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PRIMEIRA IMPRESSÃO

The Oak of Mambre, for unaccompanied Double Bass

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O Carvalho de Mambre, para contrabaixo solo

The Oak of Mambre presents an inner world of sound exploration, whose strands are woven through ancient cultures and traditions. Mambre is a birthplace, itself, literal and ideal. Compressions and rarefactions tell two stories; of Abram and Mambre, of survival and an heir.

The Oak of Mambre begins where the reality and existence of a tone becomes manifest. Here we are looking at the sub-particulate world of existence, found not through carefully placed devices designed to catch the trails of extremely high-speed and dense particulate matter, but rather through the perception of radicalized elements during sound production. Beginning with little to no pitch movement, the sound world is opened through systematic exploration of scaled microtonal movement, bow rotation, bow placement, vibrato, bow speed, bow length, etc. Within this sound world we find matrices that are associated with numerous stratified layers, whose deposition of energy varies according to reflective stress-strain qualities found in elastic fibrous interaction.

In The Oak of Mambre, the expression I was interested in presenting was similar to Edward Said's notion of an artwork exhibiting "intransigence, difficulty, and unresolved contradiction" in order to provide an "occasion to stir up more anxiety, tamper irrevocably with the possibility of closure and leave the audience more perplexed than before... to explore... a nonharmonious, non-serene tension, and above all, a sort of deliberately unproductive productiveness, going 'against'..."

Murray Gell-Mann (Nobel Prize, 1969, for his work on quarks) identified that many quantities for complexity have been proposed, and that a variety of different measures are required to capture intuitive ideas about complexity and simplicity. Take for instance time/space measures – Gell-Mann suggested that one reliable indicator of complexity consists of how long it took a computer to perform any particular task, or the number of steps required to carry out a computation; whereas measures of information were related to the length of the shortest message conveying certain information. However, in ordinary conversation, the measure that corresponds to what is meant by complexity corresponded not to the "length of the most concise description" but rather the "length of concise description of a set of the entity's regularities". So that in a message that is effectively random, with practically no regularities: the effective complexity will be near zero. In a message that is completely regular, bit string of zeros, or perhaps an invariant rhythmic stream, the effective complexity may be near zero. However, in a message featuring effective complexity, complexity is high only in a region which is intermediate between total order and complete disorder.

Michael Edward Edgerton - Currently Associate Professor at the University of Malaya, Michael is a composer whose work elides the boundaries of complexity with practical applications of physical and perceptual models. Michael's compositions have received prizes and/or recognition from: Kompositionspreis der Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart, 2007; Composition Contest of the Netherlands Radio Choir, 2007; 5th Dutilleux International Composition Compétition, 2003; 31st Festival Synthese Bourges, 2001; MacDowell Club, 1996; Friends and Enemies of New Music, 1993; Midwest Composers Symposium, 1989; National Federation of Music Clubs, 1987; National Federation of Music Clubs, 1987; Michigan State Univ-Orchestral Composition Contest, 1986. Michael is engaged with research into voice, acoustics and perception. His work with the extra-normal voice is internationally known through performances, journal publications and a book, *The 21st Century Voice* published in the *New Instrumentation Series* (Scarecrow Press).

The Oak of Mambre

(Haram Ramet el-Khalil)

for double bass

Michael Edward Edgerton

Dedicated to Edicson Ruiz

The Oak of Mambre is a recomposition of *Mamre* (#55, 2000) for solo violin

TEXTUAL SOURCE REFERENCES

The following excerpted from:

"Ancient Sources: Mountain of Judah and Shephelah: 78. Arbo, also the Terebinth. The Oak of Mamre - (Ramat al-Khalil)"

Genesis 13:18

Abram settles in Mamre

Abram moved his tent, and came and settled by the oaks of Mamre, which are at Hebron; and there he built an altar to the Lord.

Genesis 18:1-15

The apparition at Mamre

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on - since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, "Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes." Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

Eusebius, Onomasticon 6:12-16 (ca. 295 A.D.)

Jerome 7:18-24 (ca. 390 A.D.)

The oak of Abraham, also called Mamre, could be seen standing until the reign of Constantius, and the tomb of the same is visible to this day and while a church has been erected there by our people, the place of the oak is [greatly] venerated by all the pagan population around, because under it Abraham gave hospitality to the angels. At first the place was called Arbe, and later it was named Hebron after Hebron, one of the sons of Caleb, as we read in the Chronicles. (1Chron 2:42).

Josephus, War 4,533 (1st cent. A.D.)

There is also there shown, at the distance of six furlongs from the city, a very large turpentine tree; and the report goes, that this tree has continued ever since the creation of the world.

Itinerarium Burdigalense 599 (333 A.D.)

Fourteen miles away is Bethsur, at which is the spring where Philip baptized the eunuch. It is nine miles to Terebinthus, where Abraham lives and dug a well beneath the terebinth tree, and spoke and ate with the angels; an exceptionally beautiful basilica has been built there by command of Constantine. Two miles on from there is Hebron, where there is a remarkably beautiful tomb, square and made of stone, in which are laid Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah.

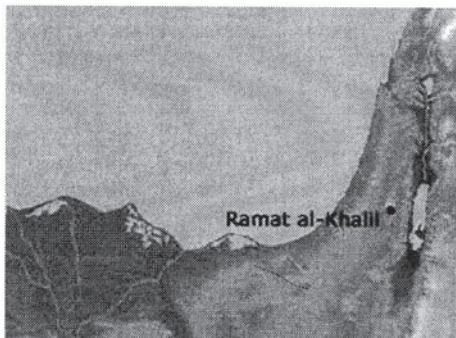


Sozomenus, Historia Ecclesiastica II,4 (5th cent. A.D.)

I deem necessary to declare now what was resolved about the oak of Mamre by Emperor Constantine. The place is presently called the Terebinth, and is situated at the distance of fifteen stadia from Hebron, which is to the south... Every year, at summer time, the inhabitants of that place and the Palestinians, the Phoenicians and the Arabs, coming from far away, make a fair there. Many come there for the sake of business, some to sell and some to buy. The feast is celebrated by a very big congregation of Jews, since they boast of Abraham as their forefather, of heathens since angels came there, of Christians since he who should be born from the Virgin for the salvation of humankind appeared there to that pious man. Everyone venerates this place according to his religion: some praying God the ruler of all, some calling upon the angels and offering libations of wine, burning incense or sacrificing an ox, a pig, a sheep or a cock... Constantine's mother in law (Euthropia), having come there to fulfill a vow, gave notice of all this to the Emperor. So he wrote to the bishops of Palestine reproaching them for having forgot their mission and permitted such a most holy place to be defiled by those libations and sacrifices.

Anonymus Placentinus, Itinerarium 30 (ca. 570 A.D.)

From Bethlehem it is twenty-four miles to the Oak of Mamre, the resting-place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah and also of Joseph's bones. The basilica has four porticoes and no roof over the central court. Down the middle runs a screen. Christians come in on one side and Jews on the other, and they use much incense. On the day following Christ's Birthday the people of this area celebrate the Deposition of Jacob and David with much devotion, and Jews from all over the country congregate for this, too great a crowd to count. They offer much incense and lights, and give presents to those who minister there.



TEXTUAL SOURCE REFERENCES – COMMENTARY

The site of Mamre, known in Arabic as *Haram Ramet el-Khalil*, lies approximately 3 km (2 mi.) north of Hebron on the ancient road linking the main Hebron-Jerusalem and Bethlehem-Ziph routes. The Bible describes Elonei (oaks of) Mamre as Abraham's dwelling place ...

Josephus relates that Abraham resided near Hebron, by an oak

called ogyges, the oak of genesis (Antiq. 1, 186). Elsewhere he mentions a terebinth 6 stadia from Hebron that had stood there since creation (War IV, 533); it is not clear whether both references are to the same place. In Antiquities he tells the biblical story, calling the tree Lin oak: whereas in War of the Jews he is describing a holy place in his own time calling it a terebinth. ...

The book of Jubilees (29:17-19; 37:14. 17) refers to Abraham's capital in the Hebron Hills as a tower (migdal). The reference is probably to Abraham's residence Lit Elonei Mamre. If so, the author, a contemporary of the Second Temple was describing the enclosure at Elonei Mamre in terms associated with the Temple Mount -migdal or birah - both meaning tower or fortress. Talmudic literature refers to the place as Beth Ilanim or Botnah and it is mentioned as the site of one of the most important fairs in Palestine: "There are three fairs: the fair of Gaza, the fair of Acco, the fair of Botnah, and the least doubtful of them all is the fair of Botnah," meaning that of the three fairs this was the one most definitely associated with idolatry and therefore Jews were forbidden to participate in it (J.T. A.Z. 39c; Gen. Rab. 47: 10). The fair is mentioned in two of Jerome's commentaries (In Hieremiam VI, 18, 6, CCSL 74, 307; In Zachariam 111, 11, 4-5. CCSL 76A, 851), where it is said that Hadrian brought the captive Jews to the famous marketplace at Terebinth. There he sold many into slavery. For this reason the Jews in Jerome's time shunned the annual fair.



The most detailed description of the site is in the work of Sozomenos (op. cit.). He reports that the place situated 15 stadia from Hebron, was the site of the terebinth, where the angels had appeared to Abraham. In summer, he states a great fair was held there attracting hordes of people from far away, who came to offer libations and burn incense, but also to trade; among them were pagans, Christians and Jews.

The Medeba map seems to differentiate between Botna and Mamre, as the mosaic depicts both a church and a terebinth. During the seventh century CE there was a monastery at the site that continued to exist after the Arab conquest (Adamnanus, De Locis Sanctis 11, 11. 6, CCSL 175, 211). In Crusader times, the site may have been occupied by the Church of the Trinity

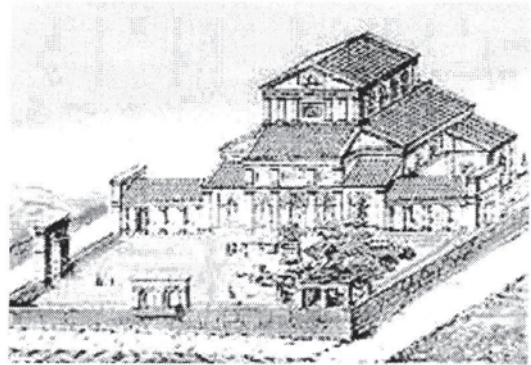
- Itzhaq Magen, *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Jerusalem 1993, ad v. "Mamre"*

The sacred enclosures of Mambre and Hebron - Haram Ramet el-Khalil, Mambre

The large enclosure is preserved so badly that it does not allow for such study as might specify its date with certainty. In the fourth century buildings occupied its eastern part following Constantine's intervention.

Eutropia, Constantine's mother-in-law, while visiting the holy place which commemorated the apparition of the three angels to Abraham, observed the mixed cult offered there by Jews, Christians and even by heathens, and begged her son-in-law to erect a church on the site. The latter gave the order to Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem. In 333 the church was finished, as the pilgrim of Bordeaux noted. According to Peter the Deacon ... the place included a well, an altar in front of the church, and two "most bright" caves where Abraham had stayed.

The church was frequented by the Christians who left some graffiti, among which we note the invocation in Greek: "Lord, help your servant Paregorios"; at other inscriptions we have only names, for example, Arsenius, Christopher, and Demas, or invocations where the name of the supplicant has disappeared. Many lamps, some of them with Christian emblems, testify to the cult practiced there. The place was a cult center, especially for the nearby villages. The church continued to be visited after the Arab conquest; in 670 Arculph noted within the enclosure a large oak said to date back to Abraham's time. Later the spot seems to have been abandoned because at the beginning of the Middle Ages a different oak, today preserved by the Russians, began to be venerated. Nevertheless, the location was continually visited by pilgrims. Thus, for example, Barbone Morosini, describing in 1514 his excursion to Hebron, says: "We found large buildings and ruins; our friars told us that the place had been called Mambre" (TS 1950, p. 49).



THE TREE ITSELF?



The famous Oak of Mamre, Abram's Oak, was illustrated formerly in the Transactions of the Linnean Society, by Dr. Hooker.

It is a fine specimen of the species *Q. Coccifera*, the prickly evergreen or Kermes Oak, a native of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean; the insect (coccus) from which it derives its name yielding the dye known as 'Turkey red.'

Abram's Oak is 22 feet in circumference; it is popularly supposed to represent the spot where the tree grew under which Abraham pitched his tent.

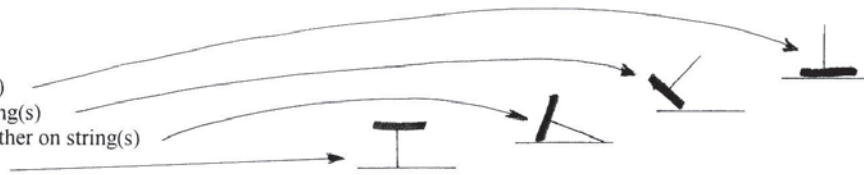
There is a superstition that any person who cuts or maims this oak will lose his firstborn son.

FROM: botanical.com - A Modern Herbal | Oak, Common by Mrs. M. Grieve

Performance notes:

Bow hair rotation

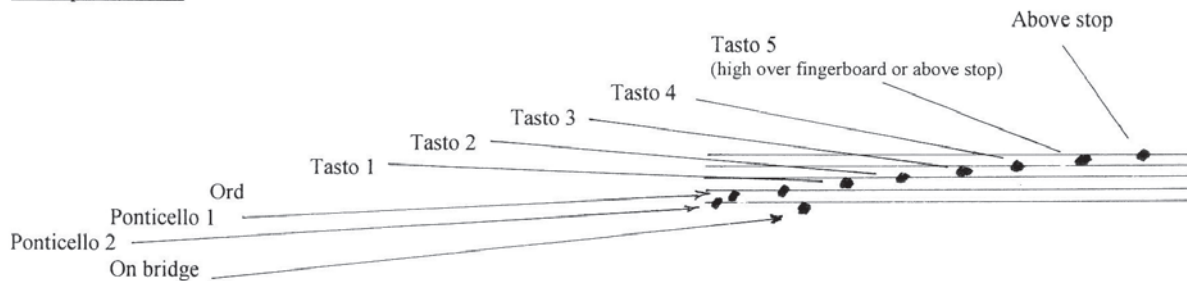
Bow hair flat on string(s)
 Bow hair on edge of string(s)
 Bow hair and wood together on string(s)
 Wood only on string(s)



Bow speed (with faster bow speeds always use 2/3 to 3/4 bow length – except when performing tremoli – try to keep pressure from moderate to light – at the very fastest speeds, it is expected that the bow may bounce or feature other erratic behaviors – the intent is to draw in the otherwise unallowed source (bow to string) characteristics)



Bow placement



Vibrato

A variety of vibrati are used:
 Non-vibrato
 Vibrato ad lib
 Vibrato with slow to fast frequency
 Vibrato with small to wide excursion

Bow angle

Bow angles are used in which the bow remains on the horizontal plane with the strings, changing as notated



Beating – detuning of adjacent strings when playing unison and nearly-unison diads

Slight pitch differentials are often manifest as beating when existing within the same bandwidth. When a unison is slightly detuned a slow beating occurs, then as the pitches move further apart the speed of the beating increases, then at some point the beating begins to slow down until the two pitches reaches the bandwidth threshold.

In this piece the speed of the beating is identified within a 10-point scale with +10 being the fastest, +1 being the slowest and +0 being a perfect unison.



Bow pressure

Bow pressure is not explicitly identified in this piece – more or less bow pressure will follow the dynamical markings. When performing at faster bow speeds try to use less pressure

♩ = 70

Handwritten notes: *no vib*, *ad lib*, *no vib*, *ad lib*, *arco*, *pizz*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *pizz*, *arco*, *subito*, *subito*

rit ----- **largo**

Handwritten notes: *no vib*, *vib*, *small slow*, *wide*, *small slow*, *wide fast*, *pizz*, *arco*, *mf*, *pizz*, *arco*, *mf*, *pizz*, *arco*

accel. ----- **allegro moderato**

Handwritten notes: *small fast*, *wide slow*, *no vib*, *vib*, *ad lib*, *pizz*, *arco*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *over*, *bowl speed*

(At faster bow speeds, use 2/3 to 3/4 bow length)

accel. ----- **presto**

Handwritten notes: *sfz-pp*, *mf*, *p*, *ff*, *sub*

♩ = 120

Handwritten notes: *ord bow speed*, *sub*, *sub*, *bridge*, *very freely*

♩ = 66 ----- **♩ = 15-20**

Handwritten notes: *(2)*, *(4)*, *(5)*, *45° on*, *1 bow*, *pp*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *bow angle*, *ord*, *pp*

largo

(4) (6) (4) (5)

largo

pizz. arco

robato

♩ = 20-30
 bow speed:
 slow as possible

+6 +10 +9 +1 +5 +10 +0 +7 +5 +3 +5 +10

bow angle

ord

f mp mf pp f mp

+10 +5 +8 +7 +0 +9 +3 +6 +2 +9

f p f p f pp f pp f

♩ = 50
 (Multiple bow changes per 1 or 2.)

ord

pp

45"

+7 +10 +1 +0 +5 +3 +7 +0

f pp mp

50" // one bow

ff

13 June 2008
 Berlin, Germany.