

Arquivos de Zoologia

Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo

Volume 41(3):133-151, 2010

www.mz.usp.br/publicacoes
www.revistasusp.sibi.usp.br

ISSN impresso: 0066-7870
ISSN on-line: 2176-7793

DEUSES E GAFANHOTOS NAS ANTIGAS CIVILIZAÇÕES DA EURÁSIA NOTAS ETNOENTOMOLÓGICAS

NELSON PAPAVERO^{1,3}
JOSÉ ROBERTO PUJOL-LUZ^{2,3}

ABSTRACT

A brief survey is made of the gods directly or indirectly associated to locusts in China (Ta Pa Cha, Ch'ung Wang, Auntie Chin Ku, Pu Shen, Ma Cha, Crow and Frog) and Mesopotamia (Wind gods, Ashur and Nanaya). Considerations are also made about the Seleucides birds (Sturnus roseus).

KEYWORDS: Gods; Eurasia; Locusts; China; Mesopotamia; *Seleucides* birds (*Sturnus roseus*).

INTRODUÇÃO

Impotentes contra as periódicas invasões de gafanhotos, que provocam a destruição de suas colheitas causando muita fome e padecimentos (*cf.* Sistach Leal, 2007) e não tendo outros meios para combatê-los, é natural que as sociedades humanas tivessem como único recurso invocar a proteção dos deuses, propiciando-os muitas vezes com a construção de templos e oratórios e dirigindo-lhes preces e orações. É o que veremos em seguida, em quatro grandes civilizações antigas da Eurásia.

CHINA

Yao Ch'ung, um ministro da dinastia T'ang (650-721) organizou contramedidas em escala nacional para prever pragas de gafanhotos na China, mas a primeira lei para o controle dessa praga foi escrita em 1182, as "leis contra gafanhotos", e um folheto para o

controle desses insetos foi publicado pelo governo no início do século XIII. Hsü Kuang-Ch'i (1562-1633) (*cf.* Maverick, 1940), em seu livro *Nung Chêng Ch'üan Shu* (Tratado completo de Agricultura), publicado pela primeira vez em Pequim em 1640, sugeriu obras de engenharia para suspender os ciclos de aridez e enchentes de modo a por um fim nas pragas de gafanhotos dos deltas de rios. Como comentou Cloudsley-Thompson (1976: 191), "It has only recently become known in the West that fluctuations in soil moisture can affect the survival of locust eggs and nymphs, and thus enable propagation to reach outbreak conditions".

O frade dominicano Domingo Fernández Navarrete (1610-1689), missionário na China de 1657 a 1665, deixou-nos um interessante relato sobre a maneira como o imperador debelava a praga:

"At this time there were great swarms of locusts in *China*. The Emperor went into his Gardens, and taking up some of them spoke

¹ Museu de Zoologia, Universidade de São Paulo, Caixa Postal 42.494, CEP 04218-970, São Paulo, SP, Brasil.

² Departamento de Zoologia, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Universidade de Brasília, CEP 70910-900, Brasília, D.F., Brasil.

³ Bolsistas de Produtividade do Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq).

these words; The People maintain themselves on Wheat, Rice, &c. you come to devour and destroy it, without leaving any thing behind; it were better you should devour my Bowels, than the Food of my Subjects. He went to swallow them; and some that stood by telling him they were venomous, he answer'd, I value not my Life when 'tis for the good of my Subjects and People; and immediately he swallow'd them. The History tells us, the Locusts that very moment took Wing, and went off without doing any harm that Year" (Navarrete, 1732: 104).

Esse imperador foi Tai Chung, o segundo da dinastia T'ang. Por esse feito é por vezes identificado com Ch'ung Wang (ver abaixo). A história T'ang registrou a história original deste modo, segundo Hsu (1969: 743):

"Once T'ai Chung noticed that there was severe locust plague around the capital areas, he ordered someone to catch a big locust in his hands he said, 'It is my poor political value which causes the plague. You must eat my heart instead of eating my people's crops'. After saying these words he swallowed the locust".

Ta Pa Cha

Há um deus especializado no controle dos gafanhotos: Ta Pa-cha (Fig. 1), ou o Grande (*Ta*) Rei Pa Cha. Dele disse Maspero (s/d: 325-327):

"One of the most dreaded scourges is the invasion of locusts that devour the harvest in the blade and leave nothing where they have passed. Against them the people invoke the Great King Pa-cha, destroyer of locusts and other harmful insects. 'The locusts are summoned before his tribunal and chained' says a very popular inscription in his honour; it shuts them up in his gourd, and in this way destroys them. He is represented with a man's face and a bird's beak, a naked torso, a bell-shaped skirt under which come bird's feet; in his left hand a sabre and in his right the gourd in which he imprisons the evil-doing insects. He is not invoked at the actual moment when the menace of the insect scourge is feared; that would be too late. Every year, after the harvest, especially if it has been a good one, the village folk bring

a sorcerer, at the common expense, to thank the Great Pa-cha for protection granted and to ask him to continue it. The ceremony takes place in the open fields: the sorcerer erects a kind of tent in which he hangs up the images of the Jade Emperor, the Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak, the one the supreme master, the other the terrestrial regent under the orders of the first, and that of the Emperor Kuan, destroyer of evil spirits; then to the right and left of this trio, and in an inferior position, those of the God of the Place, the Great King Pa-cha, the God of Riches, etc. He recites incantations, beating on a drum or a gong and burning incense, then he distributes, to all who have joined in paying him to come, amulets consecrated by the incense and the recitation of formulas. Here is a very curious instance of the popular survival of a once very important



FIGURA 1: Ta Pa Cha.

rite now rejected by the official religion as lacking in dignity. In days of antiquity, after the reaping, a great harvest-home feast put an end, in the first month of winter, to the work in the fields, and marked the moment after which the earth must not be stirred, just as the feast of ploughing had set the field work going by breaking the winter interdict. It was called Pa-cha, an expression of uncertain meaning, which is traditionally interpreted as signifying 'the feast in honour of the eight kinds of spirit that will be sought'. Before all else it was a feast of the end of the harvest; its institution was ascribed to the Divine Plougher, the principal spirit was the First Reaper; after him homage was paid to the First Plougher, the First Dike-maker, the First Runnel-maker, the First Builder of Watch-huts. Respects were paid also to the spirits of cats that destroy rats, the tigers that devour wild-boars; in a word, to all the spirits that by protecting the different stages of farming helped to make the harvest abundant. It was a huge masquerade: the spirits of cats and tigers had their representatives, who were men or boys masked and in fancy guise; the feast ended in a great orgy in which all the offerings were consumed, and at which the old men had first place in honour of the old age of the year. The sacrifice was accompanied by formulas destined to regulate everything for the next year and keep away devouring insects: 'Let the fields return to their wont, the waters go back to their channels, let no insects be born, let the weeds hie back to their marshes!' It is this last side of the feast, the expulsion of noxious insects, that alone has survived: the popular religion has made it personal, referring to it to one special being charged with this task, the Great King of the Pa-cha Feast, or, as it now understood, the Great King Pa-cha. It went further: from the twelfth to the thirteenth century it had already endowed this individual with a complete civil status and titles. He is the Fierce General Liu, Liu Mêng tsiang-kün, or else the Constable Liu, Kiu T'ai-wei, to whom sacrifices were offered in Shantung and in Chihli since the time of the Sungs, and who has been identified with various historical personages according to time and place – Liu I or his brother Liu Jui, two generals of the middle of the twelfth century, or their contemporary Liu Kien, who committed suicide in 1126 at the taking of K'ai-fêng-fu by the Mongols;

or with personages whose existence is more or less apocryphal, like Liu Ch'êng-chung, of whom it is told that, holding in the Mongol period an administration in Kianghuai (approximately the present Kiangsu), and seeing the locusts settling in the country under his charge, he drove them away by attacking them sword in hand. The cult of General Liu was officially prohibited at the end of the seventeenth century, but it lived on among the people; in certain places he became a personage distinct from the Great King Pa-cha, who was made his lieutenant; in others these are different titles of the same divinity; in others again the new title has driven out the old, which has fallen into oblivion".

Ver também Hsu (1969: 738-742) sobre Pa Cha e o General Liu.

Chung Wang

Em Ashiho (Harbin, Heilongjiang, China), há três templos taoístas, lado a lado (Fig. 2; e Baranov, 1926: 29, fig. 29), dedicados a *Huo Shen* (deus do fogo), *Ch'ung Wang* (deus dos insetos) e *Lung Wang* (deus-dragão ou senhor dos dragões), com as estátuas dos respectivos deuses e seus ajudantes.

Lung Wang é representado com a face pintada de azul (Baranov, 1926: 30, fig. 30); detém o poder sobre as águas e pode enviar chuvas ou inundações; os camponeses oram para ele tanto em períodos de seca quanto em períodos de chuvas torrenciais que podem ocasionar inundações; é a principal divindade dos carregadores de água. Tem duas tríades de ajudantes. Uma (Baranov, 1926: 32, fig. 32) é composta pelo deus da chuva no centro, que na mão direita traz uma régua com a qual mede os lugares onde cairão chuvas; à sua direita está o deus do trovão, com cabeça de ave, segurando um martelo e uma cuia; à sua esquerda posiciona-se um protetor, um tipo de duende com cabeça de peixe com uma espada na mão esquerda. A outra (Baranov, 1926: 33, fig. 33) é constituída pela deusa do vento (no centro), que traz em suas costas um saco cheio de vento; à sua esquerda fica a deusa dos raios, por ela produzidos através de espelhos que traz em ambas as mãos; à sua direita existe um outro duende, com cabeça de camarão, com um vaso nas costas, do qual pode deixar cair a chuva.

Huo Shen é representado com um terceiro olho na testa, tem a face pintada de vermelho e traja ricas vestimentas. Tem duas duplas de entidades associadas.



FIGURA 2: Da esquerda para a direita: templo de *Huo Shen* (deus do fogo), de *Ch'ung Wang* (deus dos insetos) e de *Lung Wang* (deus-dragão ou senhor dos dragões), em Ashiho (Harbin, Heilongjiang, China) (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 3: *Ch'ung Wang* (deus dos insetos) (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 4: *Ch'ung Wang Ye Ye* (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 5: *Ch'ung Wang Nai Nai* (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 7: Oratório no campo para honrar três deuses protetores das colheitas (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 6: Camponês ficando bandeirinhas com o nome de Ch'ung Wang para espantar insetos das plantações (detalhe de um dos painéis pintados na parede por trás dos deuses do templo de *Ch'ung Wang*, em Ashiho) (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 8: Detalhe do oratório (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 9: À direita, na tábua, o nome de *Chung Wang* (Foto de V.N. Alin).



FIGURA 10: O ciclo de reencarnações dos homens e animais. No canto inferior direito, os animais incluídos na categoria "ch'ung" (insetos). (Baranov, 1928: 17, fig. 18).

A primeira (Baranov, 1926: 35, fig. 35) representada pelos deuses *Tse Huo Hu*, que segura na mão direita uma pomba responsável por espalhar o fogo, e *Wei Huo Hu*, que pode provocar incêndios. A segunda (Baranov, 1926: 36, fig. 36) consta do deus *Shi Huo Chu*, adornado com um porco sobre sua cabeça e segurando uma abóbora na mão, de onde emana uma chama, e da deusa *Yi Huo She*, que segura uma cobra com uma chama bífida saindo da boca, que pode causar conflagrações de incêndios.

Ch'ung Wang é o deus que pode regular toda espécie de invasões de insetos nos campos cultivados, tendo especial poder sobre gafanhotos; no vaso que tem em sua mão direita guarda os insetos; tem poder também sobre répteis e anfíbios (igualmente classificados como *ch'ung* – insetos – na taxonomia popular tradicional chinesa; fig. 10; Horn, 1937: 67). Tem apenas dois ajudantes. *Ch'ung Wang Ye Ye* (Fig. 4; Baranov, 1926: 39, fig. 39; Horn, 1937: 67) é representado como um venerável ancião; pode punir os agricultores deixando cair insetos nocivos do vaso que sustenta com as duas mãos; os camponeses temem grandemente esse “vovozinho”. *Ch'ung Wang Nai Nai* (Fig. 5; Baranov, 1926: 38, fig. 38; Horn, 1937: 67) é uma bondosa velhinha, que, temendo que insetos nocivos possam prejudicar as colheitas dos lavradores, recolhe-os para um grande vaso que transporta em suas costas.

Para propiciar a ajuda de *Ch'ung Wang* em seus campos, os camponeses de Ashiho fincam no chão bandeirinhas triangulares com o nome do deus escrito (Fig. 6); o vento espalha o poder desse nome, fazendo com que gafanhotos e outros insetos sejam obrigados a abandonar as plantações; e ainda erigem em seus campos pequenos oratórios de madeira (Figs. 7-9), onde são feitas oferendas e queimado incenso.

A Tiazinha Chin Ku

De acordo com Hsu (1969: 743): “The origin of the Auntie Chin Ku Cult is unknown. (...) it is reasonable to suppose that the cult evolved in Shantung at or before the end of the Ming Dynasty (1628) (...). In 1804, the cult was officially recognized and adopted as one of the state cults. The function of the goddess was considered to be the same as that of Pa Cha and General Liu”.

Pu Shen

Sacrifícios a Pu Shen, para especificamente proteger as colheitas contra os gafanhotos, começaram

durante a dinastia Chou. Nas histórias da dinastia Sung está registrado que nos anos 1103, 1128 e 1162 d. C. os imperadores ordenaram a oficiais especiais oferecerem sacrifícios a Pu Shen (o deus Pu), por causa de várias pragas de gafanhotos. Às vezes era considerado ou como o próprio Pa Cha ou um de seus subordinados (Hsu, 1969: 744).

Ma Cha

Ainda segundo Hsu (1969: 744): “Ma Cha is a goddess of locusts, who is said, according to legend, to be the divorced wife of Chiang Tzu-ya. After she was killed by lightning, she was deified as the locust goddess (Werner, 1961: 341, nota). It is possible that the Ma Cha cult originated in the direct worship of locusts, which then changed to the (indirect) worship of the goddess (god) of locusts. (...) The practice of the Ma Cha cult is not clearly known. Werner [1961: 341, nota] wrote about it as follows:

‘She is worshipped largely in the North, where plagues of locust are frequent and being able to cause or avert famine, is greatly feared. ‘Men do not so much seek her help, as they beg to be let alone’. A proverb says: ‘O Locust Goddess, Locust Goddess eat all our neighbors’ crops, but don’t touch ours.’”

O Corvo e a Rã

Ainda citando Hsu (1969: 744): “A common interpretation of these cults is that the destruction of locusts by crows and frogs is one way in which the locust gods extend their help to people. The worship of crows and frogs is quite localized. There is only one independent temple built for the Crow God. No temple is found for frogs, although their worship is often mentioned in gazetteers. Shyrock (1931: 123-126) also noted that the worship of frogs is a custom in the Yangtze Valley. The only temple of the Crow God is in Ping-tiung Hsien, Shansi”.

Oração a um deus dos gafanhotos

Huang & Shyrock (1929: 142-144) publicaram uma oração a um “deus dos gafanhotos” – qual deles não puderam determinar; essa e outras orações que constam nesse artigo foram tomadas de um pequeno livro litúrgico usado por oficiais na província

de Anhui, chamados para exercer funções religiosas. Segundo os autores, é impossível datá-las, mas não seriam mais antigas que a dinastia T'ang. A oração traduzida pelos autores é a seguinte:

In the presence of the God of Locusts we pray;
 O Shen [deus], thou art efficient,
 And dost love the people below.
 The people form the nation,
 And food is the life of the people.

We labor during three seasons. We toil from sunrise until night, without regard to weather, until we are worn out. Our sweat is like drops of blood. When the sowing is over, we hope for a good harvest, that we may pay our tax to the government and feed ourselves; to have enough for our beasts below, and to offer in sacrifice to the spirits above. We pray thee in spring, we offer sacrifice to thee in autumn, for we dare not neglect our duties.

O Shen, if the harvest be not good, the people will have nothing and cannot live. We have heard that there is a plague of locusts in the neighboring district. The faces of the people there are washed with tears, and their hearts are broken. Fortunately our district has had no such calamity; it is thy power, O Shen, which has sent them away and prevented their coming. Thy mercy is great and thy protection wide. Thy grace rivals that of Heaven and Earth, filling the highest and the deepest places. O Shen, we beseech thee, remember the loving kindness of the sage-kings, and carry out the merciful plan of Shang Ti [o Céu, uma divindade suprema]. Transform the locusts into fishes and shrimps, and send them into the rivers and seas; or change them into birds and make them dwell in mountains and forests; or transmute them into cicadas of autumn and let them sing on high trees; or turn them into dragonflies and bid them drink the sweet dew of the air; or transform them into butterflies and give them a happy new life; or make them fireflies to help scholars study at night; or send them away to the banks of the Southern Sea by thunder, lightning, wind, and rain, as the Shen did to the crocodile of Tsao Chou in answer to the prayer of Han Wen Kung [Han Yu ou Han Wen Kung foi um famoso intelectual do período T'ang. Ao ser banido para Tsao Chou, no sul da China, em 830 d. C., viu que o povo ali sofria das depredações de um crocodilo. Han escreveu um ensaio que

jogou no rio e os ataques cessaram. Wen Kung é um título, significando Duque da Literatura]. Then they cannot harm the people, nor struggle with other creatures. We, thy humble people, who long to live and do not wish to die, pray thee to look down upon us and hear our pitiful cries. Grant us a jade-harvest [uma colheita excepcionalmente boa], that we may enjoy the music of peace and prosperity. In fear and trembling we offer thee this sacrifice. Mayest thou hear us”.

MESOPOTÂMIA

Os ventos podem afastar os gafanhotos ou mudar sua direção. Não admira portanto que deuses do vento fossem invocados para desviar ou abater essa praga. Assim, diz Lambert (1990: 126): “The Sumerian Iškur, Babylonian Adad, as god of the storm took in the winds as well, but in a series of Babylonian incantations for driving away agricultural pests there is a sequence of seven, all very similar in content, one each to: Marduk, Ninurta, Adad, the South Wind, the North Wind, the East Wind and the West Wind. The first three are major gods at the Sumero-Babylonian pantheon, but there seems to be no evidence for cults to the four winds either individually or collectively”.

Ashur

Na Assíria era o deus principal Ashur o encarregado de proteger as colheitas contra gafanhotos (Fig. 11). Sobre ele assim discorreu Bodenheimer (1960: 77, 115):

“[p. 77] We hear about locust plagues from Mesopotamia already in its oldest times. Ancient locust prayers for the protection from ‘the locusts that destroy the cereal fields and from the locusts that waste the fruit trees’. A very beautiful enamel painting has been found at Ashur, showing an Assyrian noble praying to the god Ashur equipped with all his attributes and accompanied by a big locust [Fig. 11] (Andrae 1925, p. 29, pl. X)”.

“[p. 115] Of this small enamel painting (56 × 27,5 cm) a colour reconstruction has been published by Bodenheimer (1944, p. 1). It represents Ashur, the chief national god, being worshipped by an Assyrian noble. The

meaning of the prayer is represented forcibly enough: protection from a plague of locusts, for which he is either petitioning or returning thanks. A locust, wonderfully hit off in the simplicity of the drawing, is above the worshipper in front of the god! (Andrae 1925, p. 28). Exactly the same figure of god and worshipper with locusts feeding on a shrub is reproduced on a old Babylonian seal (Bodenheimer 1928, p. 36, fig. 21)".

Bodenheimer (1960: 105) mencionou também outro objeto votivo com a figura de um gafanhoto:

"A lead figurine of a locust, of natural size and of great accuracy, was excavated from the temple Asur in Kar-Tekulti-Ninurta. It was probably connected with locust prayers, either for protection given or expected. The splendid coloured illustration of such a locust prayer has been preserved and excavated from a dwelling house in Ashur (Andrae 1925, p. 29, pl. X)".

Nanaya (Fig. 12).

Nanaya (nome também transcrito como *Naná*, *Nanāy* ou *Nanāya*; em grego *Navaya* ou *Nava*) era o nome canônico de uma deusa adorada por Sumérios e Acádios, uma divindade que personificava "voluptuosidade e sensualidade" (Westenholz, 1997). Seu culto era largamente disseminado, tendo-se estendido até a Síria e o Irã.

No Museu Britânico existe um tablete (K 3600 + DT 75), procedente de Nínive, contendo um hino parcialmente preservado à deusa Nanaya, concluindo com uma oração a favor de Sargão II, rei da Assíria (721-705 a. C.). O texto, em caracteres cuneiformes, foi reproduzido por Winckler (1894: 2-3) (Figs. 13-14) e Craig (1895: 54-55) (Figs. 15-16) e reeditado por Livingstone (1989: 13-16). Nele encontra-se um pedido à deusa para que destrua uma invasão de gafanhotos. Esse trecho foi primeiramente traduzido por Martin (1903: 199, linhas 24-28), como segue:

'24 La *funeste sauterelle* qui ravage les céréales,
25 le méchant criquet qui détruit les plantations,
26 qui fait cesser les offrandes des dieux et des déesses,
27 de Bêl que tu aimes, de ton favori Marduk,
28 qu'ils soient par ton ordre comptés comme le vent.'



FIGURA 11: O deus Ashur.

Hurowitz (1993: 598) transliterou esse trecho e ofereceu uma outra tradução

'*šennu erebu muhalliq ašnan[n]*
lemnu zirziru mubbil šippāti
pārisu sattukki ša ili u ištara[ti]
šemēki ^d*Ellil mārkarki* ^d*Tutu*
ina qibītiki limmani zaqīqš.

The evil locust which destroys the crop/grain,
the wicked dwarf-locust which dries up the orchards,
which cuts off the regular offerings of the gods and goddesses –
(Verily) Ellil listens to you, and Tutu is before you –
may by your command it be turned into nothing.'

Esse pedido à deusa deve ter sido feito durante uma invasão real de gafanhotos que afligiu a Assíria no tempo de Sargão. Essa infestação foi registrada pelo menos em três cartas existentes no arquivo de Sargão, que foram editadas por Parpola (1987: 86-87, 170-171).

O mesmo autor comenta (p. 599, nota 9) que Ellil e Tutu/Marduk, como deuses da atmosfera e do

vento, estão sendo invocados para auxiliar Nanaya em sua tarefa de livrar a terra dos gafanhotos. À mesma página diz que dois tipos de gafanhotos são mencionados nessa prece à deusa – *erebu* e *zirziru*, que parecem ser espécies distintas e não diferentes estágios de desenvolvimento de um só tipo de gafanhoto. Declara ainda que, como o *zirziru* é um gafanhoto pequeno,



FIGURA 12: A deusa Nanaya, sentada num trono, é apresentada à filha do rei, Hunubai-Nanaya (Estela do rei Meli-Shipak II (1186-1172 a. C.).

os dois termos tomados juntos podem ser considerados um merismo, significando ‘gafanhotos grandes e pequenos’.

OS “SELEUCIDES”

Plínio, em sua *História Natural* (X, xxxix), registrou que havia certas aves chamadas *Seleucides*, para

cuja vinda eram oferecidas orações a Júpiter, pelos habitantes do Monte Cadmos [atual monte Honaz, na Turquia, a 17 km ao leste de Denizli, na província homônima, na Anatólia ocidental], para comer os gafanhotos que destruíam suas plantações; acrescentou o naturalista romano que não se sabia de onde vinham essas aves, nem para onde se dirigiam depois de partir e que nunca eram vistas a não ser quando delas se necessitava [para a destruição dos gafanhotos]

— 2. — An. ST. 11, 143

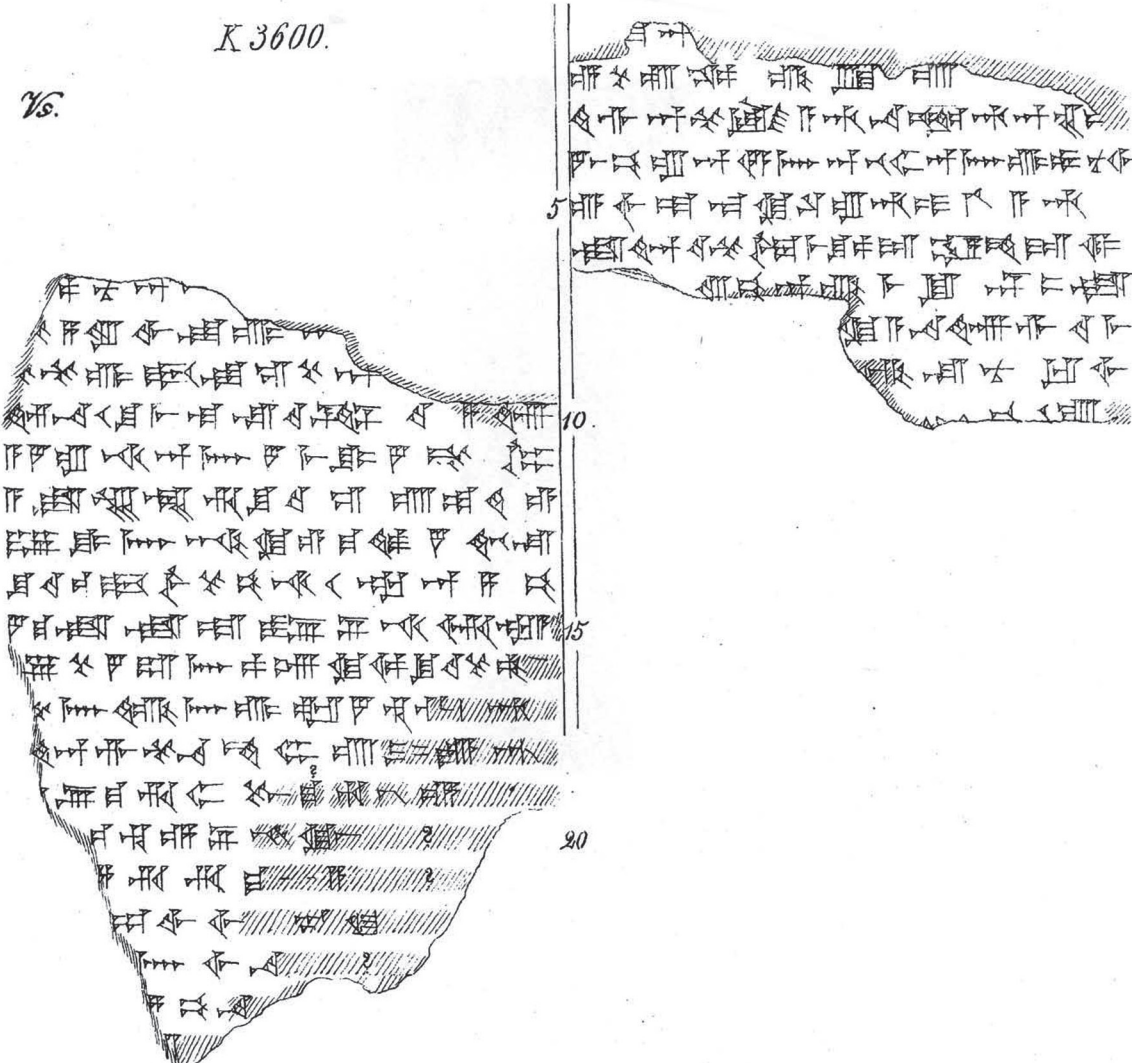


FIGURA 13: Reprodução do texto cuneiforme do Hino a Nanaya (Tablete K 3600 + DT 75 do Museu Britânico) (Winckler, 1894: 2; primeira parte).

— 3 — AnSt. 11, 143

Rs.

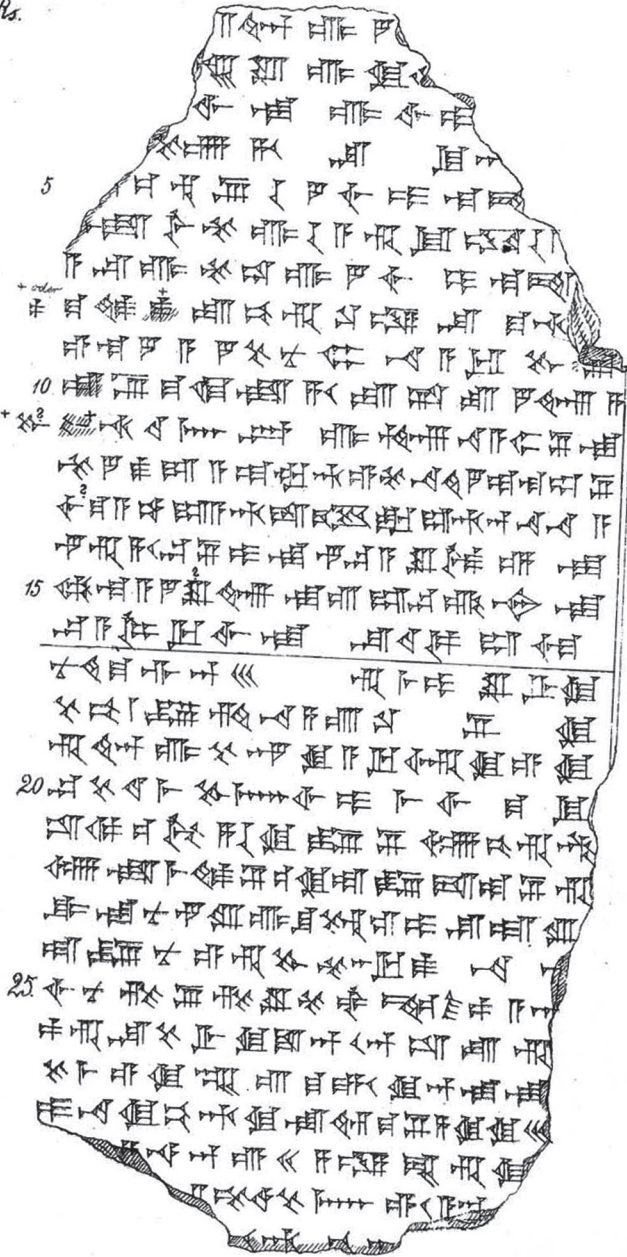
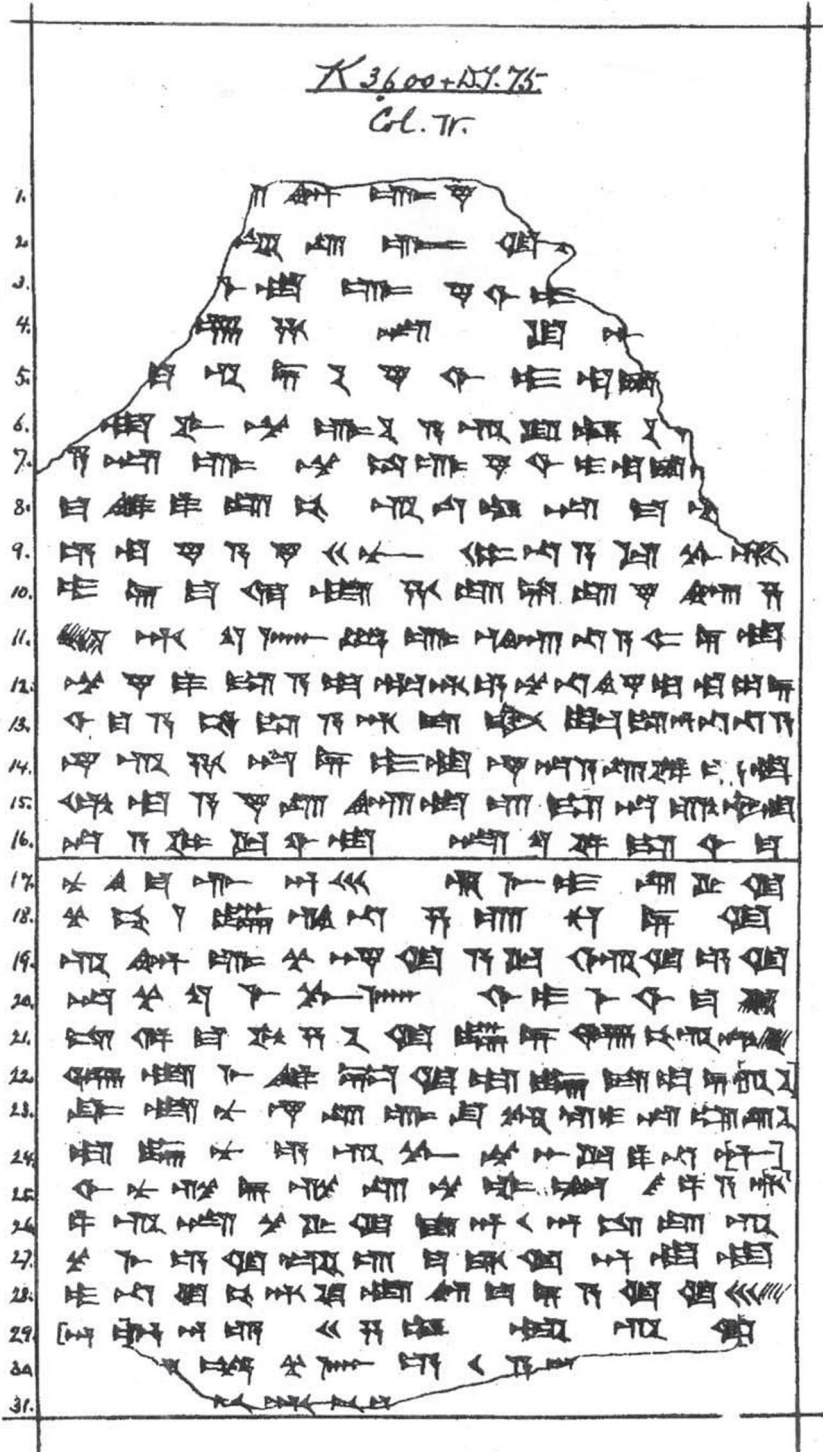


FIGURA 14: Reprodução do texto cuneiforme do Hino a Nanaya (Tablete K 3600 + DT 75 do Museu Britânico) (Winckler, 1894: 3; segunda parte).

54



8*

FIGURA 15: Reprodução do texto cuneiforme do Hino a Nanaya (Tablete K 3600 + DT 75 do Museu Britânico) (Craig, 1895: 54; primeira parte).

55.

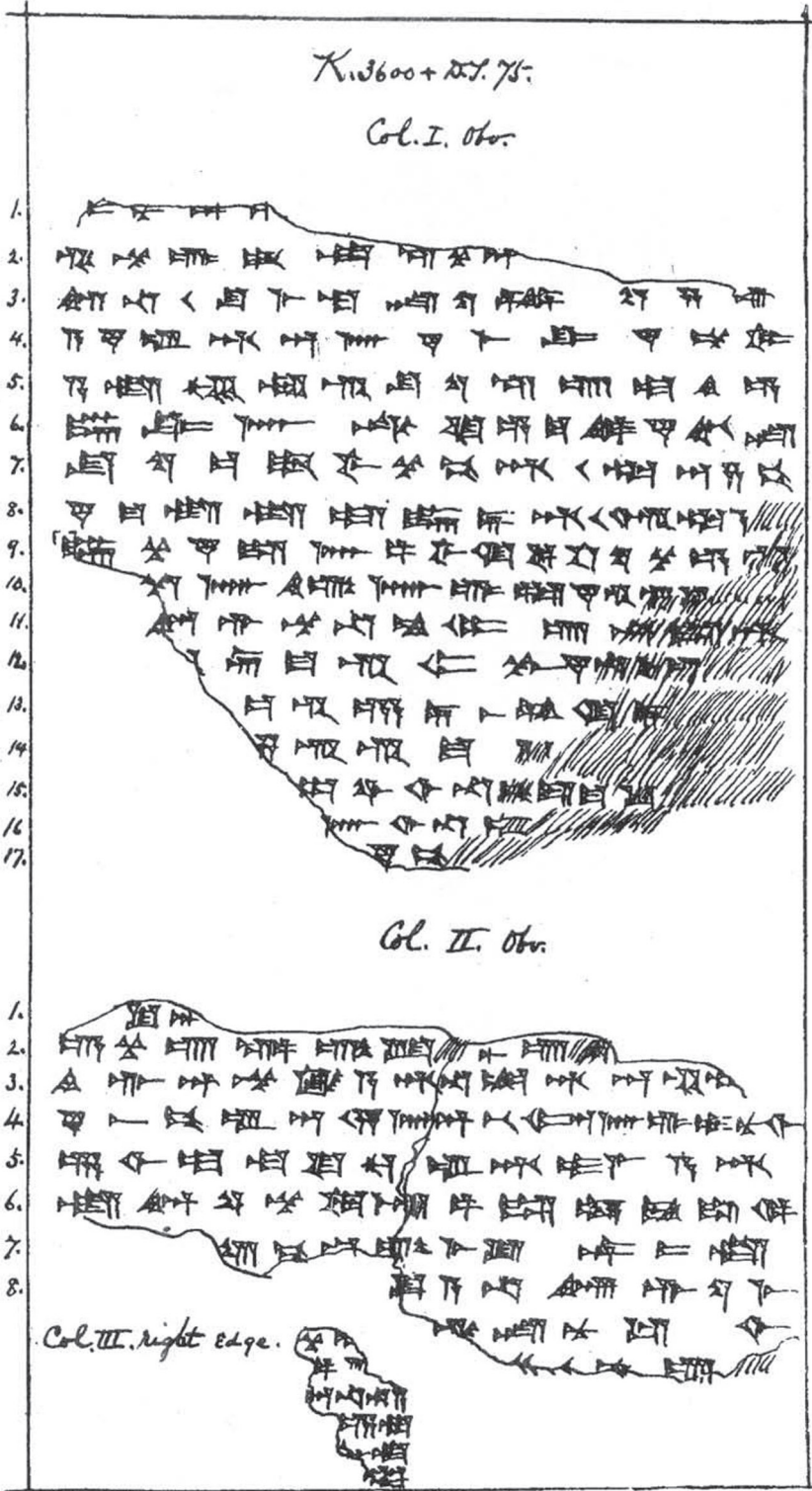


FIGURA 16: Reprodução do texto cuneiforme do Hino a Nanaya (Tablete K 3600 + DT 75 do Museu Britânico) (Craig, 1895: 55; segunda parte).

[“*Seleucides aves vocantur quarum aventum ab Iove precibus impetrant Cadmi montes incolae, fruges eorum locustis vastantibus, nec unde veniat quove abeant comperitum, nunquam conspectis nisi cum praesidio earum indigetur*; cf. Rackham, 1960: 340].

Zósimo (Ζώσιμος; fl. 490ss-510ss), um historiador bizantino que viveu em Constantinopla durante o reinado do imperador bizantino Anastasius I (491-518), escreveu uma *Nova História*, uma compilação baseada nos escritos de Dexippus (período de 238-270), Eupapius (período de 170-404) e Olympiodorus (fatos ocorridos depois de 407). No Livro I declarou que em Selúcia, na Cilícia [atual Silifke, cidade e distrito no centro-sul da província de Mersin, na Turquia] havia um templo de Apolo, ali cognominado Sarpedônio, e nesse templo um oráculo; esse deus, segundo Zósimo, era o que mandava as aves chamadas *seleuciades*, que voavam ao redor de seu templo, para destruir as pragas de gafanhotos; essas aves voavam entre os gafanhotos, capturando-os com seus bicos, e em poucos momentos destruíam um vasto número desses insetos, livrando o povo dos malefícios que deles adviriam (cf. Sylburgius, Leunclavius & Cellarius, 1679: 93; Cousin, 1686: 611; Reitemeier, 1784: 74-75; Anón., 1814: 28-29; Buchon, 1836: 667; Bekker, 1837: 50).

Thompson (1895: 153, sob Seleucus (ΣΕΛΕΥΚΙΣ)) identificou essas aves como *Pastor roseus*, atualmente *Sturnus roseus* (Linnaeus, 1758) (Passeriformes, Sturnidae) (Fig. 18). Acrescentou que “The bird, under the name *Samarmog* or *Samarmar* is in like manner revered to this day by the arabs (...). In [modern Greek] it is called *ἀγιοπουλι* [hagiopouli; “pássaro santo”] on its Spring migration, when it destroys the grasshoppers, and *διαβολοπουλι* [diabolopouli; “pássaro diabo”] in Autumn, when it devours the grapes”.

Baddeley (1940: 45-49) publicou um interessantíssimo ensaio sobre essas aves:

“At Hidersindi I particularly noticed, not having seen them before, flocks of Ararat larks (*Pastor roseus*, the Rose-coloured Pastor), a species of starling with the whole of the body bright rose-colour, the head, wings, and tail black. My note-book reads: ‘They are busily engaged in catching and devouring locusts, of which they are said to destroy incredible numbers, on the strip of flat land along the Caspian shore. They appear, indeed, to be killing, killing, killing, as fast as they can for a time, then off they fly to the water (perhaps to rinse their beaks?) and back again to kill, kill, kill’.

So I wrote at the time. I should have observed them much more closely and written about them at greater length had I known then what I know now. [Ermolao] Barbaro writes: ‘In this town [Cuerch, ESE. of Tabriz] there is a pit of water, as it were a fountain, the which is guarded by its *Thalassemani*, that is to say priests. This water, they say, is of great virtue against leprosy and against locusts, both which cases I have seen evidenced, I will not say by actual experience but by some people’s credulity; for at that time there passed that way a Frenchman with certain servants and guides, who were Moors, he being afflicted with leprosy, and, as we were told, was on his way to bathe in that water. What followed I know not, but it was commonly reported that many were healed there. While I was still in that country there came an Armenian who had been sent by the King of Cyprus long before I took my way to those parts to procure some of that water, and returning while I was still in that country, two months after my arrival in Tabriz, brought him some of that water in a tin flask. He stayed with me two days, then resumed his journey and returned to Cyprus, where on my way home I saw the same flask of water suspended from a pole set up outside a certain tower. And I learned from the people of the place that by virtue of that water they had had no more locusts. There, too, I saw some red and black birds, called the ‘birds of Mahomet’, which fly in flocks like starlings and, as I understand, being in Cyprus on my return journey, when the locusts arrive kill them all. And wheresoever they perceive that water to be they fly towards it, so, at least, all the people of the place declare’* [Ramusio, ii, f. 107. From ‘While’ to the end of this extract is omitted in Thomas’ translation of Barbaro (MS. of A.D. 1550-1 B.M.), but is supplied from Ramusio in the Hakluyt Society’s version (1873). It forms part of the original text in the Aldine 1st. ed. of Barbaro, 1543, a copy of which is in the London Library, as also one of the 2nd. ed., (1545). I use the Hakluyt Society’s transcript of Thomas].

Gamba (...) has a long description, partly from his personal observation, in which he explains the bathing habit of the bird as necessitated by the liquid that sprinkles their feathers as they crunch up the locusts, and would soon, if allowed to coagulate, put a stop to

their activity. Armenians, Greeks, and Tartars, he tells us, are convinced that to secure the coming of the *Tarbys** [*The Georgian name, as Raddle confirms] a jar of water must be brought from a well near the monastery of Etchmiadzin. This water is blessed by the monks; the bearer must never put the jar down on the ground during the whole journey, but hang it, when he stops to rest, on a tree or a wall. On arrival it is again blessed by a priest; some ravaged field is sprinkled with it and within 48 hours the *Tarbys* come flying up in clouds. 'In 1823 we saw the Archbishop Narses receive the miraculous water and the birds were not long in coming'. All previous evidence had led to the conclusion that the Rose-starlings destroyed but did not devour the locusts; Gamba himself, however, saw the birds feeding their young assiduously on them* [**Voyage dans la Russie*, &c., Paris, 1826, vol. ii, pp. 299 sqq. According to B.P. Uvaroff, *Locusts and Grasshoppers*, London, 1928, p. 124. 'Portchinsky (...) even suggested that the pink starling (*Pastor Roseus*), one of the best-known beneficial birds, kill locusts especially to obtain the fly larvae from them: this suggestion is based on the fact that starlings kill many more locusts than they can eat'].

Radde, in turn, writes: 'In some years, only, are certain localities invaded by swarms of Rose-starlings, which arrive in pursuit of the locusts and, if the latter then lay their eggs, remain, sometimes, until their next year's brood is ready for flight. Such, however, is not always the case. Of the last twenty years the most remarkable, in this respect, was 1865, when on the 22nd May (June 3rd) these pretty birds invaded Tiflis in numbers that one might well call 'hundreds of thousands'. They settled at first most densely on the stony banks of the Koura, near the Maidan and the prison, at eventide came to roost in huge numbers on the rocks of the Salakali ridge, and dispersed by day over the gardens and fields where they destroyed the young locusts and attacked also with zest the early flowering cherry-trees. They nested freely even in the midst of the city, in the Oriental part of it, at least; for the bird is held in highest regard by Mussulman and Christian alike, so much so that to shoot one might lead to trouble. If many locusts make their appearance in Tiflis in spring and are not soon followed by

their winged destroyers, a Deputation is sent to fetch water from St. Jacob's Spring or Well. The returning Deputation is met and the water taken over with much religious ceremony, the object being to induce the coming of the Rose-starlings to start their campaign against the locusts. Such a Deputation was sent in 1865. In 1825, Yermóloff, as the locusts attacked the Salakali division of Tiflis and the starlings had much to do, caused large pans of water to be set up for them to bathe in, a proceeding their dirty work makes them inordinately fond of.

The spring is, or was, 7,250 feet above sea-level on the NE. slope of Ararat. The last notice I have found of the water being sent for is 1879, but I should not be surprised to learn that the custom still holds. The saint in question, by the way, was an Armenian bishop, not the Hebrew patriarch. In the late Lord Bryce's excellent book, *Transcaucasia and Ararat*, there is a charming description of the Kurds watering their flocks at St. Jacob's Well, a scene truly biblical.

In Smyrna, it seems, the Rose-starling is called the Holy-bird in May when it kills locusts, the Devil-birds in July when it makes havoc in orchards and vineyards. If the locusts could speak, they would, doubtless, reverse the order.

According to Ghulam Risa Khan, Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh, there are 'starling-springs' at Shiraz and Qazvin, while Colonel E.W. Noel speaks of one at Kashan. Villages, he says, found as much as £150 by public subscription to pay the expenses of a party to fetch a flask of the water from Kashan, while pamphlets, which he had had translated into Persian, describing scientific methods of locust destruction, as practiced in Baluchistan, received no attention whatever* [**Journal of the Central Asian Society*, vol. xvi, 1929, part iii, pp. 350 sqq., 'A noble Persian author', by C.J. Edmonds].

Zem-Zem water from Mecca has been used at Aleppo for the same purpose* [*Hasluck, F.W., *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, 1920, pp. 203-5]. (...).

On the whole it seems evident that the Holy Water legend derives from the bird's habit of cleansing itself, which gives it a somewhat unusual interest – cleanliness and godliness for once coming together quite naturally”.

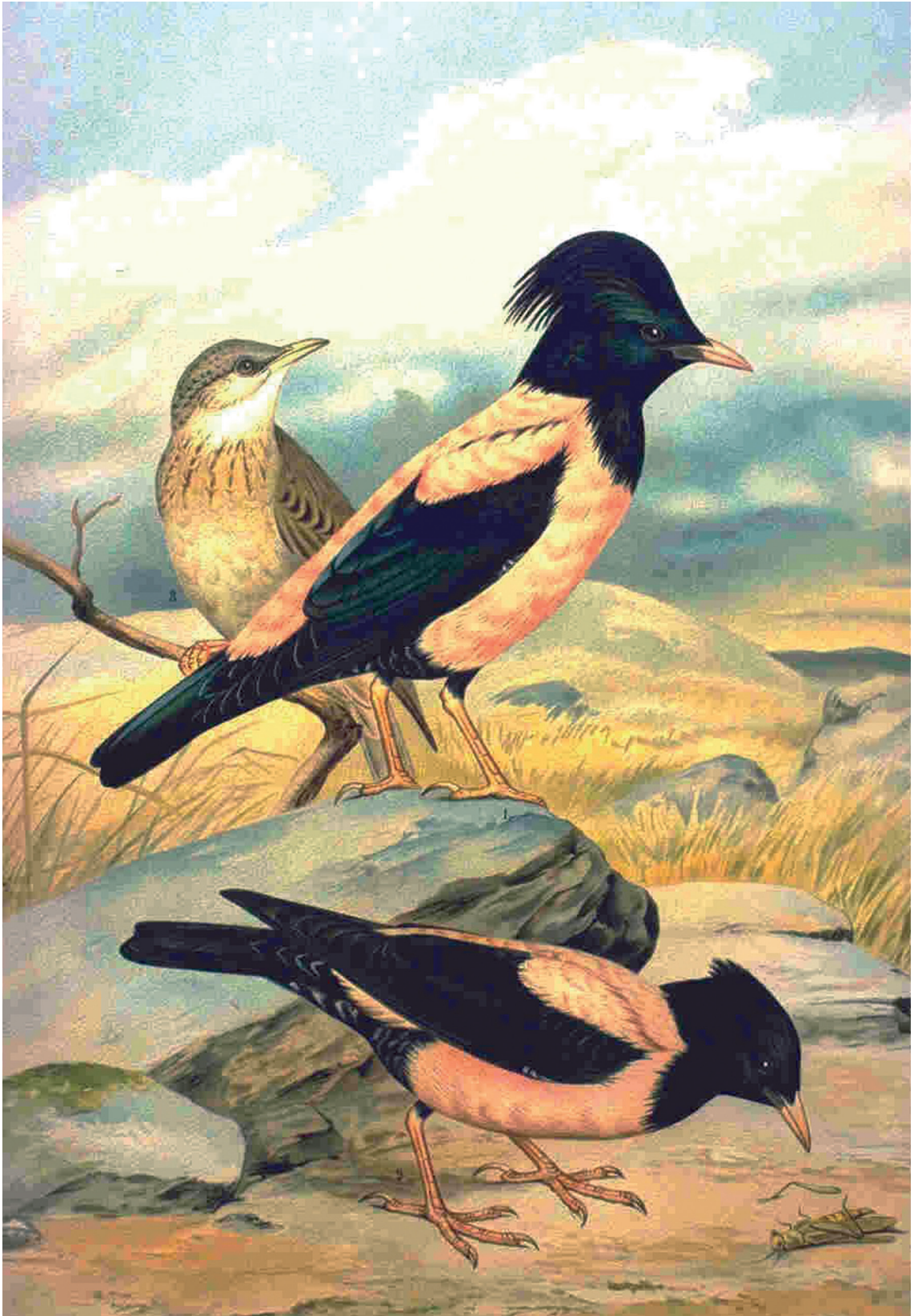


FIGURA 17: *Sturnus roseus* (Linnaeus, 1758) – macho adulto (centro), fêmea (abaixo) e jovem (acima) (Neumann, 1901: pl. 4).

RESUMO

Faz-se um breve apanhado dos deuses direta ou indiretamente associados a gafanhotos na China (Ta Pa Cha, Ch'ung Wang, Tiazinha Chin Ku, Pu Shen, Ma Cha, Corvo e Rã), e Mesopotâmia (deuses do vento; Ashur e Nanaya). São também feitas considerações sobre as aves chamadas Seleucides (Sturnus roseus).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Deuses; Eurásia; gafanhotos; China; Mesopotâmia; *Seleucides (Sturnus roseus)*.

AGRADECIMENTOS

As fotos 2 a 9 foram gentilmente ofertadas ao autor sênior nos anos '80, pelo Sr. V.N. Alin. Russo de nascimento, viveu por vários anos em Harbin antes de emigrar para o Brasil (São Paulo). Era entomólogo amador e teve várias espécies a ele dedicadas, inclusive dípteros descritos por Willi Hennig. Foi um grande colaborador do Museu de Zoologia, trazendo vários insetos para as coleções. A Dione Seripierri, Bibliotecária-Chefe do Museu de Zoologia, nossos melhores agradecimentos por suas inúmeras gentilezas em obter-nos bibliografia.

REFERÊNCIAS

- ANDRAE, W. 1925. *Coloured ceramics from Ashur and earliest ancient Assyrian wall-paintings*. Kegan Paul, Trench, Tubner and Co., Ltd., London.
- ANÓN. 1814. *The History of Count Zosimus, sometime advocate and chancellor, of the Roman Empire. Translated from the original Greek, with the notes of the Oxford edition, Complete in one volume*. W. Green and T. Chaplin, London.
- BADDELEY, J.F. 1940. *The rugged flanks of Caucasus*. Oxford University Press, Oxford & Humphrey Milford, London, v. 1.
- BARANOV, I.G. 1926. *Po kitaiskim kbaramam Ashikhbē* [Chinese temples at Ashiho]. Typographiya Kitaiskoi Vostochnoi Zhelesnoi Dorogi, Kharbin [Harbin, Heilongjiang, China].
- BARANOV, I.G. 1928. *Zagrobnyi sud v predstavleniyakh kitaiskogo naroda* [Judgement day beyond the grave in the conception of the Chinese people]. Typographiya Kitaiskoi Vostochnoi Zhelesnoi Dorogi, Kharbin [Harbin, Heilongjiang, China].
- BEKKER, I. 1837. *Zosimus*. Impensis Ed. Weberi, Bonnae [= Bonn] [Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae. Editio emendatior et copiosior, consilio B.G. Niebuhrii C.F. institute, auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Regiae Borussiae continuata].
- BODENHEIMER, P.S. 1928-1929. *Materialen zur Geschichte der Entomologie bis Linné*. W. Junk, Berlin, 2 v.
- BODENHEIMER, P.S. 1944. Studies on the ecology and control of the Moroccan locust (*Doclostaurus maroccanus*) in Iraq. I. Results of a mission of the Iraq Department of Agriculture to N. Iraq. *Bulletin de la Direction générale d'Agriculture de l'Iraq*, Bagdad, 29:1-121.
- BODENHEIMER, P.S. 1960. *Animal and man in the Bible lands*. E.J. Brill, Leiden.
- BUCHON, J.A.C. 1836. *Ouvrages historiques de Polybe, Hérodien et Zozime, avec notices biographiques*. A. Desrez, Libraire-Éditeur, Paris.
- CLOUDSLEY-THOMPSON, J.L. 1976. *Insects and history*. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London.
- COUSIN, (-). 1686. *Histoire romaine écrite par Xiphilin, par Zonare, et pas Zosime. Traduite sur les originaux grecs, par M. Cousin, président de la Cour des Monnoyes*. Chez la Veuve de Damien Foucault, Paris.
- CRAIG, J.A. 1895. *Assyrian and Babylonian religious texts being prayers, oracles, hymns, etc. Copied from the original tablets preserved in the British Museum and autographed by James A. Craig*. J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig, v. 1.
- HORN, W. 1937. Über einen Insekten-Gott der Chinesen. *Arbeiten über physikalischen und angewandte Entomologie*, Berlin-Dahlem, 4(1):67, pl. 2.
- HSU, SHIN-YI. 1969. The cultural ecology of the locust cult in traditional China. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 59(4):731-752.
- HUANG, K'UEI-YUEN & SHYROCK, J.K. 1929. A collection of Chinese prayers. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 49:128-155.
- HUROWITZ, V.A. 1993. Joel's locust plague in light of Sargon II's hymn to Nanaya. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 112(4):597-603.
- LAMBERT, W.G. 1990. Ancient Mesopotamia Gods. Superstition, philosophy, theology. *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 207(2):115-130.
- LIVINGSTONE, A. 1989. *Court poetry and literary miscellanea (State Archives of Assyria 3)*. Helsinki University Press, Helsinki.
- MARTIN, F. 1903. *Textes religieux assyriens et babyloniens. Transcription, traduction et commentaire. Première série*. Letouzey et Ané, Éditeurs, Paris.
- MASPERO, H. s/d. The mythology of modern China. In: Hakin, J.; Huart, C.; Linossier, R.; Wilman-Grabowska, H. de; Marchal, C.H.; Maspero, H. & Eliseev, S. *Asiatic mythology. A detailed description and explanation of the mythologies of all the great nations of Asia*. Crescent Books, New York, p. 252-384, 91 figs.
- MAVERICK, L.A. 1940. Hsü Kuang-Ch'i, a Chinese authority on agriculture. *Agricultural History*, 14(4):143-160.
- NAVARRETE, D.F. 1732. *An account of the Empire of China, historical, political, moral and religious. A short description of that Empire, and notable examples of its emperors and ministers. Also an ample relation of many remarkable passages, and things worth observing in other kingdoms, and several voyages. There are added the decrees of popes, and propositions desin'd at Rome for the Mission in China; and a bull of our most holy father Clement X. in favour of the missionaries. Written in Spanish by the R.F.F. Dominick Fernandez Navarrete, Divinity Professor in the College and University of St. Thomas at Manila, Apostolick Missioner in China, Superior of those in his mission, and Procurator General at the Court of Madrid for the Province of the Rosary in the Philippine Islands, of the Order of Preachers*. H. Lintot & J. Osborn, London.
- NEUMANN, J.F. 1901. *Naturgeschichte der Vögel Mitteleuropas. IV. Störlinge, Stare, Pirole, Rabenvögel, Würger, Fliegenjäger, Schwalbenvögel, Segler, Tagschläfer, Spechte, Bienenfresser, Eisvögel, Racken, Hopfe, Kuckucke*. Verlag Fr. Eugen Köhler, Gera-Untermhaus.
- PARPOLA, S. 1987. *The correspondence of Sargon II: Part I. Letters from Assyria and the West State Archives of Assyria 2*. Helsinki University Press, Helsinki.
- RACKHAM, H., (Ed.) 1960. *Pliny. Natural History. With an English translation in ten volumes. Volume III. Libri VIII-XI*. William

- Heineman, Ltd., London & Harvard University Press, Cambridge [Loeb Classical Library].
- REITEMEIER, I.F. 1784. *Zosimi Historiae graece et latine recensuit, notis criticis et commentario historico illustravit Io. Frid. Reitemeier. Ad calcem subiectae sunt animadversiones nonnullae C.G. Heynii.* Weidmanni Heredes et Reichivm, Lipsiae [= Leipzig].
- SHYROCK, J.K. 1931. *The temples of Anking and their cults: A study of modern Chinese religion.* Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris.
- SISTACH LEAL, X. 2007. *Bandas, enjambres y devastación. Plagas de langosta a través de la historia,* Editorial Almuzara, Córdoba.
- SYLBURGIUS, F.; LEUNCLAVIUS, I. & CELLARIUS, A. 1679. *Ἱστορία κομητοῦ καὶ ἀποφισκοσυνηγοροῦ Ἰστορία νεα. Zosimi comitis ex advocato fisci Historia Nova, ex recensione Frederici Sylburgii, cum latina interpretatione Ioannis Leunclavii, & notis variorum, accurante Christophoro Cellario, smalcaldiensi.* Sumpti Io. Bielki, Bibliop. Ien. Typis Fridemanni Hetstedi, Cizae (= Zeitz).
- THOMPSON, D'A.W. 1895. *A glossary of Greek birds.* Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- WERNER, E.T.C. 1961. *A dictionary of Chinese mythology.* Julian Press, New York.
- WESTENHOLZ, J.G. 1997. Nanaya: Lady of mystery. In: Finkel, I.L. & Gellers, M.J. *Sumerian gods and their representations.* Styx, Groningen [Cuneiform Monographs 7], p. 57-84.
- WINCKLER, H. 1894. *Sammlung von Keilschrifttexten. II. Texte verschiedenen Inhalts.* Eduard Pfeiffer, Leipzig.

Recebido em: 09.06.2010

Aceito em: 20.10.2010

Impresso em: 10.12.2010