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The diplomacy of King Jugurtha (118-105 BC)

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Abstract:

Many topics related to ancient history are still influenced by the perspectives inherited from colonial interpretations. This has contributed to the ambiguity in the views of historians who only saw ancient kings as mere warriors, overlooking their diplomatic roles. This trend can be observed from Masinissa to Jugurtha. While Jugurtha is often portrayed in sources as a prince of war, his diplomatic acumen is often overlooked. Jugurtha delved into diplomatic efforts before war against Rome, aiming to find solutions avoid warfare. However, the situation took a different turn when Roman forces targeted him in 111 BC following the events in Cirta in 112 BC. Despite the war between the years 111-105 BC, Jugurtha's diplomacy continued with his neighbor Bocchus I to keep Rome at bay from Numidia. The main issue of the article was as follows: What was the diplomatic role played by Jugurtha during his reign from 111-105. BC?

Keywords: Jugurtha, diplomacy, Numidia, Rome.

1. Introduction

The policy of the Numidian Kingdom during the reign of King Massinissa always aimed at enhancing diplomatic relations with Rome and avoiding any confrontation with it in any way, in order to maintain the alliances established since 206 BC. Additionally, perhaps this policy adopted by King Massinissa was maintained by the

unlimited support from the Romans, both economically and militarily, which also reciprocated by the Romans. The noteworthy aspect of this is that the Romans responded to his requests honorably when his time came to an end in 148 BC. Their dignified presence was represented by "Scipio Aemilianus" overseeing the division of the inheritance among his successors. Perhaps these diplomatic relations aimed to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the heirs and their Roman allies. The lives of the three rulers, Micipsa, Gulussa, and Mastanbal, were not disrupted until the deaths of Mastanbal and Gulussa, leaving the eldest brother, Micipsa, in power. He remained keen on maintaining diplomatic relations with the Romans, especially when he sent the commander Jugurtha at the head of units to assist them in their war against Numantia in Spain. From that moment, it can be said that Jugurtha's diplomatic thought began to manifest and establish, as he evaluated the Roman consuls, whom he would later fight. Therefore, how can we classify Jugurtha as a diplomatic figure during the period (111-105 BC)? And did the historical Numidian-Roman relations play a role in connecting the diplomatic relations between Jugurtha and the Romans?

In this discourse, we aim simply to shed light on the diplomatic issue that Jugurtha stirred during the crucial historical moments of the Numidian era when he faced the Roman colonial machinery.

2. The Roots of the Numidian-Roman Diplomatic Relations:

After the death of the Numidian King "Gaia" the Massaesylii in 207 BC, his son King Massinissa decided to contact "Scipio Africanus" in Spain, where the war was raging between Rome and Carthage, Scipio Africanus himself was seeking an ally other than King Syphax, who had abandoned the alliance with Rome in that meantime¹. Massinissa realized that Carthage was inevitably finished after 206 BC based on

^{· -} مُحَّد الهادي حارش: دراسات ونصوص في تاريخ الجزائر وبلدان في العصور القديمة، دار هومة، الجزائر، (د.ت) ص198.

the signs of weakness that began to appear in Italy². Therefore, with his diplomacy, Massinissa sought Scipio, and perhaps Massinissa's diplomatic efforts at that time were influenced by the good initiative Scipio took towards him by releasing his nephew Masiva³. Did Scipio understand that diplomacy is preceded by gifts?

Massinissa arranged a meeting with Scipio after setting the time and place, and one of the outcomes of the meeting was to remain in complete secrecy so that Carthage would not become aware of it⁴. However, the question arises: did Massinissa's diplomatic urgency lead to the meeting, or was it the other way around? The late Mohamed Seghir Ganem mentions that Massinissa was the one who contacted Scipio, while Mohamed Bachir Chniti mentions that Scipio was the one who mobilized his diplomacy to reach Massinissa. The justification for this, is that Scipio wanted to open a front against Carthage and its ally Syphax. Accordingly, an agreement was reached between the two parties for Massinissa to return to Numidia. He descended into the Mauritanian Kingdom and requested assistance from its king⁵. Perhaps this action by the Mauritanian king can be attributed to Massinissa's diplomacy on one hand and the fear of the Mauritanian ruler of Rome's strength on the other hand, which had become allies of Massinissa.

Upon Massinissa's return to his land, he faced numerous confrontations with those who rebelled against the legitimacy of his throne and sought refuge with Syphax. Massinissa realized that he was unable to engage in battle against the Maesulian king, so he mobilized his diplomats to contact his cousins and make peace with them, fearing that Syphax would use them as a pretext to take control of the

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^{2 -} مُحَّد الهادي حارش: التطور السياسي والاقتصادي في نوميديا منذ اعتلاء ماسينيسا العرش إلى وفاة يوبار الأول 203- 46 ق.م، دار الهومة، الجزائر، 2014، ص18.

 ⁻ نَجّد الهادي حارش: (التطور السياسي والاقتصادي في نوميديا ...)، المرجع السابق، ص19.

⁴ - Lacroix: Histoire de La Numidie Et de La Mauritanie de Puis Les Temps Les Plus Ancien jusqu'à L'arrivée Des Vandales En Afrique، L'Université Rolin، P12.

 ⁻ نُحَد الصغير غانم: المملكة النوميدية والحضارة البونية، دار الهدى، الجزائر، (د.ت)، ص57.

situation⁶. In the year 203 BC, the Battle of the Great Plains took place between Rome and Carthage, with Massinissa siding with Rome. One of the outcomes was the defeat of Carthage and Syphax. The following year, in 202 BC, the region of North Africa witnessed one of the greatest battles where Hannibal was defeated, and Carthage was removed from the course of history in the famous Battle of Zama. As a result, Carthage sent a diplomatic delegation of the city's elites to seek peace from the Romans. A ship decorated with olive branches as a symbol of peace sailed out to meet the Roman ships. They pleaded with Scipio for forgiveness, but his response was, "Your homeland disloyal, unworthy of mercy." He then began outlining his terms. The Zama Agreement of 201 BC was signed, with its clauses being harsh towards Carthage. One of the most significant clauses was that Massinissa would be the king of Numidia⁷.

As a result of these developments, Massinissa came to rule over all of Numidia. He was allowed to cultivate many regions to strengthen his diplomatic relations with Rome. He sent quantities of wheat and barley to Rome and supplied their armies in Greece and Macedonia during the Macedonian Wars in 198 BC and 171 BC. All these supplies were part of his diplomatic policy to counter Carthage's complaints with Rome due to the actions they were undertaking⁸.

3. The diplomacy of King Micipsa from 148 to 118 BC

It is known that after the death of Massinissa in 148 BC, he left three successors: Micipsa, Gulussa, and Mastanbal. Micipsa took over the administration, Gulussa managed the army, and Mastanbal specialized in the judiciary. The two brothers, Gulussa and Mastanbal, passed away shortly after their father's death, leaving the rule in the hands of King Micipsa. He dedicated his policy to consolidating security, and historical sources do not mention any revolutions or uprisings during

⁶ ستيفان قزال: تاريخ شال إفريقيا القديم، تر: مُجَّد تازي سعود، ج03، مطبوعات أكاديمية المملكة المغربية، الرباط، 2007، ص173. ⁷ ستيفان قزال: المرجع السابق، ج3، ص 236 -238.
⁸ مُجَّد الحبيب بشاري: روما وزراعة المقاطعات الإفريقية 146 - 285ق.م، دار الهدى، الجزائر، (د. ت)، ص 54.

his reign that threatened his interests or the interests of his allies in his land. At the same time, his diplomacy worked tirelessly to maintain friendly relations and alliances with the King of Mauritania in the west on one hand, and on the other hand, his diplomacy sought opportunities to strengthen the bonds of friendship with Rome. To solidify this, he allowed Rome to purchase wheat and slaves from his country⁹, and provided them with provisions, equipment, and arms¹⁰, especially during their war in Spain against the rebellion of Viriathus (147-139 BC) with more than 300 horsemen and numerous elephants¹¹.

At the same time, the Numantine tribes¹² ignited one of the greatest revolutions between the years (137-133 BC). Rome prepared a large army and appointed three leaders to quell this revolution: the commander Metellus, Pompeius Maximus. However, victory always favored the Numantines. In the year 134 BC, Scipio Aemilianus was appointed to lead 60,000 infantrymen who worked to impose a major siege around the Numantines¹³. Scipio emphasized that starvation was the only way to completely get rid of them, leading to despair spreading among them. Many of them resorted to suicide either by throwing themselves from the walls or through wrestling. Fire was also set around the city of Numantia to prevent it from falling into Roman hands, leaving only 50 men. In the year 134 BC, King Micipsa was trying to strengthen the alliance with Rome diplomatically by sending money and men¹⁴. The Numidian military units, led by

فيّد بن عبد المومن: "أهمية القمح في بلاد المغرب القديم، مجلة الحضارة الإسلامية، العدد 29، 2016، ص 441

¹¹ نصيرة ساحير: المرجع السابق، ص 296.

¹² النومانس: مدينة إسبانية تقع بالقرب من نهر دوراو، أسستها القبائل الغالية اعتبرت جمهورية صغيرة مستلقة قـام الرومـان الهجـوم عليها في الكثير من المرات منذ سنة 133ق.م شارك يوغرطة في حصارها ابتداء من سنة 134ق.متم إسـقاطها سـنة 133ق.م. للمزيـد أنظر: أحمد صفر: مدينة المغرب العربي في التاريخ، (د. م. ن)، تونس، (د.ت)، ص 275.

¹³ - Daniel Varga: Op Cite,P 66.

¹⁴ نصيرة ساحير: المرجع السابق، ص 299.

Jugurtha, participated alongside the Romans in this war, marking the beginning of Jugurtha's military career¹⁵.

But in this context, this idea must be brought about that King Micipsa, Rome, and the Scipio family holds a significant historical significance. The dispatch of Jugurtha to the war reflects a diplomatic context between Micipsa and Rome, aiming to maintain the closeness between the two peoples and reinforce the friendship established by Massinissa since 206 BC.

The question arises: Were Micipsa's diplomatic actions towards Rome on a state level (Roman and Numidian states) or a familial level (the ruling Numidian family and the Scipio family)? The historical connections between these two families date back to 206 BC, leading up to the pivotal year of 148 BC, especially as Scipio Aemilianus was involved in the inheritance and division of thrones in that year. It is noteworthy that the same year Scipio Aemilianus was appointed to lead the Roman army in Spain was when Micipsa sent forces to Spain in 134 BC¹⁶. This coincidence naturally raises the question: Was the diplomacy conducted on a state level? If so, why did Micipsa not send support since the beginning of the war in 137 BC? If not, does it imply a tie between Micipsa and the Scipio family? Various possibilities remain open, suggesting that diplomatic maneuvers were within the framework of states and reinforced by familial connections, according to the prevailing concepts of the time.

4. The Jugurthine diplomacy before the war with the Romans.

King Micipsa passed away in 118 BC, leaving three heirs: Adherbal, Hiempsal, and Jugurtha. After a meeting between the heirs where Hiempsal aimed to remove Jugurtha from inheriting the throne¹⁷, Jugurtha retaliated by assassinating him. This assassination occurred

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¹⁵ Daniel Varga: Op Cite, P71-72.

¹⁶ نصيرة ساحير: المرجع السابق، ص 299.

¹⁷ - Tom Wukitsch: Carthage and Roman North Africa Hannibal's army crossing the Alps, Penguin Books, New York, 2011, P115.

after the division of wealth and each inheritor taking control of their region. It's worth noting that after the division of Micipsa's wealth, the region was divided among them, with each moving to an area not far from the wealth. Hiempsal withdrew to the region of Thirmida, while Adherbal and Jugurtha were also not far from this area. Perhaps the choice of this location was not solely based on the proximity to the wealth, but also due to its closeness to the "Roman African Province," making communication with Roman authorities easier in case of emergencies. After Hiempsal's assassination in 117 BC, Adherbal sent a delegation to Rome to inform them of his brother's death and update them on the situation in Numidia¹⁸.

In 116 BC, Adherbal lost a battle against Jugurtha and fled to the Roman province that bordered his region geographically¹⁹. He then left for Rome to seek assistance from his Roman allies. He presented his request to the Roman Senate²⁰ to intervene and support his return to the throne in Numidia. He delivered his famous speech before the Senate²¹. At the same time, Jugurtha also sent his envoys carrying purses filled with money to plead his case before the Roman Senate. Some writings consider this move a success because he managed to reach a decision to divide Numidia between him and his brother through the appointment of a Roman committee. The success lies in the fact that the Romans did not militarily intervene to support Adherbal²². These purses filled with money facilitated the diplomatic process for Jugurtha's men, who were assumed to have contacted Jugurtha's key allies who stood by his side in the war against the Numantines.

¹⁸ نجَّد الهادي حارش: (التطور السياسي والاقتصادي في نوميديا ...)، المرجع السابق، ص 50.

¹⁹ سالوست: حرب يوغرطة، تر: مجَّد مبروك دؤيب، جامعة بنغازي، ليبيا، (د.ت)، 12، 04، ص 23.

E. R. Arthur: E. R. Arthur: History of Rome to 565 A. D, the Macmillan Company, New York,

²¹ Andre Berthier: La Numidie Rome et Le Maghreb ، Picard ، Paris 19812 ، P7.

²² E. R. Arthur: Op Cite, P156.

Therefore, the Roman Senate sent an investigative committee led by Lucius Opimius to divide the kingdom. The western part was allocated to Jugurtha, while the more developed eastern part was assigned to Adherbal. The envoys returned to Rome, confirming the Senate's desire to intervene in all matters concerning Numidia. Their ally, Adherbal, now shared long common borders with the Roman province of Africa. Naturally, the Romans desired a stable neighbor and perhaps hoped that this level of intervention would be sufficient to ensure stability²³.

It is also known that Adherbal insisted on confronting Jugurtha with his army near Thirmida in 112 BC. However, Jugurtha's forces forced him to retreat within the capital, Thirmida, leading to a siege²⁴. Up to that moment, and during the siege, the diplomatic relations between Jugurtha and Rome were still governed by friendship and reconciliation. The historian Sallust attested to this, mentioning that Adherbal had sent ambassadors to Rome to inform them of Jugurtha's siege of Thirmida. He noted that Jugurtha was racing against time to capture Thirmida before the ambassadors' return²⁵.

It is evident that the Roman delegation arrived on the shores of North Africa with the intention to meet both kings, Jugurtha and Adherbal, and urge them to abandon the language of warfare in favor of pursuing peaceful resolutions that align with Rome's interests. The head of the Roman Senate led the delegation and requested Jugurtha's swift presence. Jugurtha found himself torn between two options: obeying the Senate and potentially losing control of Thirmida, or defying them and risking war with Rome. Up to that moment, his diplomatic

²³ Tom Wukitsch: Op Cite, P116.

²⁴ H.H. Scullard: From the Gracchi to Nero A History of Rome 133 BC to 68AD, Routledge, London, 2010. P40.

²⁵ سالوست: المصدر السابق، 21، 01-04، ص37.

relations remained favorable, characterized by peace with the Roman Senate²⁶.

Facing this dilemma, Jugurtha chose to meet with the delegation alongside some of his knights to engage in discussions about the situation. Despite participating in the talks, he maintained the siege, explaining that he aimed to satisfy the Roman Senate. He emphasized his loyalty to Rome, dating back to his youth in Spain in 133 BC. Jugurtha clarified that the siege was solely a response to Adherbal's actions and not intended to harm anyone. He also highlighted that if the Roman people restricted his privileges granted by law, it would signify his deviation from proper conduct and sound judgment.

Jugurtha's diplomatic stance was further demonstrated when he assured the ambassadors that he would send a delegation to discuss the siege issue with the Senate members. Indeed, his ambassadors in Rome worked tirelessly to overturn the decision to send the Roman army to Numidia²⁷.

It appears that the intricate diplomatic maneuvering did not lead to the lifting of the siege, which remained Jugurtha's primary concern. Nonetheless, the Roman side did not suffer any losses in this diplomatic exchange. When the Roman merchants in Thirmida learned of the discussions between Jugurtha and the head of the Roman Senate, they advised Adherbal to seek peace with Jugurtha. However, Jugurtha proceeded to eliminate anyone associated with Adherbal, leading Rome to prepare an army under the command of Bestia to confront Jugurtha. In response, Jugurtha sent a delegation to halt the campaign, but his efforts proved unsuccessful²⁸.

²⁶ نفسه: 26، 01، ص42. ²⁷ - نفسه: 22، 01-03، ص37. ²⁸ نفسه: 23، 04، ص37.

After the war in 111 BC, Jugurtha engaged in diplomatic efforts on an international level, reaching out to Rome and its Senate multiple times in an attempt to find peaceful solutions. He also pursued diplomatic strategies on a regional level by trying to involve the Gaetulian tribes and the Mauritanian king Bocchus I in his resistance against the Romans. How did these diplomatic efforts unfold?

4. 1. Deplomacy of Jugartha with Rome:

It is evident that after the killing and massacre carried out by Jugurtha towards his brother and the Roman community in Cirta, the war launched by Rome against Jugurtha had moments of peace and reconciliation with the Roman consuls. One prominent display of peaceful and diplomatic relations between Jugurtha and the Romans was the bribes Jugurtha offered to the Romans. The first bribe he paid to the Roman commander Bestia resulted in the Romans leaving the Numidian kingdom unharmed, and an agreement was reached for Jugurtha to withdraw from the city of Cirta.

Initially, Jugurtha had sent a request to Rome seeking recognition that the city of Cirta had friendly ties and alliances with him. Notably, peaceful relations were intertwined with Jugurtha's resistance against the Romans, especially after the bribe was given to the consul Bestia. However, these peaceful relations came to an end when Albinus took command of the army in Numidia, preparing a large force to either force Jugurtha to surrender or face the might of Rome. Jugurtha tried to buy time and extend peaceful relations, but to maintain his army's morale, he conducted some campaigns against the Roman army. This marked the definitive end of peaceful relations when Albinus assumed command, as mentioned earlier²⁹.

Yet, in a fleeting moment, Jugurtha sought to establish ties with Metellus. He sent emissaries requesting clemency for himself and his children. However, Metellus was well aware that Jugurtha's

²⁹ Ibid: P159

diplomatic mission was not for establishing relations but for espionage, hence denying clemency³⁰.

5. Jugurtha's diplomacy with the Gaetulian tribes and King Bocchus I:

The historian Sallust hinted at Jugurtha's diplomacy with the Gaetulian tribes, stating: "During the war against Jugurtha, the Roman people governed all the territories of the Numidians that they had taken control of through governors of military provinces, and a large part of the Gaetulians were subject to Jugurtha³¹." The term "subject" here can be interpreted within the context of alliance or submission to rule. Were they incorporated into his alliance through diplomatic means? Why did these tribes ally with Jugurtha against the Romans? Perhaps these tribes allied with Jugurtha without necessarily falling under his rule. The reason for their alliance with him could stem from their dislike of Adherbal, as he aimed to facilitate Roman settlement just like his father did, or their direct animosity towards the Romans since these tribes had never been subjugated by them throughout history³².

Jugurtha realized that he couldn't stop the Romans, so he swiftly moved to penetrate the Kingdom of Mauretania by gaining the support of King Bocchus I's closest friends with lavish gifts and grand promises. With their assistance, he approached King Bocchus I and convinced him to join the resistance against the Romans together. It is also possible that Jugurtha requested an alliance with King Bocchus I to disrupt the Roman-Mauretanian diplomatic relations, which almost succeeded if it wasn't for the Romans rejecting Bocchus I's proposal to ally, as he had initiated the alliance with them. According to Sallust, Bocchus I had sent envoys to Rome seeking friendship and alliance,

³⁰ سالوست: المصدر السابق، 47، 01-04، ص67.

³¹ نفسه: 19، 90، ص36.

³² Henri Lorine: L'Afrique du Nord-Tunisie-Algérie-Maroc-, Librairie Armand Colin, Paris, 1908, P23.

which could have been highly beneficial for the war that had begun, either for Jugurtha or the Romans. However, some members of the Senate prevented this alliance from happening, meaning that it was the Senators who obstructed this alliance. It can also be interpreted in the context that Bocchus I wanted to play the role of a diplomatic intermediary between the Romans and Jugurtha, and the Roman rejection was due to mediation rather than alliance. This endeavor failed because those hungry for wealth and bribes from wars were the ones who opposed it³³.

Upon Jugurtha's arrival in the Kingdom of Mauretania and his contact with King Bocchus I, his sole aim was to request an alliance with him and join the resistance he was leading against the Romans. Jugurtha managed to persuade Bocchus I that the fate of both kingdoms - Numidia and Mauretania - was strategically intertwined due to the concept of borders and the indirect threat that endangered Mauretania if the idea of strategic depth was invoked. Jugurtha then recounted to Bocchus I the crimes committed by the Romans against the Numidians and the Carthaginians, whom they exterminated by burning their capitals and enslaving their populations. He emphasized to Bocchus I that Mauretania's national security begins beyond its borders³⁴.

As a result, Jugurtha promised the Mauretanian ruler expansion at the expense of the Numidian kingdom in case of victory, granting him the western part of Numidian lands. This is evidenced by what the late Mohamed Essghir Ghanem wrote in his book "The Numidian Kingdom," stating: "Jugurtha had promised him - Bocchus I - that in case of victory against the Romans, he would hand over a portion of the Numidian lands to him³⁵." Additionally, the relationship between

^{33 -} سالوست: المصدر السابق، 80، 01-05، ص103

³⁵ مُحَدِّدُ الصغيرِ غانم، (المملكة النوميدية ...)، المرجع السابق، ص82.

the two kings was strengthened by the marriage of Bocchus I to one of Jugurtha's daughters, as mentioned by Sallust³⁶.

The essence of this alliance was further solidified by a political marriage that can be interpreted within the context of the diplomatic relations of both King Jugurtha and King Bocchus I. This Numidian-Mauretanian alliance aimed at expelling the Romans. However, Sallust did not specify whether this expulsion meant completely driving them out of the ancient lands of North Africa or merely halting the Roman advance beyond the boundaries set by Scipio Aemilianus after 146 BCE, refraining from interference in Numidian and Mauretanian affairs. The primary objective of the alliance between Jugurtha and Bocchus I was initially to stand against the Roman encroachment on Numidian lands.

Jugurtha's speech to the two armies preparing to confront the Roman consul Metellus was a pivotal moment after both sides had established their relations. According to Sallust's account, the armies met at a mutually agreed location and, after exchanging assurances, Jugurtha sought to boost the morale of King Bocchus I with a speech. He declared that the Romans were oppressors and greedy, posing a common threat to all peoples. For the same reason, they would fight against Bocchus I, against Jugurtha himself, and against other nations, driven primarily by their thirst for power and their disdain for all kingdoms. Jugurtha emphasized that now he was their enemy, just as the Carthaginians had been their enemies not long ago, and any other powerful entity in the future would also become their foe in their eyes³⁷.

The essence of the relationship between Jugurtha and Bocchus I was for Jugurtha to leverage the capabilities of Bocchus I on one hand, and on the other hand, to secure peace between him and the Romans. In a third perspective, one could argue that Jugurtha allied with Bocchus I

³⁶ سالوست: المصدر السابق، 80، 06، ص103.

³⁷ نفسه:81، 01، ص 104.

to prevent the Romans from using him against his resistance³⁸. At that moment, Metellus became aware of the Numidian-Mauretanian alliance, which further helped in solidifying the alliance between Jugurtha and Bocchus I. The Roman army faced leadership challenges in the ancient lands of North Africa at that time, with commanders Marius and Metellus at odds with each other³⁹.

6. Conclusion

the history of Algerian diplomacy traces back to the very foundation of the concept of the state within its geographical boundaries. This historical journey can be seen in the actions of King Syphax, who convened a conference with the Romans and Carthaginians in his capital, Cirta, during the 3rd century BCE in 206 BC. It can also be observed through the diplomatic relations established by Masinissa with foreign nations between 203-206 BC. Furthermore, King Jugurtha played a significant role in shaping diplomatic affairs during a crucial period in Numidian history, enhancing his international and regional diplomacy to preserve and unify the state from 112-105 BC.

As history serves as a source of lessons and insights, delving into ancient sources and laying the groundwork for Algerian diplomatic ideology from bygone eras is essential. It is through understanding these historical roots that the Algerian diplomatic thought can continue to evolve and navigate the challenges of the present and future.

³⁸ نفسه: 81، 04، ص 104.

 $^{^{}m 39}$ - Plutarch: Fall Of the Roman Republic, Tr: Rex Warnerm, Penguin Books, London, P ${
m 58}\,$.

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