

# Azores

## Inscription on the base of a statue

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During the 3<sup>rd</sup> Encontro de Arqueologia do Algarve in 2005, I got involved with one inscription found on the Island of Terceira. I retook this publication together with a series of rock inscriptions of the same time, early this year, 2011, on Internet.<sup>1</sup> I will not repeat this item here. The “inscription” has been investigated recently. The investigation proves the natural result on the basalt rock. The traces on the rock do not show any human script.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the question that the Azores were inhabited by men long before the Portuguese discovery in the 14<sup>th</sup> century has been proved by a series of hipogeous, found on the Island of Terceira, Monte de Brasil, and on the Island of Corvo, excavated into the volcanic rock. There are also more epigraphic sources: the base for a statue and the coins of a treasure.

### I The inscribed stone base



The base of a light coloured volcanic rock, trachyte, which is rough on the touch, shaped round as a column and inscribed outside by about 2/3 of the round. The inscribed stone is conserved in a private home, situated in the city of Angra Heroism, Terceira Island already since several decades. The circumstances of the found are not known. The stone base was originally at about 4 km. at a place named Posto Santo, where the trachyte rock is present. The place will be investigated. Measurements as noted on the drawing.

The inscription attires our interest. I got several drawings every time more precisely, and the last one is to read and interpret. I wish to note the reading step by step.

We see two lines of script, some letters very well known as Latin or Greek majuscules, but others with strange forms and irregular in height. The letters are not standing on a straight line. The general impression is that the script has been realised by a less experienced sculptor or that it is rather old. In this type of inscriptions, letters

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.herbertsauren.netau.net>

<sup>2</sup> Rodrigues Ferreira, F. E., 2011.

from more than one writing system are used, and regularly words from several languages may appear. Where to start?

A base for a statue with the given size was an important monument. The lost statue was also very important. We can guess the statue of a governor, of a king, or of a god.

The beginning of the inscription is broken. The letter D at the beginning of the second line marks the limit of the inscription at the left side. The last letters of both lines are preserved. The inscription could be read when the reader stood in front of the statue.

**Transliteration, vocalized form, translation**

**[OD]ROY ELOFC ION  
D A C C I C O F C**

*Odroy Elo'ōs 'Ayon / Dacciōs The'os*

*Odroy, the Lord of the gods,  
the god of the Dacians.*

We try to read the second line: D A C C I C, \**Daccios / Dacciōs*. The letter transcribed as C, seems to be the old form of the Greek *sigma*, and to read S. The ending is shortened, the vowel, *o / ō*, is missing. The letter O, outside the writing line, is to consider as a graffito. We continue, before to determine the sense and the grammatical case of the word.

At the end of the line we see letters, which resemble to: O F C. The hint of possible Greek letters provokes the guess: Θ Ε C, \**theos*, god.

The missing vowel of the ending seems to be regularly as already attested in the first word. The reading *theos*, god, coincides with the purpose of the base for a statue. The two first letters need more explication.

The letter, written O without any diacritical stroke to mark the difference between the vowel O and the consonant *theta*, is used generally in Etruscan recent inscriptions and to read always the sound *th*, like the Greek *theta*, or like the emphatic dental of Semitic words in those inscriptions.<sup>3</sup> The soundless *e* of *theos* should not be written, the missing *o* of the ending proves a partly not vocalized inscription.

The majuscule F and the corresponding sound exist in Latin script and language; the letter does exist in Greek writing as letter for the *spiritus asper*, in an old alphabet inscribed on a vessel.<sup>4</sup> The stem of the letter is shortened, forming an open quadrate, corresponding to the open half circle of the *spiritus asper*. The same alphabet notes the letter of the ancient writing system for *h* using it for the *spiritus levis*. The sound to pronounce between the two vowels of the word *theos*, is equal to the *spiritus asper*.

Reading the inscriptions of the period around the centuries B.C. and A.D., one will find a constant evolution of the script and nearly always letters from several writing systems are mixed. I refer to the forms of a letter, which indicates in Semitic inscriptions the sound of a laryngeal, *cha*, as north-west Semitic, Hebrew, and Punic

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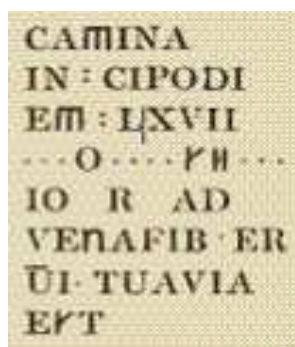
<sup>3</sup> H. Sauren, 2011, Cortona.pdf.

<sup>4</sup> H. Sauren, 2011, History of Alphabets, Greek.pdf.

*Heth*, and which changed in pronunciation of recent inscription to the sound of the vowel *e*. The form of this letter are in historic evolution in different regions: 𐤃, 𐤄, 𐤅.

The last form is attested. I cite the funeral inscription, found at Leco, for a man coming from Sardinia, as example, CH 58, J. Rhys, 56.<sup>5</sup> The inscription shows the letter for the words: *FIB* \**hīw*, life, and *ER*, \*(*h*)*err*, free. As the phoneme *cha* was not spoken any more, appears the vowel *e* at the beginning of words.

The inscription shows some other letters similar or identical with the text on the base. But this letter, *cha* > *e*, stands always at the beginning of a word or of a syllable.



- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1: SATANA             | * <i>Santana</i>  |
| 2: IN : CIPODI,       | * <i>ayān</i> : <i>Sar</i> (' <i>a</i> ) <i>da</i>                            |
| 3: ET : LXVII,        | *( <i>a</i> ) <i>et</i> ( <i>ate</i> ( <i>m</i> )) LXVII                      |
| 4: [E : M]O[RT : ]YH, | * <i>é</i> <i>mort. Jaz</i>   |
| 5: IO R AD,           | * <i>a</i> ' <i>i</i> <i>r</i> ( <i>equiescat</i> ) <i>ad</i> ( <i>onai</i> ) |
| 6: VEnAFIB · ER,      | * <i>ve na hīw</i> ( <i>h</i> ) <i>err</i>                                    |
| 7: ŪI TUA VIA,        | * <i>va tua via</i>   |
| 8: EYT,               | * <i>hiyat</i>  |

Santana, le seigneur Sarde, à l'âge de 67 (ans), est mort. Il gît ici.

Qu'il se repose dans le Seigneur.

Et dans sa vie, il était un homme libre.

Que ton chemin aille vers la vie.

The form of the letter is also attested for the sound *k* / *c*, e. g.: in the word: *cadem*, the (coins) fell, Cabeça das Fráguas, line 6.<sup>6</sup> The evolution of this letter, derived from the former, 𐤃, is: 𐤃, inverted: 𐤄, and in upright position: 𐤅.

<sup>5</sup> H. Sauren, 2010, Suisse.pdf.

<sup>6</sup> H. Sauren, 2007, 156, cf. : Schattner, Th. G., Correia Santos, M. J., 2010, where the authors continue with the wrong interpretation of the inscription.

Double consonants are rare in ancient inscriptions. The repetition of the double *ss*, USSEAM, *they used*, ICCONA, \**isso nāo*, this not, port., and LAS<sup>\*2</sup>S<sup>2</sup>O, \**lā* <*i*>*sso*, not this, sémitic, port., is intentional and a hint to Septimus Severus, about 200 A.D.

OILAM·TREBO·PALA  
 INDI·POR·COM·LABBO·  
 COMAIAM·ICCONA·LOIM  
 INN·OILAM·VSSEAM·  
 TREB·RVNE·INDI·TAV·ROM  
 IFADEM  
 RE·VE·TIT

The guttural, velar, sound serves like the hiatus to separate vowels. We could transcribe and reconstitute the pronunciation as follows: O F C, *\*th k<sup>2</sup> C > the'os, > theos, god.*

Whatever the evolution and the use of the letter on the base might be, the reading of the vowel *e*, the Greek *e-piilon* and the following ending is to postulate. The parallel with the first line will confirm the reading.

The complete reading of the second line is: *Dacciōs theos*, the god of the Dacians. The grammatical construction shows an inversed genitive construction, genitive pl. followed by the determined word. It is an epithet of the god.

The three letters at the end of the first line show: I O N. The form of the last letter seems to be difficult. The form of the letter is closer to the recent Etruscan writing,  $\Pi$ , than to the Greek and Latin majuscules. The letter *n* shows different forms at the end of words in some writing systems. The letter *n* follows the letter *l* in several ancient alphabets; *m* is the following letter marked by a diacritical stroke. We can read the Latin majuscule L and the diacritical stroke to mark the following letter in the used alphabet.

To read: ION > EON, brings a perfect parallel to *theos, god*. The English Oxford dictionary notes: EON > AEON, and explains: a power existing from eternity, emanation or phase of the supreme god.<sup>7</sup> The word exists in other European languages. The word is of Semitic origin as we will see below. We may translate: the lord.

Preceding stands: E L O F C, where the letter L shows the form of the Latin majuscule, the sculptor mixed up Greek, Latin, and older letters. The fourth letter is damaged and seems to be F as in the last word of the second line.<sup>8</sup> The parallel with the second line associates the Hebrew word: *el > elohīm, god*. The Hebrew word shows the plural form and the singular is: *\*'ilah, > ela(h). 'ILH*.<sup>9</sup> If we accept the letter O as the older Semitic *ayin* the pronunciation: 'a, was spoken. The writing shows the ending of the genitive pl.: *-ōs*, as in the second line. The letter F, > *k*, as noted above, separates the vowels: *ela - ōs > Ela'ōs > Elo'ōs*, the gods. Cf. annex.

The complete translation marks another epithet of the god, whose statue was placed on the base, he was the most powerful, the supreme god, following the belief of the people of the Dacians: *Elo'ōs eōn*, the lord of the gods.

The language is neither Greek nor Latin, nor Semitic, even if words from the three linguistic families appear. It is an Indo-European language to judge from the only

<sup>7</sup> Other modern languages guard the term. The Greek Neo-platonic and Gnostic philosophy explains the idea. I refer to the excavations at Paphos, Chypre, one of the houses is the "house of the Aion", with the corresponding mosaics.

<sup>8</sup> To read the letter I and the omission of the *h* in *elohīm* seems also possible.

<sup>9</sup> The trilateral root permits to consult, H. Sauren, 2011, Vocabulary for other occurrences.

attested morpheme of the genitive plural, equal to the old form attested in Latin: *pater familiās*, father of the families.

The damaged beginning of the inscription contains the name of the god, cf. below.

### 1<sup>st</sup> the epithet.

1.1 An inscription has been found at Furtado, Fornos de Aigodres, Portalegre, RAP 596<sup>a</sup>, and recently republished by J. de Encarnação, A. Guerra, 2010. There are baths at this place and the bath was sacred, as many other bath places from the period prove. The inscription stands in Latin majuscules. The text is mainly in Portuguese language. The writing ELONI, \**El '(ay)ōnī*, is parallel to the inscription of the Azores.

ARASEI COLLOVESEI CAIELONI COSIGO<sup>10</sup>

*\*aras aí colocas aí que aí El '(ay)ōnī consigo*

The altars here, you deposit them here, because here is the god of the gods with you.

1.2 J. 11.1 is a funeral stela found at Tavilhão, in the township of Almodôvar, Beja, measurements: 82 x 39/ 20 x 13 cm. The inscription shows the ancient writing system used from the Near East up to the Azores. The date seems to be rather recent; about 150 to 130 B.C., because of the form of the stone to cover the tomb. The title of the dead chief is mentioned as ' *g a*, \**waga*, chief of a tribe. *WGH*. The genitive construction notes the Lord of the Lords as the supreme god of the people. A tetragram below the inscription notes that this god was the *ADAN*, \*'*adān*, > '*adōn*, the lord, a northwest, a Semitic, Hebrew, word for god. '*ADN*. I cite the conventional phrase at the end of the inscription. Evident that whole the inscription is readable.

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<sup>10</sup> The cited authors, known as Portuguese Latinist scholars, add: "So far interpreted as : aras ei Collovesei Caieloni Cosigo."



‘r ḥ n<sup>2</sup> a ‘n š<sup>2</sup> a<sup>2</sup> ‘n m m, \*’ār ḥanna ’ayōn ša ’ayōnīm  
I will see the grace of the lord of all gods.

1.3 J. 16.2, found at Fonte Santa, Ourique, is older and reused during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. The stela guards the same invocation of god in the first of several conventional phrases: a [r a n a] š<sup>2</sup> a<sup>2</sup> ‘{n} a<sup>2</sup> ‘n m, \*’ār ‘ana ša ’ay’ān ’ay’ānīm, I will see the subside of the lord of the lords.

1.4 We may add F. 6.1 de Pujol de Castellon, m r l m, \*mara’ ’el(oh)īm, the lord of the gods. An invocation of god attested also at Hatra, Syria.<sup>11</sup>

The documents prove the evolution of religious thinking from polytheism to monolatry and finally to monotheism. This theological and philosophical evolution is not bound to one ethnic group. The idea spreads out and the evolution is common at all cultures around the Mediterranean Sea. The evolution took a long time, and also the documents from Portugal are from more than one century. The documents prove the common Mediterranean culture of the people. Who erected the statue of their god on the Island of the Azores?

The article or the plural as upgrade form are used to determine the only and highest god, as Allah, \*al-’ilah, the god, elohīm, the god. An adjective can be used, as for the goddess of Viseu, or the Roman god Jupiter.<sup>12</sup> An inscription of Barracos, Beja, notes Astarte saying that “there is no goddess than the goddess”, the formula used for Allah in Islamic religion.

<sup>11</sup> H. Sauren, 2004, 209, J. Hoftijzer, 693.

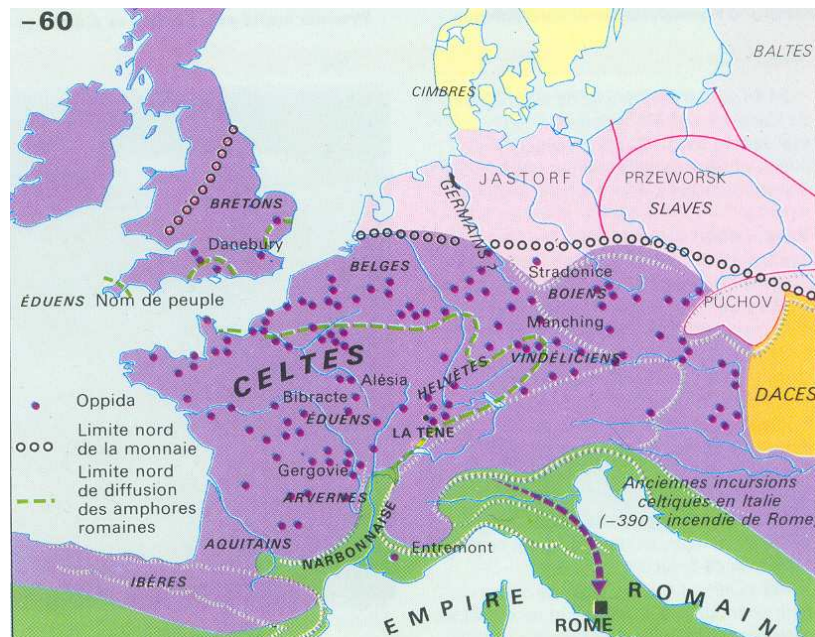
<sup>12</sup> H. Sauren, 2011, Palaeohispanica 9 Rev (2).pdf, L. Fernandes da Silva, et aliii, Palhisp. 9, 2009, 143-155.



It might be that the older mainly astral cult, where stars and planets were considered as gods, needed a hierarchic, spiritual, and logical order. The “logos” of neo-platonic philosophy got form, cf. the “logos” at the beginning of the gospel of St. John. The divulgation of the idea determines the time of the inscription.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> the people

The name in the second line is the name of the people venerating and worshipping the god on the statue: Dassi-os, in Latin documents: Dacicos, the Dacians.



The Dacians were people living at the mouth of the Danube. The people are known by the Greek historiographer Herodotus. During the second century B.C., they tried to unify the country. About 50 B.C., they conquer the Boyars of Pannonia in the west, reached the Adriatic Sea, and became a danger for Rome. History reports a war of Rom against the Dacians in 85 – 86 A.D. The Emperor Hadrian used the Dacians men to construct the wall in Britain. The homeland at the Danube was a Roman province at the time of Septimus Severus, 193-211 A.D. People from the same region are attested as workers, specialized in mining the copper ore, in Britain and elsewhere.

It seems rather enigmatic to see the Dacians on the Azores. But just at this point the inscription is sure. We do know nothing about the date of the arrival of the Dacians; it could be before or after the mentioned war.

To know more about the time, when Dacians arrived at the Azores, the first questions would be: why engaged the Romans the war? What was their interest, what was the *casus belli*? The Romans employed a big army, which proves the importance and the danger for Rome. There is no documentation, but piracy of the Dacians could be the reason. Piracy on the Mediterranean Sea is old, and already attested by a letter from Ugarit about 1200 B.C. Rome needed the free and safe trade from colonies in the Near East. Piracy on the Black Sea on the Aegean, on the Adriatic and the Mediterranean Sea could not be tolerated. If this suggestion is right, we learn the Dacians as navigators, they could reach the Azores, they were later needed for the routes on sea between Britain and Rome. To capture the copper ore coming from Britain could bring richness on the Azores.

The distance from the continent to the archipelagos of the Azores is no impediment. The distance from the Near East to the Iberian Peninsula is three times more and used during whole the first millennium B.C. The parallel of the later Normans at the coasts of Italy can be cited. The Vikings realised much longer passages on sea.



A monument in Britain showing a Dacian horse man

3<sup>rd</sup> The name of the god

The name of god at the beginning of the first line is not yet explained. If the people were really the Dacians, documents should show the name of their god, and the name should permit the restore the full reading at the beginning of the inscription.

The “*Res gestae*” of the time of the Emperor Augustus, notes some hints. The Latin term “*gestae*” is used for historic and legendary stories conserved during centuries by oral tradition. They count the history by the mouth of the people. The “*gestae*” of the Dacians tell us, that there was a kingdom during the fifth to the third century B.C. named probably by the name of the first king: ODRI-S.<sup>13</sup>

The inscription on the base notes: [O D]R O Y. The first letter is lost, from the letter D, traces are visible. We have to suppress the Latin ending, and the name of the god on the statue can be restored exactly by the name of the legendary king. That the name of the first king, of the kingdom, became later the name of the god of the people is often attested, e.g.: Aion, the word for god, and the title of many chiefs of the people. Recently the stela of Mesas de Castelinho, names the dead chief: “the lord of the people of the lords.”<sup>14</sup> We could cite Assur, as god, people and land, the names of the 12 sons of Jacob and the tribes of Israel. The name of the god and the name of the people on the base confirm each other.

I have to add that the documentation from the Dacians in Britain do not show any name of their native gods. Scholars think even that the religion was without anthropomorphic representations of their gods and some declare the religion of the Dacians as aniconic, without figural representations.

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<sup>13</sup> The Wikipedia source translated from Portuguese, the only one, which was available to me, notes: Odrísio as name of the kingdom.

<sup>14</sup> H. Sauren, 2011, *Palaeohispanica* 9 Rev (4).pdf.



## Annex

The wisdom of Salomon declares already that there is nothing new under the Sun. The use of the letter F for the *spiritus asper* in Greek inscriptions could not be the first attestation. I got meanwhile some more evidences.

1<sup>st</sup> A vase guarded in the National museum of Athens is inscribed with two alphabetic lists between the handles. One side notes the Greek alphabet with 24 letters. The other side adds the letter F without stem: □, and the letter *h* : Υ, to use in Greek inscriptions for the *spiritus asper* and the *spiritus lenis* respectively. The alphabets are to date about the sixth century B. C. The origin of the letters and its forms is much older and attested in the South of Palestine during the last half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium.

Both letters are attested on the ostracon of Isbeth Sartah. This text contains an alphabetic list, line 5, phonetic explications for some letters, line 1, and advices to write the Semitic languages with the alphabetic script, line 2-4. The date of the alphabet can be estimated about 1300 B. C. Other documents of the same region note the same letters.

F / N.º 12, Sartah, n.º 14, Walaida, n.º 25, « yt' ».  
Υ / N.º 12, Sartah, n.º 49, Ajjul, n.º 50, Akko, n.º 51, Mirsim.

The pronunciation of the letter F is in these inscriptions the Semitic laryngeal: *h*, *cha*, *heth*, which was pronounced in some regions as *ka*, e. g.: in Portugal, 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. by the cited inscription of the Cabeço das Fragoas. The pronunciation of the letter *h* is another softer laryngeal. Both phonemes are not used in Greek language and could therefore serve to indicate the correct pronouncing of vowels, meanly at the beginning of words and syllables. H. Sauren, 2011, History of Alphabets, Greek.

2<sup>nd</sup> Greek poems note the ethnic term: Achaeans, written: 'Αχαΐα, \*'achai'a, 'Αχαΐοι, \*'achai'oi, A-ka-wi-ja-de, \*agai'ata, and the relationship with the Ahhiyawa,\*'achai'a, of the Hittite documents has been made. The Hittite documents determine the date in the 13<sup>th</sup> century B. C.

The suppression of the consonant *w*, at the beginning of words and syllables is attested in several regions and languages. The letter *y* serves also sometimes to indicate the pronouncing of the vowel at the beginning of syllables, a pronouncing like the Semitic consonant *alif*, or like germ.: *aber*, e. g. in Etruscan texts.

Many publications point out that the town of the king Alexander of Wilusha, was Ilium, the famous town of the Homeric Epic, the Iliad's. Other authors try to link Wilusha with Milet, a powerful kingdom at the Aegean Sea. The different pronouncing *cha* – *ka/ga*, permits to identify the people of Ahhiyawa with the Aegean population, called the Achaeans. J. M. González Salazar, 2005, 337-338, and note 42.

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