátima Rosa

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Meet the editors

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Contents

Preface

What do we talk about when we talk about *antiquity*?

Making here use of part of the title of the book of Raymond Carver – "What do we talk about when we talk about love?"

For the majority of the population, the term immediately transports us to a notion of an ancient age or ancient world (the Parthenon, Athens and the Coliseum of Rome), which condenses in itself the Greco-Roman world. This reduces *antiquity* to antiquity that was structurally essential for the construction and emergence of the civilization called *occidental*.

For others, by the way of their religious backgrounds, *antiquity* goes back in time and enlarges its space of action, allowing for the emergence of Palestine as a primordial territory.

But these two visions (old and supported by a scientific ignorance of the ancient geographies and chronologies) enclose the history in a limited time and space. As if there would never have been a world before. As if the civilization that we called ourselves as inheritors, the so-called "occidental civilization" was the first step in the history of man on earth.

I advise you to do an exercise. Raise the veil of some of the narratives pertaining to certain characters that history has consecrated. Take, as an example, the case of Joseph of Egypt, son of the patriarch Jacob and his beloved Rachel, a biblical character whose bibliography is narrated in the book of Genesis, chapters 37 to 50.

His history, rich in adventures and incidents, will convert him into one of the most famous protagonists of the Judaic, Christian and Islamic worlds, in other words a universally relatable persona, that seduced writers like Thomas Mann, painters such as Francesco Granacci, Andrea del Sarto, Jacopo Carucci, Francesco Ubertini, Rembrandt, Antonio del Castillo y Saavedra, Peter von Cornelius, Friedrich Overbeck, Wilhelm Schadow, Philipp Veit and Richard Rappaport, musicians like Andrew Lloyd Webber and animated musical directors like Robert Ramirez and Rob LaDuca. Joseph, the youngest son of Jacob jumped from an ancient time and confined geography to a world without borders and without time. He has been consecrated in history.

However, in the popular imaginary, Joseph continued to be the most loved son of Jacob that, for years, lived and conquered great honours in Egypt, the country of the Pharaohs.

And suddenly, without realizing it, with the story of Joseph, geography also changes. In that ancient world consecrated by the biblical texts there were not only Hebrews that lived in a "promised land" and that served a single God. In that world, there existed also a great civilization – "The Two Lands", by which the Nile Country was designated and in whose territory Semitic tribes lived for centuries.

And with the change of the geography (that now encompassed Africa), time was altered. After all, there was a world and men before the Hebrews, the Greeks and the Romans.

The unwinding of the thread of time will allow the emergence through the connections of epoch and context of the story of Joseph, the civilizations and cultures that were his contemporary, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Phoenician, the Hittites, the Persians, the Chinese, the Hindu and the Cretans, that is, all the worlds of antiquity. The world widens, grows and the idea of time recedes. Naturally, the conception of inheritance that the "occidental civilization" made exclusively descended from the Greco-Roman culture and the Judaic-Christian tradition will have to start to consecrate in its origins, and in a structural way, its African and Asian strand.

The history of this Europe in which we are located, started to be drawn in Africa and Asia. It was there that the first men with writing thought of time and space, bequeathing to the world some of its capital archetypes: The flood, the creation through the word, the creation of man from the dust of the earth, the concept of monotheism (sec. XIV a. C.) to a set of laws that expressed a moral ideal. Curiously, it was by the hand of the Hebrews that I have arrived at these first founding civilizations. Again, through our Joseph. But when I knew them, I rediscovered myself and never again lost me, from myself. I'm European, African and Asian. I carry the entirety of the world inside my heart.

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Section 1

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introductory Chapter: The Importance of Reception Studies for Ancient History

Helena Trindade Lopes, Isabel Gomes de Almeida and Maria de Fátima Rosa

> *"The landscape of my days appears to be composed, like mountainous regions, of varied materials heaped up pell-mell. There I see my nature, itself composite, made up of equal parts of instinct and training. Here and there protrude the granite peaks of the inevitable, but all about is rubble from the landslips of chance (...) [1].*

1. Reception studies and history

Reception studies applied to history constitute a relatively new research field that was clearly influenced by the postulates of Reception Theory's scholars, such as Hans-Robert Jauss [21], which were developed during the 1960s and 1970s within literary studies. For this theoretical current, the significances of a given literary composition should be understood as always dependable of the readers, who produce meanings according to their own background. This proposal thus responded to the structuralist approach of the 1940's New Criticism, which defended that a text stood for itself ([2], pp. 250–255).

Subsequently, several academics applied these notions in their historical approaches to literature. One of the scholars we should mention is Martindale [3, 16] who postulates in his *opus Redeeming the Text* the imperative need to include reception theory in the research area of classical studies ([4], p. 1). In this seminal work, Martindale identified some of the theoretical formulations that allow to recognise relevant historical significances in the different uses of antiquity.

Within classical studies, Hardwick's [5] book *Reception Studies: Greece and Rome: New Surveys in the Classics* constituted another important step into the theoretical and methodological definitions of reception studies applied to ancient history. In this work, Hardwick detailed the main notions and concepts of the field, elaborating on how certain texts, images, and events of the ancient classical world were used in other historical contexts as political, cultural, and social *autorictas*, but also as symbols of resistance and controversy [19].

If we think about the pre-modern and modern western history, it becomes easy to identify this use of elements produced in antiquity as legitimation tools for those contexts. Take the *Renascence*, for instance, where there was an obvious reception of ancient Greek and Roman cultural and artistic traits, or the eighteenth century *Enlightenment,* profoundly marked by considerations on ancient literature, philosophy, and art. And more closely, let us not forget the nineteenth and twentieth century western imperialisms and colonialisms, where political, social, and military practices were justified through allusions to ancient Greek and Roman

imperialisms. Given these multiple cases, one can say that recent western history is, in a way, a history of reception of classical antiquity.

However, when we speak about reception of antiquity by the so-called western world, we should look beyond the Greek and Roman pasts. We should address antiquity in its multiple expressions, integrating other civilizations and cultural contexts, such as the Egyptian, the Mesopotamian, the Hebrew, the Persian, or the Hittite.

Notwithstanding their pivotal importance, the first major historiographic publications regarding reception studies were mainly focused on the ancient Greco-Roman cultures, namely on their written products. Hence, reception studies were firstly more cohesively and robustly applied to the classical era, which impacted the volume and characteristics of the academic works produced. In the last years, however, there is a more integrated approach to the reception of antiquity, whereas scholars specialised in different ancient context works towards a broader development of the field.

Having all this in mind, what constitutes the objects and the major historical problematics that should guide us when working on the reception studies field? First, we should address the different and multiple forms by which "ancient material was transmitted, translated, extracted, interpreted, rewritten, reedited, and represented" by later historical agents ([6], p. 4). The understanding of ancient material should be broader and inclusive, that is, one must work from an intertwined perspective that analyses the intertextuality between material, iconographic, and written data produced in ancient civilizations and received by later contexts.

Second, we should analyse how this ancient material was transformed to better deal with the anxieties, the contingencies, and the expectations of the agents/authors who took over this material and appropriated it as their own. In this sense, the perceptions, transformations, and appropriations of antiquity become part of a context that must be present at the time of the phenomenological analysis of reception. We should bear in mind that the significances attributed to the material received results largely from the aspirations, feelings, and mental framework of the agent who receives it. Thus, we should also consider the coetaneous political, social, economic, and cultural processes, given that they influenced the ways this ancient material was received and transformed.

Moreover, it is usual to identify ancient material as integrating the notion of common heritage of a given context. And as such, ancient material was reinterpreted and used in the most diverse manners. In order to understand how and why a specific ancient material is transformed into heritage, one must truly know antiquity and the different layers of its reception, so that we are able to recognise its appropriation. And even if this appropriation is evident, it needs to be problematised so that its multiple significances may become clearer.

So, in order to do update and value the many forms of relations between ancient and modern material, it is imperative to incorporate various theoretical and methodological tools of the modern literary criticism and of the post-modern theories, such as cultural, subalternity, and gender studies, to name just a few.

2. Reception studies and the "pre-classical" contexts

An example of this is the modern context in which the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia were interpreted at the time of the Napoleonic expeditions and during the first European archaeological campaigns at the middle of the nineteenth century. At the time, the new field of archaeology functioned as a

political arena, which moulded itself to the nationalist and imperialist interests of the powers involved in those same expeditions and discoveries.

Thus, the reception of the so-called pre-classical civilizations was, from the beginning, intimately associated with an imperialist logic, which claimed that the antiquities exhumed were a cultural estate of the European powers. On the other hand, there was a great impact of an orientalist vision, which was translated in a very distinctive glance of the *other*. As Said [7] stated: "the Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be 'Oriental' in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth-century European, but also because it could be… made Oriental".

This nineteenth century vision about ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt was thus dual: these oriental civilizations were envisioned as environments full of vice, sin, and excess (both moral and sexual) and, consequently, condemned to auto destruction due to its own transgressions, but simultaneously and ironically, they were considered as the cradle of the western civilization. This dual vision was due, in great part, to the coeval understandings of the notions transmitted by the Judeo-Christian matrix and the Old Testament accounts, which had marked the mental framework of the western world for centuries ([8], pp. 11–23).

During the first decades of the twentieth century, all these questions were deepened, and a real race for Mesopotamian and Egyptian antiquities began. The claim and appropriation of these pasts by western powers equated to a declaration of pre-eminence not only upon the oriental *other*, but also upon all western political contestants in a nationalist logic. Hence, the ancient material was used as a tool to authenticate the legitimacy and sociocultural superiority of these modern powers. The development of museology, with the constitution of public and private collections from this Orient, was a resulting phenomenon. The western audiences were thus faced with this ancient *other*, opening their horizons to new artistic and iconographic expressions and to a new cultural, social, and religious mentality. However, as mentioned above, the reinterpretation and diffusion of this past heritage were deeply connected with the political, diplomatic, and social demands of the twentieth century. Consequently, a clash between the *we* and the *other* was soon felt.

Hence, the ancient material of Mesopotamia and Egypt, when received and transformed in modern literature, music, art, and, later, in cinema, was intrinsically attached to the authors of these cultural (re)creations and to the audiences to which they were displayed. Antiquity was, and still is, often used as analogy, metaphor, parable, or antithesis to contrast and/or to equate situations of a western contemporary socio-political context. In this sense, antiquity and its reception serve contemporaneity, being that the present *we* composes itself with the past *other*.

It is important, however, to highlight an important aspect. When we speak about reception of antiquity by the modern world, we are not facing a static phenomenon clearly defined in a modern time-space context. On the contrary, we are referring to cumulative and continuous processes susceptible to creating, in the *longue durée*, a phenomenon comparable to a cultural palimpsest. As we mentioned above, the Judeo-Christian matrix and the contents of the Old Testament already contributed to the reception by the western world of echoes from ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt long before the archaeological findings.

In this sense, we should go back to the space that first allowed these echoes to reverberate, that is the Mediterranean, a sea which grew within the western collective imaginary proportionally to the dimension of its history. The Great Sea connected the European, African, and Asiatic worlds since the dawn of time [23]. By allowing a prolific circulation of human agents from multiple contexts, not only their commercial and political activities were developed, but also the cultural and

religious transferences were exponentiated. The Great Sea was thus a perfect media for several reception processes, within the long chronological scope of antiquity [24].

If one recalls some of the main historical agents and events of the Mediterranean, from the second millennium BCE onwards, we can identify interesting new developments as well as interchangeable social, political, and cultural phenomena. For instance, given the contacts within the Great Sea between Egyptians, Cretans, and Aegeans, during the second half of the second millennium BCE, the Egyptian art of the period covered itself with Cretan motifs. Moreover, Minoan paintings appeared in various Theban tombs of the 18th dynasty's pharaohs (*ca.* 1550–1292 BC), such as the ones of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, and Amenhotep II.

Later, during the first millennium BCE, the Phoenicians, who explored the western Mediterranean (which encompassed the North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula), and the Greeks, who widened their activity from the Red Sea to the Black Sea, inaugurated the colonisation phenomena with the creation of their *emporia* [9].

Notwithstanding, one can say that the true comprehension of the Mediterranean's importance as a vessel for multi-layered transferences was achieved by Alexander, the Great, in the fourth century BCE. His dream to connect the ancient world and to take the Greek values to the far east led him to create an empire that encompassed Greece, Anatolia, Phoenicia, Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, and the Indus Valley [10]. A new process of cultural exchanges between Europe, Africa, and Asia thus began with this Hellenistic empire.

Soon after, the Great Sea was illuminated by two economic and cultural metropolises: Alexandria in Egypt and Cartagena in the Iberian Peninsula. The famous Museum and Library of Alexandria expressed the millenary cumulative cultural exchanges within the Mediterranean [11], and the foundation of Cartagena embodied the multiple ethnical and cultural mixtures between East and West [17].

While these Hellenistic contacts flourished, another power was preparing itself to conquer the Mediterranean. In just three centuries (*ca.* sixth to third centuries BCE), Rome redesigned the ancient western world by controlling the territories encompassed by the Great Sea, from the Italian peninsula to Carthage, its great economic rival, and from the Iberian Peninsula to Anatolia.

After the victory of Gaius Octavius (later, Augustus, the first Roman emperor) over Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra, Egypt became a Roman province, and the imperial power of the eternal city was spread from the Mediterranean to a vast European area. With Augustus, the Great Sea fully became *Mare Nostrum*. "The control of land and sea is the image of empire. It is through Augustus' conquest of the sea that peace and wealth are gained for the empire. As Suetonius implies, it was through him that Rome lived and sailed and gained its livelihood (Suet. Aug. 98). And with this sentiment, we will begin our consideration of the Mediterranean Sea as an image of wealth" ([12], p. 54).

For centuries, the Mediterranean witnessed the rise and fall of several social, economic, and political projects—independent city-states, monarchies, and empires. Simultaneously, by allowing the communication between the historical agents who built the ancient world, the Great Sea enabled the diffusion of knowledge, ideas, artistic models, and religious beliefs. Some of these persisted in time, by means of reception, appropriation, and transformation, becoming true archetypes of the so-called western civilization.

To better illustrate this, let us evoke two examples of religious ideas that the biblical tradition and the spread of the Judeo-Christian matrix elevated to a western world heritage level: the cosmogonic and anthropogonic notions. "Ptah, the creator god of Memphis, conceived the cosmos in its different manifestations in his heart

and realized it through the creative and operative force of the word. The doctrine of the creator verb, usually recognized from the biblical text (Gen. 1) and situated in a particular historical, geographical and temporal context, actually dates back to a time and a place which was very different, the Nile Valley" ([13], p. 555).

In Mesopotamian, namely the Semitic tradition displayed in the Babylonian epic of creation, *Enūma eliš*, the fully existence of the cosmic elements was only achieved by the act of naming, that is, by the creative power of the word: "When skies above were not yet named/Nor earth below pronounced by name/Apsu, the first one, their begetter/and maker Tiamat, who bore them all/Had mixed their waters together,/but had not formed pastures, or discovered reed-beds/When yet no gods were manifest/Nor names pronounced, nor destinies decree/Then gods were born within them ([14], p. 233).

In what concerns the creation of humankind, both Egypt and Mesopotamia displayed several coexistent narratives. One of these traditions, however, described how the first humans were fashioned out of clay. The Egyptian potter god Khnum modelled the first humans from the "dust of the earth", whereas in the land between the rivers human beings were created by the god Enki/Ea, who fashioned them from clay ([13], p. 555; [14], pp. 11–20).

These notions were absorbed and transformed by Hebrews, the main agents and protagonists of the Old Testament, who deeply contacted with ancient Egyptians and Mesopotamians ([15], pp. 13–14). In time, via the diffusion of Christianity within the Roman Empire, these notions reached far lands and populations, thus becoming one of the archetypes of the western monotheistic religious system. And when one speaks about biblical monotheism, again ancient civilizations must be recalled, namely the unsettling Egyptian episode of Amarna. It was during the fifteenth century BCE that the pharaoh Amenhotep IV, who later changed his name to Akhenaton, proposed a political and religious revolution, presenting the concept of the singular deity of Aten, the solar disc [20, 22]. The parallels between the Hymn to Aten and Psalm 104 are striking, clearly manifesting reception processes between the religious and cultural contexts that produced both compositions [18]. Moreover, it shows how revolutionary ideas rejected in one context, by means of reception, can become normative in others.

The examples on how the Mediterranean Sea allowed several cumulative and continuous reception processes within antiquity could go on. For the present argument, it becomes clear how these ancient levels of reception should be considered when one analyses the reception of antiquity by the western modern world. Though intricate, there is no doubt that reception studies applied to ancient history constitutes an exciting field to be explored.

> *"(…) To be sure, I perceive in this diversity and disorder the presence of a person, but his form seems nearly always to be shaped by the pressure of circumstances; his features are blurred, like a figure reflected in water" [1].*

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Section 2

Notions of Antiquity

Chapter 2

Late Antiquity: Then and Now

Arnaldo Marcone

Abstract

Late Antiquity as a period has a complex history with moments when the issues pertaining to it seem to intensify. One of these was without a doubt the aftermath of World War I and reached its apex in 1923 during the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Brussels. The tragic events that had shaken Europe had a deep impact on historiography. In the aftermath of World War II, this trend was reversed on account of a progressive change of perspective and sensibility. In the last decades the favored epithets applied to Late Antiquity were "transformation", "change", "transition" and "evolution". The idea of a "long" Late Antiquity has eventually superseded the previous discourse on when and why the Roman Empire declined. Instead of a caesura, the historical continuum, the longue durée, is stressed. The continuities between Christian Rome, Sasanian Iran, and Islam are being explored. Late Antiquity has become a popular subject of a historical research that is characterized by a wide variety of methods and a paradigm shift.

Keywords: Late Antiquity, historical periodizations, Byzantium, Islam, Persia

1. Historical periodizations

Nobody doubts the convenience and indeed necessity of historical periodizations nor the validity and usefulness of the well-established categories: (late) Antiquity, Early Middle Ages, Byzantium/East Rome, Sasanid Iran, and early Islam.

And we are all conscious that no handbook of ancient Roman history could now appear without including a chapter covering the period from the reign of Constantine to, say, the Arab conquest which was the rule until half a century ago.

It is enough to remind that the original edition of the Cambridge Ancient History (1923–1939) ended with 324, the date at which Constantine became sole emperor [1]. It thus neatly avoided having to cover the Christian Empire or even indeed the foundation of Constantinople. But the recently published volume of the CAH new edition takes the concept of "ancient history" as far as AD 600. The period we usually called Later Roman Empire or Late Antiquity has become enormously popular with professional historians and students alike [2].

1.1 Alois Riegl

We can be sure that when Alois Riegl "invented" Late Antiquity in his *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* (*Late Roman Arts and Crafts*, 1901), his famous study of late Roman art, published exactly at the beginning of the last century, he could never have imagined how fertile would be his proposal of evaluation of late antique as an autonomous phase in history of art, rejecting the concept of decadence and decline. Riegl's first major achievement, in his *Stilfragen* (*Problems of Style*) of

1893, had been the elucidation of how ornamental forms, especially vegetal motifs, evolved diachronically from Egypt, Greece, and Rome right through to the arabesque that Muslim builders so loved, against those who saw "die späte Antike" as a period of decline and barbarian disruption and ornament as somehow above—or rather beneath—historical analysis [3].

2. Late Antiquity and the end of the West Roman Empire

While, from a modern perspective, this myth of monolithic continuity has been dismantled, it is another matter altogether to locate the consciousness of a break with Late Antiquity within Byzantine culture. Otto Seeck (1850–1921) aspired in his six-volume *Geschichte des Untergangs der antiken Welt* to introduce the reader to "the laws governing historical processes of formation and decline" (Seeck 1897–1920: vol. I, preface).

The thematically oriented chapters of the first few volumes were especially devoted to that objective: Seeck constructed an impressive scenario of decline that culminated in "the elimination of the best" (die Ausrottung der Besten: vol I., pp. 269–307) [4].

2.1 Social Darwinism

In Seeck's opinion the ancient world need not have come to an end. The collapse occurred when "inherited cowardice" and "moral weakening" had emerged as dominant characteristics of society. Seeck's ideas were shaped by the evolutionary biology of the nineteenth century.

These theories are representative of the period as evolutionary biology turned into a paradigm of historical discovery. Seeck's *Geschichte* can be understood only if one keeps in mind that a number of different, partly contradictory, theories were published, now usually classified as "social Darwinism." These theories were combined with eugenic considerations, scientific reflections on population, racial deliberations, and ideas about social hygiene. He combined and adapted individual pieces of research he came across in biology and related sciences and transferred them to the history of Late Antiquity.

3. *Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler

Peculiar of Seeck's account was a biological theory combined with a detailed event-oriented history based on a meticulous critical assessment of the sources. The fall of Rome was the obvious paradigm for the end of Europe's global hegemony, a cyclical interpretation of history. Undoubtedly the most famous work of this sort was Oswald Spengler's (1880–1936) *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918–1922), which was influenced by Seeck's *Geschichte* as well as by the research of the *religions-geschichtliche Schule*. Spengler believed that Germany's military defeat was a symptom of the defeat of Europe as a whole. His interpretation of world history was very simple: he assumed that according to a sort of natural law, every culture underwent three phases—development, prosperity, and decline. According to Spengler the Battle of Actium in 31 BC is the event that marked the end of antiquity. After that a sort of "intermediate period" of 1000 years came without any development, which he saw is characterized by a "magic" or "Arabian" culture [5].

According to Spengler this culture was still organized as it had been in antiquity; its nature was the product of a supposedly "oriental" influence. The crisis of the

period that we call Late Antiquity and the turmoil of the Völkerwanderung were consequences of the "ossification" of a once lively ancient culture—a process that had begun under Augustus [6]. This pseudoscientific theory of the decline of cultures could be used as an aid to the analysis of the politics present. It is remarkable that after the First World War, Spengler's peculiar speculations were successful not only among sectors of the conservative and culturally pessimistic middle classes but also among some students of the ancient world. This can be explained with the feeling of a waning significance of their disciplines and a desire to restore to antiquity its historical significance.

4. An integrated approach to Late Antiquity

An early modern historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam suggested the term "connected history" to describe the complex interchange between East and West in the age of the great discoveries [7]. A similar approach seems to be now fruitfully applied to Late Antiquity. The age of religious empires was also the age of great missionary movements: Christianity, Buddhism, and Manichaeism before Islam, which helped, each in its own way, to carry and transform *theologoumena* and rituals across Asia, along the Silk Road.

Although an outdated, isolationist approach to Late Antiquity primarily focusing on late Roman culture and society still dominates some quarters of the academy, many scholars have worked toward a more integrated and comparative approach to the period. The shifts have been gradual and partial. Today there are numerous scholars of rabbinics who explore the wider context of the Babylonian Talmud in Sasanian society; there has lately been a resurgence of interest in the history of the Red Sea region, including Ethiopia and the Yemen, in the centuries leading up to the rise of Islam; and over the last 10 years or so, we have seen significant interest in the literary and religious parallels to the Qur'an found in Syriac Christian literature in particular.

5. The religious question

One fundamental characteristics of this period is the blurring of the boundaries between the secular and the spiritual. Discourses ultimately religious in their origin shaped both state and society in Late Antiquity. The ascetic overtones that pervaded exhortations by both legislators and preachers were peculiar. But the influence went both ways. Secular models of legitimacy could be described with the application of the classical category of "tyranny" even for the abuses of power by Christian bishops. It is remarkable how ecclesiastical writers could draw upon an ancient moral vocabulary of virtues and vices to define the proper scope and exercise of ecclesiastical power. In a way episcopacy seems to be caught between spiritual and worldly imperatives. The relationship between Church and state and the nature of the Church itself were disputed: there was an ongoing struggle to define the proper boundaries between the spiritual and the worldly. Both kings and bishops exerted power: over souls (the bishop) and secular and ecclesiastical affairs (the king). The king was tasked with the protection of his people through war and religious guidance, which entailed converting the subjects, sometimes by force, convening councils of bishops, and influencing their agendas. Christianity was used as a more complex, useful, and efficient tool for monarchic legitimacy.

6. Late Antiquity and Byzantium

It may be not a paradox to claim that there never was a Byzantine Late Antiquity. A continuous and relatively unchanged Christian empire from the fourth century through to the fifteenth century can be regarded as a sort of a myth fundamental for Byzantium, as it has been fundamental for Byzantine Studies as well. In any case the distinction between "Late Antiquity" and "Byzantium" is hardly ever made in the first grand narratives of Byzantine historiography and historiography about Byzantium, *The Empire That Would Not Die* [8].

7. Byzantium: the New Rome

Within a century after Constantine's refoundation, his "New Rome" of Constantinople became a great imperial capital which could create a new focus for political, cultural, and economic activities in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond. The efforts of Theodosius I to create an emphasis on Constantinople as a great dynastic imperial city have been highlighted recently by scholars, noting that his exertions in this direction included the enhancement of the *Apostoleion* site. Theodosius went to considerable lengths to populate the *Apostoleion* with imperial tombs [9]. The "Greek Roman Empire" enjoyed prosperity and cultural and religious cohesion. In the sixth century, there was even a program of reconquest of several of the western provinces launched by Justinian. By the end of his reign, however, the Byzantine Empire began to suffer heavy decline, with the loss of its southern provinces, first to Sasanian Persia and then to Muslim Arabs. All of these events culminated into a period known as the "seventh-century crisis" [10].

Late Antiquity saw the development of a new style of imperial authority in Byzantium, now expressed in explicitly Christian terms. Christianity affects everything from literary production to patterns of civic life. In Byzantine rhetoric, the emperor upholds equity and order on behalf of Christ. Distinctive Christian cultures flourished in the southern and eastern provinces of the empire, and beyond, both in independent states (like Armenia) and under Sasanian or Arab rule. These communities adopted indigenous languages, such as Syriac, Armenian, and Coptic. Creativity and dynamism are remarkable with which this complex society responded to challenges and change.

8. The Sasanian Empire

The Sasanian Empire (226–651), which succeeded to the Parthian Empire, ruled Iran–Iraq and surrounding regions. At its greatest extent, it included parts of Southeast Asia, Armenia, and—for a short period in the early seventh century—even Egypt and greater Syria. As a formidable world power, in the east it extended to the Indus River and in the west to the upper Tigris and Euphrates river valleys. Sasanian culture and civilization benefited from a great international trade network, and Sasanian culture and civilization benefited accordingly. The reigns of Shapur II (309–379) and Khusraw I (531–579) are generally acknowledged as being high points of political stability and cultural achievement. The Sasanian Empire has been credited by modern historians with having a bureaucratic centralization with provincial officials directly responsible to the throne, and roads, city building, and even agriculture were financed by the government. The Sasanians are seen as reviving the spirit and traditions of the great Achaemenid rulers (of 559–330 BCE). Sasanian administrative and political traditions are now also regarded as a formative

influence on the Islamic empire of the Abbasids (750–1258 CE). The Sasanian empire played also an important role in the development of late antique religions, as it was in fact a vast and diverse empire of many traditions existing in a coherent, if not always harmonious, system.

Although the official religion of the State was Zoroastrianism, Christians, Jews, and Buddhists were generally tolerated and contributed openly to Sasanian society: Christians were influential administrators in the Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon, while Jews could produce the Babylonian Talmud transferring Judaism's center of gravity from Palestine to Iraq for centuries to come [11].

8.1 The eastern frontier

Sasanid Persia, stretching deep into central Asia, was often beleaguered by problems on its frontiers. Romano-Persian relations were played out in a broader geographical arena. For instance, the long succession of wars fought between the emperor Constantius II (AD 337–361) and Shah Shapur II (AD 309–379) involved not only conflict in northern Mesopotamia frontier but also diplomatic exchanges with polities in other regions such as Himyar in southern Arabia and Axum in the Ethiopian highlands. Shapur launched also a series of punitive expeditions into the Arabian peninsula. Such interactions are a proof that the Mediterranean world of Late Antiquity was part of a larger cultural and economic zone.

8.2 A permeable frontier zone

In spite of long periods of warfare between Romans and Sasanians, these did not isolate the two Empires from each other. There was also a considerable amount of peaceful interaction and forms of acculturation. This interaction was greatly helped by the fact that Mesopotamia constituted a permeable border zone without a fixed boundary similar to other border regions such as those on the Rhine and Danube. Exchange of knowledge and goods, which took place on a regular basis, was facilitated by the fact that there was a culture shared in common on both sides of the frontier and that Syriac, a dialect of the Middle Aramaic language, was the *lingua franca*. Ammianus Marcellinus' story about Antoninus (*Res Gestae* 18. 5) is a good example of the peculiar character of the border regions. Antoninus had been a merchant and an accountant in the service of the Roman military commander of Mesopotamia, who defected to the Persians with information on Roman military dispositions. He was able to even pursue a career in the service of the Persian king. Antonius was not a unique case. According to Ammianus (19. 9. 3–8), Cragausius, a prominent member of the elite of Nisibis, also went over to the Persian side. Antonius and Cragausius are two good examples of the social relations that characterized this frontier zone between the two empires where economic, diplomatic, cultural, and intellectual concerns were diverse but economic interchange took place on a regular, though restricted, basis [12].

9. Dynamic exchanges

The Roman emperor and his Persian counterpart respected each other, as appears, for instance, from correspondence between Constantius II and Shapur II in which they address each other as "brother" and Constantius even offers Shapur his friendship (Amm. Marc. 17. 5. 3–14). This can be regarded not as empty politeness but a mutual recognition of sovereignty and equal rank as well as a clear wish for good relations and dialog. The accepted equality between the Roman and the

Sasanian Empire becomes a reality in spite of the affirmed primacy of the Christian Roman Empire. At the same time, the expansion of Christendom allowed a greater assertion of Christian universality with the integration of a number of peripheral regions through the expansion of Christianity such as in Ireland and Ethiopia and the diffusion of factors of Hellenistic origin in the Arabian peninsula.

10. The Jews in Late Antiquity: a new history

The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple at the end of the Jewish revolt of AD 66–70 plays a major role in the development of Jewish religion in Late Antiquity. Jews never lost the desire to see the rebuilding of the Temple, but by the third century, they were beginning to find other ways to worship, and by the end of Late Antiquity, rabbinic Judaism, the normative form of Judaism, was well established.

Jews had been expelled from Jerusalem after the Bar Kokhba revolt in 135 CE, when the new province of "Syria Palaestina" was established by the merger of Roman Syria and Roma Judaea. Nonetheless Jews continued to live in the land of Israel in large numbers during this period, and many in a diaspora scattered both in many parts of the Mediterranean world and in Babylonia. In spite of the hostility to Rome for the destruction of the Temple, Jews within the Roman and Byzantine empires integrated into mainstream culture even if Christianization of the empire and the adoption of Palestina as a Christian Holy Land relegated Jews to a marginal position. Their situation was different in Babylonia, where, under Sasanian rule, Jews obtained a great deal of independence [13]. Jewish life within the Christianizing Roman Empire of Late Antiquity depended largely on the particular interaction of three microforces: their community, the local Christian community, and the presence of imperial representatives. As several scholars have noted, synagogues served as local municipal buildings that facilitated quotidian interactions between Jews, Christian, and other local residents, ranging from business and civic matters to more mundane contacts [14].

10.1 A new picture

Scholarly assessment of late antique Judaism has experienced a series of profound shifts over the past three decades. As Judaism and, later still, Christianity began to infiltrate the Greek mind, it was tempting to wonder whether Abrahamism and Hellenism could possibly be connected, for better or for worse. The second-century CE Syrian Numenius called his admired Plato an "Atticizing Moses," in other words "Moses speaking Attic Greek" [15]. There is a revised portrait that has emerged of the structures of Jewish communal authority in the High and Later Roman Imperial periods. Until recently it was generally thought that the priestly leadership of Second Temple period Jewish society vanished in 70 CE, as the priests were supposed to have given way to an emergent rabbinic elite, which already in the second century assumed more or less uncontested control over Jewish social and religious institutions.

This picture has been revised. Scholars are now inclined to regard apocalyptists, prayer leaders, and powerful citizens as rivals of the parvenu rabbis [16]. Groups of Greek-speaking Jews have been seen populating cities throughout the Roman Empire filling the non-rabbinic synagogues. The presumed enduring oral (Pharisaic) traditions are now regarded as polemical interventions which are to be connected to the seams between Judaism and Christianity. The rabbis themselves are described as a minority group whose arguments are important only for the members of the group itself. A story of perpetual rabbinic marginality has replaced the hegemonic rabbinism of older accounts [17].

It must be taken into account how the far-reaching shifts of the last 25 years have to do not only with the new approach to the data of early Judaism but also with the quantity, range, and nature of the data themselves. New archeological finds and new inscriptional evidence have produced a very different empirical landscape.

10.2 A wider context

Already by the middle of the fifth century, any assertion of unity of the empire can be regarded as optimistic. There were tensions between cohesion and fragmentation which are to be taken into account to avoid a simplistic account of the events that constitute the traditional grand narrative of Late Antiquity, in which the Roman Empire is dismembered by foreign invaders.

All of these developments point to a recognition that the various cultures and literatures of Late Antiquity cannot be viewed in isolation but rather must be approached in the wider context of the dynamic exchanges between various communities in the period, the imperial competition between the Romans and the Sasanians, and the spread and consolidation of the monotheistic or "Abrahamic" traditions. I would like to add that the Dome of the Rock, built by the second caliph of the Marwanid dynasty Abd-al-Malik (the Haram of Jerusalem), had the goal to show the authenticity of the Muslim faith and its identity with the faith of David and Solomon, the newness and distorting character of the Christian faith. The idea underlying the inscription in the Dome of the Rock is that God is one and that Muhammad was a prophet and Christ like him is only a prophet and only a man and not the son of God [18]. Abd-al-Malik shows his will and power to use the enormous resources of Byzantine skill and experience to promote the Muslim cause. This is the Marwanid claim of building a Muslim Byzantine society shaped and led by the Muslim, incorporating the heritage of the Byzantine subjects. There is a point that I would like to stress and that I am taking from Averil Cameron: the commonly used terminology that distinguishes between the Byzantine and the early Islamic period is unhelpful, and the majority of scholars both on Late Antiquity and early Islam now prefer the term Late Antiquity; if there is a conclusion to be drawn from recent scholarship on Late Antique Near East, it is that there was no such clear-cut chronological division [19].

Now, I would like to devote my attention to two scholars who have contributed in a peculiar way to an original reinterpretation of Late Antiquity.

11. AHM Jones

A new phase, not only in the English-speaking world, in the study of Later Antiquity began in 1964. In this year, after having studied the period for many years, Jones published his three-volume work *The Later Roman Empire, 284–602: A Social, Economic and Administrative Survey* which begins with the reign of Diocletian and ends with that of the Byzantine emperor Murice. This work, with its almost total reliance on literary and epigraphic primary sources, still provides the most reliable general account of the epoch as Jones possessed an extensive knowledge of the sources. Jones distanced himself from monocausal attempts at explanation and examined a number of interacting factors that had, in his opinion, caused the decline of the Roman Empire. Jones also contributed to overcome the popular notion that the late empire was governed by coercion and despotism. He took into account the crisis of the economy and the tax burden, the decrease in population and the shortage of workers and the bureaucratization of the administration, the barbarization of the army, and the invasions by the Germanic tribes. In his opinion

it was "the increasing pressure of the barbarians, concentrated on the weaker western half of the empire, which caused the collapse." He concludes "that the simple but rather unfashionable view that the barbarians played a considerable part in the decline and fall of the empire may have some truth" [20].

12. Peter Brown: how Late Antiquity became "long"

Peter Brown, who had previously become well known for his biography of Augustine (1967), published in 1971 a seminal book, *The World of Late Antiquity: from Marcus Aurelius to Muhammad*. He took into account the accomplishments of more recent English and French works and both anthropological research (such as that of Edward Evans-Pritchard and Mary Douglas) and the historiography of the Annales school (exemplified not least by Evelyne Patlagean). This work has a great impact on the way Late Antiquity was perceived on both sides of the Atlantic Brown's Late Antiquity extended from the third to the seventh century and embraced both the western provinces of the Roman Empire and Sasanian Iran. It is, however, not only in the English-speaking world that Late Antiquity has become a popular subject of a historical research that is characterized by a wide variety of methods and a paradigm shift. *The World of Late Antiquity* described Late Antiquity as a long-lasting phenomenon (200–800 AD) framed on the one hand by the progressive Romanization of the Roman Empire and on the other by that of its Islamization. The dissolution of the ancient Mediterranean world led to the creation of three civilizations, all equal heirs of antiquity: western Europe, Byzantium, and Islam. This conception, which has deserved the name of "Brownian model," was accompanied by the positive depiction of a period that was altogether creative. Later, in *The Making of Late Antiquity* (1978), Brown proposed defining Late Antiquity by its religious and cultural themes, in their relation to the social evolutions at the heart of the Mediterranean world. As a consequence Late Antiquity was conceived as encompassing a vaster area, combining the Roman and Sasanian territories (and later the Umayyad), even if it preserved not only its *longue durée* (250–800) and the central themes defining it (Hellenism, Christianity, Islam) but also the positive judgment it now carried.

This development has contributed over the past decades to what Andrea Giardina has described as a general "explosion" in late antique studies [21], "explosion" which, I suppose, means the abandonment of earlier historical models and grand narratives and, at the same time, the introduction of new interpretative frameworks and the opportunity for refining our established assumptions and approaches. The research into a "long" Late Antiquity has for the most part superseded the previous discourse on when and why the Roman Empire declined. Transformation, change, transition, and evolution are the favored epithets to apply to the epoch. Instead of a caesura, the historical continuum, the longue duree, is stressed [22]. There has been a fruitful cooperation between various disciplines: sociological, anthropological, and gender-focused methodologies have successfully been applied to Late Antiquity [23].

13. Garth Fowden or how Late Antiquity becomes broad

Among the scholars who sought to adopt, refine, and develop Brown's approach to the period, it was Garth Fowden—currently Sultan Qaboos, Professor of Abrahamic Faiths at Cambridge—who produced what was perhaps the most important work in this area in the 1990s: *From Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity*. It is a work which impacted many scholars

profoundly. The book is ambitious in scope, wildly imaginative, and willing to explore the period in terrifyingly broad terms but in pursuit of a single cogent thesis: that the entire history of the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean from the second through the ninth century CE can be understood in terms of a sequence of imperial projects aiming to establish God's rule on earth, that is, the unifying theme of the era, one that distinguishes it from the civilization of the ancient world and sets the stage for the medieval cultures of Byzantium, Western Christendom, and the *Dār al-Islām*, and the use of monotheism as the primary justification for state building, for literally global dominion (as far as that was possible in the pre-modern world). In Fowden's work, the use of religion to justify imperial authority becomes the thread that links Christian Rome, Sasanian Iran, and the caliphates and that allows us to see the significant continuities between them with clarity.

Fowden, in his last book, *Before and after Muhammad* (2014; the first chapter is entitled *Including Islam*), once again seeks to explore the overarching continuities between Christian Rome, Sasanian Iran, and Islam but with even more attention paid to the intertwining discourses that link Greco-Roman, Syrian Christian, Jewish, Arab, Iranian, and European cultures over the course of a thousand years, centering on what he now calls the "Eurasian hinge" of southwest Asia linking the civilizations of the region. Fowden anchors his work in a rigorous interrogation of older conceptions of Late Antiquity, criticizing previous scholars' poor integration of Islam into the period, as well as the common approach of only including the Umayyad caliphate as a late antique empire. This serves to truncate the early medieval period from older trajectories of development that arguably only reached their full fruition around the year 1000. It also artificially severs the Abbasids and Iranian Islam from the prevailing cultural patterns of the Arab-Islamic world, though they are equally rooted in the legacies of biblical monotheism and Hellenism. I would like to mention at least the book which has recently been published by Glen Bowersock, *The Crucible of Islam*. Bowersock has written: "The formation of the vessel that Muhammad bequeathed to the world under the name of Islam took place in a crucible" [24].

14. A new great empire

While Late Antiquity witnessed both the collapse of Roman and Sasanian rule and the dismemberment of much of Byzantium, it also saw the birth and spectacular growth of what was the greatest Near Eastern empire since the Achaemenids and arguably the greatest empire ever produced in southwest Asia. For the first and only time in history, lands irrigated by the Guadalquivir, Nile, and Oxus rivers were producing revenues for a single polity, the Umayyad caliphate, which, by the second decade of the eighth century, stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to Central Asia. The Umayyads had assembled an empire considerably larger than that of the Romans (at its greatest extent) in about a third the time. What is more, seventh- and eighth-century Muslims also produced the last of the great religious and cultural movements of Antiquity. Islam was initially the faith of the caliphate's Arab rulers, and Arabic was initially the language of the elite; but over the next three or four centuries, Islam was transformed into the majority religion of the empire, while Arabic (and then arabicised Persian) became the languages of empire, culture, and learning, as well as the *lingua franca* of the Arab Near and Middle East. Finishing a job first started by Constantine three centuries earlier, Muslims thus fused and transformed religious ideas from a wide variety of religious traditions (especially Jewish, Christian, and Manichaean) and cultural backgrounds (Arabian, Byzantine, and Sasanian), generating a religion and culture during the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries that were distinctively their own [25].

15. The rise of Islam

The rise of Islam turned first the late antique Near East and then the whole Mediterranean world inside out. Over a period of a few hundred years, Islam spread from its place of origin in the Arabian Peninsula all the way to modern Spain in the west and northern India. Rome and Sasanian Iran, who had faced one another across the "Fertile Crescent" of Syria and Mesopotamia for 400 years, were defeated in two decades of campaigning by Arab tribesmen in the AD 630s and 640s. The Byzantine Empire went on to lose all its African and Asian territories except Anatolia, while the Sasanian Empire was completely destroyed. Christianity, which had long been established as the religion of the Roman Empire and had been gaining ground in Iran, became the faith of a subject people, superseded by a new, Arabic revelation. Syria and Mesopotamia, which had been so far divided by the frontier between the Roman and Byzantine Empire, became, from the AD 660s, the heartland of the new empire. It was here that the palaces and cities of the caliphs were founded, far from the new frontiers in Anatolia, North Africa, and Transoxiana.

15.1 Islam's origins

Christianity was spreading along the coast of the Persian Gulf and was the religion of Ethiopia, across Mecca the Red Sea to the west. Mecca, the holy city of the religion founded by Muhammad, was very important to the people of the Arabian Peninsula. It was a city along many trade routes and may have played a role in the flow of goods and ideas between the trade systems of the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean.It must be kept in mind that the Arabic sources preserve little evidence for the seventh-century nature of Islam and that even the Qur'an itself was produced not in seventh-century Arabia but in Mesopotamia during the eighth and ninth centuries.

15.2 Qur'an

The Qur'an is a religious prescription, not a narrative history; but, as a text supposed to be contemporaneous with the life of Muhammad, it can provide evidence about the polemical religious environment in which he was preaching. In any case we must beware of mistaking rhetoric for reality and reconstructing history from it too literally. Furthermore, the exegesis that we might try to use to interpret it was produced over a century later in a milieu far removed from that of the Qur'an's origins. Nonetheless from the Qur'an, Muhammad appears to have been engaged in polemical argument with Jews and Christians, among others, and he saw himself as a reformer, in the tradition of the Jewish prophets and of Jesus. Muhammad's teaching seems part of the religious tradition of the late antique world [26].

16. Late Antiquity: epoque of revolution and adaptation of different mentalities

Late Antiquity was an *epoque* of important transformation and of the adaptation of different mentalities. What we see is the transition from a political, classical, uncontested model of Roman hegemony to a religious, Christian, contested model of Roman supremacy. In the third century, identity was still primarily political (the principal affiliation being either civic or ethnic). Four centuries later in the seventh century identity became above all religious as the principal affiliation depended on

one's religious community. Late Antiquity was a historical period in which the two conceptions coexisted and in which the second overcame the first within the empire of Constantinople, the kingdoms of the West, the Sasanian empire, and the Qur'ān with "the people of the book." This transition can be explained by the fact that the notion of religion had changed, insisting more on soteriology and history [27]. The main consequence was that the notion of "civilized" was redefined: the ancient political criteria, which permitted the inclusion of the Sasanian empire, were replaced by the new Christian religious criteria, which justified the inclusion of converted peoples, even those who were barbarians.

17. Final remarks

Many scholars have been invited in these last decades to reflect on questions of ethnicity and identity. It seems possible to say that the analysis of ancient mentalities strengthens the idea of a real Late Antiquity within an expanded geographical framework and is also an argument in favor of a long but also of a short chronology.

Maybe Jesus Hernandez Lobato is right writing "Late Antiquity is hot" [28].

Also Marco Formisano is possibly right, who has written in the same book: "Reading Late Antiquity means reading another antiquity, perhaps an allegory of antiquity, which breaks the euchronical representation of historical development by introducing a disruptive *Ursprung* (origin) (he is referring to Walter Benjamin's, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* of 1925) into it" [29].

What seems undisputable is that the new idea of Late Antiquity implies overcoming both the conception of classical antiquity as representative of stable cultural values and narrative, especially political narrative, which is probably irreconcilable with what the "fluidity" inherent to what nowadays Late Antiquity means for us.

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Section 3

Reception and Survival of Antiquity

Chapter 3

The Immutability of the Core Construction of a Chair: The Building Techniques from Ancient Egypt to Contemporaneity

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Abstract

Since the discovery of the now well-known and preserved examples of furniture found in several *per-djet* of ancient Egypt's Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2160 BCE) and New Kingdom (c. 1550–1069 BCE) it was possible to analyze in detail each object uncovered, revealing how it was built, the composing materials, the techniques that maintained it together and other elements present in its composition. The most interesting fact for this study is that, upon analysis, there seems to be interesting similarities between construction techniques used to assemble both ancient furniture and the ones used nowadays for the same purposes. To test the hypothesis, this paper is focused in three particular objects, the Solid Ebony Chair of *Tutankhamun* JE 62033, from KV62, and the Chairs of *Hetepheres* MFA 38.957 and *JE 53263*, from G7000X, -a much older chair- and analyses its structures, the materials and techniques used to assemble them, the similarities and dissimilarities, if any, between these two examples and to see if the is any correlations with them and their analog structures built three and a half millennia later, in our current days.

Keywords: ancient Egypt, chair, *Hetepheres*, *Tutankhamun*, contemporaneity

1. Introduction

Each civilization follows a path according to its own rhythm. This evolution may be defined by the choice of its main location, internal and external political situation, growth and economic prosperity but mainly the internal cultural differentiation. The appearance of an artistic mind is paramount to allow a growth from the satisfaction of basic needs to allow the emergence of more complex ones, a phenomenon that in ancient Egypt, seems to have happened in the so-called elite in a very early moment in time but not as evident in the majority of the population [1]. Based on what is now know of ancient Egyptian practices and customs of daily life, mainly known through iconography and what reached our moment in time, although rough pieces of furniture seem to be transversal to the civilization, most of the Egyptians did sit or squat and slept on the floors [1]. In our days, such behavior would be considered very disconformable on a day to day living basis. In Egypt, some of those who lived in poorer conditions did have some basic stools, chests or baskets, used primarily for minimal comfort, food conservation or simple storage [1, 2].

One establishes here that furniture, chairs, beds, well-build chest, footstools, and so on, were, indeed, pieces belonging to a specific elite, which tended to use it, supposedly in daily live and, this is quite an academic interesting debate—ancient Egyptians, commonly took they earthly belongings with them to their *per djet* or had copies made to accompany them for their last address [1, 3].

The evolution of the production of furniture itself is also associated directly with both a development of taste, a search for comfort and, also with the development of a core system of beliefs alongside the need of protection. Both always accompanied these same evolutionary processes.

So, firstly an elite chair, in ancient Egypt, has the use of extraordinary rare pieces of elements such as woods, ivory, gold and often several other elements to decorate household items, something used not only for a question of status they represent by themselves, interlinked with the beauty directly related from their compositions—but many times with a special relation with the symbolic meaning of many of their components and colors. Nevertheless, the search for comfort seems to have always been part of the equation, if one takes in consideration the evolution of the chair, from the Old to the New Kingdom. It is noticeable the *crescendo* of quality items over time inside elites' households who gradually found means to acquire their security and therefore could pursuit other needs in life. In our contemporary society, the same does seem to apply [1].

Through millennia, from ancient Egypt to our more modern days, somewhat the same globalization of furniture on the western world also happens, although not based in a real security but in a false sense of need of acquisition, even though the quality at its core is not exactly durable and certainly not the main focus, but rather aesthetics and low price.

Even though the ancient Egyptian elite could feel it relatively secure, no chair was just a chair, or furniture, for that matter. The charge of symbolism attached to every single object, designed by a craftsman was very high. In the materials chosen, the designs incorporated, the colors of the scheme presented and even the type of legs, or any other detail of a furniture made would serve more than a purpose to lay or sit or even eat off. The finished product would frequently be protective with a help of, at least, a deity, working as sort of an amulet, protecting or having some kind of intrinsic power or protective action or inscribed spell to maintain enemies at bay. This was one of the main objectives of any ancient Egyptian furniture. Try as anyone might, other than simple utilitarian furniture not-belonging to an elite member, it is, for now, impossible to find, at least, a piece without some symbolic meaning attached to it. Interesting examples, not focused in this paper, would be find in well-known pieces such as the Chair of *Sat-Amun*, now in the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo, JE 5342, or some furniture, like the *Tutankhamun*'s Footrest, in the same Museum, Carter Object 092, where the pharaoh stood upon his enemies during audiences with them, to prevent the envoys of foreigners of arming him or Egypt. Here it enters a complex world of ancient belief system that had been in work for centuries. Such preoccupation seemed to be on the Egyptian mind. This belief and the action to counter act it made the ancient Egyptians even more interesting and its culture an ever deeper one to understand, for, in fact, nobody understood what was really going on behind all that reserve, smoke and spectacle that made the Egyptians fearful in the eyes of the world for quite some millennia...

Even *Hatnofer*, mother of *Sennemut*, Vizier of *Hatchepsut*, in the privacy of her home, had a chair filled with symbolism, on the center a figure of Bes, a powerful apotropaic deity, protector of children and pregnant women, and a combination of *djed* pillars and the *tyet* amulets to protect her household, her children and herself. Here, one can see magic been used between Egyptians themselves. Such a work

most certainly would have been generalized if it was possible to afford such an item, and for some foreigner, that would simply be stranger and incomprehensible, but for an Egyptian, the message would be loud and clear [3–5].

Extremely relevant to this paper is to establish the point on which one can really focus and start to understand the "beginnings of the story of the chair" [6].

In the specific period one is analyzing here, due to its distance in time, one is inevitably restricted to what was left behind by an Ancient Civilization, whose way of life, practices and costumes were extinct almost two millennia ago.

The extreme climate conditions of Africa, specifically Egypt, works to one's advantage. The heat and inexistence of humidity paired with burial sites usually under rocks that protect wood elements from heavy deterioration, helps to maintain a dry climate that tends to conserve wood for several thousands of years [7].

The first real unearthing of such an item, where one has to consider the beginning of the history of furniture, happened exactly where people's mind tends to go when one's asked, "tell me something about Egypt..."

The mind tends to recall the Pyramids of the Giza Plateau. Structures built during the Old Kingdom (c. 2686–2160 BCE).

It is exactly during this time in history that the first pieces of furniture where placed on the Giza Plateau, dating approximately c. 2600–2500 BCE. They were found on the twentieth century by the excavating team of George Reisner and eventually brought to light. They are considered to this day the most ancient preserved pieces of furniture in our Planet. This will be analyzed in a section below [8].

However, long before this period, during Dynasty I, in Tarkhan, already bovine shaped pillar legs carved in wood with perfect joints of mortice and tenon, supposedly belonging to long beds, had been encountered. The difference here is that they did not make part of a complete structure. This indicates that furniture production was in effect in ancient Egypt far sooner than Dynasty IV, as it is also attested by the ceiling Stelae of Princess *Nefer-meri-ka* in Helwan, Tomb 246 H8 and Prince *Nisu-Heqet* also in Helwan, Tomb 946 H8, from Dynasty II, were one can see the royals sitting in front of tables or even the iconographic designs of a bed, stool and chair on the tomb of *Hesira* in Saqqara, Dynasty III [9].

It is, unquestionably clear that in ancient *per djet*, from all the periods of Ancient Egypt lays the answers one is looking for and certainly more questions that have ever been asked.

This paper will present a curious case of a chair that has being reproduced, and is currently in Boston, using an extraordinary effort to try and be truthful to the original and use its sister chair that has been restored and is in Cairo to compare the difference between execution techniques separated by 4 millennia and 7 centuries.

The other chair is a fine example of a Dynasty XVIII chair, built and only conserved, never again retouched.

For both of them one proposes a careful analysis, focusing on main material, use of extra-materials and techniques to incorporate them as well as forms used to include complex designs.

During this exposition, one will point out joints, the technological advance in furniture building in general, and chairs in particular, is the development of several joints to unify different parts of wood. For joints make a wood structure extraordinary resilient structure, the, use or absence of nails and methods of embodying other materials on the main object [10].

In the final discussion contemporary techniques will be paralleled.

Several questions did take form when one started pondering all this information, how similar could have been the construction techniques used then and now? Have these two civilizations developed so different woodworking techniques, or are they strangely similar?

Would we understand the processes and the steps they took?

Between the ancient Egyptians and our current civilization stands four and a half millennia, a vastness of time, and eventually of evolution. Would this be significative, or did we have analog evolutions in technical expertise?

How well did our current knowledge of carpentry reproduce an ancient Egyptian chair?

All these seem valid question to start analyzing closely the two examples selected.

2. The Chairs

2.1 The First Chair

Tutankhamun is, perhaps, the most well-known monarch of all ancient Egyptian history. Not because of his deeds or long life, but because of the circumstances and the findings of his Home of Eternity. His funerary paraphernalia, the British Lord who became obsessed in discovering everything the Tomb had to offer and eventually died in the process, together with other members of the excavations, all the publicity around a supposed "untouched tomb" that circulated the globe for years... A reflex of the might of Egypt over a World that had only seen a glimpse of a past civilization [11]. That specific moment in time, 1922, transformed the face of the Earth with new ideas about the Great Ancient Egypt, approaching the idea to the imaginary of people that had never contacted with Egypt or with its past. It was the beginning of reception by the masses, seen in the creation of Cafés, private rooms, furniture, bric-a-brac, and an assortment of material that would eventually bring Egypt and its culture nearer the common people of Europe and Americas.

In truth, the pharaoh lived during Dynasty XVIII, having ascended to power still in *Akhetaten* (Tell el-Amarna) very young. His father, *Akhenaten* died (c. 1352–1336 BCE—years as pharaoh) *Tutankhamun*'s older brother, *Smenkhkare* (c. 1338–1336 BCE—years as pharaoh) was in the throne. It is commonly suggested that *Nefertiti*, under the name *Neferneferuaten* could have also been a pharaoh and reigned after this pharaoh or another unknown individual, presented with the name *Ankhkheperure*, that is hypothesized to have been either *Smenkhkare* or *Nefertiti* could have occupied the throne for the four lapsed years from 1336 to 1332 [11].

In either case, the problem here is mainly chronological, for it would both explain the usually assumed disappearance of *Nefertiti* from *Akhetaten* and also the succession of *Tutankhamun*, as *Tutankhaten* circa 1332 BCE, 4 years after the death of his father. The boy—pharaoh still governed from *Akhetaten*, apparently the well-established capital of the empire at that specific time [12].

According to current data, he reigned for a total of a decade and not much is known about his direct orders or actions. However, important actions took place during his reign. A continuation of what had started a few years back, after the death of his father. In Thebes, Amun had started gaining an increase number of loud followers, in the great temples, and all over Egypt the ancestral religions were getting back to their normal functions. The most curious aspect is that no retaliation happened from *Akhetaten*, neither any retaliation happened against the Horizon of the *Aten*. There is an interesting Stelae where the pharaoh states that he, himself, restored and returned all the favors of the ancient Gods to Egypt, an incredible propagandistic form to start a new reign, for a child with around a decade of age. However, it is perception that tells the story, and the story is what it is always remembered, When *Tutankhaten* performed the coronation ceremony, he changed his name to *Tutankhamun*, in fact, but his first name did not disappear, and neither did the iconography of *Akhetaten* in many of the furniture that surrounded him, until 1922 AC [12].

As a new Pharaoh, it was time to leave The Horizon of the *Aten* and start to manage the empire from an ancient Capital.

Such a fate, as it seems, was not to be, and the pharaoh did die very young. Critics refer to the tomb of *Tutankhamun*—KV 62, as a very small space, hastily finished to accommodate the prematurely departed "boy-pharaoh" [13].

However, in this aspect, the pharaoh really did leave a mark. His House of eternity supplied pieces of incalculable scientific value like no other to this day.

Many of those belong to the furniture section. The chair chosen for this paper illustrates not only the best of ancient Egyptian art in furniture, but also the best of technique applied to fine wood construction and superb execution.

2.1.1 Analyzing the Solid Ebony Chair of Tutankhamun JE 62033

Figure 1 shows a 45° angle of the Solid Ebony Chair of *Tutankhamun*.

This chair is currently at the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo and was discovered by Howard Carted and Lord Herbert, Earl of Carnarvon, in 1922 inside KV 62—The Tomb of *Tutankhamun*.

The funerary paraphernalia was immense, as the world came to know, but this so very special chair is going to take central stage in this paper.

Its conservation status being quite good, as if it was left inside a mere couple of days before the tomb was opened, was surprisingly rudely placed inside the antechamber of KV 62, below one of the ceremonial beds—The Lioness Bed—along with several other items such as the Black Shrine-shaped box on sled (object Carter 38),
or the extraordinary Chest of ivory, ebony, and red wood (object Carter 32),
as examples.

Despite its rude deposit and its long sleep for more than c. 3200 years it arrived at the twentieth century in perfect condition, ready to be carefully analyzed.

This chair is one of six chairs found inside KV62.

Figure 1.
Solid Ebony Chair of Tutankhamun. ©The Griffith Institute, University of Oxford. Physical characteristics: The chair has the following measurements (in SI units): height, 0.715 ml; width, 0.406 m; depth, 0.391 m [13].*
**International system of units.*

Due to its size, it has been classified as a "Chair of a child" [13].

It was initially classified as Object Carter 039. The Museum of Egyptian Antiquities of Cairo has the ascension number JE 62033.

It is mainly made of ebony. This wood, for the ancient Egyptians, was extremely rare and a hard to find type of wood. It was not native from the land, and also rare in the empire even in the dominated lands the New Kingdom had under its control, so to have access to such wood in vast quantity would probably signify that it came from either commercial exchanges, something very frequent during the New Kingdom, or the payment of tributes, a practice the early New Kingdom Pharaohs, mainly *Tuthmoses* III, approximately a century before, started enforcing to maintain control on constant insurrections in further territories. Whatever the case, this wood could have only come primarily, has since the Old Kingdom, from either the Western most part of the African Continent not very acessible areas [14].

In the time of *Tutankhamun*, one sees the results of such tributes on the production of the so-called luxury items with an extreme perfection, but not to the extent seen years before, during the time of *Amenhotep* III.

The other components of this chair are ivory, gold, and some gilded bronze pieces and natural color bronzed "shoes", according to the Carter cards, from the Griffith Institute [1, 14].

2.1.2 Building the Chair JE 62033

This chair is made of six essential parts, legs, seat, arms, backrest, chair supports and back supports.

The legs are exquisitely carved pieces, two by two, mimicking the front and posterior legs of a lion sitting in bronze gilded drums, a common theme that intended to symbolically both elevate and protect the one who seated in the chair. In this particular case, an elegant detail was added, and the claws were made with ivory [15].

To give the chair extra-support four wood cylinders—the stretchers—with dowel joints would be docked between the legs that in turn docked with the carved lion legs using the same mechanism, reinforced and decorated with gilded bronze pieces one can see on the extremity of each side of the stretcher. Using the same joint, the dowels, from each stretcher four smaller ones extend to the seat of the chair reinforcing it. All and all, the visual aspect of the design is actually very pleasing, it allows for a visual effect that is completely agreeable when one sees what the craftsman was aiming for, which was a very complex but also secure structure. It is this, seemingly undecorated work that supports the overall structure of the chair in its entirety [10, 16, 17].

Although the chair seems to be a normal Egyptian chair, it is far from it. This type of seat is called a double-cove and it is a hard one to take form, and much harder to make it last for millennia. Granted, that it is very comfortable, but the execution and mainly the guarantee that it endures is probably a nightmare. It was a test on how good the craftsman really was. The trick started with the legs. They had to be higher than usual. It is common to see this type of furniture referred to- the Egyptian also sat frequently in stools—as high leg chairs or stools. The hard part does start when all the rest has to be kept in place, ergo the extra reinforcements talked supra.

In terms of execution, the wood has to be slightly bended before it could be placed in its final position. If one looks to the image, the most certain way to guarantee no bad future results with the piece is exactly by applying some nails where the legs enter the set.

The frame of the seat is unified with a series of four joints of the type mortice and tenon with shoulder. After that, an old technique from the Old Kingdom is used to fixate the seat to the legs—the lower part of the chair is fixated using a series of

leather or linen bindings that passed through holes cut in the legs and the frame of the seat, maintaining the lower superstructure united [16].

After this process is concluded, the sides of the legs are secured with gold nails, as it is visible in **Figure 1**. The major part of the structural integrity of the chair is done.

Regarding the seat, Carter described in his camp book, open access at the Griffith Institute, that the seat had five "slats (material unknown—but probably either cedar or ebony) fitted in to the framework". The material analysis is not ideal, one did not find another one, but it is known that the wood had been color treated to resemble with some type of resin to resemble ebony [10].

It is safe to assume that the chair had probably a pillow when in use, so the material on the seat could have taken a secondary concern.

The work in the arms and back, were extremely interesting. The principle used for fixation was the common use of joint of mortise and tenon with shoulder. In the situation of the arms they had four support points, the base, the backrest, the gold "L" plaque, fixated with nails, that enforced a connection to the seat and the wood piece that contour and gave them both extra resistance and comfort to whom whore the chair. It is extremely important to note that the arms are a mixture of two types of art. The first one is, of course, carpentry. The whole chair was made by a master artisan, it presents itself with no fault, a superb work, with clear lines, complex angles made with no worry and extreme devotion, but then there was also the work of gold workers, probably jewel makers, with an extremely accurate eye for detail.

It is not clear for a naked eye to see the detail of the pieces that are on the stretcher's finials, and it is even harder to see the bas-relief of what is happening on the side of the arms. In a parallel note, because it is not an excellent detailed image, both arms are decorated on the outside and inside. On the outside there are wounded oryx and desert plants, surrounded by scroll patterns, and on the inside a simple desert plants surrounded by common patterns [18, 19].

To fixate the golden element inside the four parts of wood of the arm, a housing joint would have been the most appropriate technique used. In itself, the arm took form with an invisible mortise and tenon, with shoulder, to control any possible risk of damage. To the back the same method was used.

During the late Dynasty XVIII, there is already an inclination of the back, visible in **Figure 1**. That was possible due to the existence of stiles and a central brace that allows the support of the weight of the person [20].

The chairs from this time period tended to create an illusion. They seemed to end where the back ended if looked from the front, but in truth the backrest was several centimeters in front of the back legs.

From the back legs a structure was raised composed by three vertical pieces of wood that would unite to the backrest on the headrail. Therefore, the chair eventually had a more ergonomic feel when sitting. These three vertical structures would be fixated with mortice and tenon to the back braces and mortice and tenon with shoulder to the head rail. The backrest was placed on the seat, in this case, with a stub-tenon joint and in the headrail with a same mortice and tenon joint with shoulder [16].

On the backrest artisans gave free reign to their imaginations and made the most marvelous inlays of ivory, as one can observe in this specific chair. Inlaid with ivory contrasting with a darker color surrounding it, with an incredible work of detail this chair is one example of the finest ancient Egypt art has to offer. It is important to refer that also here the same mortise and tenon with shoulder were used, always showing the extreme carefulness used to maintain invisible any unions between different parts of wood and the re-use of gold nails for structural and decorative purposes. In one final detail, although the back-rest of this chair is indeed made of ebony, there is an impressive extra detail associated to it. All the ebony was covered

by papyrus strips glued to the wood and colored by the same resin used in the seat to acquire the color of ebony. If nothing else, it is an extremely decorative step to make with such a usually marvelous wood [16].

Could the explanation be associated with the need to give a strange texture to the chair? Or to demonstrate an extravagant behavior? Maybe it is not what one would consider Egyptian, but upon the analyses of this chair, this is indeed a strange fact. Perhaps the reason is simply related to the quality of the wood, it was not completely homogeneous.

The extra concern for the use of four gold reinforcements, two between the seat and the arms and two between the seat and the stiles seems to indicate that the chair might have had, at some point, the need of repairs, which could explain the need for a repair of the backrest.

The use of golden nails on the upper side of the backrest also seems to indicate the same. Maybe the use of such a delicate chair by a young pharaoh could have been more than the chair was prepared to handle. They do not seem to be structural at all but can very possibly have been placed to reinforce the connection between the backrest and the structure behind it, in case the elbow brace originally placed to maintain the central brace was not being enough [17].

On a final note regarding structural reinforcement, usually between joints it was used some kind of natural glue to increase the resistance of the piece. Ancient Egyptians used commonly gesso and either a natural adhesive or resin, usually Acacia gum, as found in the joints of the furniture of KV 62 and in this chair here presented [21].

2.2 The Second Chair

Approximately 4600 years ago (c. 2600 BCE), the sarcophagus of *Hetepheres*, wife of *Snefrw* (the first pharaoh of this dynasty), mother of *Khwfw*, the builder of the great pyramid, was descended and finally placed in "eternal" rest, with no body inside, in the shaft tomb now numbered G7000X, in Giza [22].

Several items compose the funerary paraphernalia including the oldest preserved pieces of furniture in the World: a canopy, a bed, two chairs, a carrying chair and a curtain box [1]. The originals are now in the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo. The team that was excavating the place and eventually unearthed the tomb was working for the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Per contract, if they ever discovered a sealed tomb, all the contents would remain in Egypt. It took them 23 years to find the Tomb of *Hetepheres*.

The original Egyptologist on site was Reisner that, unfortunately, had to leave Giza exactly when G7000X was uncovered. But that was not the worst part for him. When he arrived and started cataloguing everything, he noticed that there was something peculiar. There were fragments that did not match anything they had found. And from that day till his death he initiated a reconstruction project trying to find what it was. He never did, although he had a very close idea. After his death, his project went on and in 2017 finally the project was ended, a second superb chair made out of intense archaeological survey, deduction and multidisciplinary participation returned to life, in a form of a reproduction. Reisner dream did become truth [8].

The second chair of queen *Hetepheres* is of unprecedented beauty for that dynasty. The arms, in the form of flying falcons, carved in wood and embellish with inlayed faience and the details of the back are breathtaking. This is, however, not the chosen chair for this article, but is extremely related to it, in form and technique.

The one showed here in **Figure 2** is in exposition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The reconstructed resides in the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, in Cairo, which makes this pair a special case, for one immediately thinks about the notion of the reception of an object of antiquity in our contemporaneity.

Figure 2.
The Chair of Queen Hetepheres (reproduction). Photograph© [date of publication] Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Physical characteristics: The chair has the following measurements (in SI units): height, 0.795 m; width, 0.707 m; depth, 0.660 m [9]. *International system of units.*

The chair of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is clearly a reproduction. All the suite of Queen *Hetepheres* in that Museum is such a case. It was executed in 1938 by Joseph Gerte, reproduced based on the one present in Cairo, for a private owner in Boston, that, in time, donated it to the museum, allowing it to be viewed by countless visitors, transporting them to a scenery of the Dynasty IV of Ancient Egypt. This is, of course, the epitome of trying to bring to another time something not quite belonging to it. Using eyes that understand most of the technique but not all the details. In fairness, Joseph Gerte did make an interesting job, trying to reproduce the original techniques and final appearance.

The reproduction is quite well executed, at first glance not that different from the reconstruction, lacking, however, the elegance and sophistication of the ones produced during Dynasty XVIII, and even by Dynasty IV, when techniques seemed to be far improved for finer cutting of wood and manipulation into that same material to more delicate patterns that present delicate details. Interestingly enough, as one will present in the following point, technical details like joints or wood carving seem to be very well underway by this time, but something seems to be missing, when compared to the original.

2.2.1 Analyzing the Chair of Hetepheres MFA 38.957

Figure 2 shows a 45° angle of the Chair of Queen *Hetepheres* MFA 38.957 from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, therefore, the reproduction made in 1938 by Joseph Gerte, almost identical to the Chair of *Hetepheres JE 53263 currently in the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Cairo*, which will be also referred to.

The shaft Tomb G7000X was sensibly 27 m underground, and was sealed during the reign of *Khwfw*, so it seems to attest the dedicatory on the carrying chair "The mother of *Khwfy.*" It allowed for 4600 years of controlled decomposition in very favorable conditions, permitting only part of the funerary paraphernalia to survive

to present days. When opened, part of the furniture was only maintained by the gold sheets, for the wooden part had rotten away. The gold, however, allowed the reconstruction of the furniture in an extremely long restoration process, but not of the above-mentioned second chair, that took almost a century to be completed [8].

This chair has an innate beauty and significance associated to it. Its iconography already represents so many of the founding beliefs and values of what ancient Egypt would be based for more them two and a half millennia after this moment in time. One here is almost at the genesis of a civilization. The Old Kingdom had all but started a dynasty before and the potential was immense. Iconography, ideals and ideas are all being formed at this point. Unknowingly Dynasty IV was the beginning of something that would last for centuries upon centuries to come.

This chair, although it is a reproduction, and here and there show signs of it, when compared with the reconstruction that had parts from G7000X, one will point out infra, brings important iconographic elements to light that both obviously have. There are three extremely significative [23].

The first one is the form of the chair. It will be the same from the Old Kingdom to the beginning of the Dynasty XVIII, New Kingdom. When compared to the chair of *Hatnofer*, both have the same 90° angles between the seat and the backrest [17]. The difference in angle came during the later Dynasty XVIII, a fact that is extremely curious. One is talking about a rigid norm in furniture making that will know absolutely no evolution in form for more than 1200 years.

Secondly during Dynasty IV, it was already canon to see represented carved front and hind legs of a lion over drums, showing the back legs longer then the front ones. The bovine legs seemed to have concurrent with the appearance of the lion legs, and an evolution of the chair and stool legs clearly evolved in this context [9].

Lastly, Heraldic flowers were beginning to be incorporated, at least, in pharaonic furniture and belongings. This was not limited to this specific chair, but to all the funerary paraphernalia of *Hetepheres*, the carrying chair and the recently restored chair are important examples of that [8, 24]. It is well established that furniture was an important vessel for transmitting not only information but also messages for those who did not understand Egyptian language. It is perhaps here that the beginning of the understanding of cultural and collective memory really started. Which is a massive step regarding a civilizational evolution point, for it's the beginning of the use of the right images and messages to convey the right information to keep *maat* for as long as possible.

2.2.2 Building the Chair MFA 38.957 and introducing the Chair of Hetepheres JE 53263

When this chair was commissioned, based on the one found in G7000X, the intent was to build it as faithful as possible. Despite that, the original chair was in a terrible state of conservation; and therefore, so much had to be improvised, which possible may account for some discrepancies [24].

Due to the recent studies on the second chair of *Hetepheres*, it is now possible to have access to the building techniques of the sister chair, the one in exposition for almost a century in Cairo and for around 70 years in Boston.

The chair in the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston, is simpler in some parts of the design than the one in Cairo. Although one presents in **Figure 2** the one in Boston, the differences will be pointed out as a way to establish a counterpoint between construction concerns in different times.

The four legs are, as mentioned, carved wood legs in the form of front and hind lion legs, very detailed and sit upon drums covered with gilded copper.

As usual each leg has tenons with shoulders that will fit the mortices of the seat.

The seat will create a frame where the two side rectangular woods would have mortices that fit both the legs and the other two parts of the seat itself. Both chairs had the lower section reinforced with golden nails.

According to the current hypothesis, it is not sufficiently accurate to hypothesize what made the backrest and the seat, although based on iconography, it is thought that this type of chair would have pillows. In any case, both the Cairo and the Boston chairs ended up with a plain wood finish [8, 25].

The top armrest is made of semi-circular pieces of wood that connects to the backrest. The vertical parts of the arms of the chair are parallelepipedal, the reproduction presents the front part as quite uneventful and with almost no work at all, while the Cairo reconstruction shows them as a carved piece with vertical parallel carved work. In both versions, they are attached to the chair with a mortice and tenon with shoulder that will fit on the sit and on the armrest [6]. In the Cairo reconstruction, the joints of the front and back of the armrests are strengthened with leather strips that pass diagonally and are concealed with gold patches when appeared on the surface [25]. On the case of the Boston chair one can see the lines in the arm pieces, on the vertical and horizontal ones, where the strips actually pass. It is an interesting appointment.

The backrest by itself is an curious piece of craftsmanship. The back frame seems to slide by lateral rails and then the top rail is pushed down and stays in place with a mitred cross-halving joint and rebated with a dovetail, there staying in place [9, 19].

The last part of the chair building is, of course, the carved wood panels in form of three papyrus flowers tied with six rows of wood and place inside the armchair's sections. The three stalks of the papyrus have tenons with shoulders that fit mortises on the seat of the chair. On the Cairo chair, the papyrus flower that touches the backseat seems to have the same mechanism to be fixated, although the other two flowers on each arm panel seem to be secure with leather, not visible because all the chair is covered with gold sheets after the carpentry process [9, 19].

To finalize this part, one notes the presence of some nails in the reproduction of the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston, mainly in sections where joints could be experiencing some problems. It would remain a question if this was a specific problem of the reproduction or a problem of the original design. It is very curious to note that they seem to replicate the exact place of the reproduction of the one in Cairo, according to photographs.

The design of this chair is extremely impressive, especially the details of the legs and the details of the papyrus flowers. The carving truly defends that on the third millennium BCE the level of perfection in complex areas was already at a very fine degree. The question now is, how high was it really, comparing to contemporaneity?

3. Final ideas

The question regarding reception is always a puzzle. Regarding Ancient Egypt, one is dealing with a civilization whose practices, codes of conduct and values, ways of life and belief have been massively extinct for almost two millennia. The ancient Egyptians did not disappear; they are still there, inhabiting the ancient land of *Kemet*. They simple follow different paths from those of their predecessors that stayed in the past for several reasons such as invasions, wars, a Planet in constant change and so many other reasons.

Then there are the Egyptologists, always searching for the past. To try and understand a civilization long gone, but still here. And why here? For some reason, when one has the slightest contact with it, one immediately embraces it. The Great Temples

of Abu Simbel, the paintings of David Roberts, a mural by an anonymous painter that alludes to Egypt, a view of the Nile. And constantly one brings Egypt to life and with no conscience of the fact, this is where reception enters in our modern lives.

However, Egypt is not only this, that illusion of a grand civilization of prosperity and greatness, of peace, or war, and beauty. Egypt is so much more than this. Much of this is what one can call reception of an ancient civilization by a new one.

In this article one has decided to go for something quite simple but tremendously essential in our day-to-day life.

Each civilization has the notion that evolves more than any other that has come or that exists along us. That's a curious way of thinking, a dangerous state of mind to have. It leads to actions that would eventually have devastating consequences. So, what better than to look to the most primary and nevertheless complex day-to-day tool all of our society uses.

A few years ago, one ended a dissertation focused on Ancient Egyptian Furniture and noticed curious aspects between Egyptian and current furniture [26].

Although twentieth-century furniture, aesthetically has lost immensely to our counterparts of the Two Lands, what about the techniques. Are we better on building chairs, or stools?

The answer is no. If anything, our civilization can still produce an amazing quality item, that is a certainty, but those are still produced to the elites, not for the masses.

Nowadays one finds extremely professional carpentries shops, auction houses selling perfect furniture and incredible Schools of Arts that either produce or sell top of the quality items, but the cost is so high that only a fraction of the population will have the means to acquire it. It is almost like the Egyptian way of life is repeating itself.

What does this mean? As a civilization, we have evolved very little regarding this specific aspect. Although we have created alternatives, being the most significative, here, the mass production of low cost furniture. Now, it is not only the elite tha has access to furniture, but still the only to high quality furniture. We adapted to what is really necessary and what seems to be dispensable. Maybe to have a full life one doesn't need to have a chair with lion legs or ivory inlaid backrests, and this is our advantage as civilization. Maybe. Will the archaeologist of the future think the same about us? Will it matter?

On a last note, the belief systems that surrounded the ancient Egyptians are not as dominant as any of the major ones existing in our current society. Although superstition, magic, fear in many forms does still exist, there is not an extension to all the aspects of life in normal circumstances, therefore, much of the symbology carried in the superb Egyptian furniture would not be seen in these current days. This been clarified, one is prepared to present the conclusion and establish the bridges between antiquity and contemporaneity regarding the chair.

4. Conclusions

The main question here would have to be focused not in the capability of our civilization to use tools of mass production of furniture that granted, it does possess; but how the basic techniques to unify and work different parts of wood are being used nowadays. And this is a really interesting question to consider. A civilization, or a determined group of people, tends to evolve and acquire the most advantageous ways to deal with a problem. After that problem has the most adaptable solution, there is no reason to keep searching for another solution to solve the same question, in theory. It is a waste of resources. Several years ago, there was an article focusing

one of the most dignified School of Carpentry in Lisbon, Portugal, that produced furniture-using techniques from the eighteenth century, FRESS [27]. Their pieces are exquisite in every sense, they are flawless, extremely durable and have an undetermined period of durability, as far as one knows, they can last generations in perfect conditions.

When doing a close analysis, today it is still used every ancient Egyptian technique in furniture production, from inlay to carving and varnishing. Even the use of glues to strengthen joints and, most fundamentally, the unions themselves find the exact same use today as they did in the so far long past. The most detectable are the mortice and tenon joints, dove tails, tenon with shoulders... basis for any contemporary furniture construction. A chair made by a carpenter today would have a mortice and tenon joint with shoulder perfectly visible in the back of the chair, on the union of the seat with the backrest. The joint used is exactly the same.

And this is an extraordinary aspect of evolution. Our civilization as achieved wonderous things, but this specific aspect, has come from the past.

So, when asking, how similar could have been the construction techniques used then and now? The answer would have to be almost the same. They are, of course some differences. Industrialization as brought some major alterations regarding the way furniture has been built. Joint are invisible, nails are practically inexistent and mainly substituted by immense screws, but those "wood" cylinders one places inside IKEA holes are, in fact tenons. The principle is the same.

Answering "Are these two civilizations so different in woodworking techniques"? Absolutely not, we are extremely similar. Maybe our need to satisfy masses is making us invent an alternative twist, but the base is the same, and it will always be.

That is why one so easily understands the process of construction of the Chair of *Tutankhamun* and that's why it was relatively easy to reproduce the suite of *Hetepheres*. But one note has to be made. There was a significant difference between the reproduction and the reconstruction in Cairo. Maybe it was the Cabinet maker, maybe it was the fact that he did not see anything except the designs, but the chair was noticably inferior to the original, although it was a good reproduction. The major fault was in the carving of the armrest. Maybe the detail was not that significative. These are, after all, only hypothesis.

This is, however, one of the main reasons why this chair was brought to this study together with its sister chair, to make a counterpoint between an example purely built during ancient Egypt, Dynasty XVIII The Ebony Chair of *Tutankhamun*, and two other, one reconstructed and one reproduced on the twentieth century The Reproduction Chair of *Hetepheres*. Original Egyptian, the original, and what can be called the result of reception of an Egyptian artifact in the past century.

This particular case of the Chairs of *Hetepheres* allows one to consider variables commonly associated with the fact that reception usually means recreation, and here one is simply referring to material culture. And this is true. Much of reception implies recreation that usually does not follow cannon, something that tends to change the overall process of what is scientific, what is real, what matters. It is one step from Egyptology to Egyptomania. Sometimes it is a dangerous step, many times it is an inoffensive one.

Dangerous is only when the absence of knowledge tried to become science. When a reproduction tries to become a recreation. There are differences.

When one started this paper, the first aspect, when studying the *Hetepheres* chair in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston was exactly "How similar are you to your much older sister?" The answer was immediate. "Almost nothing!" The general idea was there. The feeling was there. However, the history was completely different. It didn't weight millennia. It told a completely different story. A story of a woman,

not a Queen, that was fascinated with the story of a faraway land, of a long dead monarch that had a suite she wanted for her-self. She asked someone to replicate it for her. As best as possible. This was a movement of reception of a contemporary of century XX AD to something from century XXVII BCE.

Everything has its time and definitely its place. After this, there are, of course, the way people perceive and receive what is Egyptian or what reminds them of Egypt. That's a completely different story. Here enters the Reception, which is a stupendous idea that must be fueled at all costs, for people do tend to have enthusiasm for what is absolutely amazing, and Egypt has been that for more than two centuries now. And has so much to offer.

This is the beauty of time and the fact that it flows in only one direction.

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Chapter 4

Enlightenment and Neoclassicism in *La Clemenza di Tito of Mozart*: An Historical-Legal Perspective

Mario Riberi

Abstract

Opera seria had always chosen its settings and characters from classical antiquity drawing on Greek mythology, the histories of Livy and Suetonius, the *Aeneid*, *Plutarch's Lives*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, this world was given a new lease of life, separated from contemporary matters by an ever-decreasing division, across which it seemed almost possible for modern ideas to join hand with antiquity. In this context, the virtue of clemency is often represented on many levels in Mozart's operas, and in particular in *La Clemenza di Tito* (1791). The main purpose of *La Clemenza di Tito* is the creation of an esthetic and neoclassical vision that introduces an enlightened interpretation of the virtue of clemency into the absolutistic context. Demonstrating the ability to forgive, and setting his own needs aside to accommodate his subjects, Tito is an enlightened ruler, who is both morally irreproachable and sensitive. By forgiving and preserving his subjects, the enlightened ruler allows them to become enlightened themselves.

Keywords: Mozart, Titus, clemency, enlightenment, neoclassicism

1. *La Clemenza di Tito*: an introduction

In 1791, the year of his death, Mozart received three important commissions, very different from each other but each in its own way significant in the boundless catalog of the Salzburg genius.

The first proposal was made by Emanuel Schikaneder, former director of the *Theater auf der Wieden* in Vienna, who in May submitted to Mozart's attention the libretto on the *Magic Flute*, written by Schikaneder himself and based on those humanitarian and truth-seeking ideals of ancient masonry, of which Mozart himself was a believer [1].

A few months later, precisely in July, he was the butler of a certain Count Franz von Walsegg who knocked on Mozart's door, offering him to compose a requiem mass for a fee set by the composer himself. Walsegg is now known as a wealthy and amateur musician who commissioned other scores of various kinds and then pretended to be the true composer. The requiem required by Mozart was conceived for his late wife, and Walsegg himself directed his execution in the Cistercian church in Vienna, 2 years after Mozart's death on December 14, 1793 [2].

The most demanding proposal of the three, however, was presented to Mozart in August: Leopold II of Habsburg-Lorraine would have been crowned king of

Bohemia in Prague, on 6 September, shortly before the representatives of the Bohemian states had signed with the impresario Domenico Guardasoni a contract for a work celebrating the event, which would be staged on the day of the coronation. The choice of the libretto was almost obligatory and fell on a text written by Metastasio in 1734, *La Clemenza di Tito*, a solemn drama of Roman argument on the virtues of Titus, an enlightened sovereign who in the name of friendship renounces love and forgives conspiracy ordered by Sesto for the love of Vitellia. The work had indeed been commissioned to Salieri, at the time considered the greatest living composer in Austria, but he had refused it for unknown reasons. The time to complete the commission was very short, and Mozart worked hard at it, completing the score (if it is true what Niemetscheck says) in just 18 days. The composer immediately went to Prague with his wife Costanza; the pupil Süssmayr, who wrote some of the *recitativi secchi* of the opera then revised by the master; and the clarinetist Anton Stadler, who would have obtained an important part in the orchestra [3].

Mozart had accepted the work with enthusiasm, and he did not spare himself at all in his writing, taking notes even in the carriage and in the brief moments of rest; but it was not enough to satisfy the Prague public, who coldly welcomed the dry and classical linearity of *La Clemenza*. The chronicles of the evening tell of the regal but unrefined comment of Empress Maria Luisa, daughter of the King of Naples, who brandished the work as a "German-style trash in Italian style" [4]. Although *La Clemenza* was increasingly appreciated in the short term, the number of her representations has been gradually diminishing until it almost disappears; moreover, musicologists and conductors (like Riccardo Muti) have given new life to this work of excruciating beauty from the last century to today. If it is true, in fact, that in his expressive stylistic forms *clemency* casts a glance back at the old world of *opera seria*, it is also true that its fluid structures already presage the future solutions of Beethoven and Weber [5]. Compared to the sublime trilogy of Mozart-Da Ponte, which in addition to providing a faithful image of the time when it was written is characterized by the dynamism of stage action, *La Clemenza di Tito* is a more static work, which describes the facts around Tito, an illuminated motor of the whole history; this is at least the criticism that came from many parts. It would surprise many readers to know that almost 60 years after its birth, the libretto of Metastasio (originally written to celebrate Leopold II's grandfather, Charles VI) was not hired *sic et simpliciter*, but it was "reduced to a real work," and it is Mozart himself who wrote this in his personal catalog, from the court poet of the Elector of Saxony, Caterino Mazzolà. The glorious times of the *opera seria* had inevitably passed away, and a text like the Metastasian one, even if very precious, was, if we want to put it this way, "aged badly." As the most skilled of the tailors, Mazzolà adds something and cuts here and there; in particular it is the insertion of ensembles (duets, threesomes, concertati) the most innovative element: it's indeed a modernization of a scheme that since the time of Caldara was based on the rigid alternation of recitatives and solo arias. A restoration of the kind, of course, has a price. The famous recitative of Titus (III, 7), already praised by Voltaire, is now mutilated in several parts, and the air "Se mai senti spirarti sul volto," which had its importance in the version of Gluck of *La Clemenza*, is now transformed into a *terzetto*, certainly ensuring greater fluidity to the scene but also mitigating its dramatic potential [6].

La Clemenza di Tito is a story of friendship and forgiveness triumphing over jealousy and violence. The new emperor of Rome, Tito, is much loved by the Roman people, with the exception of Vitellia, the daughter of the previous emperor. When her attempts to return to her rightful place on the throne through marriage are unsuccessful, Vitellia plots Tito's assassination and enlists the help of her young admirer, Sesto. Sesto is close friends with Tito, but will do anything to gain the affections of Vitellia, so he agrees to her plans. He sets fire to the Capitol, intending

to trap Tito inside and kill him. Meanwhile, Servilia (who is Sesto's sister) has refused Tito's marriage proposal because she is already engaged to Annio, Sesto's close friend. Tito instead sends Publio, his captain of the guard, to take a marriage proposal to Vitellia on his behalf, but Publio arrives too late, and the assassination plot is already in motion. Fortunately, Tito is not killed in the fire, but Sesto has gone missing. Annio finds his friend, who is torturing himself with the guilt of his crime, and tells him that Tito did not die in the fire and that Sesto should be honest with Tito and trust in his reputation for clemency. Sesto admits his guilt and faces trial and execution. Tito has explained several times in the opera how important clemency is to him and he now struggles with sentencing his friend. He questions Sesto privately, and Sesto begs him to remember their friendship. Alone and unaware of Tito's trouble, Vitellia realizes that Sesto's life is too high a price to pay for her place on the throne and finally admits to Tito that she is responsible and asks him to spare Sesto's live. Tito announces a pardon for all conspirators, to high praise from the Roman people.

Alongside the style of the magniloquent and the gorgeous (which is also favored by a certain public), there is the less used *modus operandi* of sobriety and rigor. It is not coinciding with the absence of emotions but deals with the contemporary need of levity, which, like heaviness, has its honorable reasons. All this seems to us to be applied reasonably to *La Clemenza*, which is the result of the work of Mozart and Mazzolà. To try to understand more, it is appropriate to start from the difficulties encountered by the Venetian poet Mazzolà in writing the *libretto*, especially starting from the physical and dramaturgical barycenter of the work: the ending of the first act. The famous quintet with chorus "Deh, conservate o dei" is in fact the keystone of the new dress made by Mazzolà for the old eighteenth-century drama [7]. The *concertato* is constructed through the progressive entrance on stage of all the characters except Titus, whose assassination is announced at this point. The whole cast comments on the misdeed from his own personal point of view. Their lines are united with the feeble voice of the choir, which behind the scenes laments the death of the enlightened ruler; in the background, the Campidoglio burns. Mazzolà has reduced the three original acts to two and, at the end of the first act, has included the concertato composed of the quintet on stage and the chorus that comments the murder behind the scenes. In doing so, however, a dramaturgically crucial event lacks which could properly conclude the act I. Here then the genius of Mozart shines: at first he composed in a sublime manner the *concertato*, giving it a character of anticlimax (after the allegro the chorality of the voices emerges with the next andante, during which the news of the emperor's death arrives), which imprints a sudden braking at the dramatic rhythm, creating a flouting atmosphere that concludes the act in an aura of mystery; then he has the spectacular intuition of making visible a passage that in Metastasio is only narrated: the Campidoglio in flames. In the same theater that had baptized the final episode of Don Giovanni, with the protagonist thrown into hell by the stone guest (cf. Da Ponte: "foco da diverse parti" and "il foco cresce"), now the flames surrounds the Roman hill (cf. Metastasio: "Annio che fai?/ Roma tutta è in tumulto, il Campidoglio vasto incendio divora"); it's a powerful scenario for this human and musical journey, considered the dynamic (pianissimo) which are reduced orchestra and voices on the scene, at the fall of the curtain [8].

The second act opens with a *recitativo secco*, which reveals immediately to the audience that Tito has escaped the conspiracy and is still alive. It was a brilliant *coup de théâtre*, as well as a source of confusion for the protagonists and the public, who had concluded the previous act believing the dead of Titus. The melodic enchantment of Mozart settles, in this act, especially on the figure of Sesto, protagonist at first of the *terzetto* "Quello di Tito è il volto" with Publius and Tito himself, and immediately after with the aria-rondò "Deh, per questo istante solo," in which he caresses the thought

of dying, in order to not suffer any further for the sorrows inflicted at his friend Tito. However, if the final verses of the trio ("Chi more/non può poiù penar") get the musical assent of the orchestra, not so can be said for those who conclude the rondo ("Tanto affanno soffre un core/Nè si more di dolor!"), which instead are presented in a musical guise contrary to their meaning. As Raffaele Mellace affirm:

> *The rondo melody of Sesto makes its appearance from an 'elsewhere' of sidereal distance, like a voice of almost metaphysical gratuitousness, estranged from all pain, which seems resolved in a play of primitive innocence. A return to the origins very close to certain atmospheres of The Magic Flute and to other melodies of the last Mozart* [9].

It is worth dwelling on another significant number of the score and in particular on two significant timbre choices: one falls on the clarinet, the other on his "brother" with a deep sound, the basset horn (close relative of the alto clarinet but with a wider extension in the severe register). The first stands out, in act I, in the farewell of Sesto to Vitellia, the aria "Parto, ma tu ben mio," where with the velvety and persuasive timber it tells of the fateful domination of affections on the human will, in a magnificent *concertato*; the basset horn instead affirms itself in one of the best known points of the score, the aria "Non più di fiori," with which Vitellia renounces the imperial throne in order to save Sesto. After a first section with a liederistic flavor, we pass, in this aria of the final act, to a second part characterized by an intense vocal articulation, counterpointed by the dark line of the basset horn. As Giovanni Carli Ballola wrote [10], the basset horn bellows dark as the Minotaur of the labyrinth of Borges, echoing to the sound of the voice in the low register, where the melody resembles that of the air-rondo of Sesto: it's the return of the fixed idea of death as the ultimate goal and source of redemption of all sin.

The orchestra of Clemenza, compared to that of the other serious Mozart masterpiece (*Idomeneo re di Creta*, 1781), is characterized by its smaller dimensions, similar, paradoxically, to the comic operas written in collaboration with Da Ponte; removing the aforementioned basset horn, they are in fact practically the same. The timbric refinement, however, now plays the irreplaceable function of "humanizing" with extreme delicacy the rigid sacredness of the drama of Metastasio. The horns, in addition to the usual harmonious reinforcement in the central register, support the voice of Publius in the only solo air of the character ("Tardi s'avvede"), in which the bass recalls, according to Machiavelli's principles, that for a ruler, like Tito, it is more convenient to suspect than to have faith on his subjects. The trumpets are used in particular in scenes of collective joy, moments in which the authentic popular simplicity and the intense religious sentiment coincide.

La Clemenza di Tito is a work of many souls. No doubt it is a political text; above all because, in a difficult historical moment like the French Revolution, which would soon have blown up more than one head, it has the arduous task of exalting the ideal of magnanimity and wisdom, of clementia in substance, of a sovereign like Leopoldo II, who first adopted Cesare Beccaria's ideals in the world with the promulgation of the Leopoldian code (which abolished the crime of injured majesty, the confiscation of property, the torture, and the death penalty). But the dramatization of the virtues of the princeps is itself political school, and of the best: the Machiavellian lesson that the sovereign imparts to himself by observing his qualities reflected in a mirror. But *La Clemenza*, as the director Luca Ronconi reminds us, is an inner adventure rather than a plot of a conspiracy, and it is a story of love and friendship. The conspiracy of Vitellia and Sesto against Tito, which she loves without being reciprocated, has little of the act of terrorism. It's all in the reasons of the heart. The final quintet of the first act becomes the sung story of five friends; as if in a subtle play of invisible threads, the equilibriums

shift, and the relations of force change, because one of them becomes emperor. It is paradoxical that in the work perhaps less loved among those of the maturity of Mozart, one finds such a living and powerful humanity. It is felt, for example, in the recitative accompanied by Titus, in which Caesar envies the poor *villanello* who perfectly knows the intentions of each other, without having to rush to demonstrate their truthfulness, "mentre noi"—Tito laments "fra tante ricchezze sempre incerti viviam." It is a difficult choice and always actual, choosing between the heart and the mind, and Publio effectively reminds in the trio with Sesto and Tito how between sense and sensibility "Mille diversi affetti guerra fanno." It seems appropriate then to conclude with the words of a great music critic like Paolo Isotta, who, comparing the *Idomeneo* and *La Clemenza* to each other, wrote:

> *Between the two works the fundamental difference is this, that in the first the dramatic element is much more pushed and, while in the second the light is uniformly and softly diffused as on a marble surface. The ambition of classical perfection and the neoclassical atmosphere are united. But the tragic element, in sublime style, is so present that we would give the whole Magic flute in exchange for the Final I of Clemency [...]* [11].

And we would do it because, like the rest of the work, it has something imponderable, moving, human.

2. *La Clemenza di Tito*: enlightenment and neoclassicism

As Thomas Kaminski affirm:

> *The eighteenth century was the age of Enlightenment, a period that we associate with social criticism, anticlericalism, and scientific discovery; and the classics often appear to have no place in this culture of reason and progress. But as demonstrated, virtually all of the important Enlightenment figures were deeply immersed in classical learning. (...) During the first half of the eighteenth century, neoclassicism actually constituted the basic esthetic theory of the Enlightenment* [12].

The clemency of Tito is a good example of the union between Enlightenment and neoclassicism.

The Emperor Peter Leopold himself is an example of Enlightened ruler. The second son of Maria Theresa, during his government as Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1765 to 1790, made great relevant reforms. Intelligent and energetic, he made reforms in both economic and humanitarian affairs. He attacked monopoles and encouraged free trade, built roads and bridges, made taxes both lower and fairer, and reduced the public debt; he also made a valiant attempt to drain the Maremma's marshes. In consultation with the Milanese jurist Cesare Beccaria, he drew up a penal code that made Tuscany the first state in Europe to abolish the death penalty and burn the gallows, a measure so audacious and encouraging to the cause of enlightenment that a Spanish reformer implores his own to turn his eyes to Tuscany to reflect upon the mildness of the death penalties upon the small number of crimes committed there and to read over and over again the penal code of its prince. Among his other merits, Peter Leopold was conscientious and loyal to a state that had no connection to either of his parents' families before 1734. Although from 1770 he was heir to the imperial throne in Vienna, the Grand Duke kept his father's promise to defend the rights and maintain the autonomy of his duchy. In 1790 he became the penultimate Holy Roman Emperor after the death of his brother,

Joseph II, who was the greatest and most innovative of all enlightened monarchs, an emancipator of serfs as well as Jews [13].

During his brief reign in Vienna, Leopold II (as Peter Leopold became) retained his reforming zeal, abolishing various punishments and ordering the police to be kind to prisoners; he even gave his subjects something of the principle of habeas corpus.

The clemency represents a dramatization of the *speculum principis*. The sovereign (like Leopold II) possesses superior qualities, and their celebration confirms the virtues of the princeps, shown to him as in a mirror ("Scribere de clementia, Nero Cæsar, institui, ut quodam modo speculi vice fungerer et te tibi ostenderem perventurum ad voluptatem maximam omnium," incipit of the *De Clementia* of Seneca) [14]. Clemency, natural and necessary virtue for the prince, saves the sovereign from the danger of anger, guaranteeing him the love of his subjects. The Titus is an uplifting work also because it is not simply an *opera seria*, genre "symbol of the culture of the ancien régime," but of the staging of a historical fact, of a dramatization of history, and therefore of "*veritas* on stage," a real example drawn from history and therefore more effective, because it is objective, absolutely true, and therefore very authoritative, based on *De Vitae Cæsarum* of Suetonius, not without a noble dramatic derivation from the *Cinna ou La Clémence d'Auguste* of Corneille [14–16]. In the transfiguring perspective of the libretto, perfectly aligned with the ideal of the good enlightened lord-father, the sovereign, perfect prince is an irreplaceable hero, whose regal glory resides in the incredible, superhuman exercise of virtue: justice, self-control, philanthropy, and clemency. For him the institutional experience is all-encompassing, and it sacrifices every individual need to it. Obedience to the *raison d'état*, though tiring, is binding: the eventual insubordination of the monarch, moved by private interests, would entail his decline from the supreme position that the supreme rank requires and, automatically, the ignominious slippage in tyranny. In the *Trionfo di Clelia* of Metastasio, not surprisingly, the *raison d'état* appears in the eyes of the passionate Tarquinio "barbaric," because it brakes and limits its political and erotic appetites. Tarquinio is the opposite of Tito, knows no rational domain of affections, cannot curb impulses, and is not a good ruler but just a tyrant, an amoral sovereign, who abuses power for his own benefit.

Di stato, o cara,

la barbara ragione, il genitore

m'ha nella figlia a lusingar forzato;

ma la ragion di stato

sugli affetti non regna

In Titus, on the contrary, the undisputed priority of the public dimension, and therefore of the imperial function, dominates and wins, with supreme control of passions, of every temptation of the heart, and determines the solution of every inner conflict between obligation and desire always in favor of the first, which benefits his fellows and his subjects [17, 18].

3. Conclusions

The neoclassicism of the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries is one that valued ancient Greek, Roman, and Etruscan artistic ideals. These ideals, including

order, symmetry, and balance, were considered by many European generations to be the highest point of artistic excellence. Although many movements in European art were largely devoid of classical characteristics, they were always looked to as sources of inspiration and were revived as significant movements at least three times throughout European history, in the twelfth century, during the Renaissance, and during the age of the present topic, the enlightenment, with its development of neoclassicism.

There are several events and movements within the Enlightenment that contributed to the rise of neoclassicism. The expansion, evolution, and redefinition of the European standard classical education were one of the greatest causes, as well as the recent archeological discoveries of Pompeii and Herculaneum. The rise in commissioned art and architecture and the refinement of art scholarship also gave rise to this movement. Finally, the general reaction to the exorbitant styles of Baroque and Rococo necessitated a return to the more orderly ideals of antiquity.

Opera seria had always chosen its settings and characters from classical antiquity drawing on Greek mythology, the histories of Livy and Suetonius, the *Aeneid*, *Plutarch's Lives*, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the second half of the eighteenth century, however, this world was given a new lease of life, separated from contemporary matters by an ever-decreasing division, across which it seemed almost possible for modern ideas to join hand with antiquity. In this context, the virtue of clemency is often represented on many levels in Mozart's operas and in particular in *La Clemenza di Tito* (1791) [19].

The main purpose of La *Clemenza di Tito* is the creation of an esthetic and neoclassical vision that introduces an enlightened interpretation of the virtue of clemency into the absolutistic context. Demonstrating the ability to forgive, and setting his own needs aside to accommodate his subjects, Tito is an enlightened ruler, who is both morally irreproachable and sensitive. By forgiving and preserving his subjects, the enlightened ruler allows them to become enlightened themselves:

> *Non ha conosciuto l'antichità né migliore né più amato principe di Tito Vespasiano. Le sue virtù lo resero a tutti sì caro, che fu chiamato "la delizia del genere umano". E pure due giovani patrizi, uno de' quali era suo favorito, cospirarono contro di lui. Scoperta però la congiura, furono dal Senato condannati a morire. Ma il clementissimo Cesare, contento d'averli paternamente ammoniti, concesse loro ed. a' loro complici un generoso perdono.*
>
> *Antiquity knew no prince who was better or more beloved than Tito Vespasiano. His virtue endeared him to all, and he was called the delight of humanity. But two young patricians, one of whom was his favorite, conspired against him, Once the plot was discovered, they were condemned to death by the Senate. But the most merciful Caesar, content to give them a paternal warning, granted them and their accomplices a generous pardon* [20].

As we notice, the libretto's *argomento* of *La Clemenza* of Metastasio emphasizes the drama of character to the virtual exclusion of the revolutionary aspects of the story. The drama in Metastasio and in Mozart/Mazzolà is centered not on the actions of the conspirators, Sesto and Vitellia and their followers, but rather on Tito's virtue and forgiveness. Clemency is not merely a chief attribute of a title character but as the main subject of the drama and the goal of its plot.

As well noticed:

> *The events of the opera emphasize the way clemency and the Enlightenment values it represents are threatened by dark tendencies in human nature: like the Queen of the Night and the attack of Sarastro's realm, Vitellia and the rebellion she incites are fundamentally opposed to enlightened order. But the solution in the Italian opera is not the vanquishing of the power of darkness; it is rather the unconditional pardon of Vitellia, Sesto, Lentulo and the other conspirators. (…) The Queen of night will or cannot recognize the values of Sarastro's enlightened realm: she is irrevocably opposed to his governance. Vitellia and Sesto, however, prove themselves deserving of the pardon Tito grants them: they are, in the end, fully reconciled with the world they had wronged. The crux of the plot here is the emperor's experience of and the response of betrayal; the definitive recognition is the moment at which he reclaims his policy of clemency and recovers his identity as an enlightened ruler* [21].

The reception of classical antiquity is used by Metastasio/Mozart/Mazzolà, at least, to recover and celebrate the enlightenment's values [22].

One year later the representation of Mozart's *La Clemenza*, Leopold II died suddenly in Vienna, in March 1792. Meanwhile Louis XVI, King of France, was officially arrested on August 13, 1792 and sent to the Temple, an ancient fortress in Paris that was used as a prison. On September 21, the National Assembly declared France to be a Republic and abolished the monarchy. Louis was stripped of all of his titles and honors and from this date was known as Citoyen Louis Capet. On Monday, January 21, 1793, Louis XVI, at age 38, was beheaded by guillotine on the Place de la Révolution.

A new era begins.

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Chapter 5

Reuse and Re-conversion of the Monumental Heritage in Naples

Rosa Maria Giusto

Abstract

The paper deals with the theme of the re-use of the public architectural heritage in reference to three monumental buildings of the city of Naples different by type, of which the conversion is under-way for collective and social purposes. In particular, the cases of the Royal Hospice for the poor (Reale Albergo dei Poveri)—intimately connected with the monumental complex of San Michele a Ripa Grande in Rome—of Palazzo Fondi and of the church of the Saints Cosma e Damiano are examined. These interventions can constitute reference models in terms of reusing public buildings returned to their renewed social and educational function, able to actively promote urban regeneration of the surrounding area.

Keywords: reconversion of historic buildings, urban regeneration, reusing, Reale Albergo dei Poveri, church of Saints Cosma and Damiano, Palazzo Fondi, Naples

> *"There is an antiquity that is stratified in ourselves and that must be considered as a premise and condition of all our becoming. Now, we can say that our psychological stratification finds its testimony, [...], or its reflection in that of the ancient center. Thus the true and most intimate reason for our love for the testimonies of the past arises precisely from this identification and not from an extrinsic satisfaction towards unrepeatable images. Therefore [...] the city needs to preserve the memory of itself as the individual man needs it" [1].*

1. Introduction

1.1 Historical knowledge and future of the city

"The continuity between the old and the new and the capacity of the historic city to go through time to recur with its mutations in the critical present [2]" make it the field of application and privileged verification of the project of integrated conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, both material and immaterial.

The principles of active preservation and participatory management of historic cities that emerged after the Valletta meetings held by the Scientific Committee on Cities and Historic Villages (CIVVIH) of ICOMOS and adopted in the charter (ICOMOS) of November 2011, contain the fundamental guidelines on the development and active conservation of cities and historical areas. The objective is to guarantee the respect of the material and immaterial values of the urban cultural heritage starting from the knowledge of the places and the specificities of the single assets to promote enhancement and revitalization processes that allow their conscious re-entry into the incessant flow of the contemporary city.

In the absence of clear planning and without a long-term systemic design any redevelopment project is destined to fail. In this sense, "valorisation is proposed as a necessary correlative of conservation, as a search for appropriate functions expressing the social need in an active involvement of the subjects in charge of protection" [3]. This involvement must take into account the specificities of the individual asset, promoting "the knowledge, the compatible use proposal, the intervention project" [3].

It is within the design themes that a balanced relationship can be found between preservation and transformation of cities, territory for integrated and coherent interventions aimed at sustainability and regeneration, since each project of re-use and re-functionalisation to be effective it must necessarily be placed in a historical perspective.

> *"The speed and acceleration of the changes that modernity brings with it threaten to erase the traces of the past and weaken, until it becomes insignificant, the link between past, present and future. Memory and design are elements that imply each other. Memory without project is an operation of pure museum conservation, the project without memory is the pursuit of a goal without knowing the meaning" [4].*

From this point of view, the role of the historian or, to put it in the words of Henri-Irénée Marrou, of historical knowledge in the processes of valorisation of the urban, material and immaterial cultural heritage, becomes crucial because it contributes to "unravelling the tangle of stratifications, of meanings, of the design drawings of the past. From this clarification the city is made comprehensible, articulated, available also to non-destructive interventions at different scales. [...] History is fundamental for understanding the existing city, for knowing things from the past but above all for being able to correctly read what still survives. Every theory—and therefore also a theory of reuse—must [...] be based on the knowledge of the object before proposing interventions" [5].

The necessary rethinking of the cultural heritage of historical centres and their conversion of values passes through the reactivation of the primary functions of the spaces of commerce, socialization, culture and art; a reconversion that cannot happen correctly without an adequate historical investigation that rediscovers and makes identity and vocations re-emerge, past functions and future potentials. It becomes imperative, in this framework, the need to start regenerative processes of systemic cultural innovation that reaffirm the identity of places and their collective memory through innovative models aimed at implementing new technologies and systems able to connect "territories, heritage and people in a logic of smart heritage" [6].

To really be able to preserve and promote over time a value development of the asset and of the territory connected to it, the re-use project must intercept and generate new connections, reinvigorating the social fabric around it and stimulating participatory processes aimed at the implementation of innovative and flexible solutions, open and inclusive, able to face the multiple challenges of the globalized society. Managing the complexity of the present, to be understood as a resource rather than a constraint, means encouraging collaboration between transversal, multidisciplinary and cross-media skills, promoting contacts and contaminations to trigger interconnectivity and pluralism.

The recent multiplication of urban laboratories and calls for ideas and projects aimed at creating places for innovation and social inclusion is an indication of the need, felt by many, to envisage development processes focused on the redevelopment of "hybrid spaces to cultural and creative vocation in which [...] it is possible to work, produce, distribute, aggregate" [7]. The ability of those assets to acquire new values is a function of their availability to intercept and welcome active

relational networks becoming "containers of planning that civil society is able to express through organized and stable actions" [7].

> *"The production and enjoyment of beauty, in the broader sense of sensible experience of cognitive paths that relate the subject to the world," represents "a central tool in the re-articulation of subsidiary welfare practices, capable of overcoming the social and economic differences present in our contemporary cities. In this sense, culture presents itself as a transversal theme to other social policies, intersecting the themes of health, mobility, living, education and in general access to material and immaterial resources present in the territory" [8].*

Already in the Amsterdam Declaration of 1975 the "extensive" nature of conservation no longer confined to the sole protection of buildings of particular architectural and environmental value but aimed at safeguarding historic cities in the more general objective of "reshaping the contemporary city to improve the quality of life" by introducing the definition of active integrated conservation as a "joint action of restoration techniques and the search for appropriate functions."

The need to envisage interventions aimed, on the one hand, at the recovery of the asset subjected to safeguarding activities, from another, to its functional reuse, leads us to look at the problem of reuse from several points of view; the experiences of urban regeneration can represent in this sense "a genuine lever for the enhancement of the assets of the public heritage" [9] as well as opportunities for the development of cultural sites of degraded cities or left on the margins of redevelopment policies.

The ever-increasing number of disused buildings that time and obsolescence have put into the register of works impossible to recover is such that they have led to tracing real geographies of abandonment where the numerous unused, abandoned or never really used buildings, scattered throughout the national territory, are carefully listed. Poised between memory and obsolescence, these buildings ask to be recovered by giving them back, at least in part, the function they had originally been called upon to satisfy. The intervention methodologies for the correct re-entry of these building complexes in the vital fabric of the cities go in the direction of returning to them a renewed function, as more flexible and homogeneous in terms of type and purpose, providing solutions open to future modifications and evolutions, the only viable way to start active safeguard policies of the historical-artistic heritage. In this perspective, forgotten historic buildings and places return to assume a strategic role within an urban ecosystem increasingly aimed at stimulating contamination between the various sectors of the economy and the urban social sphere and generating new connections.

Starting from the meaning of integrated conservation meant not as a "passive" defence, but as a dynamic protection activity "including the specific profiles of knowledge, restoration, use and enhancement of the same assets" [10] and against an idea of protection meant as a museum of architecture and the city, the building events that have affected the historical-artistic heritage over the centuries testify to the themes of functional and technological innovation, of the expansion and transformation of historical typologies as a necessary consequence of "adaptation" to the needs of society and as a first, "empirical," response to conservation issues. But what reorganization of existing structures should we imagine in relation to their size, historical typology and location in the territory, also considering the experimentation of new techniques and the pressing demands of inclusiveness and overcoming of architectural barriers?

The paper deals with the theme of the reuse of architectural heritage in Naples in reference to three buildings in the historic centre, different in type and original

functions, but united by conversion projects under-way aimed at cultural and collective re-use: the seventeenth-century church of the Saints Cosma e Damiano, in the ancient heart of the city, part of the Great Project Historic Centre of Naples enhancement of the Unesco site; the Royal Hotel of the poor, from the mid-eighteenth century, used as the seat of the *Young's City* and the Palazzo Fondi on Via Medina, a private building of renaissance origin, the result of various additions and accretions attributable mainly to the eighteenth century, to be used for offices and recreational activities. These interventions can be considered reference models in terms of reusing historical buildings returned to their renewed social and educational function, able to actively promote the regeneration of the surrounding urban area.

2. Reuse and re-conversion of the monumental heritage in Naples

2.1 The great project "historical centre of Naples enhancement of the UNESCO site"

In 1995 part of the historic centre of Naples was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its road layouts, the importance and richness of its historic buildings, its squares and its architecture, were recognized as universal values capable of projecting its own ray of influence *over much of Europe and beyond the borders of it*.

The opportunity offered by this important designation has made it possible to orient the planning of the areas of the historic centre towards initiatives aimed at safeguarding and protecting cultural heritage with particular attention to their enhancement in relation to the environment and active citizenship. The regeneration project of the historic centre, inserted in the broader context of the Integrated Urban Program of Naples, provides for systemic and participatory interventions able to promote the protection and enjoyment of the cultural resources of the historic centre and its ancient productive vocations by renewing the memory of the places in a contemporary key, enhancing the tourist offer and developing the establishment of a truly extended chain of cultural assets played around the themes of reception and inclusiveness. Through territorial policies aimed at encouraging public and private entrepreneurial initiatives, Naples, city of art and culture, is preparing to address the issue of a cultural economy based on production and on the value innovation of the tangible and intangible assets of its historic centre [11].

> *"While on the one hand it is necessary to protect historical centers as delicate realities within the cultural landscape in which they are inserted, on the other it is finally possible to rethink them in an intelligent way, identifying new possibilities for integrated socio-economic revival and sustainable regeneration" [12].*

> *"The phenomenon of cultural production and innovation has for some years [...] been deeply rooted and inserted in the urban space, so much so that it is often indicated as a key element for the re-urbanization of some parts of the city and the re-functionalisation of abandoned buildings. The spaces of cultural production—open, shared, accessible—represent new areas of relationship with the city and also urban politics identifies the practices associated with them as possible new drivers of local development" [13].*

Consistent with what has been outlined so far, the Project for Naples identifies two privileged areas of intervention for the regeneration of the historic city consisting in the reuse of the abandoned building heritage and in the transformation of

the common areas on the ground floor of the recovered buildings to be transformed into "poles of cultural and social animation (also through the inclusion of tertiary activities with a high artistic, cultural or social level) [14]." The aim is to start a redevelopment that, while aiming to protect and enhance the historical-artistic heritage, is not limited to "single-purpose" interventions but acts as a pivot of attractiveness and as a stimulus for the economic and social development of the territory [14].

The introduction of new functions compatible with the nature of the buildings subjected to protection activities and the inclusion of re-creative, exhibition and educational activities on the ground floor of the recovered buildings aims at transferring an "urban value" within a private space belonging to the city. Between the street, the vestibule, the courtyard and the ground floor rooms, the urban system and the building system hybridize, merging into a relationship of reciprocal dynamic relationship to determine the extension of the axis of the road inside the courtyard of the building.

2.2 The church of Saints Cosmas and Damian

The church of Santi Cosma e Damiano on the Largo dei Banchi Nuovi, rises in an area originally close to the Greek walls, in the stretch that delimited the ancient centre of the city towards the sea, in a western direction, along the axis of Via dei Banchi Nuovi has become over time one of the main directions of development of the coastal fabric enriched during the Middle Ages with the growth of villages and neighbourhoods linked to the economy of the Porto Piccolo. A commercial vocation confirmed and consolidated even in the Angevin and then modern times when the area became the privileged site of laboratories and merchant houses, welcoming a large number of lodges for commercial activities. Rua Catalana, Via Scalesia, Rua dei Fiorentini, Via Loggia di Genova, Via Loggia dei Pisani, are just some of the paths that still today meet near the port, testifying to the cosmopolitan and mercantile character of the places.

The general layout of Piazza dei Banchi Nuovi dates back to the period between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Due to riots in the city, in fact, around the middle of the sixteenth century the ancient Banco dei mercanti, located in piazza dell'Olmo, was destroyed; in the same period Alfonso Sánchez de Luna, marquis of Grottole, engaged in the construction of his own residence at Largo San Giovanni Maggiore, started the opening of the Largo dei Banchi Nuovi behind the building of which he would have marked the south-eastern margin. The opening of the square was the occasion to start the construction of the Loggia dei Banchi Nuovi on its southern edge, replacing the structures that had previously been destroyed; the construction of Palazzo Orsini, then of the Dukes of Casamassima, located on the south-eastern side of the square, whose renaissance forms—still legible—were transformed by Ferdinando Sanfelice in the eighteenth century. The completion of the Largo occurred during the first half of the seventeenth century with the construction, on the northern side, of Palazzo Vernazza (or Vernasse), transformed into Sanfelice's forms in the first decades of the following century.

The "vertical" connections between the Largo dei Banchi Nuovi and the lower city were ensured by a network of paths and lanes that still today branch off into the valley, filling the gap between the ancient city centre and the orthogonal plant checker-board, and the maze of alleys and lanes that cross the area near the harbour. The Banchi Nuovi square is in this sense the junction or, even better, the welding point between the centre of Neapolis and the lower city, marked by the convergence of the Via di S. Chiara and by the rise, starting from the early modern age along the extension of its upper limit, of a series of noteworthy buildings: from the renaissance

complex of Santa Maria la Nova (fifteenth to sixteenth century), to the church of Santa Maria dell'Aiuto (seventeenth century), from the Penne palace (fifteenth century), to the new church of Santi Demetrio e Bonifacio (early eighteenth century).

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, with the abolition of the new lodge decreed for reasons of public order, the area underwent further transformations. The building of the Banchi Nuovi was first purchased by Sánchez and then resold, in 1616, to the Barbieri Congregation which transformed it into a chapel for its own congregation to replace the ancient seat along the Via dei Tribunali, which was sold to allow the construction of the complex of the Gerolamini. In October 1617 the new church was finished in its general form, although work continued inside it.

The church, dedicated to the Saints Cosmas and Damian, fits into the square-shaped structure of the sixteenth-century Loggia composed of nine square spans covered by cross vaults supported by 16 trachyte pillars. The planimetric solution (**Figure 1**) adopted is that of a latin cross-shaped with a single nave, corresponding to the first two central spans of the Loggia, completed by two chapels on each side obtained by inserting walls in about half of the original side bays of the existing structure and ended by a high transept coinciding with the three terminal spans of the sixteenth-century Loggia [15]. "The interruption of the spatial continuity of the cross vaults" visible in the lateral rooms "was cleverly disguised [...] by means of pseudo-arched arches supported by sails" [16]; next to the main body of the church, in the "residual" spaces of the Loggia, the sacristy was obtained, on the left hand, and the room intended for the congregation on the opposite side.

Both on the main façade and on the lateral side of the church, along the Calata of Santi Cosma e Damiano, the triple round arches on trachyte pillars that conformed the once-open arcades of the Loggia dei Banchi Nuovi are still visible. The main façade of the church, concluded at the top by the cornice and the small bell tower surmounted by the cross, presents, above the seventeenth-century trachyte portal, a large late-Baroque window decorated with rocaille stuccoes (**Figure 2**). On the other hand, the oval openings in façade facing the upper rooms that flank the nave, date back to nineteenth century.

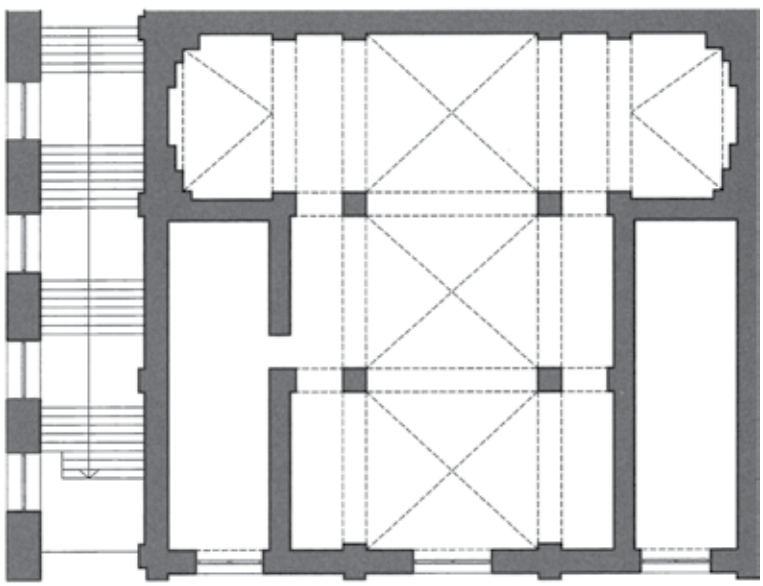

Figure 1.
Naples, church of Saints Cosmas and Damian on the largo Dei Banchi Nuovi, ground floor plan [15].

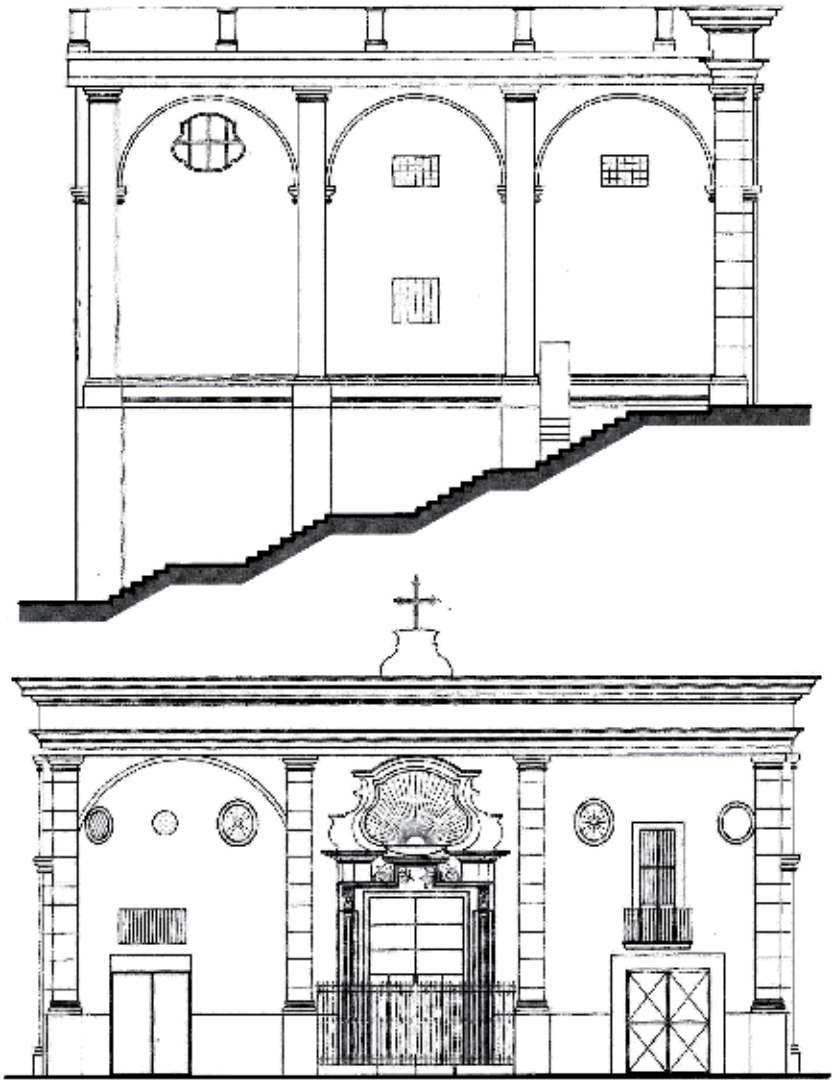

Figure 2.
Naples, church of Saints Cosmas and Damian, relief drawing of the main and lateral façade [15].

The church, abandoned since the eighties of the twentieth century and subject to continuous theft and vandalism, is the object of the interventions of recovery and functional enhancement conducted by the Municipality also because of the crucial role played by Largo dei Barchi Nuovi compared to the surrounding territory (**Figure 3**). Precious open space in a maze of streets and buildings mainly for residential use, it is in fact a strategic gathering and meeting place for young people, as well as being used for multiple vocations.

Specifically, the intervention in progress concerns the redevelopment and re-functionalisation of the church of Saints Cosma and Damiano, whose re-use is aimed at creating multi-purpose and flexible spaces to be used for cultural activities, with particular reference to exhibition purposes, music, conferences and training. The building, in fact, rises in the centre of a nucleus that condenses strong identity values around itself: from the music pole, which has a privileged reference point in the nearby Conservatory of San Pietro a Majella and in the adjacent street of musical instruments; at the pole of culture and knowledge constituted by L'Orientale

Figure 3.
Naples, church of Saints Cosmas and Damian and the largo Dei Banchi Nuovi.

University of Napoles, from the twentieth century owner of the ancient Sánchez palace, and from the Federico II University, whose headquarters is located along the Via di Mezzocannone on which the extension of Via dei Banchi Nuovi converges.

The presence of important tourist flows due to the proximity to the art itineraries of the ancient centre has determined the demand for spaces and services for culture, leisure and hospitality. The current project includes, among its main objectives, the enhancement of the local artistic and artisan fabric; improving services to citizens with the consequent increase in safety and legality; the promotion of initiatives aimed at rediscovering craft and creative vocations through an integrated approach that affects the environmental, social and economic degradation of the neighbourhood by activating participatory processes of systemic cultural enhancement and development and modernization policies.

3. The project of urban regeneration and temporary reuse of Palazzo Fondi

The Sangro di Fondi palace rises on the eastern side of Via Medina in an area characterized by imposing architectural works dating back to the Angevin and Aragonese periods when, the identification of Castel Nuovo as the residence and political and administrative centre of the city, determined the coagulation of houses and aristocratic residences linked to the presence of the palace. The original structure of the palace can be traced back to the first half of the sixteenth century when Michele Giovanni Gomez, president of the Royal Chamber of the Sommaria, bought a series of neighbouring houses to build his own family palace [17]. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the first changes were registered in the planimetric distribution of the building, organized around a main rectangular block along the Via Medina and with three other smaller volumes behind which the rectangular courtyard will take shape. The main body of the nucleus along Via Medina has a base plan marked by a trabeated portal that leads into the large internal vaulted atrium, and from the entablature on which the windows of the noble floor are set, followed by the mezzanine floor concluded at the top by the cornice and the double-pitched roof. In 1698 the palace was sold by Gomez to the Marquis of Genzano, Stefano de Marinis, who entrusted the transformation work to Giovan

Battista Manni, active in the construction site in the years between 1704 and 1714. The intervention carried out mainly concerned the construction of the portico on the counter-façade with the arrangement of the large courtyard and the apartments on the noble floor. In 1709 the monumental staircase to the right of the entrance hall was redone and the following year the serliana (**Figure 4**) was built on the bottom of the courtyard—concluded by a terrace delimited by a loggia composed of three arches at full centre on columns with trachyte bases—which symmetrically incorporates the analogous solution present in the counter-façade (**Figure 5**). In 1712 the entrance portal was modified, enriching it with two powerful marble columns and the overlying central balcony, corresponding to the ballroom on the main floor, decorated with frescoes by Giacomo del Po'. The first arrangement of the main facade dates back to this period, with the regularization of the openings and the realization of the elegant facade stuccoes documented in the engraving by Carlo Petrini of 1718. Between 1720 and 1760 the works continued under the direction of Gaetano Di Tommaso who completed the decorations on the first floor, transforming the party room and the private chapel. The very presence of the engineer Di Tommaso, a collaborator of Luigi Vanvitelli in the works of Palazzo Berio on Via Toledo and in the properties of the Casacalenda family, led to the attribution of the building—not supported by documents—to Vanvitelli, as reported by Francesco Milizia and as reported also by Chiarini in his edition of Celano, where we read: "the

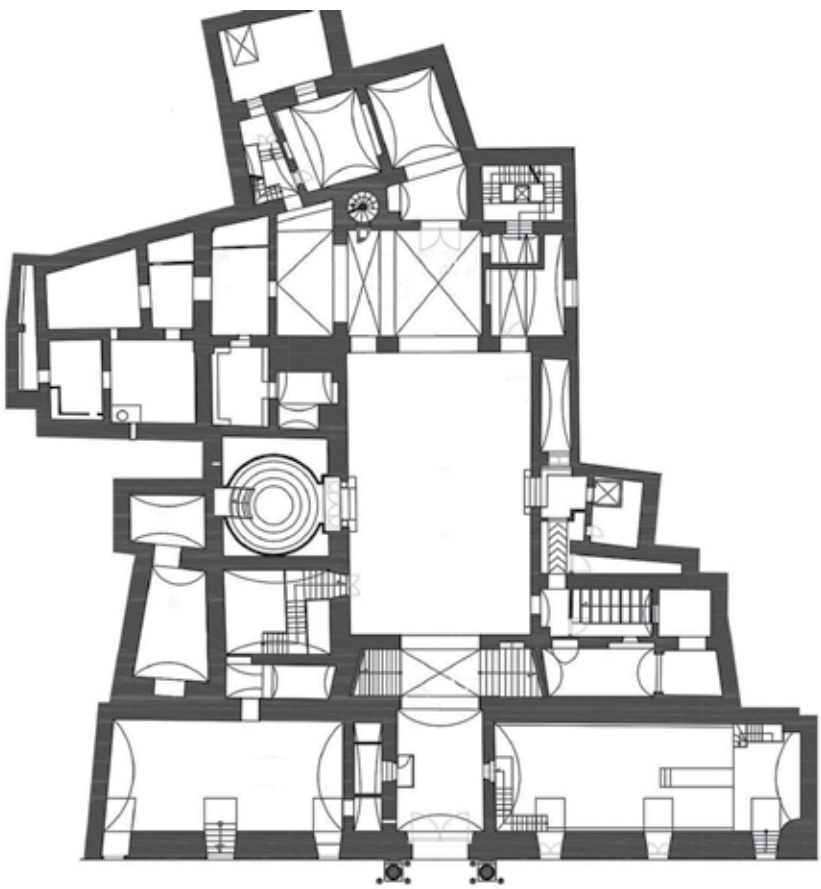

Figure 4.
Naples, Fondi palace on Via Medina, ground floor plan. Available from: http://www.provveditorato-ooppcampaniamolise.it/uffici_dirigenziali.php.

Figure 5.
Naples, Fondi palace on Via Medina, inner courtyard and particular of the Serliana (photo of the author).

building [...] belonged to the old Marquis of Genzano, but afterwards by hereditary right [...] it passed into the domain of the Prince of Fondi. The building was built after the middle of the last century with a drawing by Cav. Luigi Vanvitelli. The door is all in marble, decorated with two columns of Ionic order, and the windows of the noble floor are formed in tabernacles with pillars of the same order. The details do not have the merit of the others operated by the distinguished architect; but the set of architectural lines is grandiose, the distribution of the space is regular, the appearance is imposing. The discovered court is beautifully decorated; and a superimposition of delightful terraces very elegantly designed, adds to it beauty and nobility. The scale treated in the upper landings is also of great value with the convenience and grandeur that Vanvitelli was able to find in all his works" [18].

From the mid-eighteenth century there were further transformations and growths due to the purchase of adjacent real estate units until, in 1798, the main façade was rebuilt, with the complete elimination of the stucco decorations documented by Petrini, and the elevation of a second noble floor (**Figure 6**).

The configuration reached at the end of the nineteenth century does not present significant transformations until the early twentieth century when the building, which became the seat of the Fascist provincial federation and Casa del Fascio, underwent massive transformations that changed its appearance. The transformation of the roof into the terrace dates back to this period—it was accessed from a new floor created above the second noble floor and set back from it—and the addition of a central turret eliminated after the second World War when the building was the seat of the Communist Federation.

Figure 6.
Naples, Fondi palace on Via Medina, detail of the other Serliana on the counter-façade in the courtyard (photo of the author).

The redevelopment project started in 2014 by the State Property Agency, owner of the property, and coordinated and developed by Ninetynine Urban Value with the collaboration of the Municipality of Naples and various institutions such as the Federico II University and the Fine Arts Academy of Naples, aims to restore a historic building to the city for some time unused through a diversified and temporary conversion program of the building that favours its enhancement also in terms of knowledge and functional innovation, minimizing the risks deriving from its prolonged inactivity and encouraging the availability of creative incubators to be allocated to students and young entrepreneurs. The building—with a total surface area of 4432 square meters—hosts multi-functional spaces for art, culture, experimentation, events, places of comparison and coagulation, itinerant exhibitions and conferences open to the city and the network of public and private stakeholders interested in collaborating with institutions to initiate participatory processes for the enhancement and integrated use of the tangible and intangible cultural assets of the historic city (**Figure 7**). The objective is to create a contemporary place where art, culture, experimentation and multidisciplinarity can give rise to new initiatives, promoting collaboration and contact between companies, the world of education and culture, institutions and civil society [19].

> *"They are physical places, very often inserted in urban contexts that need public dimension and sharing, which try to have an impact on the city through the continuous offer of diversified services. Places that hybridize functions related to leisure, recreational and cultural consumption with issues related to the social and political dimension and which, in this sense, confer different values and meanings to innovation itself. This last aspect, more than others, finds its humus in the city, because institutions, people and initiatives are concentrated in the urban context, knowledge and cultures are spread, social and cultural capital is developed, more than elsewhere" [13].*

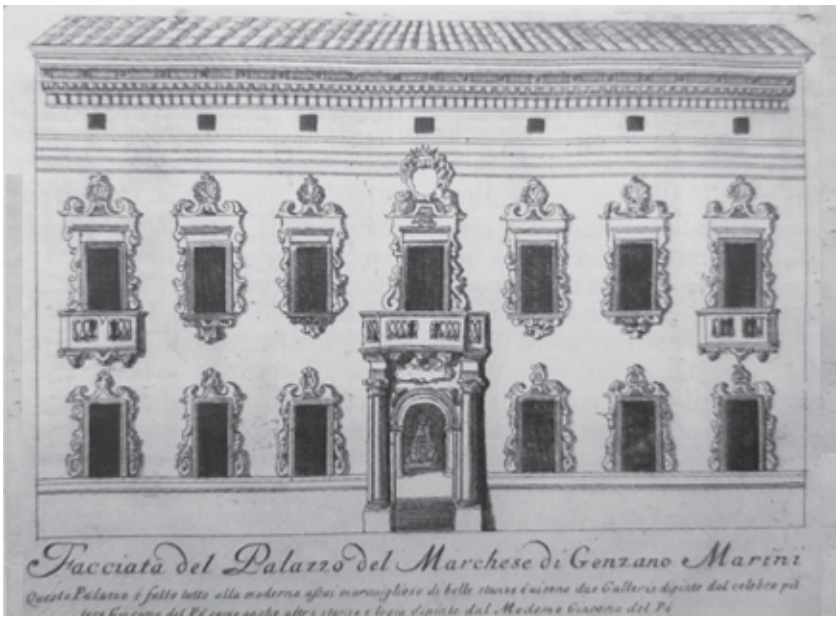

Figure 7.
Naples, facade of the palace de Marinis di Sangro, then Fondi, engraving by P. Petrini, 1718 (National Library of Naples).

4. The real hospice for the poor and the recovery project

It was to fulfil social stability problems that Charles III of Bourbon commissioned Ferdinand Fuga in 1749—returning from the Roman shipyards of San Michele in Ripa Grande and the extension of the Santo Spirito in Sassia Hospital (1742–44)—to build in Naples the largest Hospice in Europe, capable of accommodating eight thousand marginalized, providing them with adequate living and working conditions [20]. "It was destined for eight thousand poor, to be divided into four classes, that is, of men, women, boys, and girls, without any communication between them. Annexed to the aforementioned Hospice he designed a vast public church, to be visited separately by the four aforementioned classes. There were great conveniences such as laboratories, refectories, courtyards, arcades, workshops, and servants' and executives' quarters" [21].

Characterizing sign of such institutes it was precisely to place oneself as a poles of development and social cohesion with respect to the territory, creating the conditions so that artisan activities and trades could arise around them able to revive the urban economy in crisis, determining opportunities for work and development for an ever increasing number of inhabitants.

The theme of assistance to the poor was certainly not new in the mid-seventeenth century and was part of that program of raising awareness of the social recovery of entire groups of needy and abandoned people who, from France to the rest of Europe, would have spread rapidly, identifying in the Hospices and in the Internment Houses the solutions adopted to limit and correct the damages deriving from begging and poverty. Precisely the number of such institutions can be considered an effective parameter of evaluation to understand the importance assumed by a city centre compared to the others: the more they were productive and economically independent, the greater was the number of welfare structures built within them to stem the security and social problems. The awareness of the need to identify in the work a more effective rehabilitation function than mere isolation, led to

the "ethical condemnation of idleness" [22]. It was no longer a question of "locking up the unemployed, but of giving work to those who had been locked up, making them participants in common prosperity" [22]. The significance of this operation was more economic than ethical and consisted in supplying low-cost labour during periods of full operation, and in forming and keeping prisoners engaged in times of crisis [22].

Precisely "the capacity of such structures [...] to adapt to the rapidly changing new socio-economic scenarios will mark their destiny: the decline, when their function will be reduced to an amorphous commitment to care, or an active role, when they succeed in integrate into the industrial processes already in place since the second half of the eighteenth century, and recover a more articulated relationship with civil society outside the walls" [23]. The idea of making the Hotel of the poor a town-building, conceived as a self-sufficient community body, reflected on the very nature of the proposed projects. Whether you look at the first project, based on a square plant internally divided into four courts, to be erected in the village of Loreto, in the eastern area of Naples; whether the definitive project is observed, organized on the succession of five majestic courtyards-squares, to be built in the village of Sant' Antonio Abate, in a crucial area for connections with Rome and city traffic, one cannot but consider the importance that the new factory was called to cover the intentions of the sovereign. Located at the foot of the Capodimonte hill, along the extension of the avenue that led to the sumptuous villa of Poggioreale (**Figure 8**) [24], one of the most elegant and celebrated dwellings of the early Neapolitan renaissance, the building, of which only the three central courtyards were built, competed for dimensions (600 m/140) and architectural language with the royal residence of Caserta, the last "anachronistic" example of capital-city of monarchical absolutism (**Figure 9**).

The construction of the Hospice for the poor unfolds over a period of time ranging from the death of Ferdinando Fuga (1782), to Mario Gioffredo, to the

Figure 8.
Scenic view to the west of the city of Naples in the Campagna Felice, detail of the map of the Duke of Noja, Naples 1775 with in evidence of the Hotel of the poor (Albergo Dei Poveri) in the original project articulated around five courtyards [24].

Figure 9.
Late eighteenth-century engraving depicting the two large factories built by Ferdinando Fuga in Naples in the second half of the eighteenth century: The Hotel of the poor in the project actually built with only three central courtyards; and the massive block of the granary factory [24].

intervention of Carlo Vanvitelli (1785–1799) and from these to Francesco Maresca (1802), author of the definitive reorganization of the Fuga's project.

The architectural language adopted by the florentine architect suggests a double interpretative key: on one side the late baroque vein, which can be found in the unfinished Panoptikon church located in the middle of the intermediate courtyard; from another the classicist vein with which the development of the whole building is solved, like the Granili (550 m) played on the poetics of the large dimension and on the landscape scale of the intervention. The plan of the church, in the first solution envisaged for the village of Loreto, presented a series of internal open galleries on the aisles according to an organization experimented by Fontana in the church of San Michele a Ripa, from which the subdivision by classes of the interior spaces was taken. In the transition to the final site, the church's design is also considerably complicated with the position of the dome that has been moved back compared to the more soaring and looming initial solution.

The dimensions of the building, as partially realized, have a width of façade equal to 360 m length for 140 m of width; with an area of 100,000 m^2 and a volume of 830,000 m^3.

With its 430 rooms and 20,000 m^2 of outdoor spaces, the colossal structure, far more imposing than the Roman factory, has always been considered a "false step" in the Bourbon government policies. "Who knows when it will end? And it is almost thirty years that this work is being done. With less expense, and in a shorter time, it would have removed all poverty from the abundant Kingdom of Naples. But this is not the business of the architect, but of good government" [25].

Yet, seen from the ring road, the Hospice for the poor clearly conveys the meaning of its construction. The proportion it establishes with the metropolis that grew up around it tells with unparalleled efficacy the significance of the strategic operation conducted at the time by the Bourbons: it was a city in the city that was intended to be built, the "city of services," placed at the entrance to the capital of the kingdom (**Figure 10**). More than the constructive aspects of the Hospice for the poor, it is interesting to underline the propelling role that it was called to play over the surrounding territory when, in the wake of the industrial revolution and the new modes of production, it became an "incubator" of companies and trades .

Figure 10.
Naples, aerial view of the Hotel of the poor.

Already Ferdinand IV of Bourbon had created the premises so that an industrialization process would be started up within it, aimed at identifying in the two poles of vocational training and education the cornerstones around which to rotate, for productive purposes, the functional reuse of the building. The advent of the French and the return of the Bourbons marked the years of greater productivity and "flexibility of use" of the Hospice for the poor. The building became the centre of a strategy aimed "at constituting an effective place of intersection between the programmatic function of public interest and [...] the executive role of private individuals" [26]. Not only was it the site of various production activities, but it became a production centre connected to other important institutions located throughout the territory thanks to a series of contracts and activities that regulated the relationships: a sort of clusters that worked in synergy with the head office. This is the case of the coral factory, started in Torre del Greco but established with its own independent workshop also in the Hospice for the poor, or of the nautical school which, started by the marquis Tanucci, saw its flowering in 1816 thanks to its collaboration with the youth of the hotel.

On the other hand it was during the Bourbon period that the idea of establishing a "widespread cultural chain" in the kingdom of Naples was affirming itself. From publishing, to local production systems, from silk factories to laboratories in the Hospice for the poor, a fine-tuning of a formidable production system spread over the territory, which identified the levers for future development and growth, is outlined. The silk factories of San Luecio, the farm of Carditello, the corals and ceramics factories, the tapestry makers, the factories for the production and spinning of wool, the printing press, the metal laboratories are another way to read in watermark the history of Neapolitan architectural culture at the turn of the nineteenth century, within which a fundamental role was played precisely by the Hospice for the poor, a true breeding ground for arts and crafts, a production center embedded in the ancient heart of the city.

The theme, nowadays very current, of the cultural industry as an element capable of introducing, in the wider economic system, a market of beauty and culture was started already by the Bourbons not only as an instrumentum regni, but as a project capable of triggering productive processes able to feed innovation, research and creativity within a "knowledge pole" supported by the policies of the kingdom. The rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum and the resulting archaeological excavation campaign, with the consequent relief, design and publication of

the exhibited antiquities of Herculaneum, gave rise to studies and research in the most diverse fields of knowledge and artistic production, donating new life and inspiration to painters, sculptors, academies and to the textile sector itself whose reproduction of fabrics, prints and decorative motifs was inspired by that formidable repertoire of cultural forms and traditions that emerged from the excavations, giving impetus to the economy and to artisan production.

Called the Grand Emporium of the most varied Arts and Manufactures, the Hospice for the poor played an important role in the economic and commercial development of the capital. In the mid-nineteenth century, "it swarmed with activity: [...] from the large [...] spaces destined to the remittances for the train of the Royal artillery, to the spaces for [...] the foundry, the engraving, [...] the glass-works, [...] the dyeing of wools, [...] the hall of mergers, [...], the school of Fine Arts" [27], showing its multi-functional nature, a consequence of the modular structure of the building.

After various vicissitudes and various restorations, the last of which is still in progress, the Municipality of Naples—which acquired since 1981 the building in its own patrimony—has since 1999 prepared the "Real Hospice for the poor Recovery Project" coming to identify in the *Youth City* (2004–2006) the final goal of the project. Around large courts it will be possible to attend university study courses, make use of assistance services for study and work, promote collaboration between young people from different countries, favouring spaces that are as versatile and multi-purpose as possible.

The rationalization of internal routes, consisting of nine kilo-meters of corridors; the clear distribution of the environments; the articulation of the buildings around the three large courts; the "serial" repetition of the facade modules, allow a functional restructuring of the building that respects the construction characteristics, keeping the type unaltered.

Prison, laboratory, factory, school, the Hospice for the poor can guarantee a flexible and plural use of its interior spaces, combining some of the great themes around which revolves public buildings to be used as spaces for the community and taking into account of a new, "ancient" social emergency that the chronicles of our days dramatically tell: that of acceptance and inclusiveness.

5. Conclusions

The projects of reuse and conversion of the three analysed Neapolitan buildings, characterized by different types, will allow to preserve their historical memory by activating regenerative urban processes aimed at the promotion and development of activities and services for the community. These interventions present aspects that may lead us to consider them as possible reference models in terms of reusing historic buildings that have been restored over time to their renewed collective function, able to actively promote the development of the surrounding urban area in a logic of smart heritage.

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What do we talk about when we talk about antiquity? For the majority of the population, the term immediately transports us to the notion of an ancient age or ancient world (the Parthenon, Athens, and the Coliseum of Rome), which condenses in itself the Greco-Roman world. This reduces antiquity to antiquity that was structurally essential for the construction and emergence of the civilization called occidental. For others, because of their religious backgrounds, antiquity goes back in time and enlarges, in part, its space of action, allowing the emergence of Palestine as a primordial territory. But these two visions (old and supported by a scientific ignorance of the ancient geographies and chronologies) enclose the history in a limited time and space. As if there would never have been a world before that time. As if the civilization that we comfortably call ourselves as inheritors, the so-called "Occidental Civilization" was the first step in the history of man on earth.

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