In 2012, two sociological journals dedicated special issues to the centenary of the publication of Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (which we shall refer to here as *The Elementary Forms*). A third journal, while not directly concerned with *The Elementary Forms*, gave pride of place to an article which shed new light on it – we should have expected no less from its editors, William S. F. Pickering and William Watts Miller. This anniversary allows us to learn plenty of things about this book which, although a classic, has always been neglected by French sociologists.1

### On the Elaboration of *The Elementary Forms*

Let us begin with the special issue of *L’Année Sociologique (AS)* conceived by Massimo Borlandi, himself a well-known specialist in the history of sociology. He offers readers a dozen contributions and two syntheses. Three hundred original pages on this subject in total – a real feast! Some of the authors are

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1. In his Introduction to the issue he has edited, Mr Borlandi writes: “While not easy to systematize, the data we have on the references to Durkheim show that *The Elementary Forms* is his book least used by sociologists.” Our own comparative study of sociology introductory handbooks has led us to the same result (cf. our Introduction to the centenary edition of *The Elementary Forms* to be published by Garnier in 2014).
II - THE ELEMENTARY FORMS HONORED

Durkheim specialists. Others have occasionally written about him. This issue does not seem to follow an overall plan, as is usually the case with anniversary works. However, Borlandi’s Introduction does show the coherence behind the selections made: four authors have dwelt mostly on the period leading up to The Elementary Forms (Giovanni Paoletti, William Watts-Miller, Myron Achimatos, and Cécile Rol); four others have delved into what could be called the argumentation of the book, taking an interest in its methods (Borlandi), theory of kinship (Enric Porqueres i Gené), or philosophy of knowledge (Susan Stedman-Jones and Dominique Merllié); while the final four have dealt with the reception that it got, whether immediately from contemporaneous philosophers (Stéphan Soulié), subsequently from first-generation Durkheimians (Jean-Christophe Marcel), or, closer to us, from certain twentieth-century American anthropologists (Pascal Sanchez) and sociologists (Jacques Coenen-Huther). We can thus see that this is a perfectly coherent and classical plan. We merely wonder why it was not spelled out in the Table of Contents.

It would be impossible for us to present all these excellent articles. We shall therefore beg forgiveness in advance for our arbitrary selection and unequal presentations.

In his article, G. Paoletti (University of Pisa) deals with the origins of The Elementary Forms by taking us back to Durkheim’s works which preceded it. According to him, Durkheim looked at four issues concerning religion: its definition, the means for its sociological study, its relationship with morality, and its future. Paoletti begins with an analysis of the way in which Durkheim dealt with these issues in the articles of his youth, including his doctoral thesis, a period during which he attempted to define religion starting solely from the notion of obligation. Unfortunately, the subject of the study of religion in Durkheim’s thesis is limited to a single paragraph in Paoletti’s article, who spends more time on the period when he wrote Suicide and his first paper on incest (1898). Suicide was supposed to deal with a completely different issue, but Durkheim could not help linking it to religious phenomena which had fascinated him since 1895 (the year of his famous “revelation” about the central role religion played in sociology and the right method for understanding religious phenomena). Paoletti reminds
us that, strangely enough, the word “totemism” first appeared in *Suicide*, which he finished at the same time as he was embarking on the *L’Année Sociologique* project and writing his first article on the origins of the prohibition on incest, in which Smith, Frazer, and Hartland appeared in his references. Paoletti has drawn up a captivating table of Durkheim’s “borrowings” from these authors (page 298). He also provides new evidence on the important role played by Hubert and Mauss in Durkheim’s theoretical elaborations. Beginning with 1899 and the publication of their paper on sacrifice, they influenced him and enabled him to renounce some of his convictions. We see how the questions raised by Durkheim kept finding new answers and his theoretical journey, far from being uniform or linear, was complex and tortuous: “Consequently, it was an extraordinary and composite intellectual journey, made up of continuities, innovations, and deviations” (page 308). He was elaborating a theory “in the making,” which was interrupted by his death alone and would have no doubt led to new avenues (one should therefore be wary of those who present *The Elementary Forms* as “the culmination of his work,” his “opus magnum”).

It is quite interesting to read Borlandi’s article immediately after Paoletti’s because it goes almost in the opposite direction whilst trying to demonstrate that there was continuity in Durkheim’s thinking. The issue editor shows that he brought few innovations compared to his doctoral thesis – which was finished in March 1892, exactly twenty years before the publication of *The Elementary Forms* – or to his *Rules of Sociological Method*. Unlike Paoletti, Borlandi takes the time to compare the thesis with *The Elementary Forms* (thus making up for the lack in the first article) and makes a few suggestive observations. He is very persuasive when noting, for example, that what Durkheim said, in 1892, about pain and its effects was similar to what he said, in 1912, about celebrations and the force they produced (page 377). The precise and minute knowledge that Borlandi has of Durkheim’s written works means he can pick up on a few enormous contradictions. Thus, in his 1895 review of Westermack’s work, Durkheim, as always, stated with his inimitable aplomb that, in order to understand primitive societies, one had to be outside of them. This statement is the exact opposite of what he maintained as of 1895! At times, Borlandi gets annoyed with the scholar he has known and admired for decades, particularly when he claims that he had discovered everything “beforehand” (from 1892), as though thirty years

5. Generally speaking, Durkheim’s texts on religion, almost all of them ethnological in character and related to totemism, have been left aside by sociological historiography. Hence the interest shown on the occasion of this centenary and the special issues dedicated to it.

6. It seems to us there is an ambiguity running through the whole article when he brings up the “rules.” This reminds the reader of the famous “method rules” of 1894 (for example: “seeing social facts as things”). Nevertheless, Borlandi also mentions other rules that have a mostly explanatory role (for example: explaining a representation by means of moral density). These are, in our view, further theoretical rather than methodological elements. However, the author believes there is no difference between the two.
of “field” investigations (i.e. innumerable readings) had never shaken his convictions. We know the dexterity with which he was able to assimilate new data into his theoretical schemas. Borlandi finds it extremely suspect that he should not deviate one inch when going through so much reading material.

This point of view needs to be seen in relation to the minute survey conducted by W. Watts Miller (University of Oxford). This great British/Scottish connoisseur of The Elementary Forms has compared the written works of Spencer and Gillen – two field ethnologists who, in 1899, brought back “revolutionary” material concerning the Aborigines – to the way in which Durkheim used them. We find out that the latter did not hesitate in “transfiguring” what he read and twisting the authors’ words in a way which suited his theories. On the other hand, just like Paoletti, Watts Miller shows that, in 1898, Durkheim’s theory was in search of itself and far from having been fixed once and for all. He took into account the works of some of his colleagues, which does not contradict the fact that he “interpreted” them. Watts Miller does not draw any abrupt conclusions about Durkheim, and remains more nuanced than Borlandi: according to Watts Miller, the great scholar neither gave accurate accounts, nor falsified the ethnographic sources (which they themselves were but interpretations). Nevertheless, he calls The Elementary Forms a “great work of art” and a “great work of science,” which is a diplomatic way of saying that Durkheim’s work was not strictly scientific. Durkheim would not have been pleased!

That Durkheim was not unbiased in his reading of his opponents’ works is also shown by the article of D. Merllié (University of Paris VIII), who has studied the connection between Lévy-Bruhl and Durkheim since 1989 and who has compared the writings of the former to the way in which they were used by the latter – nothing can withstand an analysis as precise as this. Thus, we find out that he twisted his colleague’s words by exaggerating them. Here is Merllié’s final, unappealable verdict: “The Lévy-Bruhl criticized by Durkheim is, to a great extent, a fantasy or his own construction” (page 439). The whole typical ideal opposition, which would later serve other authors such as Boudon, falls flat when we see that it was blown out of proportion by Durkheim. However, Lévy-Bruhl made the mistake of always refusing to reply.

The article by Mr Achimastos (University of Crete) is also very important. His point of view is all the more remarkable since he is the Greek translator of The Elementary Forms and is about to have the first critical edition of this work published in France by Garnier. No need to say, then, that he too casts an expert eye on his subject. He tries to clarify the relationship between Durkheim and Frazer, who was considered his main, direct or indirect, interlocutor in The Elementary Forms as well as starting with his first papers on religion (1898). Durkheim always situated himself in relation to Frazer, who seems to have been his first contact with British anthropology and was linked to all the others. For this reason, sociologists interested in Durkheim and his theories on religion
can neither ignore Frazer nor this article, which offers an accessible synthesis. Frazer was the author most read by Durkheim beginning with 1897; there is hardly any doubt about that, while Herbert Spencer – if it is possible to draw a hierarchy among Durkheim’s many bibliographical references – was part of the pantheon of the preceding decade. By reading Frazer, Durkheim became open to the whole of British anthropology, from Hartland to Smith, and from Lang to the specialist journals (Man, Folk-Lore, Fortnightly Review, Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, etc.). The article by Mr Achimastos presents the obstacles which existed between the two men in a didactic fashion.

7. The question remains whether he had read him as early as 1887, when his small essay on totemism was published (cf. Watts Miller’s article in this issue) and when the ninth edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica, edited by Robertson Smith (1886-1888), came out. This has been the prevalent theory since Lukes (his doctorate goes back to 1968 and his seminal book to 1972) and Fournier (1994 on Mauss, 2007 on Durkheim), who both ascribe a teaching role to Lucien Herr, the librarian at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris, on the basis of a retrospective testimony by Mauss dating back to 1925 (cf. his “In Memoriam” article). Frederico Rosa (L’âge d’or du totémisme, CNRS 2003), on the other hand, thinks that he must have read his works only beginning with 1897 when writing his essay on the prohibition of incest. An analysis of the books borrowed from the Library of the University of Bordeaux allows us to further investigate this matter. Thus, we discover that he had Encyclopaedia Britannica in his hands beginning with 1894: he took it home with him five times, twice during his first course on religion, from February 28 to March 8 (volume 23), and from March 11 to April 5 (volume 21), then three more times for less well-determined purposes: from November 30, 1895 to March 10, 1896 (volume 2), a year later from November 18, 1896 to February 10, 1897 (volume 20), and from February 10 to June 20, 1897 (volume 23 again), perhaps in order to write his article on prohibition. Bizarrely, today, Encyclopaedia Britannica can no longer be found in the storage room. However, we have been able to access the inventory register thanks to Mr Allioux, Bordeaux librarian, which has allowed us to confirm its acquisition by the university. What is more, the purchase register allows us to identify the lecturer who requested its purchase and on what date. While the entry indicates that the work was purchased when Durkheim was at Bordeaux, it is interesting to note that it was not he who requested it. It was his colleagues Georges Radet (Lecturer in Ancient History) and Georges Brunel (Lecturer in Mathematics) (application number 325, page 33, 1st register). The application was approved and the volumes were entered in the Bordeaux University inventory in January 1888. This information can help us achieve unanimous agreement: there was possible access beginning with 1888 and there were borrowings directly related to his course preparation in 1894 and his article writing in 1897/98. For further information on the 504 times Durkheim borrowed from the Library of the University of Bordeaux between 1887 and 1902, see Durkheimian Studies (soon to be published).


9. A quick look at the bibliography found in The Elementary Forms shows very clearly the pre-eminent place taken by journals and articles. According to our calculations – based on the exhaustive bibliography of Mr Achimastos, who presented it to us a year ago – out of 246 references we find 104 journal articles, representing 42% of the total. This goes to show the level of specialization reached by Durkheim.

10. To be completed by another article by Mr Achimastos, which will be published in the collective work on the centenary of The Elementary Forms, where he looks at the way in which Durkheim used the German ethnologist Strehlow against Frazer and the Australian ethnologists Spencer and Gillen.
Another analysis of the elaboration of *The Elementary Forms* is the article by Cécile Rol (University of Halle, formerly University of Caen), who suggests a very interesting clarification of the relationship, known to have been decisive, between Durkheim and Wundt. In fact, Durkheim read a lot of Wundt’s works, mainly for their experimental psychology, a subject which he regarded highly and had a preeminent place in the final-year philosophy curriculum (cf. Durkheim’s Sens Lectures). It was Théodule Ribot, director of *Revue Philosophique*, who recommended the young teacher to his colleague Wundt during a trip to Germany (1886) (cf. Fournier 2007). Durkheim’s first reviews evoked Wundt. However, while Wundt was still present in *The Elementary Forms* thirty years after Durkheim’s first articles, this was only so to a much lesser, not to say imperceptible, extent. Rol tries to see what was left of that relationship and upon what their eventual disagreement, foretold by certain acerbic or disappointed reviews in *L’Année Sociologique*, was based.

What is really interesting in this article is that the author has done research into Wundt’s pronouncements on Durkheim. In 1914, a combative issue of the *Anthropos* journal edited by Wilhelm Schmidt gave Wundt the chance to respond to Durkheim’s criticisms. He reproached him for not innovating anything and for taking up the nominalist theories of Spencer (*Principles of Sociology*, 1876, volume 1) and Lang (*The Secret of the Totem*, 1905), according to which a totem was an emblem born only out of a need to give each other names and to distinguish between tribes and clans. The Wundt passages quoted by Rol are rather witty. We often forget the extent to which the debates were lively and “virile,” our historiographies are too sanitized to present these discussions between reviewers. Not to mention that we still have Durkheim’s point of view, the “winner” in this debate, which we allow to take precedence over the others. It is therefore very important to know the arguments that were brought against Durkheim during his lifetime – and God knows he had his fair share of criticism! We knew this was the case with *The Rules of Sociological Method* and *Suicide*; we now discover it with *The Elementary Forms*.¹¹

Still dealing with the period leading up to *The Elementary Forms* but perhaps delving somewhat more into its content, the article by S. Stedman Jones (*British Centre for Durkheimian Studies*) looks at the considerable influence Durkheim’s philosophical knowledge had on the elaboration of his work. From Aristotle all the way to Renouvier, and obviously not forgetting Kant, Durkheim mobilized a whole tradition to examine his sociological ideas on the notions of time, space, gender and species, evolution, personality, causality, and totality. What interested Durkheim was the social origins of the “categories” which allowed

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¹¹ Although we shall have to wait a bit longer for things to settle down so we can have an overall view and decide on the question whether *The Elementary Forms* was generally well or badly received... assuming that this would be a heuristic type of assessment.
us to conceptualize the world. Beginning with the article he wrote together with Mauss (published in 1903), the 1909 article published in the *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* (RMM), in which he officially announced *The Elementary Forms* (subscribing to the philosophical tradition of the theory of knowledge), Durkheim clearly used philosophy to take his research into religion forward. Ethnology and the compared history of religions were supposed to help him solve certain, very old, philosophical problems. While Ann Rawls (see below) chose to insist on rites and practices, giving them a decisive place in the analysis of causality seen as a force in *The Elementary Forms*, Stedman Jones, on the other hand, has emphasized the decisive importance of representations and the “psyche.” She once again brings up *The Rules of Sociological Method* (and thus, like Borlandi, sees continuity in Durkheim’s work), a book she likes to compare to *The Elementary Forms*: “social life consists entirely in representations” (page 396). She takes up the fascinating phrase “categories are social things,” which at once links *The Rules* to *The Elementary Forms* (1912, page 627). She reminds us that “nothing exists outside representation”. In contradiction with Schmaus, her other “pet hate,” she insists on the link between Renouvier and Durkheim (cf. her *Durkheim Reconsidered*, 2001). In keeping the representations she does not renounce Durkheim’s dearly held idea of force, since “a representation is a force.” Stedman Jones does not tire of reminding us of the “debt” that Durkheim owed to Renouvier’s ideas and she is exasperated to see that this major philosopher (who died in 1903) is unknown to those who today pretend to be Durkheim’s exegetes. How can one give an account of Durkheim’s ideas if one has not read the authors he read? Worse still, if one does not have the faintest idea about the author he mastered best? Stedman Jones gives a few quotes from Rawls writing the opposite of what Durkheim wrote (for example, “categories are not concepts,” [page 398]), and catches her making obvious errors of interpretation. Readers should revisit this controversy (which is not a controversy per se since Rawls has never responded to Stedman Jones), which took a radical form in her article published in 2006. The point of these positionings is to situate Durkheim in the philosophical line, not forgetting that it was only later that he came to use ethnographical sources. This laborious article is beneficial to sociologists. Reading it, we realize that it is impossible to truly understand Durkheim’s intellectual motives if we do not delve into his cultural makeup. There is still some way to go for all those sociologists who want to get inside the thinking of the founder of sociology! Using a slightly abrupt analogy, we could say that forgetting that Durkheim was a philosopher is like forgetting that Jesus was Jewish (Christianity may have encouraged this by initially


13. He confided to his nephew that his was a gradual transformation. “Sociology is a precious instrument for philosophizing and even engaging in psychology. I am in the process of replacing a philosopher and a psychologist” (Letter dated June 18, 1894).
VIII - The Elementary Forms Honored

forgetting its own origins), or forgetting that Luther was a Catholic monk. This is every founder’s tragedy: the success of his or her enterprise erases the path which led up to it and made it possible. We must also be perceptive enough to see that only accomplished philosophers can claim to have an “inner understanding” of what Durkheim wanted to say. Sociologists who come from different backgrounds have to make an effort to change their perspective in order to keep up, be credible, and remain coherent among themselves.

On the Reception of The Elementary Forms

The AS dedicates four articles to the subject of the book’s reception. S. Soulié (author of a thesis published in the RMM) has looked at the reception of The Elementary Forms by philosophers, that is, the authors of reviews published in the RMM and the Revue Philosophique de la France et de l’Étranger, or by participants at the Société Française de Philosophie and the voices of Gustave Belot, Henri Delacroix, or Jacques Lachelier. The reception of The Elementary Forms by philosophers was a difficult one, to say the least – and this is euphemistically put – as was the case with The Rules of Sociological Method in 1894. This is probably the best-known point, since it has already been studied in Durkheim’s works and the corpus is more “obvious.”

J.-C. Marcel (University of Paris-Sorbonne) has studied the work’s reception among the Durkheimians. It is in fact quite useful to try to see how Durkheim’s collaborators read, commented on, and interpreted their “mentor’s” last work, even though, with the exception of Halbwachs, no one put it to any real use in their own works. We also have articles by P. Sanchez (University of Lyon II) on twentieth-century anthropologists, and by J. Coenen-Huther (University of Geneva) on several American sociologists he has already looked at in his Comprendre Durkheim.

However, we now need to turn our attention to the other journal, the Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions (ASSR), where the net is getting tighter around the subject of the reception of The Elementary Forms. Indeed, the brains behind this issue have produced a wonderful editorial event, choosing, not without some audacity, to bring together no less than thirteen contributions on the sole subject of the work’s reception (263 pages). It will now no longer be possible to feign ignorance about this subject.14 This issue enriches almost definitively the

14. We can announce the other five articles to appear in the Actes de Bordeaux on the centenary of The Elementary Forms to be published in 2014. In this collective work we shall find articles on the first American reception before Parsons (François Pizarro, University of Quebec in Montreal), the reception by the classicists (Rafael Benthien, University of Brazil), as well as by Mauss himself (J.-C. Marcel); and on the contemporary uses of The Elementary Forms, whether in the United States from Goffman to Alexander (Didier Lapeyronnie, University of Sorbonne), or in the sociology of contemporary economic studies (Frédéric Lebaron, University of Amiens).
works by Steven Lukes (1972) and Marcel Fournier (2007), which would need updating should they be republished. The journal’s wager is mostly won thanks to the knowledge on this subject which has made gigantic strides.

We undoubtedly have to start by presenting the short but extremely dense article by Stéphane Baciocchi (EHESS – CARE), who has outlined the “first reception” of *The Elementary Forms*. To the twenty or so known texts which have summarized the Durkheimian historiography on this subject in the past hundred years, the editors of this issue have managed to add around fifty more which have been published in various journals.¹⁵ This is a considerable contribution. We should also add that this corpus can be found online on the journal’s website (http://assr.revues.org/22979). How did they manage to expand the referential corpus of the initial reception of *The Elementary Forms* to such an extent? And, equally, how could the previous exegetes have failed to notice them? Baciocchi tells us his method: he has worked with the bibliographies of books and articles which are already known; he has also consulted the Leipzig international bibliography, a supplement to the *Internationale Bibliographie der Zeitschriftenliteratur*, but also the *Polybiblion, Revue Bibliographique Universelle*, which is published in Paris, and the *Book Review Digest* published in New York (note 2, page 17). Backed up by this discovery, he has outlined a plan for studying the circulation of *The Elementary Forms*: there were 1500 copies in French and another 1000 of the English translation produced by Swain in 1915 and corrected by Durkheim himself. The English translation restarted and prolonged the commentaries in the Anglo-Saxon world: twenty-three new English texts were produced after 1915 (compared to nine English reviews after the publication of *The Elementary Forms* in French). The chronological landmark (the initial reception is measured until Durkheim’s death) is obviously slightly rigid and needs to be complemented: we need to further follow the effects produced by this – by now classic – book (an interesting project for future “tracers” out there). In the meantime, Baciocchi has come up with a typology of the journals in this vast corpus, distinguishing between “general reviews and journals” (for example, *Le Temps*), representing 33% of the corpus, denominational reviews and journals (12%), and those specializing in a particular subject (philosophy, theology, sociology, social science, history and archaeology, anthropology, psychology).¹⁶ Numerous nationalities are represented: around thirty texts are in English, five in German (the *Anthropos* 1914 issue found and used by Rol in his

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¹⁵. One thinks of Durkheim who, in a letter dated July 20, 1912, wrote to Bouglé: “No review of my book has been published yet. Your article is very lively [*Le Temps*, July 20], it is an animated review of [my] book. I am sure it will arouse interest. Needless to say, I could do without this awakened interest; I am in dire need of tranquility and all I ask is that I am left alone. I am afraid of polemics, which is no doubt a sign of senility.”

¹⁶. His paper at the International Conference of Bordeaux (June 2012) has presented the chapters in *The Elementary Forms* most quoted in this corpus. We are eagerly awaiting the publication of this additional information.
article on Wundt is not cited), and three in Italian. Nevertheless, Baciocchi points out that this expansion is still work in progress:

Our bibliography remains open to additional entries which will no doubt come from more in-depth research into the ever-expanding digital archives, especially those of daily newspapers and peripheral small reviews. The absence of Spanish, Portuguese, or Russian reviews is explained by our linguistic incompetence.

While waiting for a future expansion, we can only admire the work done so far, which offers a lot of new material to interested researchers. Several articles in this issue have already drawn on this new material. Thus, Michael Löwy (EHESS – CNRS) has looked at the German reception of *The Elementary Forms*. He starts by picking up on the deafening silence from the big names in the sociology of religion of the time: Troeltsch, Otto, Weber and his journal *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*. He has nevertheless managed to find a definitive pronouncement by Weber, which is taken from his *Sociology of Religion* and is clearly addressed to Durkheim (occasionally compared to his “adversary” Frazer). In it, Weber highlights [Durkheim’s] “greatly exaggerated [belief], completely abandoned in our days,” that totemism was universally valid. This was, in Löwy’s words, “a polemical sally.” This short allusion aside, Durkheim’s work remained “invisible” to these three great sociologists of religion. The situation is very different with the German ethnologists, which should be less surprising if we knew how much Durkheim read their works – no matter what he may retrospectively have had to say on this subject in 1907. Löwy summarizes texts by Vierkandt (who calls Durkheim a “genius”), Preuss, and Mayer – the first two had themselves been reviewed in the *AS*. We discover a fascinating perspective on Durkheim, who was read with eyes and from points of view which we are not used to coming across. These readings have the dual merit of bringing a fresh light on the blind spots in *The Elementary Forms*, helping us discover new arguments, and of revealing the characteristics of the German ethnological perspective. The article finishes with the *Anthropos* issue edited by Schmidt, based on an idea by Goldenweiser, where we find Wundt.

From this perspective, it is equally interesting and innovative to discover the Italian reception. The article by Salvatore Abbruzzese (University of Trento) deals with the treatment received by Durkheim in the *Rivista Italiana di Sociologia* (1897-1921). He looks at the reviews by Pareto (who was hostile to *The Rules of Sociological Method*)

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17. We have done a calculation (cf. our paper presented at the *Association Française de Sociologie* Conference on the “German authors in Durkheim’s sources, 1893-1917,” Nantes, September 2013): 44% (249 out of 568) of Durkheim’s reviews were about German-language articles and books. The ones he reviewed the most were indeed ethnologists (Kölher, Cunow, etc.), but he took them out of his references in *The Elementary Forms*, which contained only 19% German references. On this subject, see also our article «De L’AS aux Formes. Sources recensées et sources référencées» to be published in *Le centenaire des Formes* (Garnier 2014).

18. So its absence from the corpus of 74 titles must be an oversight.
of Sociological Method)\textsuperscript{19} and presents the overall reception of Durkheim's sociology in the journal (pages 63-76). Only at the very end (pages 77-82) does he deal with the (enthusiastic) reception of The Elementary Forms from Alessandro Bruno, who had followed and reviewed Durkheim’s works since 1908 and also reviewed this book. This is no doubt one of the rare examples we are aware of, which link Durkheim’s papers, and those of his “school” (Mauss and Hubert), to his 1912 book.

It is also very interesting to read the article by Guillaume Cuchet (University of Lille III), who has worked with a corpus of thirteen articles published by Catholic journals or authors, thus complementing Pickering’s study of the Protestant reception of The Elementary Forms.\textsuperscript{20} We learn that it was a very difficult reception: “he was contradicted by all of them.” We understand why when we read his study.

Pierre Lassave (EHESS – CEIFR), ASSR editor and issue co-coordinator, offers an original reflexive survey which looks at the treatment received by Durkheim in this journal, from its creation in 1956, drawing on a corpus of thirty articles (around 300 pages) (“Les Formes dans les Archives: filiation, refondation, référence”). It is an interesting exercise which should be done with all sociological journals, French and foreign, for anyone who would like to systematically study the question of the treatment of The Elementary Forms in journals. The editorial line with regard to Durkheim has not always been clear, to say the least, often appearing divided between “a desire to break away and claims to filiation” (page 104). The journal ignored Durkheim for a long time and clearly preferred Weber to him. It is difficult to see the ASSR as a continuation of the second section of the AS, as suggested by Lassave even on the back cover, where it reads: “Wishing to be the heir to the religious sociology section of the AS – another great Durkheimian achievement – the ASSR (formerly Archives de Sociologie des Religions) is at the heart of this survey...”\textsuperscript{21} This is a complex matter and the filiation claimed today by its editor should certainly be examined more closely – it could make for an interesting topic, which would require work to be done, for example, on the link between Mauss and Le Bras. Very few have studied Durkheim in the ASSR beginning with 1956. François-André Isambert is no doubt the exception in this group. Without seeking to position himself in

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\textsuperscript{19} Durkheim did not exactly respond in kind: he wrote very dry reviews on Pareto (cf. AS, volume 3, 1900).


\textsuperscript{21} Small rectification: The AS was not founded in 1896 (page 89) and, therefore, the first ten volumes did not run from 1896 to 1906. The first volume appeared in May 1898 and the first ten volumes appeared from 1898 to 1907 (followed by two more volumes in 1910 and 1913). This error may be circulating since the publication of Jean Duvignaud’s compilation work Journal Sociologique (PUF 1969). We find it, for example, in Charles-Henry Cuin’s Durkheim. Modernité d’un classique (2012).
relation to Durkheim, he is the only one to have tried (between 1976 and 1982) to dissect the genesis and development of the Durkheimian analysis.

This article is directly related to that of Yann Potin (EHESS – CNRS) on Gabriel Le Bras, as well as the interview with Jacques Maître (pages 122-133): “In short, Durkheim gave us our legitimacy, but at the same time we were doing something completely different” (page 132). The “ambiguous relationship” with Durkheim’s legacy cannot be understood simply by reading G. Le Bras’s comments since, as Maître explains, “neither one of us was his student.” It was Henri Desroche who provided the driving force. It is therefore he we need to look at so we may understand the relationship the journal had with Durkheim. This takes us back to Lassave’s article which sheds light on the “former Dominican” (page 91) and his contribution to the 1969 issue (“Retour à Durkheim?”), an article which, in our view, was ambiguous, to say the least, and insisted on Durkheim’s call to “understand” religious experience from the inside. The ASSR certainly wanted to make the effort to rediscover Durkheim, as long as one went looking for a Durkheim who empathized with the believers.

The issue editors have not been able to systematize all of their ambitions at once, namely, to analyze all the aspects of the new corpus. Thus, nobody noticed the American reception of The Elementary Forms\textsuperscript{22} (cf. a selection by J. Coenen-Huther for the AS), nor the British one. And yet, they would have been essential, especially when we know the importance of the Anglo-Saxon writers in Durkheim’s research. The focus on the “reception” of The Elementary Forms has produced a few attempts which are less convincing but not completely without interest. It all depends on what we understand by “reception.” The ASSR has chosen to extend its meaning to “various uses” (Lassave, page 15), allowing it to reach further, all the way to the present day and taking various forms. Thus, the scholar’s work can be “used” by contemporary social movements; from a strictly historical and textual analysis we move to presentist analyses very popular with specialists on the American continent. Similarly, we can look at the interplay of filiations, affiliations – institutional and individual – and we have not even looked at the uses yet. In this case, we could perhaps distinguish between the controversies caused by The Elementary Forms (or some other subject) and the appropriation strategies. Some are more negative than others. However, the positive/negative polarization does not exhaust the subject either.

The article by Lewis Ampidu Clorméus (EHESS – CNRS) looks at one “use” Durkheimian sociology was put to, enabling Jean Price-Mars, a Haitian author from the interwar period, to interpret the Voodoo religion. It explains how he was able to use Durkheim to show that religious analysis could also be applied to Voodoo cults.

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. Pizarro in a book on The Elementary Forms centenary to be published by Garnier in 2014.
The article by Laurence Roulleau-Berger (CNRS – ENS Lyon) and Zhengai Liu (IEAASS Beijing) on “Durkheim’s theory of religion” in Chinese sociology takes us further away from the analysis of the initial corpus, however, it affords us a panoramic view of sociology in China – which was banned by the People’s Republic of China in 1952 and rehabilitated in 1979 – and from there of French, and finally Durkheimian, sociology. We are quickly presented the debates which certain contemporary Chinese sociologists have had around Durkheim’s religious sociology. The rather exotic bibliography includes titles in Chinese characters running alongside English and French translations (pages 147-150). It is refreshing to see our old classic faced with contemporary readings by practitioners in this field from the most populous country in the world. It produces a powerful relativizing effect. We are frankly amazed that Durkheim should be read and commented on, indeed, paid any attention in China at all – it is an almost miraculous honor in some way. We inevitably ask ourselves: what about India (an even more densely populated country) or Africa, this immense heterogeneous continent much ignored by Europeans?

The article by Jean-François Bert (University of Lausanne), somewhat cut off from the rest, in our view, presents the notes taken at one of Mauss’s seminars in 1922 by one of his students, André Varagnac. We are used to Bert’s “scoops”, who has already uncovered a course by Durkheim on Hobbes (1894-95) taken down by Mauss (published in 2011); the archives of the collaboration between Hubert and Mauss (1899 on sacrifice, and 1904 on magic) in Travailler à Deux (2012); as well as Mauss’s rich archives (L’atelier de Mauss, 2012). It is obviously very interesting to see the ways in which Mauss was able to use his uncle’s work from a set of course notes (six lectures given ten years after the publication of The Elementary Forms), “as part of the work updating the secondary literature used by Durkheim.” As it happens, this chimes very well with the article offered by J.-C. Marcel in the AS, which attempts to follow the “career” of The Elementary Forms in the books and articles of the first-generation Durkheimians after the war. However, as often, Bert provides fascinating material accompanied by commentary which ends where it should have started.

This paper is directly related to the article by Thomas Hirsch (EHESS), who tries to make the link between Halbwachs’s Les Cadres sociaux de la mémoire (The Social Frameworks of Memory) (1925) and The Elementary Forms. Although in charge, together with François Simiand, of the fifth section of the AS (first series), which dealt with economic sociology, Halbwachs was no less fascinated, after the war, by The Elementary Forms. We understand better the

23. It should be noted that he has also contributed an article to Durkheimian Studies: “Découverte d’une archive: l’Esquisse d’une théorie de la magie.”

24. Which, in turn, focuses on Mauss in the Actes de Bordeaux, to be published by Garnier in 2014.
genesis of Halbwachs’ intuitions, who hid neither his admiration for Durkheim, nor his influence on him.25

Finally, we can read an article by Philippe Steiner (University of Paris IV-Sorbonne), who has tried to develop a few ideas starting from the elliptical footnote found in *The Elementary Forms*, in which Durkheim explained that the link between economics and religion, economic sociology and religious sociology, had not yet been explored. “There is only one form of social activity which has not yet been expressly linked to religion, namely, the economic activity.” (*The Elementary Forms*, page 598, note 2). Steiner compares it to the other famous footnote, found in *Suicide*, which suggested, without developing, a fourth, “fatalistic” type of suicide. Deprived of any help from Durkheim, Steiner suggests three other authors (five, in fact) that could help develop this link: Mauss and Simiand, Weber, Foucault and Agamben. He does not manage to establish a direct link between Weber and Durkheim – including with regard to the notion of asceticism, which interested both of them – and in the end he has to present their intuitions side by side. However, we think it would be very interesting to conduct a systematic comparison between their respective religious sociologies, something which, as far as we know, has not yet been done. As for the link with Foucault, via notions of power and apparatus (dispositif) (including, therefore, the religious ones), he seems to us to be finding “uses” which could be seen as far removed from *The Elementary Forms* itself, all the more since Foucault certainly did not quote Durkheim – did he read him? In the end we no longer know if this is about the ways in which Foucault used *The Elementary Forms*, or the ways in which Steiner uses *The Elementary Forms* in his attempt to shed light on Foucault from a Durkheimian perspective...

**On *The Elementary Forms* (1912) and Their Immediate Extension: the Pragmatism Lectures (1913)**

The journal of the Durkheimian specialists has decided to leave it to others to take care of the anniversary of *The Elementary Forms*, while its 2012 issue brings no less than an essential piece into the debate: a “scoop”26 based on the retranscription of the first, previously unpublished, lecture from one of Durkheim’s courses (barely more than five pages [43-47], if we leave presentation, warning, notes, and translation aside). It comes from the manuscript of a

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25. It should be noted in passing that Halbwachs was not one of Durkheim’s “students,” as is often wrongly claimed; a graduate of the École Normale Supérieure and therefore a Parisian, he passed the 1901 agrégation in philosophy with the best grades. At that point, Durkheim was still teaching at Bordeaux.

26. It had already been presented in German two years before and was circulating among the “EHESS Parisian circles,” who were very interested in the issue of pragmatism and its influence on Durkheim.
student whose identity has not been possible to establish, who attended these lectures on pragmatism in 1913-14. A retranscription had already been published in 1955 by Armand Cuvillier (himself a former student of Durkheim), thought to be complete. It transpired that it was not: the first lecture was missing, which, according to Stéphane Baciocchi and Jean-Louis Fabiani (EHESS), was essential since it inaugurated the Chair of “Sociology” at Sorbonne.

The link between this lecture on pragmatism and The Elementary Forms has long been established. In our days, the course on pragmatism is read by Durkheimian specialists as an extension (see the clarification) of The Elementary Forms. American pragmatism (especially that of James), which was at the heart of the philosophical debate at the beginning of the twentieth century, constituted, to a great extent, the intellectual context Durkheim was steeped in when he studied primitive religions. He knew perfectly well the work of James, the lecturer in psychology and philosophy, author of the famous work on religious experience (also read by Weber). Durkheim saw in it a source for understanding religious phenomena, both at an individual level (surpassing oneself) and at a collective one (creating a community, a conscience, as well as excitement). Far from being illusionary, mystifying, or delirious, religious phenomena were the result of fundamental collective phenomena and enabled society to rest on solid foundations.

We should at least try to “explain” the title of the article (pages 19-40) accompanying the transcription of the rediscovered introductory lecture, because it is far too allusive. The authors’ choice of title, “Durkheim’s Lost Argument (1895-1955): Critical Moves on Method and Truth,” is a nod to the article by the philosopher Ann Rawls, “Durkheim’s Epistemology: the Neglected Argument,” published in 1996 in the American Journal of Sociology. Thus, the “lost argument” (or rather the “lost lecture”?) echoes the “neglected argument.” We should point out that the authors do not adopt a position with regard to Rawls and the debate she has given rise to (see above). They choose to quote her in a positive way when they write that she insisted on that part of the book where Durkheim showed the importance of practice (rites) in the creation of beliefs (page 32). Rawls has joined forces with Garfinkel for the past ten years in highlighting

27. We should note that the photograph showing Durkheim in the Sorbonne lecture theatre before a large audience is misleading. As S. Baciocchi, himself very knowledgeable about these things, has pointed out, it comes from a set of negatives dating back to 1905. Having appeared in Georges Davy’s Durkheim in 1911, it may have given the impression that it dated from that period.

the importance of “practical accomplishments” (however, Löwy informs us that reviews had already made this point as early as 1914, see above). According to her, this is what religious “reality” consists of: rituals produce “real” effects, in terms of groups and representations. It is therefore worth returning to Parsons’s theories, who sees his work on religion as an idealist veering-off-course in his mature years – something we could well agree on.

Returning to our two authors, this inaugural lecture is essential for understanding Durkheim’s founding intentions, who inaugurated the Chair of Educational Science and Sociology, the first one in the history of French universities.29 He wanted to show that sociology was able to bring new life into the great philosophical questions, drawing partly on pragmatism. The retranscription of the lecture gives us the key to Durkheim’s argument – assuming, of course, that there is only one:

“It is especially through its study of religions that sociology can be of use to philosophy [page 45], because there we find connected the questions concerning practices (morals) and those concerning representations (beliefs). Religion affords us an eminently central perspective; it is a question of method [...] Within religion, thoughts are intimately linked to actions.” (page 46)

This first lecture allows us to shed light on the methodological reasons which motivated Durkheim to analyze religious phenomena. This, therefore, clears up part of the “enigma” by shedding new light on the meaning of the 1895 “revolution,” which he himself retrospectively recounted in 1907. We, for one, do not think that Durkheim would have reached his decision purely for theoretical or methodological reasons. It is clear that he understood well all the benefits he could gain from actively situating his religious research within the philosophical debate of the time. To Bourdieu’s “two-pronged” theory we can add a “three-pronged” one: there is the pure scientific interest, certainly; and the interest in one’s notoriety and career, that is obvious too; but why neglect the psychological interest, so clearly seen by Weber in place of that internal, psychological incentive spurring us to opt (often in spite of ourselves) for some research subject or other?

Alongside this article, the Durkheimian journal offers another one connected to The Elementary Forms30 by Raquel Weiss (University of Porto Alegre),

29. We could say that Durkheim always assumed a founding role. From his inaugural lecture on social science at Bordeaux in 1887, all the way to this inaugural lecture on sociology at the Sorbonne in 1913, he presented himself as the founder of sociology (which is exactly what Jean-Claude Filloux saw as early as 1977 when he drew the risky psychoanalytical comparison with the rabbinic father named “Moses”).

30. In fact, there are four articles which do not seem to be directly related to it: one by Pickering, which is strange since he is the great specialist on this subject; one by Bert on magic; one by Paoletti on the duality of human nature, which is only distantly related to The Elementary Forms; and one by Guizzardi and Martignani on Simmel’s and Durkheim’s conceptions of giving. Given that they are so far removed from the subject, we shall not discuss them here.
who deals with the moral issue. She shows that excitement is a notion linked to Durkheim’s moral sociology. However, there is no space left here for us to develop this point. We will just note that one of Durkheim’s first ideas when he wrote at the beginning of his career was that religious, moral, and legal issues should not be separated.31

If we had to give a somewhat synthetic opinion on these three issues, we would choose to highlight the great intellectual dynamism stimulated by the centenary of the publication of *The Elementary Forms*, in France and abroad (see the Digital Durkheim website – http://digitaldurkheim.hypotheses.org/ – which offers an overview of the events related to this anniversary), among journals and publishing houses alike, with several titles still to appear in 2014. There has no doubt been a new wave of research which, we would wager, will not cease at the end of the anniversary. Too many fascinating avenues have been opened up and too many things will be left to do for researchers to change the subject that easily. The sociology of religious phenomena should be seen as primordial and the ASSR have an important role to play in the scheme of things, with or without Durkheim. Furthermore, over and above the powerful, objectively observed return of this sociological subspeciality, we should note that academic disciplines – philosophy, anthropology, sociology, history, etc. – have found mutual ground, just as they did in 1900. Specialists come together and discuss, which is, in itself, a very good thing. All we need is psychology, literary studies, and maybe legal and economic studies (which are still very much taking a back seat) to come on board, in order for the success to be complete.

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