THE SPLENDOURS AND MISERIES OF PYRAMIDOLOGY, OR THE FRONTIER CASES OF (NOT)KNOWLEDGE: FROM ORIENTALISM TO ALIENTALISM

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The author analyzes marginal theories and concepts that emerged as lateral and dead-end branches in the history of Western Orientalism. It is assumed that marginal intellectuals falsified historical sources. The goals of these falsifiers could be different, ranging from the desire to make a contribution to science, to make the history of their community more ancient or to obtain financial benefits. Three generations of falsifiers developed a marginal and non-academic discourse of Orientalism. The author believes that marginal intellectuals transformed Orientalism into Alientalism. Alientalism became a successful market project of a modern consumer society. Alientalism blurred the rigid boundaries between the various forms of knowledge and ignorance, turning them into a mobile frontier contact zone, where the non-academic theories continue to emerge.

Key words: history of science, Orientalism, falsifications, marginals, intellectual communities, Alientalism, consumerism

Introduction

Orientalism belongs to a number of contradictory moments in intellectual history and the history of the ideas of the modern West. The history of the emergence and development of Western Orientalisms, including European, American and Latin American, provides the historian with several examples how intellectuals imagined and constructed Orient, ignoring the requirements and patterns of academic knowledge and preferring to satisfy the rising and strengthening national identities, feelings and self-consciousness. European intellectuals in particular and Western authors in general tried and sought to imagine and invent different images of Orient as a non-West and these intellectual and cultural practices were extremely diverse and their goals also varied, ranging from a pure and honest desire to impact in Oriental studies to aspirations to use Oriental narratives and images for the development of the identity of groups and communities, intellectuals belonged to. Oriental studies in different countries of the West formed and developed very differently, but the author of this article believes that Oriental studies before the historical moment, it became a strict academic science with object and subject, could become victims of political manipulations, speculations and ideologies.

Therefore, attempts to use non-academic and non-systematized uncategorized knowledge and Oriental images were an integral part of various intellectual practices and strategies that inspired the emergence, progress or development of national identities of those groups that did not have an Ancient Oriental in general or an Oriental origin and roots in particular. The ancient Orient and its heritage were so powerful attractive factors in the 19th and early 20th century that some Western intellectuals sought and tried to integrate certain facts or even artefacts into their national historical narratives or their alternative unofficial versions. The history of early Oriental studies in this intellectual situation became a history of academic sincere service and a history of several falsifications. Therefore, the history of early pre-academic and non-institutionalized Orientalism is the history of the struggle between the myths and values of the nation against the principles and laws of the academic community. The history of Western Oriental studies, the collective and individual attempts of the Occident to imagine, invent and construct Orient provides modern historians with numerous examples of forgery, falsifications and violations of academic norms that form the basis of modern professional ethics.

Oriental temptations of the frontier experience

Analysis of the intellectual practices, tactics and strategies of forgeries of the ancient Oriental in particular or other artifacts in general is the main objective of this article, which also has several tasks, including analysis of the causes of falsification of historical sources and artifacts, studies of strategies of transplantation of Oriental images, motifs and artifacts into the non-Oriental landscapes, an analysis of counterfeiters' attempts to prove the originality of sources and artifacts, they "found" and promote the narrative of "antiquity" in national historiography canons.

Supporters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, better known as Mormons, were probably the first who tried to use the ancient Oriental artefacts to solve their political tasks. Ideological myth and formally approved and accepted the ideologized version of the history, Mormons sincerely and truly believe in, has clear ancient Oriental backgrounds. The Book of Mormon, the main text of the Church and the source of its doctrine, exploits the biblical ancient Oriental images too actively. The narrative of the exodus of one of the Hebrew communities to America became, in fact, an attempt to invent history. It is obvious that the anonymous personal or unknown collective authors of this text actively used the achievements of European historiography and transplanted popular and romantic narratives into the contexts of the emerging American historiography.

The weakness of professional academic American historiography inspired to the success of Mormons in their attempts to promote their version of history, which claimed to be the basis of the historical grand narrative. Mormon intellectuals did not limit themselves to narrative exercises with Oriental images only. The Mormon acquisition of ancient Egyptian papyri is widely known, despite the fact that their attempts to decipher these texts were unsuccessful from an academic point of view. Mormons "translated" and interpreted the papyri in a way that was convenient for them. Mormons actually invented texts that had nothing in common with those real and authentic historical sources they owned and imagined as Mormon historical relics and artefacts. These texts were not enough to satisfy the historical imagination of Mormon ideologists and they inspired the emergence of Mormon archaeology which imagined and falsified the results of archaeological excavations for the implementation of the Mormon historical myth. It is logical to assume that Mormons were not the only falsifiers and amateurs who tried to transplant the Oriental artefacts into American contexts and spaces, but they probably became the most famous and successful inventors of history and the discoverers of new non-academic meanings in real Ancient Egyptian artefacts or falsified sources.

The first generation of counterfeiters creates folk-Orientalism

This article is an attempt to analyze the intellectual practices and strategies of Orient's invention and its confusion with national history in contexts of the activity of several historical figures including James O. Scotford, Daniel E. Soper, James Savage and Padre Carlos Crespi Croci, who "collected" and tried “to systematize” historical and archaeological artifacts, providing them with different meanings and interpretations, rejected and unrecognized by academic historiography and archeology. Doubtful activities from the academic point of view of these intellectuals are known, and their "achievements" are following: James O. Scotford in 1890 "found" a clay casket in the district of Montcalm; Daniel E. Soper and James Savage began archaeological excavations in Michigan, the numerous "artifacts", including tools, weapons, utensils, ornaments became their results; James Savage donated his collection as a gift to the University of Notre Dame. Padre Carlos Crespi Croci, a Catholic priest, served in Ecuador, where he collected a collection of local "artefacts" that local peasants sold to him. Padre Carlos Crespi Croci did not have a historical and archaeological education and therefore the authentic artefacts of local Indian cultures and the latest products of his Indian contemporaries were included in the collection and mixed in it. Milton Hunter, a Mormon priest and president of the New World Archaeological

Foundation, in the first half of the 1960s got access to the collection from the University of Notre Dame and bought a collection of Daniel E. Soper's heirs. Mormon intellectuals tried to academize the collection of Daniel E. Soper and James Savage, arguing that all artefacts are authentic and their creators were immigrants from the Middle East who settled in North America some years later after Jesus Christ was crucified. The proponents of this viewpoint believe that these ancient migrants created their own culture and civilization. The political and ideological message of supporters of this point of view was obvious: the modern USA is the historical heirs of Indian cultures, English colonists and natives from the Ancient Orient. These ideas, despite their anti-academic nature, placed Americans on a par with ancient civilizations and cultures and made them involved in their contribution and impact on world culture.

Pseudoarchaeology, alternative archaeology, fringe archaeology etc.

The efforts of marginal intellectuals (Hancock, 1995) (Velikovsky, 1950) (Von Däniken, 1968) institutionalized a new direction in pseudoscience which became known under several names, including pseudoarchaeology, alternative archaeology, fringe archaeology, fantastic archaeology, or cult archaeology (Feder, 2010) (Wallis, 2003) (Fagan, 2006) (Flemming, 2006) (Schadla-Hall, 2004) (Sebastion, 2001) (Stiebing & William, 1987). These marginal branches of archaeology arose in the 19th century and could not adapt to the academicization of historical knowledge. Representatives of marginal archaeology prefer to operate out-of-place artefacts. These marginal directions had nothing in common with academic archaeology and historiography, and their achievements and successes quickly became victims of impartial academic analysis, although representatives of academic archaeology and other related sciences, including Oriental studies, prefer not to notice and ignore marginals and their discoveries. These forms of archaeology have nothing in common with academic forms of archaeology (Cole, 1980) (Fagan & Feder, 2006) (Holtorf, 2005) (Moshenka, 2008) because the intellectuals involved in these studies prefer and actually correlate their results with the political and ideological situation or religious preferences of groups or institutions which sponsored archaeological excavations. Nationalistic conjuncture and the rise of national identity, the progress of nationalism inevitably inspired an ideological and social inquiry that stimulates the anti-academic activities of intellectuals in archaeology, the falsification of artefacts or biased non-academic interpretation and understanding of sources.

Pseudoarchaeology and invention of senses

Pseudoarchaeology specializes in the falsification of historical sources and artefacts. What causes and incentives push intellectuals to become falsifiers and marginals? No one of them recognized themselves as negative figures in modern science, but they will try to create the areol of martyrdom and sacrifice, accusing academic science of repression and persecution. The reasons for the rise and progress of pseudo-academic explanations are diverse. If we analyze the "artefacts" of ancient Oriental origin found in the United States or Latin America, the reasons for their appearance can be extremely diverse. On the one hand, intellectuals who falsified the sources could have formally good goals because they sought to introduce nations, they belonged to, into the circle of historical peoples. Nationalists believed that the possession of ancient history and great ancestors belong to the number of attributes and characteristics of the nation. On the other hand, modern societies of consumers are not so picky in the motivations and legitimations of falsification, imagination and invention of the past or the appropriation of another's history. It is extremely doubtful that the ideological and political feelings of nationalism are driven by modern falsifiers or determine the motives and incentives that force them to falsify historical and archaeological sources, promoting non-academic and pseudoscientific interpretations.

It is logical to assume that the logic of the market and consumerism became the main and most important stimulus for archaeological and historical falsifications and the "discovery" of the ancient Oriental stratum in the history of the Americas. The falsifiers hope that consumers of their ideas will believe in non-academic texts about the contacts of the Ancient Orient with America, they also understand that books about the ancient Egyptians or Babylonians who discovered America will be sold better than pure academic studies about the cultures of pre-Columbian America or the Ancient Orient. Falsifiers use several tactics and strategies for their communication with the society they belong to. Falsifiers are very persistent in their attempts to promote and popularize their versions and forms of historical narrative. On the one hand, falsifiers prefer to pull out their artefacts from contexts, including archaeological, social and cultural ones. On the other hand, they are very aggressive and active in their confrontation with academic archaeology and history, because formal barriers, limitations and prescriptions of academic ethics are not significant to them. Falsifiers speculate with formal similarities between American and Middle Eastern archaeological traditions actively, but they are more active in the promotion of the narrative that the representatives of Babylon, Assyria, Egypt visited America long before Columbus. The absence of formal restrictions allows falsifiers to mix and combine different cultures.

Their "artefacts" can combine elements of different civilizations and traditions. All formal limitations were always secondary and unimportant for representatives of non-academic archaeology who tried to prove that representatives of ancient Oriental civilizations visited the American lands. The political and ideological motives of antiquity and involvement simultaneously stimulated the anti-academic practices of intellectuals who imagined their mission of Orientalization of American spaces as a serious academic task.

Pseudoarchaeology as an attempt to transplant Orientalness in non-Oriental cultural landscapes

If we reach a consensus that the Oriental artefacts of alternative archaeology, found in North and Latin America, are counterfeits, then it is perspective to analyze two dimensions of the activities of falsificators. Firstly, the production of artefacts. Secondly, the meanings of the production of false artefacts. Falsifiers, making fake and false artefacts, tried to imitate and feign the role of the creator because the history of the Americas did not provide them with examples of this cultural tradition. What was the meaning of the falsification of historical artefacts? Creating these false artefacts, forgers played the role of creator and they transplanted the historical, cultural and political traditions of the Ancient East into North American cultural spaces simultaneously. Falsifiers seek to transfer the historical experience of the Ancient East to imagined cultural and political bodies of North and South America. Intellectual and social activities of falsifiers in pseudo-Orientalism were forms of cultural and symbolic communications. Fake artefacts, first of all, the Orientalist of origin, became a form, an imitation and a simulation of the cultural and social gift. Falsifying the results of archaeological excavations pseudo-Orientalists, on the one hand, feigned the very symbolic and sacred procedure of the gift. On the other hand, they mimicked the sacral ritual of sacrifice because of the fake artefacts, falsified by them and buried by them or their accomplices, were a necessary sacrifice. These intellectual practices and strategies of supporters and representatives of pseudo-academic Orientalism had nothing in common with the traditions of classical academic Orientalism but were predominantly different cultural games and intellectual practices of transplantation of Orientalness into American cultural spaces and landscapes. These pseudo-Orientalists and falsifiers did not understand that they communicated with symbolic and sacred spaces of memory and identity.

Pseudoarchaeology and spirit of changes: from neutral zone to situation of frontierness

Pseudo-archaeological studies of self-proclaimed Orientalists were isolated and developed in their reserves until the early 1990s, but the rapid development of television, communications and the Internet changed the situation significantly and radically. If, before the beginning of the 1990s, the boundaries between academic Orientalism and the archaeology of the Ancient East were precisely boundaries with tightly regulated rules of crossing, then in the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s these boundaries turned and mutated into a shaky and indefinite frontier. If the neutral zone separated Orientalism and marginal theories before the early 1990s, then the contact zone completely replaced it in the next three decades. If before the beginning of the 1990s pseudo-Orientalists, supporters and apologists of alternative archaeology were relatively closed community, in 2000 they cease to be marginal in the eyes of society because academic science, including Orientalism and archeology, occupies the place of marginals as a result of several companies of mass media that discredited the achievements of academic Oriental studies as a closed science that allegedly hides the truth about the civilizations and cultures of the ancient Orient. Marginals and pseudo-Orientalists quickly occupied niches and positions, they drove academic Orientalism out. If before the beginning of the 1990s pseudo-Orientalists were a kind of cultural and intellectual sect, then in the next three decades they began to influence the formation and development of Orient images in the public consciousness.

Why did these negative transformations and changes become possible? Academic Orientalism chose to remain academic and could not withstand the onslaughts and attacks of profane and amateurs. Academic Orientalism preferred to exist in those forms and institutions, including specialized journals and centres that emerged during the earlier periods. Academic Orientalism was a prisoner of language because it was impossible to radically change and reconstruct the discourse by simplifying and primitivizing it and changing the main vectors and trajectories of analysis and description of the history of the Ancient Orient and its role and place in the history of world civilization. The academic orientalists could not adapt to the new situation because their community had ethical norms and rules which pseudo-Orientalists preferred to ignore. Pseudo-Orientalists, beginning in the 1990s, tried to combine two non-academic discourses actively, including alternative archaeology and the myth of aliens, which became the product of the mass culture of the 20th century. On the one hand, pseudo-Orientalists and adepts of alternative archaeology picked up Orientalism that fell from their attacks and strikes, simplified, primitivized it and combined it with Alienism – various phobias and myths

inspired and generated by the successes and progress of space operas and resulted in the collective belief in aliens. Alientalism became the result of this unnatural and highly resilient and adaptive mutation. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Google search engine will persevere you to offer *Orientalism* if you enter *Alientalism* into the search bar.

The second generation of counterfeiters combines pseudo-Orientalism with Alienism

The first generation of falsifiers created primitivized and simplified versions of Orientalism that integrated collective ideas about the past and preferred to use unverified facts, ignoring academic historiography, archaeology, and their arguments and evidence. The first generation of folk orientalists formed and proposed the canon, which integrated ideas about developed ancient civilizations and contacts between them. The ideas of the first pseudo-Orientalists did not have scientific nature and relatively quickly fell victim of academic research and revelations. It is logical to assume that the ideas of the first American counterfeiters could coexist with academic historiography and had a popularity among representatives of the church who denied official historiography and academic Orientalism. Mormons became faithful consumers of such ideas because their intellectuals themselves were among the falsifiers and formers of the canon of alternative archaeology and marginal Orientalism. Cultural dynamics of the second half of the 20th century changed and modified significantly the alignment of forces among falsifiers of history in general and Orientalism in particular. Erich von Däniken (1970) (1972) (1973) (1975) (1976) (1980) (1984) (1988) (1998) (2001) (2013) became the most significant falsifier of the second generation. The dynamic development of science fiction stimulated the appearance of the myth about aliens and supporters of paleocontact theory marginalized the traditional falsifiers of history.

The second generation of pseudo-archaeologists and pseudo-Orientalists replaced the first one. Representatives of the second generation did not bother to fake archaeological artefacts, preferring to imitate the academic style and “study” those facts and problems, official archaeology could not explain. The second generation of falsifiers tried to integrate various artefacts into the theory of contacts of representatives of ancient civilizations with hypothetical extra-terrestrials. Their efforts finally eroded the formally rigid and fixed boundaries between academic knowledge and profane amateur practices and strategies for constructing and inventing past and history. The activity of counterfeiters of the second generation institutionalized the situation of the frontier in the relationship between academic Orientalism and various marginal theories and

hypotheses. Erich von Däniken has kept away from the falsifiers of the first generation because he relatively successfully simulated and imitated academic discourse. Actually, Erich von Däniken became the founding father of a high culture of historical falsification and pseudo-Orientalism because the ideas of his predecessors were not so radical and ambitious, and the conclusions of his ideological heirs and successors in Europe and Russia were more primitive. The dynamic development of the mass media, which in the early 1970s began to produce virtually pseudo-documentary films about Oriental cultures and civilizations and their contacts with aliens, finally blurred the boundaries and division lines between forms of knowledge and transformed them in the frontier.

From Orientalism to Alientalism

Alientalism expresses itself in modern Western mass culture. The development of the American film industry in the 1990s - 2000e provides historians with several examples of manipulations with Orientalism. "Stargate" became one of the most ambitious and mass projects of modern Alientalism. Thematically, Stargate has much in common with Hollywood's other attempts to actualize the potential of Ancient Egypt, including “The Egyptian” (1954), “Land of the Pharaohs” (1955), “The Mummy” (1932, 1999 and 2017), “Joseph” (1995), “The Mummy Returns” (2001), “The Scorpion King” (2002), “The Scorpion King 2: Rise of a Warrior” (2008), “The Scorpion King 3: Battle for Redemption” (2012), “Exodus: Gods and Kings” (2015), “Tut” (2015), “Gods of Egypt” (2016). The oriental themes turned out to be so universal and attractive that the company “Private” known for its adult films created three pornographic films "The Pyramid" in 1996 and "Cleopatra" in 2003. Not all these films are Alientalist in the classic sense, but all of them equally assisted to the vulgarization of collective ideas about Orient and reproduced and promoted variously the myth of paleocontact of the inhabitants of the Ancient Orient with aliens, integrating Oriental images into various contexts of modernity. These films contributed to the formation and progress of the classical Alientalist canon, which includes the following statements and ideas: ancient civilizations, including Egypt and Babylon, were not the first civilizations; they received sacred and secret knowledge from their alien predecessors; the monumental structures of ancient civilizations, including pyramids, were created by aliens, academic archaeology deliberately hides all these facts. Alientalism in this intellectual situation opposes to academic Orientalism, despite the fact that Orientalists prefer to ignore the ideas of the Alientalists. Modern Orientalism and Alientalism are not equal in their competition and confrontation because the film industry very actively promotes the

Alientalist mythology, and academic Orientalism has neither the resources nor the possibilities to respond adequately to the myths of Alientalism that assimilate and marginalize scientific concepts about the civilizations of the ancient Orient in the mass consciousness.

The third generation of counterfeiters monetise Alientalism

Falsifiers of history including pseudoarchaeologists and pseudo-Orientalists change from generation to generation. If falsifiers of the first generation were active and ambitious, representatives of the second generation imitated academic discourse and were active, ambitious and self-confident enough to argue with academic science, then the third generation lost skills of their historical predecessors. If the representatives of the first and second generations were Americans or Western Europeans, then the pole of historical, archaeological and pseudo-Orientalist falsifications shifted to Russia in the 1990s and 2010 which experienced a wave of enthusiasm for Erich von Däniken's ideas that inspired local falsifiers who formed the third generation. The ideas of Erich von Däniken had the delayed and deferred effect in Russia. Despite the fact that the first translations of his books were published in the 1990s, a wave of pseudo-Orientalism covered Russia in 2010s only. Two figures, including Andrei Skliarov (1961 – 2016) (2011) (2013) and Igor' Prokopenko (2017a) (2017b) (2017c) (2017d), became the founding fathers of modern Russian pseudo-Orientalism. Their ideas are not original, but they create and reproduce the delusions and fabrications of their predecessors, including the followings: ancient civilizations were very developed and had unique technologies, ancient cultures were in contact with aliens, official archaeology and historiography conceal these facts deliberately. If the falsifiers of the first generation were just falsifiers, if the falsifiers of the second generation tried to monetize and marketize their ideas, then the Russian falsifiers of the third generation successfully found their place in the market economy. If falsifiers of the second generation were relatively original, then their Russian heirs prefer to primitivize, simplify conclusions of their mentors and broadcast them to consumers.

Conclusions

The competition and confrontation of Orientalism and Alientalism continue, the activity of adherents of pseudo-scientific concepts, including non-academic Oriental studies, has a steady character and it is pointless to assume that they will cease to disseminate their ideas because the market consumes them. Alientalism was so tenacious that became virtually a form of soft and unobtrusive euthanasia of academic history. The Stargate project became the most effective Alientalist attempt to reject academic

and official historiographies because its inspirers preferred to primitivize and explain almost all important events in the history of civilization by contacts with aliens or alien interventions. The series "Stargate SG-1" introduced several cultural and ethnic groups that existed in real history into the imagined universe and made them its heroes and inhabitants of other planets. Actually, the creators of the series "Stargate SG-1" deprived the history of meanings and logic because they imagined these groups as victims of alien influence and interference and evil aliens who moved people to other planets, conserving social, political and economic relations and institutions of ancient Egypt, antiquity or the Middle Ages. Alientalism in this cultural situation once again actualized the constructivist nature of the history (except for the history of modern times and emerging capitalism, the creators and founding fathers of the Alientalist discourse did not dare to assimilate) and did it no worse than recognized postmodern intellectuals.

Unscientific and non-academic theories continue and will continue to serve and satisfy market demands. The history of non-academic Oriental studies which, unlike other unrecognized theories, survived and could adapt to modernity, is more an exception than the rule because other alternative theories in Oriental studies died out or became invisible practically and virtually. Alternative ideas in non-classical Orientalism survived and mutated into Alientalism, combining several ideas that were rejected by academic science. The idea of contacts between ancient civilizations was connected with the non-academic theory of paleocontact, inspiring the flowering and triumph of Alientalism. It is impossible to exclude that modern mass culture will provide its historians and critics with several new examples of products in the style of Alientalism. The imagined universe of the Stargate testifies to the fact that the request for Alientalism was stable enough some years ago. It is logical to assume that the conjuncture can change and new myths will replenish the number of non-academic inventions of modern mass culture.

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БЛЕСК И НИЩЕТА ПИРАМИДОЛОГИИ, ИЛИ ФРОНТИРНЫЕ СЛУЧАИ (НЕ)ЗНАНИЯ: ОТ ОРИЕНТАЛИЗМА К АЛИЕНТАЛИЗМУ

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Автор анализирует маргинальные теории и концепции, которые возникли как боковые и тупиковые ветви в истории западного ориентализма. Предполагается что маргинальные интеллектуалы фальсифицировали исторические источники. цели этих фальсификаторов могли быть различны, варьируясь от желания внести вклад в науку, удревнить историю своего сообщества или получить финансовые выгоды. Три поколения фальсификаторов развивали маргинальный и неакадемический дискурс ориентализма. Автор полагает что маргинальные интеллектуалы трансформировали ориентализм в алиентализм. Алиентализм стал успешным рыночным проектом современного общества потребления. Алиентализм размыл жесткие границы между различными формами знания и незнания, превратив их в подвижную фронтирную контактную зону, где различнеы неакадемические теории продолжают возникать.

Ключевые слова: история науки, Ориентализм, фальсификации, маргиналы, интеллектуальные сообщества, Алиентализм, потребление

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