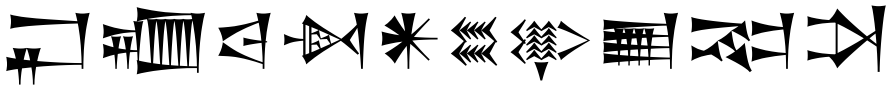


From the Archives of the Devotees of

Nisaba

№ 1 (2023/2024)

Karljürgen G. Feuerherm and David R. Lipovitch, Eds.

The Sumerian text on the title page reads as follows:

bisaŋ dub-ba arad$_2$ ^{d}nisaba-ke$_4$-ne-ta

literally,

((basket tablet)-of ((servant [divine] Nisaba)-of [plural]))-from

The frontispiece is adapted from a Sumerian carving of the goddess Nisaba, the earliest known patron deity of writing, after the photograph found at 'Goddess Nisaba', Pinterest, accessed 22 July 2024, https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/422986589981852473/.

This journal is produced using the XeLaTeX typesetting system according to traditional typographic best practices using the open source 'The Libertinus Font Family' font set. Body text is set at 12 point, with other text scaled accordingly. The type block is 6 inches in width for ideal reading of English and the margins are set to allow three-hole punch and mirror for double-sided printing.

First issue: Summer 2024

Department of History, Wilfrid Laurier University.
From the Archives of the Devotees of Nisaba –
p. cm.
Includes illustrations and bibliographical references.
ISSN
1. Ancient world I. Title

'Printed' in Planet Earth

Nisaba Publishing and Typography,
Teviotdale, Ontario
nisaba (at) feuerherm dot ca

Contents

Contents i

List of Figures v

Preface vii

I 2023 1

1 Drakon's Law on Homicide: Not as Original as You Thought 3

David Duffield (HI498)

The origins and influences of Drakon's law on homicide are explored through the perspective of earlier systems of adjudication such as the Homeric poems and ancient Near Eastern legal systems beginning with an overview of existing scholarship discussing these and other archaic Greek systems of adjudication.

The main argument discusses four key subtopics to consider similarities between Drakon's law and the earlier systems, namely the role of the family, the use and acceptance of monetary compensation, intention and unintentional homicide, and exile and conceptions of pollution to show that Drakon's law was not as original and innovative as it is commonly regarded; rather, it was a collection of existing and accepted legal practices made explicit through the Greeks' adoption of writing and culture from the Near East.

2 The Importance of the Divine in Ancient Egyptian Medicine 23

El Gillies (HI235)

One of the Egyptians' greatest feats was the development of early forms of medicine, some of which are preserved in medical and magical papyri such as the Ebers Papyrus, the Edwin-Smith Papyrus, and the Berlin Papyrus.

Modern scholars are typically inclined to analyze these records within a modern, strictly scientific framework. However, this approach removes the important

context of spirituality which was ingrained in every aspect of the ancients' lives. Both scientific and magical approaches were used for medical treatments since medical ailments were thought to mirror a person's relationship with the greater universe, including gods, entities akin to what we might call demons, the deceased, and the overarching balance of the world they called ma'at. *This paper illustrates the integration of these two aspects of Egyptian medicine.*

3 The Cultural Impact and Symbolism of the Burning of Persepolis 31

Tess Moffat (AR333)

In 330 BCE, Alexander took the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, Parsa, a. k. a. Persepolis. The city was significant to the Persians, especially considering the nearby cultural landscape and Persepolis' direct ties to the Achaemenid kings. Instead of preserving it, Alexander let his army loot its riches and set the palace complex ablaze, seeking vengeance for the destruction of the Athenian Acropolis by Xerxes. The conflagration consumed palace structures and culturally significant artefacts, though Persepolis continued to be regarded as an important site and was revisited following its destruction. For the Greeks, this event represented their victory over their ancient enemy. However, for the Persians, the site became a rallying point for later empires.

This paper will demonstrate that while the burning of Persepolis was a significant cultural disaster which signalled the demise of the Achaemenid Empire and the beginning of Macedonian hegemony in the East, the site, as well as Achaemenid customs and traditions, remained culturally relevant centuries after its destruction.

4 The Nimrud Tombs: Neo-Assyrian Queens and Their Religious Standing 41

Samuel Taylor (AR337)

The Neo-Assyrian Empire dominated the ancient Near East between 900 and 600 BCE. Several aspects of its study have been largely neglected, including the question of queens' powers and responsibilities, particularly with respect to the state religion. As such, this paper attempts to answer the question: What power did Neo-Assyrian queens wield?

The first portion of the paper provides a brief overview of the Neo-Assyrian state, as well as a concise history of archaeological excavations at Nimrud. It also notes problems inherent in discussing Neo-Assyrian queens, such as conflicting information and the limited scope of archaeological data. The paper then describes the potential powers of queens by analysing available archaeological evidence found in a burial context as well as recovered administrative documentation. The paper concludes that while the full extent of the Neo-Assyrian queens' reli-

gious power cannot be ascertained, it was likely greater than merely aesthetic.

II 2024 **51**

5 The Mixtec and Zapotec Writing Systems ca. 600 BCE–pre-1521 CE **53**

Chantal Bresse (HI498)

The ancient history of any civilization is enriched when all facets of its culture are considered. This paper explores a lesser known aspect of Mesoamerica—writing—specifically prior to colonization. Furthermore, the paper restricts its focus to the Mixtec and Zapotec as the deciphering of these two writing systems is much less advanced than that of the Maya.

The paper considers examples of various genres of literature: genealogical, divinatory, epic, or propagandist. I examine the characteristics and evolution of the two writing systems through their history with a particular focus on their relationship with the social and political context.

As a preface, I discuss the definition of writing and the key characteristics of the spoken languages that influence the choice of writing systems, the impact of colonization on the Indigenous peoples, their writing and self-expression. For contextualizing purposes, a concise overview of the calendars that are central to the Mesoamerican ideology, and thus their writing, is given.

6 Art Imitating Life, Life Imitating Art: Environment, Religion, and Art in Dorset Culture **75**

Isabella G. Murray (HI498)

With no literature left behind and no direct ancestors, the Dorset culture leaves many unanswered questions for those who attempt to study it. The art discovered at Dorset sites is often the best source to answer questions regarding their culture, with supplements from radiocarbon analysis, grave sites, and ethnographic analogy. Piece by piece, it has been made apparent that there is some intersection between environment, religion, and art.

This paper examines that intersection with particular focus on art as a historical source. Following an in-depth analysis of the harsh Canadian Arctic environment and the theoretical shamanistic and animistic belief system of the Dorset, the paper analyzes various artistic carvings and their supposed meanings. This paper draws attention to popular theories as well as their objections to create a holistic approach to an unknown culture. It grapples with what art can and cannot tell scholars about an extinct people.

7 The City of Uruk 4000–3100 BCE: Trade in Uruk and Mesopotamia **95**

Preston Thacker (HI282)

Trade played a large role in the development of Mesopotamian Uruk's culture and economy, allowing it to flourish and emerge as one of the first trade empires in recorded human history.

This paper will cover the development of Uruk through the lens of its trading ability, as well as focus on how the trade goods produced by Uruk influenced its own culture as well as those of other peoples around them. This study considers the many trade goods with sufficient evidence of Uruk having produced and traded them to other cities and examines the city of Hacinebi as a case study as it has some of the best-preserved evidence of trade from Uruk.

The findings show that trade did play a significant role in allowing Uruk to become the dominant city of early Mesopotamia and created the bases that many future Mesopotamian cities would emulate for their own trade needs.

A Invitation to Prospective Instructors **105**

B Requirements and Guidelines for Students **107**

Bibliography **113**

List of Figures

1.1 The law code of Gortyn 4

3.1 Panoramic view of Persopolis 32

5.1 Illustration of the use of glyphs 57
5.2 A Mixtec scribe with his paintbrush 60
5.3 Main Mexican mountain chains 62
5.4 Mixtec Codex Tonindeye/Zouche-Nuttall 64
5.5 The story of Lord 5-Alligator 65
5.6 Detail of Codex Bodley showing the rebus principle 66

6.1 Map highlighting the Canadian Arctic Archipelago 77
6.2 Drawings of Dorset bear carvings 83
6.3 Dorset polar bear carvings highlighting the flying posture 83
6.4 Ivory teeth, highlighting human (?) teeth and larger bear canines 84
6.5 A man-seal carving 85
6.6 A bear-falcon carving 85
6.7 Small naturalistic carving of a baby bird or owl 86
6.8 Walrus carvings 87
6.9 Polar bear carving with skeletal design and X markings 87

7.1 Typical bevelled-rim bowl 99
7.2 Stamp seal from the Middle Uruk period 101
7.3 Calcite cylinder seal 101

Preface

Background

The present 'journal' had its origin in part of a role play scenario for the research paper assignment in one of the instances of HI498, 'Research Seminar in Ancient Studies'. The idea was for students to apply to participate in a 'mock conference' by submitting an abstract and putting together a paper for presentation, which, if accepted (read: met all the requirements of the assignment) would be circulated to the editorial board (i. e., a class peer-review) and, providing the final result was of sufficient quality (meaning, an A-level grade), would be published in the 'conference proceedings'.

In due course, in light of positive student response, the steering committee of the Ancient Studies programme was approached with the idea of producing a programme-wide journal open to students from all participating departments and courses.

Name

The journal is named for the Sumerian goddess of writing, Nisaba.[1] To our knowledge, this is the earliest attested deity of writing, and, given that Sumerian cuneiform is the oldest known script, the attribution seems fitting.

Current Issue

The first official instance of the journal was to have been produced in Summer 2023, but due to unforeseen circumstances it was not possible to complete the project on time, and then, of course, the demands of the academic year made themselves felt. Consequently, this, the first official issue, covers submissions from 2023 and 2024.

We hope you enjoy these papers, which are an excellent testament to the hard work of their respective authors and feel confident that they will inspire current and upcoming students to produce further excellent work in the future.

The editors

Waterloo, Ontario

[1] For further information, see 'Nisaba', Wikipedia, 30 November 2023, 10:18 p.m. (Z), accessed 26 July 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nisaba&oldid=1187699330. Page Version ID: 1187699330.

nb: Instructors in Ancient Studies are heartily encouraged to support *Nisaba* in courses featuring essays at whatever levels. Students are likewise urged to seek their instructors' support! Please consult the relevant appendices below.

Part I

2023

1 Drakon's Law on Homicide: Not as Original as You Thought

David Duffield (HI498)

The origins and influences of Drakon's law on homicide are explored through the perspective of earlier systems of adjudication such as the Homeric poems and ancient Near Eastern legal systems beginning with an overview of existing scholarship discussing these and other archaic Greek systems of adjudication.

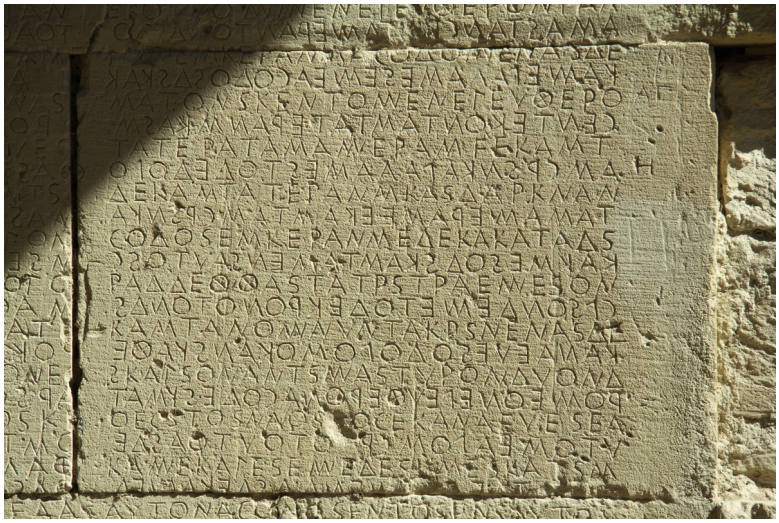
The main argument discusses four key subtopics to consider similarities between Drakon's law and the earlier systems, namely the role of the family, the use and acceptance of monetary compensation, intention and unintentional homicide, and exile and conceptions of pollution to show that Drakon's law was not as original and innovative as it is commonly regarded; rather, it was a collection of existing and accepted legal practices made explicit through the Greeks' adoption of writing and culture from the Near East.

In 620 BCE, the first collection of written laws was implemented in Athens with the institutionalization of the laws of Drakon. Drakon's laws were the first in Athens' history to explicitly state the legal procedures to deliver justice in response to various crimes as customary social laws were previously used to deliver arbitration. However, Drakon's law on homicide was the only law to remain in use throughout the classical period after Solon adopted it during his reforms. A vital source for our understanding of Drakon's law on homicide comes from a marble stele which republishes it as part of Solon's reforms. Initially, Drakon's laws are understood to have been inscribed on *axones*—four-sided wooden tablets that could be rotated on an axis with an inscription on each side—erected in public areas. Many scholars, such as Ronald Stroud, understand this republication to be an unaltered copy of Drakon's homicide law from the original *axones*,[1] making it a vital source for understanding not only the law but its origins. This paper will discuss earlier systems of adjudication in order to understand how they influenced Drakon's law. It is the intent of this paper to answer the question of how elements and influences of Near Eastern law and Homeric arbitration are reflected in Drakon's law on homicide.

The corpus of cultural products this paper will use dates between the 7th and early 4th centuries. Some sources dating to the 5th century, such as the Law Code of Gortyn, will

[1] H.W. Pleket, 'R. S. Stroud, Drakon's Law on Homicide (Univ. of California Publ.: Classical Studies, 3). Berkeley-Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1968. 83 p. 4 Pl. Pr. D. 4.00', *Mnemosyne* 26, no. 3 (1973): 323.

be used to understand the earlier material. Additionally, while the cultural products from the Near East are predominantly contemporary with this period, some date as far back as the 18th century. This paper will consider direct and indirect references to homicide and its arbitration as seen in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* along with other archaic poetry from writers such as Hesiod. Although it does not pertain to homicide law itself, the Law Code of Gortyn will be examined as Edwin Carawan explains that it can clarify legal developments that would have been comparable to those experienced by Homer's audience.[2] The homicide laws of the ancient Near East will be discussed as, at the time of the archaic period, the Near East had developed expansive cultural and economic systems with extensive trade routes upon which the Greeks relied, providing the avenue for cultural exchange between these societies.[3] Near Eastern societies also had extensive legal systems of their own and were developed much earlier than the Greek archaic period.



Zde, *Gortyn Code, ca. 450 BC, Gortys.*, 14 September 2014, 09:53:56. Image license: CC By-SA 4.0.

Figure 1.1: The law code of Gortyn

The latter was a transformative time in Greek history, seeing changes in the economy, social structure, and art and architecture. Increased contact with the Near East bolstered the Greek economy, increasing the production and consumption of material goods, in turn allowing populations and city-states to grow into more urbanized communities. Robin Osborne suggests that the literary evidence from the Homeric poems and Hesiod supports the idea of economic transformation during this period as the practice of gift exchange reflects a system of a commercial sort.[4] The proliferation of stone temples, statues, vases, and other material objects from this period (reaching its height during the 6th century)

[2]Edwin Carawan, *Rhetoric and the Law of Draco* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 60.

[3]C. G. Starr, 'Economic and Social Conditions in the Greek World', in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., ed. John Boardman and N. G. L. Hammond, vol. 3, The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 419–20.

[4]Robin Osborne, 'Archaic Greece', in *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris and Richard P. Saller (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 300–301.

also suggests economic growth. The archaic period also saw the rise of the aristocratic class as Greek society and culture quickly became driven and shaped by social elites.[5]

To understand the origins and influences on Drakon's homicide law, scholars look to systems of arbitration in archaic literature including the Homeric poems. Between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* there are a total of thirty-one references to homicide and its treatment. It is important to approach the methods of homicide arbitration in the Homeric poems with a degree of skepticism, as Gagarin explains one cannot be fully certain if the Homeric poems truly reflect a system that was relied upon in pre-Drakonian Athens. However, that does not mean indications in Drakon's laws that suggest similarities should be ruled out.[6]

Likewise, by studying the systems of arbitration described in the works of Hesiod, reflections of the historical legal realities in use prior to Drakon's law in archaic Greece can be observed. Papakonstantinou suggests that the Homeric poems and other archaic poetry functioned as legal narratives as their performance to the ancient audience would have shaped and influenced the legal landscape in early archaic Greece.[7] While the poetry from Hesiod presents a more realized commentary on early Greek justice that criticizes the greediness and corruptness of the *basileis* who held the role of judges.[8] Papakonstantinou is not the only scholar to note that the performative purpose of the poems to an ancient audience supports the validity of using the archaic literature to understand pre-Drakonian legal practices. Discussing Drakon's place in Athens' legal history, Carey looks to the Homeric poems for insight into the earlier influences on Drakon's homicide law. To reach its wide audience, the socio-political construct of the Homeric world amalgamates the realities of the various Greek city-states to create a system the audience can understand, including the systems of justice and arbitration. In this sense, Carey suggests that the Homeric poems are panhellenic in nature and it's the lack of local colouring that allows for the poems to speak throughout the Greek world.[9] Carawan also suggests that the Homeric poems reflect contemporary legal practices that at the time of the epic's writing were used throughout archaic Greece and relied on the audience's understanding of said systems. Using Homer's description of the arbitration unfolding on the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18. 535–47), Carawan argues that this scene is one example of where Homer depends on the knowledge of the ancient audience. The description of the homicide arbitration seems to heavily rely on the audience's ability to recognize the proper roles of the figures to fully appreciate the scene as there are no clear explanations described by the poet.[10]

By interpreting the Homeric poems and archaic Greek literature as amalgamated reflections of legal practices across city-states for wide audiences to understand, it becomes reasonable to agree with Carey's central argument. Carey presents the argument that Drakon's role was not so much lawgiver as law writer. Drakon's law on homicide was

[5]Starr, 'Economic and Social Conditions in the Greek World', 438–41.

[6]Michael Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine studies* 20, no. 4 (2004): 5–6.

[7]Zinon Papakonstantinou, *Lawmaking and Adjudication in Archaic Greece* (London: Duckworth, 2008), 23.

[8]Ibid., 37.

[9]Chris Carey, 'In Search of Drakon', *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 59 (2013): 34–35.

[10]Carawan, *Rhetoric and the Law of Draco*, 53.

a written collection of existing legal practices from across Greek city-states that were already practiced and accepted. Carey bases this conclusion on the similarities between Drakon's law and the scenes of arbitration in the Homeric poems, such as the clear right of the victim's family to pursue or pardon the killer in Homer and under Drakon's law.[11] Additionally, by examining the courtroom speech ([Dem.] 59) that details Stephanos' capture of Epainetos, an adulterer, we can note similarities to the myth of Ares and Aphrodite recounted in the *Odyssey* (8. 265–367), as both present the same legal procedures. Carey finds that the myth reflects the later Athenian system seen in [Dem.] 59 that involves imprisonment, the need for a guarantor to secure release, and the payment of ransom as the condition for the accused's release. Central to these examples is the element of self-help and ransom, which is also stressed in the Law Code of Gortyn, a collection of written laws from Crete dating to the first half of the 5th century pertaining to earlier practices that possibly go as far back as the writing of the Homeric poems. The code's adultery laws permit the right to capture an adulterer and hold him until a ransom is paid. Using all of this, Carey suggests that the outlined processes of adultery cases were recognized in various parts of the Greek world based on the similarities between Athenian and Homeric practice, making it likely that there existed substantial unwritten law codes that Drakon could draw upon to form his law code.[12]

While an understanding of the origins and influences on Drakon's homicide law can be gained through the Homeric poems, it is also important to consider other influences on the archaic period and the cultural products produced during and before this period. Many scholars emphasize that Near Eastern influences were heavily present in archaic Greece, particularly with the adoption of writing that occurred through cultural exchange with the Near East. Walter Burkert and Jonathan Burgess provide evidence for *The Epic of Gilgamesh's* influence on the Homeric poems as they early borrow aspects from the Mesopotamian classics along with characters and their role being alike, such as Circe and Siduri.[13] Additionally, Erwin Cook suggests that the description of the palace of Alcinous in the *Odyssey* reflects contemporary stereotypes held by the Greeks regarding Near Eastern palatial architecture that would have been acquired through cultural exchange (7. 82–135).[14] Furthermore, the Law Code of Hammurabi, dating to the reign of Hammurabi of Babylon (ca. 1792–1750 BCE), can give insight into understanding the progression and development of Greek law. Similar to Carey's understanding of Drakon's law, Benjamin R. Foster argues that the Law Code of Hammurabi may have been composed by drawing on well-established traditions and legal material.[15] In Foster's translation of the epilogue, the language used in the legal texts makes it clear that the intent was to stress the explicitness and indisputability of Hammurabi's laws. One passage that reads: 'I am Hammurabi,

[11] Carey, 'In Search of Drakon', 36–37.

[12] Ibid., 32–36.

[13] Jonathan Burgess, 'Gilgamesh and Odysseus in the Otherworld', *Mouseion (Calgary)* 43, no. 2 (1999): 175; Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*, Revealing Antiquity 5 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 88, 129.

[14] Erwin Cook, 'Near Eastern Sources for the Palace of Alkinoos', *American Journal of Archaeology* 108, no. 1 (2004): 71.

[15] Benjamin R. Foster, ed., *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005), 126.

king of justice, to whom Shamash gave truth. My words are carefully chosen, my deeds unrivalled, they are lost only on the fool, for the wise they stand out as praiseworthy' strongly conveys the message that Hammurabi's laws were indisputable, that only fools would choose to question or disobey them.[16]

The Law Code of Hammurabi's need to repeatedly emphasize that they are to be strictly followed leads to the suggestion that the prior systems possessed some degree of instability that needed to be corrected by a written law. This is a characteristic of written law that continues to be seen later into Near Eastern history. Henry McKeating provides a detailed survey of the development of homicide law in ancient Israel, arguing that it developed from a kin-based legal system into a political system which gained its authority through a transitional stage of religious law. Looking at the laws pertaining to homicide under religious law, McKeating identifies elements of the earlier kin-based legal system that continued to be relied upon in the early monarchy texts and Old Testament. Based on this, McKeating suggests that Israel's legal system was based on the incorporation and modification of existing earlier legal practices and laws, which as we have seen is a characteristic of written laws in the Near East and Greece vocalized by other scholars such as Carawan, Carey, and Foster.[17]

There are several connections between McKeating's discussion of ancient Israel's homicide law and the Homeric and Drakonian systems of homicide arbitration. As mentioned, McKeating explains that ancient Israel's legal system was originally centred on law where justice was achieved through measures of self-help. This is also the case throughout the Homeric age as the means of achieving justice in cases of homicide relied on the exercise of self-help. There was no restriction on a victim's relatives with respect to defending the injured, even wrongdoers could expect the assistance of their kinsmen.[18] However, as we have seen, this kin-based system of achieving justice is followed by an explicit written law code as a result of the instability of the previous system those being, the Law Code of Hammurabi, the early monarchic law in ancient Israel, and Drakon's homicide law. McKeating discusses the pre-monarchic narrative source *Jdg. xix–xxi*, an account of rape and subsequent death of the Levite's concubine, demonstrating that clan law easily and frequently led to out-of-proportion bloody vengeance because of the system failing. The victim, backed by his kin, originally sought redress from the community where the crime took place, but the city stood by the offender. This resulted in the victim and his supporting tribes standing up against the city, involving larger units of people reaching the point of tribal war that began over a small-scale piece of violence since there was no limit on measures of self-help under clan law.[19] Homeric examples displaying the same instability and out-of-proportion vengeance can be seen in Odysseus' revenge and its aftermath affects in the *Odyssey*. Odysseus and his supporters violently kill the suitors in revenge for the crimes of devouring Odysseus' goods, ravishing the servant women,

[16]Ibid., 132.

[17]Henry McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', *Vetus Testamentum* 25, no. 1 (1975): 65–66.

[18]Robert J. Bonner, 'Administration of Justice in the Age of Homer', *Classical Philology* 6, no. 1 (1911): 13–14.

[19]McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', 49.

wooing his wife Penelope, and planning to kill his son Telemachus.[20] This prompts the families of the suitors seek to take up arms against Odysseus which would have resulted in civil war had Athena not intervened preventing further bloodshed.

As a result of the problematic conditions that could arise under justice systems based on clan law, attitudes toward the system could be negative. In discussing Near Eastern legal systems, Westbrook argues that practices of Near Eastern homicide law developed out of response to unsatisfactory situations within systems of justice in existence prior to more civilized societies. With the advent of the courts, the role of limiting these extreme cycles of retaliative violence to a degree that was appropriate to the initial homicide and determining the punishment was now removed from the rights of the victim's family previously available under the provisions of self-help.[21] It is also worth discussing here the similarities between the Near East and Greece in terms of the use of judges in homicide cases. Looking first to the Near East, as early as The Law Code of Hammurabi we see indications that legal disputes were overseen by certain individuals who met decided upon criteria that made them suited for the role. In Foster's translation of the law's epilogue, it is stated that kings must follow Hammurabi's law justly so 'may he govern the people of this land justly, may he judge their law cases, may he render their verdicts' to remove wrongdoers from the community.[22]

Likewise, in ancient Israel during the early monarchic period after the legal system shifted away from being centred on clan law there are records of homicide cases being brought before a king acting as judge in special instances. McKeating discusses that when this occurred it remained the responsibility of the victim's kin to initiate the process of justice by bringing the case before the king for judgement. This is seen in *Sam. xiv* as a widow brings a case to King David for judgement as her one son has been killed by the other resulting in the family seeking to put the murderer to death. The woman pleads for David to prevent this so she can still have an heir.[23] McKeating concludes that the widowed woman is not asking King David to interfere with the normal course of the law, but rather to restrict the kin group from seeking vengeance that would have been considered excessively harsh. By drawing on the concepts of clan law, where it was typical for offences within the family not to be prosecuted through revenge, it would appear the woman sought the aid of King David to ensure justice was served in a measured and reasonable way.[24] Similarly, when discussing the dispute in trial scene on Achilles' shield through the perspective of Mycenean and Near Eastern legal systems, Westbrook argues that it is over what limit the council of elders should have when imposing on the rights of revenge or ransom. It is thus their role that the appropriate severity of punishment is exercised depending on the circumstances surrounding the crime, as is the case in the Near Eastern system where it is ultimately up to the courts to determine the appropriate

[20]Kostas Myrsiades, *Reading Homer's Odyssey* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2019), 252.

[21]Raymond Westbrook, 'The Trial Scene in the Iliad', in *Ex Oriente Lex: Near Eastern Influences on Ancient Greek and Roman Law*, ed. Deborah Lyons and Kurt A. Raaflaub (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 5.

[22]Foster, *Before the Muses*, 132.

[23]McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', 50.

[24]Ibid., 50–51.

limits for achieving justice.[25]

When comparing this to the systems of arbitration in the Homeric world, a notable, higher-class individual also fulfilled the role of a judge. According to MacDowell and Papakonstantinou, in the Homeric world, the *basileis,* elders and other aristocratic men would be relied upon to administer justice and manage legal decision making in the community.[26] References to kings serving as judges in the archaic period is also seen in Hesiod's *Works and Days.* Unlike the Homeric poems which centres around the lives of the elite, Hesiod's commentary addresses the instability of using kings and aristocratic elite to judge cases saying, 'O gift-devouring kings; make your speeches straight, and forget crooked judgements altogether!' implying cases under this system of justice may not have always been fairly judged.[27] Furthermore, Carawan compares the judges in the trial scene to those at Gortyn in cases of adultery, as both are to present the right to self-help, identifying the proper conditions for its legitimate use. Carawan presents these aristocratic judges not as experts who knew the facts of the specific case. Rather, they acted as experts in the procedures of dispute settlement who after listening to the litigants' claims can present the facts of the case in a manner that mitigates the cycle of vendetta.[28] Ajax and Idomeneus' decision to consult Agamemnon over their dispute regarding the winner of a chariot race in the *Iliad* (23. 486–7) perfectly demonstrates how aristocratic leaders were relied upon in dispute settlements. As Carawan points out, Agamemnon would not be called upon as an expert as he would not have had a better vantage point to see which chariot turned the corner first, rather he is called upon to be a witness to the oaths made by the charioteers, who in this case are the firsthand witnesses.[29]

As implied by the scholarship, the judge-like figures in the Homeric world are not relied upon to deliver judgements in the disputes brought to them, as there existed no limits on the rights of self-help. However, as was the case in the Near East with the implementation of written law, Drakon's homicide law saw the beginning of judges delivering judgements in homicide cases that were deemed appropriate in relation to the specifics of the crime since there now existed explicit procedures to be followed. Under Drakon's law homicide cases were judged by the *basileis* and the *Ephetai* where it was their responsibility to decide if the homicide was an unintentional killing or not and prescribe the respected punishment.[30]

To summarize this section, the scholarly discourse surrounding ancient legal systems and the development of homicide law in the Near East, Homeric poems, and other archaic literary sources highlights many similarities and strongly indicates the immense Near Eastern influence on archaic Greece resulting from cultural trade. This section also discusses how the scholarship contextualizes earlier homicide arbitration in archaic poetry to understand how they reflect the influences and origins of Drakon's homicide law. For the remainder of this paper, I will continue my discussion of the similarities between

[25]Westbrook, 'The Trial Scene in the Iliad', 17.

[26]Douglas M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens*, Aspects of Greek and Roman Life (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 14; Papakonstantinou, *Lawmaking and Adjudication in Archaic Greece*, 25–26.

[27]MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens*, 15.

[28]Carawan, *Rhetoric and the Law of Draco*, 61.

[29]Ibid., 63–64.

[30]Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', xvi–xvii.

the earlier systems of adjudication in the Near East and archaic Greek sources in relation to Drakon's homicide law. These similarities will be presented by the following four topics that are addressed in all three systems of homicide adjudication: the role of the family, the use/acceptance of monetary compensation, intentional and unintentional homicide, and exile as a means of punishment and conceptions of pollution.

1.1 The Role of the Family

Evident by the marble republication of Drakon's homicide law, it is without question that the family played a crucial role in seeking justice for homicide cases. The law states that 'a proclamation is to be made against the killer in the agora by the victim's relatives as far as the degree of cousin's son and cousin. The prosecution is to be shared by the cousins and cousins' sons and by sons-in-law, fathers-in-law, and phratry members'.[31] Drakon's law informs us that a wide extension of the victim's family could bring cases of homicide to trial but as Gagarin discusses, it omits any statement of who specifically was to prosecute the trial itself. As seen in surviving courtroom speeches from the classical period, fathers, brothers, and sons would logistically fill this role as they are the closer relatives to the victim. However, Gagarin suggests this should not be understood as a legal obligation of the family but a legal expectation, as there are no sanctions against those who do not prosecute. Rather, it is proposed that the law be interpreted as close relatives are *allowed* to prosecute instead of *are* to. Echoing the findings of Carey, Gagarin argues Drakon did not explicitly state this as the family's role was accepted without question based on earlier unwritten customary laws that were integrated into the law.[32]

When looking at the customary laws throughout the Homeric poems, the family's importance in arbitrating homicides is heavily stressed. As we have seen, Greek systems of homicide arbitration prior to Drakon's law were based on measures of self-help as is the case in the Homeric world. Bonner and MacDowell point out that the natural expectation to receive help from one's family following a crime is expressed by Odysseus in his character of the Cretan refugee who asks Telemachus 'have the Ithacans been turned against you by some god? Or do you blame your brothers, who should be a man's supporters when conflict comes?' (*Od.* 16. 96–99) in response to hearing his son's situation.[33] Furthermore, Orestes' revenge of his murdered father Agamemnon after killing Aegisthus is revered throughout the *Odyssey* by various figures such as Nestor who tells Telemachus 'how fortunate the dead man had left a son to take revenge upon the wicked, scheming killer, that Aegisthus, who killed Orestes' father' (*Od.* 3. 196–99). S. Douglas Olsen suggests that Nestor is not encouraging Telemachus to kill the suitors but is using Orestes' revenge as a motivator to let Telemachus become a good son according to the customary laws by whatever means he sees fit.[34] Nestor's account stresses how in cases of homicide

[31] Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', xvi–xvii.

[32] Ibid., 303–4.

[33] Bonner, 'Administration of Justice in the Age of Homer', 14; MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens*, 12.

[34] S. Douglas Olson, 'The Stories of Agamemnon in Homer's Odyssey', *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974–)* 120 (1990): 63–64.

the victim's family would seek justice, with sons having the duty to avenge their father to bring justice.

Furthermore, it also can be argued that the family's role in homicide cases and the revenge they seek for the victim is what makes the act of homicide considered a punishable offense. Gagarin finds that the killing of guests normally does not result in punishment as the threat of revenge from the victim's family is non-existent since there are none around. Rather, as experienced by Heracles in the *Odyssey* who kills Iphitus after welcoming him as a guest (*Od.* 21. 25–30), the killer would experience disapproval for ignoring the will of the gods.[35] Eumaeus also suggests this, telling the disguised Odysseus 'I would be praised enormously among men, now and in times to come, if I took you inside and welcomed you, then murdered you!' (*Od.* 14. 402–5). Gagarin concludes that the epics held a clear distinction between what he calls the 'legal violation of killing a regular member of society' and the 'moral violation of killing a guest.'[36]

The importance of witnesses in Homeric homicide arbitration is discussed by multiple scholars and demonstrates an additional role the family could hold in achieving justice for their murdered kin. In his interpretation of the trial scene on Achilles' shield, Papakonstantinou finds that an important aspect of arbitration in the Homeric world was the process being held in public. A litigant's success resided in their ability to present their case that was centered and backed by their network of relatives and friends.[37] The public's presence in arbitrations helped to ensure the litigants' accusations were the truth, as MacDowell argues it was harder to defy the public's opinion as the pressure existed in their number.[38] Like Papakonstantinou, MacDowell discusses the importance of witness in the trial scene focusing on how the public could influence the elder's verdict. One of the proposed interpretations is that the public would respond in applauds and cheers each time an elder spoke, the one who receives the most public support is ultimately accepted. This leads MacDowell to suggest that the origins of democratic judgements are perhaps observable in Homer, as the verdicts made are influenced or guided by the public.[39]

When looking at the Near East it is clear the victim's family was also expected to perform the same responsibilities seen in the Greek world. McKeating discusses that it was the right of the kin group to achieve vengeance as they saw fit, anyone who stood in their way would become involved and endure suffering. This resembles similar conceptions from classical Greece, as MacDowell explains those who do not aid in the action taken against a killer would face disgrace and could even become involved in a legal case and face conviction.[40] Walter Woodburn Hyde argues there is much evidence to suggest that the Greek system of blood-revenge was influenced by the Near East. The concept of blood-revenge was common among early Indo-European peoples, with references to its use seen in ancient Iranian courts, Hebrew laws dating to and beyond the period of the Kings, in addition to self-help remaining superior during the Old Kingdom. Further

[35]Michael Gagarin, 'Morality in Homer', *Classical philology* 82, no. 4 (1987): 295–96.

[36]Ibid., 296.

[37]Papakonstantinou, *Lawmaking and Adjudication in Archaic Greece*, 33–34.

[38]MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens*, 18.

[39]Ibid., 18–21.

[40]Douglas M. MacDowell, *Athenian Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators*, Publications of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Manchester 15 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963), 9.

evidence is found in the Book of Numbers and the Koran where the revenger of blood is permitted to murder the killer in revenge.[41]

1.2 The Use and Acceptance of Monetary Compensation

Having discussed the role of the family within homicide cases it is fitting to shift to the scholarly discourse regarding monetary compensation, or blood money, to redress homicides as it would be up to the victim's family to decide to take it or not. Drakon's homicide law has no mention of blood money which neither confirms nor denies its acceptance or use under the law. Monetary compensation for other crimes is recorded in different written laws such as the adultery laws at Gortyn where husbands can demand ransoms for a captured adulterer. The use of blood money in cases of homicide in Homer are rare as the killer commonly opted to flee into exile to avoid the revenge of the victim's family (as this paper will discuss later) but there are references to the possibility of its use. When talking to Achilles about how he should expect a ransom for Agamemnon's offense in the *Iliad,* Ajax justifies his suggestion by saying 'a man accepts compensation for a murdered brother, a dead son. The killer goes on living in the same town after paying blood money' (*Il.* 9. 652–55). Both Carey and Westbrook attest to this passage being evidence to prove blood money could be paid to redress homicides in Homer.[42] Using his argument that Drakon's homicide law was a written collection of existing legal practices Carey suggests the use of blood money, although not explicitly stated in the law, may still have been practiced based on the family's ability to pardon the killer if they unanimously agree.

The trial scene on Achilles' shield is another example of blood money in cases of homicide. On the shield two men quarrel over 'blood money for a murder, one claiming the right to make restitution, the other refusing to accept any terms' (*Il.* 18. 537–9). There has been much scholarly debate over this account of disputed blood money. Westbrook presents an interpretation that is based on comparisons to the Near East and understandings of intent in homicide cases (which will be further discussed later) to suggest the dispute should be approached with the question can the killer's right to offer blood money be refused by the victim's kin, finding that only in cases of aggravated homicide can that be done.[43]

Similar findings can be seen in the Near East as exile and the revenge of the victim's family is recorded as the most practiced means of resolving homicides, making monetary compensation rare. In the Near Eastern legal system homicide, wounding, rape, and theft were part of their own category which had different consequences for the crime. Westbrook explains that the punishment for these crimes the family, or victim if alive, was given dual rights having the option to take revenge in the form of lawful killing upon the accused and/or his family, or they could accept a ransom, like it is seen in the Greek systems.[44] McKeating discusses that by transitioning away from clan law the ancient Israelian legal system can provide insight to the similar fashion Greek law developed. This

[41]Walter Woodburn Hyde, 'The Homicide Courts of Ancient Athens', *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* 66, nos. 7/8 (1918): 322–23.

[42]Carey, 'In Search of Drakon', 37; Westbrook, 'The Trial Scene in the Iliad', 13.

[43]Ibid., 2.

[44]Ibid., 4.

transitional stage in ancient Israelian law saw the legality of monetary compensation for homicides change since the use blood money was now abandoned after shifting away from the earlier system. McKeating argues that blood money was known and used to redress homicides, or at least it was an option, based on the practice being prohibited in *Num. xxxv* as even in accidental homicides the killer was not allowed to pay a monetary penalty to avoid being exiled.[45]

Though it can confidently be said that monetary compensation to the families of homicide victims was practiced, or at least an option, under early systems of adjudication in the Near East and Greece, there is still uncertainty regarding the origin of the practice. Hyde presents a convincing answer to this question that also explains why the acceptance of blood money was gradually abandoned or prohibited, that being due to changes in the way the human soul was conceptualized in the afterlife. In the Homeric world it was understood that in Hades the soul would live on not holding any strong passions or power to injure the living. For instance, the spirit of unburied Elpenor begs Odysseus to give him a proper burial saying it 'will make the gods enraged at you' (*Od.* 11. 74) implying the threat comes from the gods not the deceased. Since homicide at this time was an offense solely against the kin group, the personal choice of accepting blood money was available and could be opted to avoid the risks of a blood-feud or help with burial or funeral costs helping to repair the inflicted loss.[46] Likewise, Bonner suggests that the acceptance of blood money was to help cover the expenses of sacrifices made to the dead, arguing that this is hinted at by Achilles who promises the deceased Patroclus that he would share the ransom he got for Hector's body with him (*Il.* 24. 639–43).[47] As conceptions of the soul changed, the practice of demanding a life for a life slowly becomes the expectation for homicide redress after Homer's time. According to Hyde's discussion, the soul was now understood to possess a desire for revenge and could even haunt the killer on earth, commonly seen in 4th and 5th century folklore such as the *Choephorae* of Aeschylus as Orestes was instructed by Apollo to kill his father's murderer otherwise the unavenged soul would turn against his kin by sending the Furies to assault him.[48] With Hyde's conclusions it is now understandable why monetary compensation was not a means of homicide redress under Drakon's homicide law, as this aspect of early customary law no longer aligned with changing societal perceptions.

1.3 Intentional and Unintentional Homicide

Across the scholarship there is debate over the extent intent had within homicide adjudication in the Near East and archaic Greece. From the marble fragment of Drakon's law it is implied that there were distinctions between intentional and unintentional homicides, however, the killer's intent had no factor on the punishment as the killer was always sentenced into exile. Westbrook provides an interesting analysis of Drakon's law applying evidence from the Near East and biblical texts, to argue the provision preceding the word

[45]McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', 55.
[46]Hyde, 'The Homicide Courts of Ancient Athens', 321.
[47]Bonner, 'Administration of Justice in the Age of Homer', 19.
[48]Hyde, 'The Homicide Courts of Ancient Athens', 321–22.

'and' at the start of Drakon's law was not in relation to murder but unpremeditated violence which did not cause death. Westbrook forms this argument by also looking to other law codes contemporary to Drakon's, finding ancient Mediterranean law codes share the commonality of being caustic sentences that reflect hypothetical circumstances created to describe how someone would or would not be liable under a formed law.[49] Knowing that Solon only adopted Drakon's laws on homicide in his reforms the copyists would have only kept parts of Drakon's law that pertained to homicide. Westbrook thus suggests the provision proceeding the word 'and' was not concerned with homicide, but an act closely linked to it based on the common nature of ancient law.[50]

Intent is also not distinctive in the Homeric poems and there lacks any concrete evidence of it being a factor in homicide treatment.[51] Likewise, little to no distinction can be formed between intentional and unintentional homicides in the Near East, as McKeating explains at this stage 'crimes' are not yet conceived making the act of homicide a tort against the aggrieved party who seeks recompense that is proportional to the damage done instead of punishment.[52] Despite this, scholars do not rule out the possibility that these ancient peoples could have been aware of the differences between intentional and unintentional acts.[53] Looking for evidence of intent in Homer some scholars interpret the reactions of the suitors in the *Odyssey* when Odysseus kills Antinous (22. 8–26), as proof that the Homeric Greeks understood unintentional homicide to some degree. Odysseus in the disguise of a beggar announces he 'will shoot again, towards another mark no man has hit' (*Od.* 22. 5–6) that target being Antinous, which according to Gagarin, was only understood as an unintentional accident in the eyes of the suitors who only took up arms to stop the now dangerous beggar. However, this example becomes less informative for understanding intent in homicide cases due to the factor of intoxication. The tale of the drunken centaur, told shortly prior to this scene, gives warning to the dangers of drink (*Od.* 21. 286–312), implying the same degree of intentionality does not exist in cases of drunken rape and accident.[54] Westbrook argues that in terms of Odysseus the beggar's liability in this act the lack of intention is irrelevant, as there exist no mitigating circumstances that would prove so as it was caused by inebriation and was warned of the dangers of intoxication moments earlier.[55]

Mitigating circumstances is a central component to Westbrook's discussion surrounding his interpretation of the trial scene, an aspect of Near Eastern law which he argues can be seen in such Greek examples. Based on similar procedures in legal codes from the Hittites and Assyrians, and passages from the Bible, Westbrook finds that since the killer in the trial is claiming the right to pay ransom it means the dispute on the shield is representative of a mitigated homicide. To do this, the mental state of the culprit may be

[49] Raymond Westbrook, 'Drakon's Homicide Law', in *Ex Oriente Lex: Near Eastern Influences on Ancient Greek and Roman Law*, ed. Deborah Lyons and Kurt A. Raaflaub (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 47–48.

[50] Ibid., 53.

[51] Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', 11; Westbrook, 'The Trial Scene in the Iliad', 14.

[52] McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', 46.

[53] Carawan, *Rhetoric and the Law of Draco*, 66; Gagarin, 'Morality in Homer', 296.

[54] Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', 11–12.

[55] Westbrook, 'The Trial Scene in the Iliad', 15.

used, and could be acknowledged under ancient Near Eastern homicide law.[56] Similarly, Carawan finds that the accused's plea for reconciliation through monetary compensation implies remorse and denial of malice in the act. The injured party, however, can choose to ignore or disregard the killer's state of mind but the council of elders as Carawan argues would be responsible for challenging the accused's plea of innocence under oath, suggesting the acknowledgement of intent in Homeric homicide.[57]

Turning back to Westbrook, he explains that when a fight breaks out between two or more parties, if the culprit did not intend the injury or death that resulted and could prove so, it would be considered a mitigated homicide and the killer would be allowed to pay an agreed-upon ransom. Westbrook compares this Near Eastern system to Homer using Patroclus' exile from his home as a boy after killing another boy not willingly, but in anger during a game of dice. In Patroclus' case, it is seen that he strikes the boy because of his emotions but did not wish for his death (*Il.* 23. 92–97). However, although it may not have been intended, Patroclus is still exiled out of his city as the mitigating circumstances may not have been convincing enough in trial but does show an attempt to lessen his moral culpability if not his legal one. The avenger's refusal of the ransom in the trial scene, as Westbrook presents, asserts that the case is one of aggravated homicide, meaning there were no mitigating factors that proved the killer did not intend to kill.[58] While the scholarship aims to suggest the possibility of intent within ancient homicide arbitration, it is speculative as there is not enough concrete evidence to prove so, additionally, as this paper will now discuss, exile was the predominant punishment for any case of homicide.

1.4 Exile and Conceptions of Pollution

As discussed, exile was the primary means to redress cases of homicide and it is seen throughout Near Eastern and Homeric systems of adjudication remaining in use under Drakon's homicide law. By looking at Near Eastern and archaic literary examples we can understand why exile remained popular throughout history and why Drakon incorporated it into his law. In the Near East exile was a voluntary choice that the killer could choose, it was heavily opted for as it helped to protect the individual from the threat of revenge from the victim's family. Sentences of banishment however, as Westbrook describes, were imposed by the government as a measure to ensure the killer would never return but is scarcely discussed in ancient sources suggesting it was rare and that voluntary exile was the common practice.[59] In Homeric Greece banishment would typically be imposed on the killer when a homicide occurred among relatives, whereas in cases of homicide outside of the family fleeing into exile was often the killer's first instinct.[60] Gagarin argues that exile may have been so commonly practiced due to the lack of set laws within the Homeric system as the killer could easily be confused whether they should flee or face the victim's family. As a result, killers often would flee into exile first and their

[56] Ibid., 1–21.

[57] Carawan, *Rhetoric and the Law of Draco*, 66.

[58] Westbrook, 'The Trial Scene in the Iliad', 1–21.

[59] Raymond Westbrook, 'Personal Exile in the Ancient Near East', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 128, no. 2 (2008): 320.

[60] Bonner, 'Administration of Justice in the Age of Homer', 17.

family would try and arrange monetary compensation with the victim's family so the killer could return safely back to the community.[61]

To the ancient person, exile was regarded as a severe and undesirable punishment explaining why the victim's family saw it as an appropriate means to avenge their fallen kin. Exile is often spoken of negatively by those who experience it. In the Bible we see Cain complaining of the hardships and dangers a life of wandering brings, equating the punishment to that of blood revenge.[62] The spirit of Patroclus also holds bitter attitudes of his banishment before finding shelter with Achilles and his father Peleus.[63] Joseph Roisman highlights the negative connotations of exile in archaic poetry such as Alkaois, the Mytelenian poet and political refugee, who speaks of a wretched existence in exile missing the sounds of the agora along with his ancestor's property. Additionally, Theognis expresses the same in addition to saying no substitute of his prior life can be found in exile.[64]

As mentioned, the threat of revenge from the victim's family is what drove killers into exile evident by Theoclymenus who says 'I killed a man of my own tribe, and I have many brothers and kinsmen, powerful in Argos, so I am on the run. They want to kill me' (*Od.* 15. 272–75). While Bonner argues that those in exile are not in danger of being pursued making Theoclymenus' fears groundless,[65] I do not agree with such an argument based on the discussion from various other scholars. It is widely understood that in both Near Eastern and archaic systems the killer would be in danger of revenge as a fugitive until they could reach places of sanctuary or be accepted into a new country.[66] It is not until Telemachus welcomes Theoclymenus on his ship that he is safe after being granted asylum in Ithaca where he no longer bore any moral stigmas regarding his previous actions since no one there was wronged by them.[67] McKeating argues there is sufficient evidence to suggest that in the system prior to ancient Israel's legal reforms a system of sanctuary was in use to mitigate extreme measures of revenge that provided the offender with safety.[68] Likewise, West also finds the use of asylum sanctuaries in Ugaritic, and Biblical law, and in Phoenician and Syrian towns.[69] Even under Drakonian law there is no stipulation that protects an exiled killer. The law does say that those who kill a killer, unless found in certain places in Attica, or if found in the place of the crime, that individual would face the same consequences as the initial killer, but this does not rule out the possibility of the victim's family pursuing the killer. Since homicide was a crime that deeply affected families the likelihood of there existing strong residual resentment towards the killer is justifiable. During the 5th and 4th centuries the institutionalization of *aidesis* allowed exiled killers to come back to Attica which required the persuading of the victim's family. D. L.

[61]Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', 16–17.

[62]Westbrook, 'Personal Exile in the Ancient Near East', 322.

[63]Bonner, 'Administration of Justice in the Age of Homer', 18.

[64]Joseph Roisman, 'The Image of the Political Exile in Archaic Greece', *Ancient Society* 15/17 (1984): 24.

[65]Bonner, 'Administration of Justice in the Age of Homer', 18.

[66]Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', 10–11; McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', 57; M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 37; Westbrook, 'Personal Exile in the Ancient Near East', 322.

[67]Gagarin, 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens', 10–11.

[68]McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', 54–55.

[69]West, *The East Face of Helicon*, 37.

Cairns finds that this implies there still existed considerable resentment from the victim's family that the initial period of exile did not dispel. The later provision is derived from earlier periods when homicide was resolved solely by the family through measures of self help, which, as we have identified, is the system relied upon prior to Drakon's law.[70]

Turning to conceptions of pollution and its connections with exile, while the Homeric poems make no reference to pollution or *miasma* being associated with homicide like in classical Greece it is still worth discussing as it provides insight into the development of homicide law in not only Greece, but also the Near East. It is often argued by scholars that during the archaic period, pollution was a primitive way the Greeks used to handle and understand homicide which was gradually replaced with the institutionalization of law codes and the courts, but as Edward M. Harris argues, this is a common fallacy held by scholars.[71] Carol Dougherty discusses Greek conceptions of exile and pollution throughout the colonization narratives of the archaic period. In Greek thought, the idea of pollution was primarily a way to convey societal chaos rather than a structured method of justification. By exiling the killer, the city was cleansed of pollution and protected from further civil strife as homicide was now considered a wrongdoing that affect the whole community rather than just the family.[72]

To demonstrate her point, Dougherty uses Pindar's account of the founding of Rhodes that alters the account from the Homeric poems where it initially was the fear of retribution from relatives driving murderers into exile. Pindar's account introduces Apollo's role as a purifier instructing murderers to flee and establish a colony now constituting homicide as a sacral offence. Additionally, Plutarch's altered account of the founding of Syracuse omits the expulsion of the native Sikels representing the founder Archias as an exiled murderer, neglecting the inevitable bloodshed that occurs during colonization, replacing it with the purification abilities of colonization.[73] Roisman's arguments adds to this, saying conceptions surrounding exile changed over time from the negative remarks from the archaic poetry to ones that saw it as a source of pride under certain political and social conditions. Later generations ignored the evils that call for exile. As a result, Roisman also attests that colonial aristocrats would use political exile to explain the origins of colonies.[74]

It is apparent that conceptions of pollution are heavily reliant on homicide being conceived as a sacral offence against the land in centralized and urbanized communities. In the Homeric poems exile is used and is brought up numerous times but there is little to no emphasis on pollution being connected to exile. I argue this is because society in the Homeric poems is not yet centralized and urbanized, recalling Carey's argument that the Homeric poems are a collected hybrid of elements from the independent archaic Greek

[70]D. L. Cairns, 'Revenge, Punishment, and Justice in Athenian Homicide Law', *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 49, no. 4 (2015): 648.

[71]Edward M. Harris, 'The Family, the Community and Murder: The Role of Pollution in Athenian Homicide Law', in *Public and Private in Ancient Mediterranean Law and Religion*, ed. Clifford Ando and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 19–20.

[72]Carol Dougherty, 'It's Murder to Found a Colony', in *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics*, ed. Carol Dougherty and Leslie Kurke (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 180–82.

[73]Ibid., 186–87.

[74]Roisman, 'The Image of the Political Exile in Archaic Greece', 32.

city-states. Furthermore, recalling McKeating's findings that ancient Israels' clan law system was gradually amalgamated into the monarchic legal texts and Old Testament, he finds that it is not until there are sacral conceptions of homicide that pollution is a factor in exile. To support this, McKeating discusses a dispute between the Israelites and the Gibeonites who are suffering from a three-year famine caused by an offense Saul had committed against the Gibeonites who require his seven sons to be ritually killed as recompense. McKeating presents the conclusion that the Gibeonites (who are equated to the Canaanites) had a settled and urbanized society that had been established for a longer time than Israel's. Their clan or tribal structure had broken down much further than that of Israel's and now viewed homicide as a pollution of the land rather than a tort against the kin group.[75] It is evident by the scholarship that though exile was used as a means of rectifying instances of homicide in early kin-based systems reliant on measures of self-help, it is not until communities are centralized and urbanized that homicide becomes attributed to a sacral offense against the community where pollution becomes a factor in delivering justice. This explains why its not discussed in Homer or Drakon's homicide law.

1.5 Conclusions

This paper has demonstrated that the various similarities between the legal systems of the Near East and arbitration from the Homeric poems and archaic literature with Drakon's homicide law strongly indicate that Athens first written law code was a product influenced by earlier justice systems. The development of homicide law in archaic Greece heavily mirrors the legal progression of the Near East which, as the evidence suggests, is the result of cultural exchange between the societies. While the Homeric poems and writings of Hesiod are not exact reflections of archaic Greek society, elements of archaic realities are rooted in the literature to ground the narrative to make it understandable to its ancient audience. This makes sources like the Homeric poems a valuable source for understanding the archaic influences on Drakon's law. Overall, this paper aligns itself with the argument made by much of the scholarship that Drakon's laws were not as original and innovative as they are commonly regarded as. Rather they were a collection of existing and accepted legal practices from various archaic Greek city-states made explicit through the Greek's adoption of writing and culture from the Near East and were simply inscribed by Drakon.

References

Bonner, Robert J. 'Administration of Justice in the Age of Homer'. *Classical Philology* 6, no. 1 (1911): 12–36. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://www.jstor.org/stable/261287. (Cited on pages 7, 10, 13, 15–16).

Burgess, Jonathan. 'Gilgamesh and Odysseus in the Otherworld'. *Mouseion (Calgary)* 43, no. 2 (1999): 171–210. (Cited on page 6).

[75] McKeating, 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel', 59–62.

Burkert, Walter. *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age*. Revealing Antiquity 5. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992. (Cited on page 6).

Cairns, D. L. 'Revenge, Punishment, and Justice in Athenian Homicide Law'. *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 49, no. 4 (2015): 645–65. Accessed 11 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10790-015-9522-9. (Cited on page 17).

Carawan, Edwin. *Rhetoric and the Law of Draco*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998. (Cited on pages 4–5, 9, 14–15).

Carey, Chris. 'In Search of Drakon'. *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 59 (2013): 29–51. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26430992. (Cited on pages 5–6, 12).

Cook, Erwin. 'Near Eastern Sources for the Palace of Alkinoos'. *American Journal of Archaeology* 108, no. 1 (2004): 43–77. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40024676. (Cited on page 6).

Dougherty, Carol. 'It's Murder to Found a Colony'. In *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics*, edited by Carol Dougherty and Leslie Kurke, 178–98. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. (Cited on page 17).

Foster, Benjamin R., ed. *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature*. 3rd ed. Bethesda: CDL Press, 2005. (Cited on pages 6–8).

Gagarin, Michael. 'Morality in Homer'. *Classical philology* 82, no. 4 (1987): 285–306. https://doi.org/10.1086/367061. (Cited on pages 11, 14).

———. 'The Prosecution of Homicide in Athens'. *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine studies* 20, no. 4 (2004): 301–23. (Cited on pages 5, 9–10, 14, 16).

Harris, Edward M. 'The Family, the Community and Murder: The Role of Pollution in Athenian Homicide Law'. In *Public and Private in Ancient Mediterranean Law and Religion*, edited by Clifford Ando and Jörg Rüpke, 11–36. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110367034/html. (Cited on page 17).

Hyde, Walter Woodburn. 'The Homicide Courts of Ancient Athens'. *University of Pennsylvania Law Review and American Law Register* 66, nos. 7/8 (1918): 319–62. https://doi.org/10.2307/3314160. (Cited on pages 12–13).

MacDowell, Douglas M. *Athenian Homicide Law in the Age of the Orators*. Publications of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Manchester 15. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963. (Cited on page 11).

———. *The Law in Classical Athens*. Aspects of Greek and Roman Life. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978. (Cited on pages 9–11).

McKeating, Henry. 'The Development of the Law on Homicide in Ancient Israel'. *Vetus Testamentum* 25, no. 1 (1975): 46–68. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.2307/1517371. (Cited on pages 7–8, 13–14, 16, 18).

Myrsiades, Kostas. *Reading Homer's Odyssey*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2019. (Cited on page 8).

Olson, S. Douglas. 'The Stories of Agamemnon in Homer's Odyssey'. *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974–)* 120 (1990): 57–71. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.2307/283978. (Cited on page 10).

Osborne, Robin. 'Archaic Greece'. In *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, edited by Walter Scheidel, Ian Morris and Richard P. Saller, 277–301. Cambridge University Press, 2007. (Cited on page 4).

Papakonstantinou, Zinon. *Lawmaking and Adjudication in Archaic Greece*. London: Duckworth, 2008. (Cited on pages 5, 9, 11).

Pleket, H.W. 'R. S. Stroud, Drakon's Law on Homicide (Univ. of California Publ.: Classical Studies, 3). Berkeley-Los Angeles, Univ. of California Press, 1968. 83 p. 4 Pl. Pr. D. 4.00'. *Mnemosyne* 26, no. 3 (1973): 323–24. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1163/156852573X01052. (Cited on page 3).

Roisman, Joseph. 'The Image of the Political Exile in Archaic Greece'. *Ancient Society* 15/17 (1984): 23–32. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44080232. (Cited on pages 16–17).

Starr, C. G. 'Economic and Social Conditions in the Greek World'. In *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., edited by John Boardman and N. G. L. Hammond, 3:417–41. The Cambridge Ancient History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982. Accessed 11 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521234474.017. (Cited on pages 4–5).

West, M. L. *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997. (Cited on page 16).

Westbrook, Raymond. 'Drakon's Homicide Law'. In *Ex Oriente Lex: Near Eastern Influences on Ancient Greek and Roman Law*, edited by Deborah Lyons and Kurt A. Raaflaub, 44–58. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015. (Cited on page 14).

———. 'Personal Exile in the Ancient Near East'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 128, no. 2 (2008): 317–23. Accessed 9 June 2023. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25608363. (Cited on pages 15–16).

———. 'The Trial Scene in the Iliad'. In *Ex Oriente Lex: Near Eastern Influences on Ancient Greek and Roman Law*, edited by Deborah Lyons and Kurt A. Raaflaub, 1–21. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015. (Cited on pages 8–9, 12, 14–15).

Zde. *Gortyn Code, ca. 450 BC, Gortys.* 14 September 2014, 09:53:56. Accessed 23 July 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gortyn_code,_ca_450_BC,_Gortys,_145813.jpg#/media/File:Gortyn_code,_ca_450_BC,_Gortys,_145813.jpg. (Cited on page 4).

2 The Importance of the Divine in Ancient Egyptian Medicine

El Gillies (HI235)

One of the Egyptians' greatest feats was the development of early forms of medicine, some of which are preserved in medical and magical papyri such as the Ebers Papyrus, the Edwin-Smith Papyrus, and the Berlin Papyrus.

Modern scholars are typically inclined to analyze these records within a modern, strictly scientific framework. However, this approach removes the important context of spirituality which was ingrained in every aspect of the ancients' lives. Both scientific and magical approaches were used for medical treatments since medical ailments were thought to mirror a person's relationship with the greater universe, including gods, entities akin to what we might call demons, the deceased, and the overarching balance of the world they called maʾat. *This paper illustrates the integration of these two aspects of Egyptian medicine.*

The ancient Egyptians herald an impressive list of achievements, from monumental architecture, to well-preserved writing systems, to elaborate fashion trends.[1] Undoubtedly one of their greatest feats was the development of early forms of medicine, which are preserved in several medical and magical papyri- most notably the Ebers Papyrus.[2] Other important texts include the Edwin-Smith Papyrus and the Berlin Papyrus.[3] Modern scholars are usually inclined to analyze the contents of these records within a modern, strictly scientific framework. However, this approach removes the important context of spirituality that was ingrained in every aspect of the ancient Egyptians' lives.[4] Both scientific and magical approaches were used for medical treatments in the papyri, and for good reason: medical ailments were thought to represent a person's relationship with the universe around them, including gods, entities akin to what we would call demons, the deceased, and the greater balance of the world that they called *maʾat*.[5] It was this worldview of the material and spiritual being interconnected that allowed the Egyptians to conceptualize

[1] Bob Brier and A. Hoyt Hobbs, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 2nd ed., Daily Life through History (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008), xi.

[2] Laura M. Zucconi, 'Medicine and Religion in Ancient Egypt', *Religion Compass* 1, no. 1 (January 2007): 27.

[3] Kasia Maria Szpakowska, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt: Recreating Lahun* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 172–73.

[4] Zucconi, 'Medicine and Religion in Ancient Egypt', 26.

[5] Ibid., 27–28.

solutions to injuries and illnesses alike. The integration of spirituality and divinity into treatments was necessary in the development of ancient Egyptian medicine. Secular, scientific observations and methods alone would not have achieved the same results, as that was not how the Egyptians understood and related to everything in the world. This is illustrated through their treatments of wounds and other ailments, their understandings of sacred organs, and their application of the concepts of balance and connectivity to the human body.

2.1 The Origins of Medicine and Healing in Egyptian Mythology

The ancient Egyptians' spiritual beliefs not only aided in their revelations about human biology, they also added a sense of urgency that hastened the finding of solutions and treatments for patients. This is because wounds or illnesses were thought to be caused by either a hostile entity, the displeasure of a revered deity, and/or the threatening of *ma'at* which would cause disorder and chaos.[6] The pharaoh Nebra even stated that his son's illness must be due to divine displeasure at a sin he committed.[7] Ancient Egyptian religion was polytheistic, and at any given time during Egypt's ancient history, thousands of gods with many forms and avatars were being worshipped.[8] Although many deities had multiple associations and forms, the major gods associated with healing and medicine were Sekhmet, Heka, Isis, Horus, and Thoth.[9] The goddess Sekhmet, often depicted as a lioness, was so strongly associated with the medical arts that her priests were said to be gifted healers in several texts and inscriptions.[10] Interestingly, Sekhmet is also known to have a destructive side that can bring about epidemics, plagues, and catastrophe.[11] Heka is the god of magic and medicine, and has both healing and destructive capabilities - much like Sekhmet, who was well known to have a fearsome wrath.[12] The goddess Isis reassembles her husband Osiris in a legendary myth, prompting her designation as a patron of medical specialists, and her son Horus' association with healing comes from a myth where his eye injury is healed after battle.[13] The god Thoth was associated with many things including writing, and by extension, medicine, as it was considered to be a specialized scribal art.[14] While many gods and goddesses were associated with healing and aid, other beings and even other forms of gods were often considered the causes of sickness.[15] A phrase commonly used in medical papyri is translated as 'caused by god

[6] Kasia Szpakowska, 'Demons in Ancient Egypt', *Religion Compass* 3, no. 5 (2009): 800.

[7] Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, 2nd ed. (Avon: British Museum Press, 1994), 138.

[8] Brier and Hobbs, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 36.

[9] Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, 140.

[10] Andrew H. Gordon and Calvin W. Schwabe, *The Quick and the Dead: Biomedical Theory in Ancient Egypt*, Egyptological Memoirs 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 149.

[11] Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, 141.

[12] Katharina Zinn, 'Magic, Pharaonic Egypt', in *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st ed., ed. Roger S. Bagnall et al., 13 vols. (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 4227. 10.1002/9781444338386.

[13] Brier and Hobbs, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 273–74.

[14] Jennifer Gordetsky and Jeanne O'Brien, 'Urology and the Scientific Method in Ancient Egypt', *Urology* 73, no. 3 (2009): 478.

[15] Zucconi, 'Medicine and Religion in Ancient Egypt', 29.

or a dead man'.[16] This concept is crucial in understanding why the Egyptians needed a spiritual context to succeed in medicine- their whole existence was tied to the gods.

2.2 The Medical and the Spiritual: the Dual Role of Egyptian Priests

The intertwining of medicine and religion is personified in the dual role that priests had as healers and spiritual figures. Priests at the Temple of Sais were also renowned for their healing abilities: an inscription on the statue of Udjahorresnet gave one priest the title of 'chief physician/healer'.[17] In addition to these priests, a common term for physicians in medical papyri is *swnw* or *sunu*.[18] This term, often translated as 'healing practitioner', is most commonly seen in the Old Kingdom, and many of these *swnw* also had priestly titles.[19] Scholars believe that the institutions referred to as *per ankh*, or 'House(s) of Life', had medical functions and were attached to temples.[20] This dual role of religious and medical healing is strongly supported in literature, and archaeological remains at Tell El-Amarna support mentions in texts of a renowned temple that provided healing to the sick.[21] Since the Egyptians had strong associations between certain ailments and divine beings, it would make sense to have both temples and healing facilities in close proximity with each other- especially since gods were believed to inhabit their temples during the daytime.[22] Unlike today, where there is a strict dichotomy between science and religion, the Egyptians understood them as intertwining forces that produced a wide variety of outcomes for human beings and the natural world.

2.3 Demons and Other Entities: Early Knowledge of Wound Care

In addition to the plethora of gods that made up the ancient Egyptian cosmos, medical papyri also refer to entities similar to our modern notions of demons, who caused mischief and harm to humans.[23] In the Berlin Papyrus, an 'intruder' is mentioned that the physician needed to combat or take care of in some way.[24] Demons and malicious entities were believed to be the causes of several illnesses, infections, and localized afflictions or pain in one part of the body, such as stomach aches.[25] In recent history this mindset is often dismissed as nonsense, that came from a lack of scientific knowledge during this time. However, in some cases recorded in the medical papyri, their myth-based knowledge

[16] Ibid.
[17] Gordon and Schwabe, *The Quick and the Dead*, 154.
[18] Ibid., 150; K. M. Szpakowska, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt*, 173.
[19] Gordon and Schwabe, *The Quick and the Dead*, 150.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid., 154.
[22] Brier and Hobbs, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 38.
[23] K. Szpakowska, 'Demons in Ancient Egypt', 799.
[24] Péter Sipos et al., 'Special Wound Healing Methods Used in Ancient Egypt and the Mythological Background', *World Journal of Surgery* 28, no. 2 (February 2004): 211.
[25] K. M. Szpakowska, *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt*, 160.

actually parallels scientific reality and leads to successful treatment. One of the best examples of this is the treatment of wounds. Wounds were seen as openings through which malicious entities could enter the body, and so the Egyptians attempted to treat them by 'sealing' off the wound with various substances.[26] We know today that this concept is important to prevent infection-causing bacteria from entering.[27] The treatment used to seal the wound in the papyrus also illustrates the power of mythic origins and subsequent empirical observation working together. Donkey feces was used to 'close' the wound, as donkeys were sometimes associated with the protective nature of Seth and the guarding of Osiris.[28] In fact, donkey feces and many other animal feces have been shown to be rich in antibiotic substances.[29] Once again, the seemingly irrelevant divine origins of a treatment led to a positive result, which was observed and therefore repeated and recorded as successful. Although the Egyptians did not have modern biological knowledge of the functions of bacteria and infections, their own worldview allowed them to postulate causes and solutions, test them, and then change or continue their approach accordingly.

2.4 Worms and Plague-Bearing Winds: Early Knowledge of Disease

This system of combining religious elements and empirical observation was also used in the process of discovering other illnesses and medical concepts. Snakes and scorpions were thought to be manifestations of the restless dead or agents of chaos that threatened *ma'at*, and therefore were treated in a similar way to wounds- although in this case, their treatment of the bites did not yield as successful results.[30] The Egyptians' beliefs about plagues spreading were more scientifically sound, even if they did have mythological origins. In the Edwin Smith Papyrus, spells mention that plagues are believed to be carried by winds and caused by Sehkmet, which brought 'disease demons' that infected people.[31] This trend in mentioning

'plague-bearing winds' suggests that Egyptian practitioners had some idea of how airborne diseases were spread, whether they meant literal winds or the winds of change, such as new immigrants entering the area.[32] A common disease in ancient Egypt that is still prevalent in their population today is schistosomiasis.[33] It is contracted from waters infested with the *Schistosoma hematobium* parasite, which is extremely prevalent in both the Nile Delta and the Nile Valley South.[34] Many Egyptologists believe the urology disorder mentioned in medical papyri, notably the Ebers Papyrus, as '*aaa* disease' is in fact

[26] Sipos et al., 'Special Wound Healing Methods', 211.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 212.
[30] Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, 138.
[31] Brier and Hobbs, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 277.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Rashida M.R. Barakat, 'Epidemiology of Schistosomiasis in Egypt: Travel through Time: Review', *Journal of Advanced Research* 4, no. 5 (September 2013): 425.
[34] Ibid.

schistosomiasis.[35] Although ancient Egyptian healers believed the disease to have divine origins, this was once again accompanied by careful observation and a trial-and-error approach to treatment. In the Berlin Papyrus, the phrase 'driving out the *aaa* of a god or a dead man' appears, highlighting a similar belief to wounds and other illnesses previously mentioned.[36] The Ebers Papyrus also reveals an impressive understanding of the parasitic nature of the disease by associating it with worms, and listing a remedy to kill worms in the body caused by *aaa* disease.[37] Similarly to the parallels between infections and demons, the idea of malicious beings entering the body to create illness is accompanied by the mention of worms that need to be extracted. The Egyptian concept of purity, or *wab*, linked cleanliness between humans and the divine - they believed by being hygienic they would also achieve spiritual purity.[38] This mindset led to preventative measures, that were often successful, to prevent schistosomiasis such as penile sheaths and discouraging people from drinking polluted water.[39] These religious beliefs reflect how the Egyptians interacted with the world around them, and thus provided a way for them to deduce the causes of illnesses and attempt to treat them.

2.5 Mummification and Sacred Organs

An important part of Egyptian culture was the process of mummification after death, which demonstrated the sacred value assigned to the various organs of the body. Organs were often associated with specific deities during the mummification process: the liver, lungs, stomach and intestines were removed from the body and put into the protection of the four sons of Horus.[40] The Book of the Dead also includes spells that assign different body parts to different gods, with sections such as 'my eyes are Hathor ... my lips are Anubis ...'.[41] Each aspect of an Egyptian's existence, right down to each organ, had a divine correlation deeply rooted in their cosmos. The heart was of special significance, as the Egyptians believed it was the center of a person's knowledge and determined their worthiness of the afterlife.[42] It was believed to be weighed against the feather of *ma'at* after a person died, to determine if they were worthy of joining Osiris in the afterlife.[43] Despite the fact that Egyptian physicians attributed many functions of the brain to the heart, they still deduced an impressive amount of knowledge about the heart's functions and structures. One section from a medical text describes how the physician can feel that the heart 'speaks out of the vessels of every limb' referring to the person's pulse.[44] Just as the heart was believed to be the center of *ma'at* in a person, it was also understood that

[35] Gordetsky and O'Brien, 'Urology and the Scientific Method in Ancient Egypt', 478.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Cyril P. Bryan, trans., *Ancient Egyptian Medicine: The Papyrus Ebers*, in collab. with G. Elliot Smith (London: Ares Publishers, 1930), 118–19.

[38] Zucconi, 'Medicine and Religion in Ancient Egypt', 28.

[39] Gordetsky and O'Brien, 'Urology and the Scientific Method in Ancient Egypt', 478.

[40] Zucconi, 'Medicine and Religion in Ancient Egypt', 28.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Magdi M. Saba et al., 'Ancient Egyptian Medicine and the Concept of Heart Failure', *Journal of Cardiac Failure* 12, no. 6 (2006): 418.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

it played a significant role in keeping a person alive. This is evidenced by the mention of *mtw* vessels in the Ebers Papyrus that 'link up' important parts of the body to create balance and flow, not unlike the circulatory or respiratory systems.[45] Of course, the healers at this time did not have complete understandings of these systems yet, but their ideas of interconnected systems in the body were highly developed for their time. Physicians would check the pulse of the heart to check if the *mtw* vessels were clear.[46] Even though many of the illnesses they faced could not be treated yet, knowing to check patients' pulse as an indicator of health is a remarkable discovery for healers in antiquity.

2.6 Conclusions

When Herodotus visited Egypt in 450 BCE, he recorded that the medical practice was 'split up into several parts' and that there were 'innumerable doctors'.[47] The advancement and specialization in medicine that Herodotus observed was one of the most incredible achievements of the ancient Egyptians, and along with empirical observations, their spiritual beliefs were key tools in helping them accomplish this. All aspects of ancient Egyptian medicine were deeply rooted in religious ritual and mythology, from the causes of wounds and illnesses, to the sacred value of organs, to the interconnected systems that keep us alive. Indeed, even the patient and the physician would often take on the roles of the gods: the healer would often call on the powers of Isis, as she helped reassemble her husband Osiris, and the patient would be represented by Horus, who had his eye miraculously healed.[48] The religious and cultural contexts of ancient Egypt are inseparable from the history of medicine, and should not be ignored when examining ancient texts. Many scholars have attempted to 'sort' the texts into two understandings of knowledge: medical/scientific and magical.[49] On the contrary, the papyri we have today provide an insight into how deeply connected these two fields of knowledge were for the Egyptians. Spiritual and scientific knowledge were one in the same, as they were gained through their collective experiences in the world and used in their quest to explain the unexplainable. It is impossible to decide which understanding came first and led to the other, but one thing is for certain: both were necessary to create one of antiquity's first complex understandings of medicine.

References

Barakat, Rashida M.R. 'Epidemiology of Schistosomiasis in Egypt: Travel through Time: Review'. *Journal of Advanced Research* 4, no. 5 (September 2013): 425–32. Accessed 10 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jare.2012.07.003. (Cited on page 26).

Brier, Bob and A. Hoyt Hobbs. *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*. 2nd ed. Daily Life through History. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2008. (Cited on pages 23–26, 28).

[45] Zucconi, 'Medicine and Religion in Ancient Egypt', 27–29.
[46] Ibid., 28–29.
[47] Brier and Hobbs, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 283.
[48] K. Szpakowska, 'Demons in Ancient Egypt', 800.
[49] Ibid., 799.

Bryan, Cyril P., trans. *Ancient Egyptian Medicine: The Papyrus Ebers.* In collaboration with G. Elliot Smith. London: Ares Publishers, 1930. https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=coo.31924073200077&view=1up&seq=6. (Cited on page 27).

Gordetsky, Jennifer and Jeanne O'Brien. 'Urology and the Scientific Method in Ancient Egypt'. *Urology* 73, no. 3 (2009): 476–79. Accessed 10 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.urology.2008.09.045. (Cited on pages 24, 27).

Gordon, Andrew H. and Calvin W. Schwabe. *The Quick and the Dead: Biomedical Theory in Ancient Egypt.* Egyptological Memoirs 4. Leiden: Brill, 2004. (Cited on pages 24–25).

Pinch, Geraldine. *Magic in Ancient Egypt.* 2nd ed. Avon: British Museum Press, 1994. (Cited on pages 24, 26).

Saba, Magdi M., Hector O. Ventura, Mohamed Saleh and Mandeep R. Mehra. 'Ancient Egyptian Medicine and the Concept of Heart Failure'. *Journal of Cardiac Failure* 12, no. 6 (2006): 416–21. Accessed 10 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cardfail.2006.03.001. (Cited on page 27).

Sipos, Péter, Hedvig Győry, Krisztina Hagymási, Pál Ondrejka and Anna Blázovics. 'Special Wound Healing Methods Used in Ancient Egypt and the Mythological Background'. *World Journal of Surgery* 28, no. 2 (February 2004): 211–16. Accessed 10 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00268-003-7073-x. (Cited on pages 25–26).

Szpakowska, Kasia. 'Demons in Ancient Egypt'. *Religion Compass* 3, no. 5 (2009): 799–805. Accessed 10 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2009.00169.x. (Cited on pages 24–25, 28).

Szpakowska, Kasia Maria. *Daily Life in Ancient Egypt: Recreating Lahun.* Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008. (Cited on pages 23, 25).

Zinn, Katharina. 'Magic, Pharaonic Egypt'. In *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, 1st ed., edited by Roger S. Bagnall, Kai Brodersen, Craige B. Champion, Andrew Erskine and Sabine R. Huebner, 4227–31. 13 vols. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012. Accessed 10 June 2023. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444338386.wbeah15250. (Cited on page 24).

Zucconi, Laura M. 'Medicine and Religion in Ancient Egypt'. *Religion Compass* 1, no. 1 (January 2007): 26–37. Accessed 10 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8171.2006.00004.x. (Cited on pages 23–25, 27–28).

3 The Cultural Impact and Symbolism of the Burning of Persepolis

Tess Moffat (AR333)

In 330 BCE, Alexander took the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, Parsa, a. k. a. Persepolis. The city was significant to the Persians, especially considering the nearby cultural landscape and Persepolis' direct ties to the Achaemenid kings. Instead of preserving it, Alexander let his army loot its riches and set the palace complex ablaze, seeking vengeance for the destruction of the Athenian Acropolis by Xerxes. The conflagration consumed palace structures and culturally significant artefacts, though Persepolis continued to be regarded as an important site and was revisited following its destruction. For the Greeks, this event represented their victory over their ancient enemy. However, for the Persians, the site became a rallying point for later empires.

This paper will demonstrate that while the burning of Persepolis was a significant cultural disaster which signalled the demise of the Achaemenid Empire and the beginning of Macedonian hegemony in the East, the site, as well as Achaemenid customs and traditions, remained culturally relevant centuries after its destruction.

3.1 The Razing of a City

In 334 BCE, Alexander III of Macedonia, who commonly referred to as Alexander the Great, led the Macedonian army and the League of Corinth into Asia Minor, intending to destroy the ancient enemy of Greece, the Achaemenid Empire. By the end of his life in 323, Alexander had defeated the Persians and secured territories in the East, expanding the Macedonian Empire and earning him renown throughout history.[1] However, Alexander the Great's 'legendary' image changes depending on the context. After taking the city without force in 330, the Macedonian forces looted and burned the ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire, Parsa or, as it is known in the West, Persepolis.[2] The destruction of the city occurred in two stages:

1. The Macedonian forces slaughtered the inhabitants, vandalized the residential area, and looted Persepolis.

[1] Waldemar Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest: Resistance to Alexander the Great* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 15.

[2] Ibid., 142.

2. After the city was thoroughly pillaged, the palaces were set ablaze during an act of drunken revelry.

The latter decision was allegedly fuelled by a desire for vengeance for the 480 BCE destruction of the Athenian Acropolis.[3] The sacking of a city is commonplace in war; however, the destruction of Persepolis was more than a cultural disaster and became a symbol for both sides. This paper will demonstrate that Persepolis' destruction symbolized the end of an empire and the victorious beginning of Macedonian hegemony in the East; however, Achaemenid customs and sites remained culturally relevant centuries after the empire fell, demonstrating resilience and resistance.

3.2 Persepolis and Its Past

For the Persians, Persepolis was a culturally important centre with an ancient and royal history. Surrounded by the Zagros mountains, Persepolis was constructed around 515 by Darius I (ca. 550–486), the third king of the Achaemenid Empire.[4] His descendants continued to expand and develop the city throughout the fifth and fourth centuries. While Darius constructed several aspects of the palace complex, such as the great stairway and audience hall, most of the buildings were erected during the reign of his son, Xerxes (ca. 519–466). Xerxes' contributions include the Palace of Xerxes, the Hall of a Hundred Columns, and the Palace of Artaxerxes I.[5] Xerxes created an ambitious building program that was only completed during the reign of his son, Artaxerxes I (ca. early fifth century–424).[6] Persepolis was personally significant for the kings; they were building upon the work of their fathers and ancestors.

Ggia, *Persepolis Panorama - Iran.*, 29 December 2010, 10:51:02. Image license: CC A-SA 3.0 Unported.

Figure 3.1: Panoramic view of Persopolis

Persepolis was also important for secular and religious practices and rituals. The city was most likely one of several seats of Achaemenid power, housing administrative buildings and monumental religious structures.[7] Its treasury famously contained an abundance

[3] Jan P. Stronk, *Semiramis' Legacy: The History of Persia According to Diodorus of Sicily* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 332.

[4] Ibid., 161.

[5] Ali Mousavi, *Persepolis: Discovery and Afterlife of a World Wonder* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 150.

[6] Stronk, *Semiramis' Legacy*, 165.

[7] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 48.

of riches and offerings. According to the various images along the Apadana, representatives from all corners of the empire brought tributes to the rulers at Persepolis.[8] While the delivery of gifts might be indicative of a secular relationship, historians such as Paul Kriwaczek have theorized that the delivery of offerings could have coincided with the celebration of the New Year during the spring equinox. The king would have been residing at Persepolis during this time, and imagery on the buildings, such as a lion fighting a bull, is believed to represent the sun aligning with Taurus during the vernal equinox.[9] Regardless of whether this interpretation be correct, Persepolis was an essential location for ritual and administrative events.

The city's location is also significant. Outside the city, archaeologists have uncovered two royal tombs, possibly belonging to Artaxerxes II and Artaxerxes III, as well as an unoccupied chamber most likely intended for the last Achaemenid king, Darius III (ca. 381–330).[10] The city is also near Pasargadae, the original capital city built by Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, in the sixth century.[11] Naqsh-e Rustam, the burial place for the descendants of Darius I, is also in proximity.[12] The city was central to Persian cultural heritage, contributing to and embodying the legacy of these kings. Persepolis was more than a cultural centre; people settled near the city as workers, farmers, or nobles. According to historian Richard Stoneman, these people 'derived their existence in some way from the palace'.[13] Persepolis was an important cultural centre and settlement that embodied the legacy and heritage of the Achaemenid rulers, making it the perfect target for an invading and vengeful force.

3.3 The Burning of Persepolis

Classical writers have thoroughly described the destruction of Persepolis. Several Western authors have described the event, such as Diodorus Siculus (ca. first century), Quintus Curtius Rufus (ca. first century CE), Plutarch (ca. 45–125), and Arrian (ca. 87–160). These writers post-date Alexander significantly and never stepped foot into Persepolis, but they most likely based their writings on earlier lost records.[14] According to classical sources, after taking Persepolis with little resistance due to an offer of surrender by the treasurer, Tirdad, Alexander took the citadel for himself, securing the riches of the Achaemenid Empire to fund his campaign.[15] These classical writers have speculated regarding what he found; Alexander took anywhere from 40,000 to 120,000 talents, any pieces of silver and gold, furniture, statues, artwork, and fabrics;[16] the stolen material was brought back

[8] John Walsh and Elizabeth Baynham, eds., *Alexander the Great and Propaganda* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 8.

[9] Stronk, *Semiramis' Legacy*, 178.

[10] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 25.

[11] Stronk, *Semiramis' Legacy*, 167.

[12] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 49.

[13] Richard Stoneman, 'Persepolis', in *Xerxes: A Persian Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 180.

[14] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 57–58.

[15] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 147.

[16] Edmund F. Bloedow and Heather M. Loube, 'Alexander the Great 'Under Fire' at Persepolis', *Klio* 79, no. 2 (1997): 344–45.

to Greece. In particular, the silver was recycled and used for the coinage of Alexander and his successors.[17] After securing the treasury, Alexander allowed his army to plunder the city, slaughtering and enslaving its inhabitants and looting private residences.[18] The pillaging process was comprehensive, as archaeologists have uncovered a small number of precious metals and valuable artefacts. The Macedonians left few luxuries behind and even ripped adornments from sculptures. In the treasury, archaeologists have only been able to recover stone tableware, scattered coins, and the charred remains of materials and artefacts.[19] After the riches of Persepolis were sacked, Alexander and his forces occupied Persepolis for four months before resuming their campaign against Darius III.[20] While a culturally and economically disastrous event for the Achaemenid Empire, pillaging is a common aspect of warfare, especially for keeping the morale of troops and maintaining campaign funds; however, burning Persepolis was a controversial decision even during Alexander's campaign.

The burning of Persepolis was a horrific disaster that destroyed Persian cultural heritage. There are four accounts of what occurred, but the authors agree on certain details. These writers most likely had access to similar source materials or knowledge of each other's interpretations, especially for the authors after Diodorus.[21] Alexander and his companions partook in countless feasts and parties during his four months in Persepolis. On one of these occasions, Thais, an Athenian courtesan, persuaded the king and his intoxicated army to set fire to the palaces of Persepolis to avenge Greece and the burning of the Athenian Acropolis by Xerxes.[22] This was a targeted attack against the king, considering Xerxes was behind the building program of Persepolis. The fire even originated in the architectural structures created by Xerxes.[23] While Diodorus, Quintus Rufus, and Plutarch agreed that the Macedonians were inebriated and encouraged by Thais, Arrian had a dissenting opinion. Arrian believed this was a sober decision by Alexander and excluded the role of Thais in his description of the event; however, he agrees that the king was motivated by revenge on account of the Greco-Persian wars.[24] Alexander's decision was believed to be problematic by members of the Greek party. According to Arrian, Parmenion warned Alexander against destroying his own property and that the Persians would not react kindly to this disgrace.[25] Despite these warnings, Alexander the Great set fire to Persepolis.

Persepolis has been thoroughly studied and recorded by academics and archaeologists. The ruins remained visible on the landscape, being documented by western travellers, traders, and missionaries from the fourteenth century onward and were recognized as Persepolis in the seventeenth century. The city, specifically the palace complex, underwent several early archaeological excavations in the 1800s and continues to be studied

[17] Janne Blichert-Toft et al., 'Origin and Fate of the Greatest Accumulation of Silver in Ancient History', *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 14 (2022): 1, 64.

[18] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 58.

[19] Bloedow and Loube, 'Alexander under Fire', 345–46.

[20] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 152.

[21] Stoneman, 'Persepolis', 161.

[22] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 58.

[23] Walsh and Baynham, *Alexander the Great and Propaganda*, 114.

[24] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 58.

[25] Stronk, *Semiramis' Legacy*, 327.

today.[26] Evidence of conflagration has been found in several important buildings, such as the Apadana, the Hall of a Hundred Columns, the Treasury, and the Hadish. These structures and their features—especially the columns—were primarily constructed from cedar, ensuring that the flames would quickly consume the buildings.[27] The fire also reached parts of the city, leaving in its wake charred beams, scorched floors, baked and cracked mudbrick walls, and burnt columns;[28] for example, archaeologists have recorded layers of ash and charcoal in the Hall of a Hundred Columns.[29] In addition to destroying the buildings, the conflagration also changed their physical structure and mechanical properties; for example, the intense flames altered the shape and increased the inherent strength of stone features.[30] Outside of architectural structures, archaeologists discovered evidence of the fire elsewhere. The rooms in the palace complex were most likely filled with combustible material besides wooden features like window frames and columns; charred fabric particles have been uncovered in Room 11 of the treasury.[31] The cultural heritage and artwork of the Achaemenid Empire were possibly other sources of fuel for the flames, especially tapestries.[32] It stands to reason that other important artefacts and works made from combustible material would have been consumed, such as writings recorded on parchment and animal skin. Fortunately, certain artefacts survived the inferno, such as clay tablets which effectively ended up fired.[33] Other artefacts were transformed; in Room 34, the shafts of arrows were discovered in carbonized lumps.[34] While the fire did not consume the entirety of the city, the palace complex of Persepolis was severely damaged and became mostly uninhabitable.[35] Alexander's presence in Persepolis resulted in the looting and destruction of the Achaemenid Empire's cultural heritage and its kings' legacy. The burning of the city is well-documented in the written and archaeological records and had disastrous implications for the Persians and their heritage. However, this event was more than an act of war and cultural disaster.

3.4 Persepolis and Propaganda

Ancient historians used the burning of Persepolis to emphasize the image of Alexander the Great and the Greek victory over their enemies, claiming the fire represented the end of the Achaemenid Empire. During his time and since, Alexander has been the subject of propaganda, including his burning of Persepolis.[36] The classical sources rely on clichés, tropes, and literary devices. For example, Thais of Athens' instigating the drunken act

[26] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 95.

[27] Bloedow and Loube, 'Alexander under Fire', 341.

[28] M. Heidari, M. Torabi-Kaveh and H. Mohseni, 'Artificial Weathering Assessment of Persepolis Stone Due to Heating to Elucidate the Effects of the Burning of Persepolis', *Bulletin of Engineering Geology and the Environment* 75, no. 3 (2016): 980–81.

[29] Bloedow and Loube, 'Alexander under Fire', 342.

[30] Heidari, Torabi-Kaveh and Mohseni, 'Artificial Weathering', 984.

[31] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 62.

[32] Stronk, *Semiramis' Legacy*, 170.

[33] Stoneman, 'Persepolis', 165.

[34] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 62.

[35] Ibid., 70.

[36] Walsh and Baynham, *Alexander the Great and Propaganda*, 140.

of arson was a propagandistic tool. Not only is it symbolic that someone from Athens pushed for the fire, but the fact that it was a courtesan behind the destruction of Persepolis, the legacy of the kings, is an insult to the Achaemenid Empire.[37] Classical scholars and writers heavily dramatize the event. Primarily, the classical sources are focused on the image of Alexander as the avenger of Greece, a common trope within Greek and Macedonian propaganda.[38] According to these sources, Alexander was the champion of Greece, avenging the historical injustice committed by Xerxes.[39] Diodorus even went one step further. According to him, when they were on the road to Persepolis, Alexander and his army came across Greek artisans who had been taken prisoner at Persepolis and been mutilated. This angered the Macedonian forces and is thought to have inspired Alexander to take revenge. The event was most likely a dramatic device to justify the treatment of Persepolis.[40] According to classical authors, Alexander was avenging the destruction of the Athenian Acropolis and the barbaric atrocities committed by the Achaemenids.

The burning of Persepolis was itself a literary trope used by propagandists; the symbol of Persian hegemony and its cultural heritage erupting into flames was meant to represent the fiery conclusion to the Achaemenid Empire and the triumph of Greece over its historical enemies. The destruction of Persepolis did not entirely represent the end of the Achaemenid Empire. Darius III was still alive and attempting to prepare for Alexander's next move; however, this would be in vain, as he was killed by his own men in July 330 BCE.[41] The death of Darius was the actual end of the Achaemenid Empire, as the destruction of Persepolis would have been a hollow 'victory' without the king's death.[42] Written sources used the burning of Persepolis for Alexandrian and Greek propaganda, transforming the event into a symbol of Greek success and the fiery demise of an enemy empire.

Alexander's decision to set fire to Persepolis could have been a deliberate political action, using the city to make a point. Historians have speculated why Alexander would have taken this course of action, looking beyond what the classical sources have described. According to Johann Gustave Droysen, Alexander waited four months at Persepolis for Darius' response regarding recognizing Alexander's rule over Asia. After failing to receive a response, Alexander decided to set Persepolis on fire to demonstrate that he had fully conquered Asia and that the Achaemenid Empire was no more.[43] If this theory is accurate, Alexander wanted to be recognized as the next ruler of Persia. Other historians, such as Pierre Briant and Krzysztof Nawotka, have speculated that Alexander stayed in Persepolis for four months to wait for the roads to thaw and for the Persian New Year festival. During the spring equinox, the delivery of tributes to the king would have occurred, possibly leading to the recognition of Alexander as the next ruler. According to these historians, Alexander attempted to validate his rule by visiting the resting place of Cyrus the Great, acknowledging the history of Persian conquest and justifying the Macedonian invasion

[37] Bloedow and Loube, 'Alexander under Fire', 349.
[38] Walsh and Baynham, *Alexander the Great and Propaganda*, 140.
[39] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 151.
[40] Ibid., 149.
[41] Walsh and Baynham, *Alexander the Great and Propaganda*, 137.
[42] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 202.
[43] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 66.

as re-establishing the line of Cyrus. However, his attempts were in vain; he was not recognized as ruler, and thus set Persepolis ablaze in retaliation.[44] Alexander could have used Persepolis as a symbol and tool for his political ambitions, primarily to illustrate the end of the Achaemenid Empire and the beginning of Macedonian control.

3.5 The Legacy of the Achaemenid Empire

The destruction of Persepolis was a devastating cultural disaster for the Achaemenid Empire, representing the end of an era; however, the legacy of Persia continued to live on well after the empire's demise. The written record is biased towards the western perspective and Alexander the Great, especially when considering the adage about who writes history.[45] Considering the extent of the damage, looting, and violence, the people of Persepolis most likely would not have had a high opinion of their new Macedonian ruler. However, there is little evidence of immediate Persian resistance, especially in the historical record.[46] If the theories of Droysen and Briant are to be believed, the refusal by Persian nobility and Darius III to acknowledge Alexander as the next ruler of the Achaemenid Empire represents Persian opposition.[47] Evidence of resistance would be more vivid later in history.

Despite the new Macedonian rulers and Hellenistic traditions, elements of the former Achaemenid Empire remained culturally relevant. Greek control and influence did not end with the death of Alexander in 323. The Seleucid Empire, one of several Greek states formed from the division of Alexander's legacy among his generals, was established in 312, encompassing the regions previously held by the Achaemenid Empire. Seleucid control concluded in 63 BCE after the Romans conquered their remaining territories.[48] During the Seleucid reign, Greek traditions were adopted and combined with local cultures to varying degrees.[49] The Seleucid Empire dealt with uprisings and acts of resistance against their rule. Within Persia, the Seleucid rulers had to deal with the Parthians. The early rulers of the Parthian Empire, founded in 247, challenged the Macedonians, the Scythians, Armenia, and Rome. They retook territory now forming modern Iran from the Seleucid Empire, especially Parthia.[50] This resistance involved cultural changes: the Parthians traced their lineage to the Achaemenid kings and embraced Persian culture and Hellenistic traditions.[51] While the Achaemenid Empire had been symbolically destroyed, their practices and rituals were revived and closely followed by later generations.

Cultural resistance to Hellenism and Greek rule was strong centuries beyond the Seleucid Empire. The rulers of the Sassanid Empire, which succeeded the Parthians and flourished from the third to seventh centuries, also claimed to be descendants of the

[44] Ibid., 67.

[45] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 152.

[46] Ibid., 157.

[47] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 66–67.

[48] Nikolaus Leo Overtoom, *Reign of Arrows: The Rise of the Parthian Empire in the Hellenistic Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 12–13.

[49] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 200.

[50] Overtoom, *Reign of Arrows*, xxi–xxii.

[51] Ibid., 6–8.

Achaemenid kings. This empire was founded by Ardashir I, who aimed to avenge 'the blood of Dara' or 'the blood of Darius' by restoring the legacy of the Achaemenid Empire by expanding its boundaries.[52] Ardashir I and his descendants, especially Shapur I, led several campaigns against Rome, attempting to reclaim territories that Persia had lost.[53] The Sassanid kings also took an interest in Achaemenid structures and cultural heritage. Naqsh-e Rustam was frequently visited by Sassanid rulers, who documented their exploits and conquests on the cliffside below the tombs of the Achaemenid kings.[54] Persepolis continued to remain culturally significant; Sassanid graffiti depicting royal processions and kings have been uncovered on the walls of the Harem of Xerxes and the Palace of Darius. Considering that the images were carved where they could hardly be seen, they were most likely sketches and studies for larger artwork similar to the bas-reliefs outside of Persepolis.[55] The Sassanid rulers wanted to establish physical and spiritual links to the bygone Achaemenid kings. One of the inscriptions outside of the Palace of Darius documents the 310 CE royal visit of Shapur Saganshah, governor of Sistan and Sind and a relative of Shapur II. The text describes how the prince organized a great feast for nobles and important members of society in the Palace of Darius. As a part of the festivities, he ordered one of the many fallen pillars to be raised and offered blessings to his relatives and ancestors.[56] For the Sassanid kings, Achaemenid cities and sacred locations were their cultural inheritance. Aiming to revive the bloodline of Dara, the Sassanid kings attempted to reclaim what had been lost, including spiritual connections to their ancestors. With the burning of Persepolis, the Achaemenid Empire had been symbolically destroyed; however, the city continued to be culturally significant and symbolized Persian excellence centuries after its destruction, representing Persian resilience.

3.6 The Fate of Persepolis

The destruction of Persepolis was a horrific disaster, especially for its occupants; however, this was the end neither for the city nor its people. According to classical sources, the entire population was slaughtered or enslaved, but this could have been a literary device to showcase the ruthlessness of Alexander and his quest for revenge.[57] Some inhabitants may have fled the city to avoid the incoming army, but there is little evidence to support this in the archaeological and written records.[58] That said, it stands to reason that the city could have been reoccupied and revisited after 330. According to the historical record, Alexander passed Persepolis around 324 on his ill-fated journey to Babylon. Evidence in the archaeological record supports that the city was indeed revisited; in the treasury, archaeologists have recovered two coins struck around 312 and a third from 325.[59] Several buildings survived the wanton destruction and conflagration. The structures surround-

[52] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 78–79.
[53] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 155.
[54] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 80.
[55] Ibid., 81.
[56] Ibid., 82.
[57] Bloedow and Loube, 'Alexander under Fire', 349.
[58] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 155.
[59] Walsh and Baynham, *Alexander the Great and Propaganda*, 8.

ing the Terrace were mostly preserved and could have been occupied for residential or commercial purposes. Decades after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire, the southwest portion of the Terrace was partially reoccupied by local rulers. There is evidence of construction activities surrounding the Terrace during the post-Achaemenid period, but there are limited finds pertaining to this time. However, the small number of artefacts from the post-Achaemenid period is most likely due to such materials being difficult to distinguish from their earlier counterparts, an issue that has plagued archaeologists since the 1930s.[60] The site was also utilized for festivities and celebrations by the Seleucids and Greeks. In the historical record, Pekeustas, an officer under the late Alexander, organized a festival at Persepolis in 316 to honour the Greek general Eumenes. The festivities took place in tents because of the poor state of the administrative buildings.[61] The site was most likely chosen due to its historical importance for the Greeks, representing as it did their victory over the Persians.[62] The palaces were not reconstructed; however, the local population did not wholly abandon these structures. The materials from the ruins were harvested and reused at Parthian and Sassanid sites like Istakhr and Qasr-e Abunasr.[63] The burning of Persepolis did not result in the complete abandonment of the area and the site was frequently visited and used. While the local population continued to rely on the city, Persepolis was never rebuilt; instead, the ruins of its grand palaces and halls remained visible on the landscape, reminding the people of a bygone era.

3.7 The Legacy of Warfare

Persepolis was a culturally significant landmark for the Achaemenid Empire, representing the legacy of its kings; by setting the city ablaze, Alexander the Great demonstrated to both Greeks and Persians that the Achaemenid Empire was no more, signalling the beginning of Greek control in the East. However, Persian culture was not entirely lost and would be revived centuries after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire.[64] While the Greeks viewed the burning of Persepolis as a triumphal moment, the people of Persia had a very different perspective. The fire was a cultural disaster and resulted in the destruction of invaluable works of art and the collapse of the palace complex. For the Greeks, the ruins represent their victory over their ancient and powerful enemy and their triumph in avenging the Athenian Acropolis.[65] However, this event was adopted as a part of the city's history. The Sassanid royals viewed Persepolis as a reminder of their ancestors' strength and desired to avenge their bloodline by re-establishing Persian culture and power in the East.[66] Despite not being rebuilt to its former glory, Persepolis continued to have an active life well after the fall of the Achaemenid Empire. Acts of war are plagued with symbolic actions and decisions, affecting how an event is remembered by either side. The burning

[60] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 73.
[61] Ibid., 74.
[62] Walsh and Baynham, *Alexander the Great and Propaganda*, 114.
[63] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 104.
[64] Overtoom, *Reign of Arrows*, 12–13.
[65] Heckel, *In the Path of Conquest*, 155.
[66] Mousavi, *Persepolis*, 79.

of Persepolis signalled the beginning of Macedonian hegemony in the East; however, the legacy of the Achaemenid kings was not entirely extinguished.

References

Blichert-Toft, Janne, François de Callataÿ, Philippe Télouk and Francis Albarède. 'Origin and Fate of the Greatest Accumulation of Silver in Ancient History'. *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences* 14 (2022): 64. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12520-022-01537-y. (Cited on page 34).

Bloedow, Edmund F. and Heather M. Loube. 'Alexander the Great 'Under Fire' at Persepolis'. *Klio* 79, no. 2 (1997): 341–53. https://doi.org/10.1524/klio.1997.79.2.341. (Cited on pages 33–36, 38).

Ggia. *Persepolis Panorama - Iran.* 29 December 2010, 10:51:02. Accessed 23 July 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:20101229_Top_panoramic_view_of_Persepolis_Iran.jpg. (Cited on page 32).

Heckel, Waldemar. *In the Path of Conquest: Resistance to Alexander the Great.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2020. (Cited on pages 31, 33–34, 36–39).

Heidari, M., M. Torabi-Kaveh and H. Mohseni. 'Artificial Weathering Assessment of Persepolis Stone Due to Heating to Elucidate the Effects of the Burning of Persepolis'. *Bulletin of Engineering Geology and the Environment* 75, no. 3 (2016): 979–92. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10064-016-0887-1. (Cited on page 35).

Mousavi, Ali. *Persepolis: Discovery and Afterlife of a World Wonder.* Boston: De Gruyter, 2012. (Cited on pages 32–39).

Overtoom, Nikolaus Leo. *Reign of Arrows: The Rise of the Parthian Empire in the Hellenistic Middle East.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. (Cited on pages 37, 39).

Stoneman, Richard. 'Persepolis'. In *Xerxes: A Persian Life*, 160–80. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. (Cited on pages 33–35).

Stronk, Jan P. *Semiramis' Legacy: The History of Persia According to Diodorus of Sicily.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017. (Cited on pages 32–35).

Walsh, John and Elizabeth Baynham, eds. *Alexander the Great and Propaganda.* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021. (Cited on pages 33–36, 38–39).

4 The Nimrud Tombs: Neo-Assyrian Queens and Their Religious Standing

Samuel Taylor (AR337)

The Neo-Assyrian Empire dominated the ancient Near East between 900 and 600 BCE. Several aspects of its study have been largely neglected, including the question of queens' powers and responsibilities, particularly with respect to the state religion. As such, this paper attempts to answer the question: What power did Neo-Assyrian queens wield?

The first portion of the paper provides a brief overview of the Neo-Assyrian state, as well as a concise history of archaeological excavations at Nimrud. It also notes problems inherent in discussing Neo-Assyrian queens, such as conflicting information and the limited scope of archaeological data. The paper then describes the potential powers of queens by analysing available archaeological evidence found in a burial context as well as recovered administrative documentation. The paper concludes that while the full extent of the Neo-Assyrian queens' religious power cannot be ascertained, it was likely greater than merely aesthetic.

Despite the substantial amount of information that has been uncovered regarding Neo-Assyria, there is comparatively little known about the queens. Their connection to the religious institutions of the empire is also poorly understood. What evidence is available concerning the connection between the Neo-Assyrian queens and the imperial cults is mixed. Some evidence implies that the queens were primarily in positions of either soft power or accessories to the reigning monarch. However, there are intriguing archaeological discoveries at the site of Nimrud amongst the recently discovered queens' tombs, which imply exactly the opposite. These discoveries serve to add dimension to our understanding of Neo-Assyrian queens, specifically in terms of the queens' connections to the cults and temples of the empire.

4.1 Overview of Site

Before diving into the archaeological aspects of the site at Nimrud however, a brief overview of the historical and geographical context of the site is required. Nimrud, which is also known by the name Kalhu, is in Upper Mesopotamia, with the Kurdish mountains to the north, and the Tigris river visible to the west. The site is surprisingly beautiful, being

vibrant and colourful in the spring months.[1]

The Neo-Assyrian Empire was, for its day, the largest empire the world had ever seen. The empire flourished roughly between 900 and 600 BCE, conquered a considerable amount of territory, and built amazing architectural wonders as expressions of strength.[2] One of these architectural wonders was Nimrud. Historically, the site at Nimrud was constructed by the Neo-Assyrians during the 9th century BCE. This was at the behest of the Neo-Assyrian King Aššurnasirpal II.[3] After its construction, the site was utilized as the capital of the burgeoning Neo-Assyrian Empire. Interestingly, Nimrud replaced the traditional Assyrian capital at Assur. Prior to the construction of Nimrud, Assur had functioned as the capital of Assyria for over a thousand years.[4] This would not last forever of course, as the capital would eventually shift to the new site of Dur–Shurrakin, which was constructed in 705 BCE by Sargon II.[5]

4.2 History of Excavation

The first excavations took place in 1845 under a man named Austen Layard.[6] It should be noted that the excavations during these early years had little in common with the careful, methodical uncovering of ancient artefacts that we associate with archaeology today—these digs were more akin to mining expeditions. Endowed with a relatively small budget, Layard actually borrowed an existing mining technique, which he utilized to set up a series of tunnels within the site. These primitive excavations produced some amazing archaeological finds however, which were promptly shipped out of the region and back to Britain. Layard would continue his excavations until 1851.[7] A period of sporadic excavations continued for the next century, before the famous novelist Agatha Christie and her husband, Max Mallowan, arrived. They would work on the site between 1949 and 1957, with Agatha going on to pen several famous works while at Nimrud, including the murder-mystery 'They Came to Bagdhad'.[8]

These prior excavations pale in comparison to the importance of what was discovered next, however. It was in 1988 when the first, undisturbed tomb was discovered under the remnants of the palace at Nimrud. Tomb 1 was swiftly followed by two more, and then a fourth in 1991.[9] At this point, any work which was done on Nimrud was frustratingly

[1] John MacGinnis, 'New Light on Nimrud: Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th-13th March 2002. Edited by J. Curtis, H. McCall, D. Collon and L. al-Gailani Werr. Pp. 290. London, British Institute for the Study of Iraq, 2008.', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25, no. 3 (2015): 1.

[2] Sarah C. Melville, 'Neo-Assyrian Royal Women and Male Identity: Status as a Social Tool', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124, no. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 2004): 1.

[3] Karen Radner, *Ancient Assyria: A Very Short Introduction*, First edition, Very Short Introductions 424 (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015), 27.

[4] Brian Brown, 'Kingship and Ancestral Cult in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud', *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 10, no. 1 (2010): 1.

[5] Pauline Albenda, 'Dur-Sharrukin, the Royal City of Sargon II, King of Assyria', *Society for Mesopotamian Studies*, no. 38, 5.

[6] MacGinnis, 'New Light on Nimrud', 49.

[7] Radner, *Ancient Assyria*, 29–30.

[8] Ibid., 31.

[9] MacGinnis, 'New Light on Nimrud', 49.

curtailed. Only a small amount of work was conducted in 1991, due to interference in the form of the Gulf War.[10] Naturally, this necessitated the pausing of excavations until the fighting died down. Adding insult to injury, there were torrential rains during the same period, which flooded parts of the site.[11] All the same, excavations continued following these unfortunate mishaps.

However, these were not, unfortunately, the last of Nimrud's poor fortunes. Following the conquest of the region by the ISIS movement, the terrorist group began to systematically destroy as much of the site as possible in order to erase it from memory.[12] While, thankfully, ISIS was unable to completely obliterate the site, they were able to destroy almost everything in and around the Northwest Palace. An effort is underway to preserve what has not been bulldozed or bombed out of existence, with The Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage serving as headquarters for the mission.[13]

4.3 Issues Facing Investigation

Before continuing, we must first make note of several issues which plague any investigation into the Neo-Assyrian queens. One of the more prevalent issues we face is a lack of reliable archeological information. It is not uncommon to find tombs which have been looted in antiquity. An example of this is Tomb II, which contains empty stone sarcophagi, bare of anything except for bones.[14]

Even more unfortunate, however, is the method by which the Neo-Assyrians recorded information about the queens themselves. While documents and administrative texts have been found which mention the queens, is not uncommon to find such texts referencing the female monarchs, whilst simultaneously not naming them.[15] Thankfully, while these issues are inconvenient, enough information survives that examples of connections between the Neo-Assyrian queens and the empire's cults and temples have been uncovered.

It should be noted as well that while numerous administrative documents from Nimrud have been discovered, the information is not entirely understood. For instance, some texts seem to indicate that the Assyrian queen held her title for life. That might be awkward should the Assyrian king die, as it might mean that the new king would be expected to marry his mother.[16] This is not conclusive, and the head consort of the new king might simply inherit the title from her predecessor.[17]

Lastly, and possibly worst, is the issue of damage done to the objects which might shed light on our subject. Many of the texts and inscriptions available for study are in-

[10] Ibid., 57.

[11] Ibid., 99.

[12] Jennifer Couzin-Frankel, 'Mission Aims to Salvage What's Left of Nimrud', *Science* 357, no. 6358 (2017): 1340.

[13] Ibid., 1341.

[14] Tracy L. Spurrier, 'Finding Hama: On the Identification of a Forgotten Queen Buried in the Nimrud Tombs', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 76, no. 1 (2017): 151.

[15] David Kertai, 'The Queens of the Neo-Assyrian Empire', *Altorientalische Forschungen* 40, no. 1 (2013): 109.

[16] Ibid., 110.

[17] Ibid.

complete. An example of this is the ritual text BM121206, which was badly eroded. While still partially legible, only the reverse side of the tablet is still of any use, where there had originally been ten full columns of text on the tablet.[18] It should be noted however that this tablet does, in its existing form, provide some evidence of connections between the royal women and state religious practices. The tablet includes mention of the king's wife, sister, and daughter while discussing an important ritual.[19] Incomplete does not necessarily equate to useless in this instance, though the issue persists.

4.4 Jewellery and Artifacts from Nimrud

Having discussed some of the issues with gathering information, we transition to our first source of evidence regarding the queens' connection to the state religion: their jewellery and grave goods. The importance of the Neo-Assyrian queens is self-evident in the richness of most of their burials. The actual scale of the power that each queen might have wielded will has yet to be properly determined, but the sheer opulence of the interments themselves seems proof enough that the Neo-Assyrian queens were not simply decoration.[20] A massive number of precious objects have been unearthed from the tombs at Nimrud. These include everything from anklets to earrings to elaborate headdresses.[21]

Amongst these artefacts have been found a series of seals which might provide some clue as the Neo-Assyrian queens' religious status. In total, twelve stamp seals and two cylinder-seals have been recovered from the tombs at Nimrud. These seals were distributed unevenly amongst the tombs, with five being found in Tomb 1, five more in Tomb 3, two in Tomb 4, and none in Tomb 2. The pair of cylinder seals were also found in Tomb 3.[22] One stamp seal was found in the burial of a Queen Hama, who was buried in Tomb 3.[23] This particular seal was deviated from established Neo-Assyrian religious styles. Hama is depicted on the seal, kneeling to a goddess who has not yet been definitively identified. One possibility is that the goddess is Mullissu, the consort of Assur. As such, there is a possible connection to the gods through her position as partner to Assur's mortal representative.[24] This would, naturally, connect the queen to the imperial religious model, as the king was the earthly representative of Assur.[25] If true, this would be conclusive evidence of a connection between the queen and the imperial religious model. Unfortunately, it

[18]Natalie N. May, 'Neo-Assyrian Women, Their Visibility, and Their Representation in Written and Pictorial Sources', in *Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura (University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 267.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Stephanie Lynn Budin and Jean MacIntosh Turfa, eds., *Women in Antiquity: Real Women across the Ancient World* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), 127.

[21]Amy Rebecca Gansell, 'Dressing the Neo-Assyrian Queen in Identity and Ideology: Elements and Ensembles from the Royal Tombs at Nimrud', *American Journal of Archaeology* 122, no. 1 (2018): 66.

[22]MacGinnis, 'New Light on Nimrud', 155.

[23]Muzahim Mahmoud Hussein, *Nimrud, a City of Golden Treasures: The Queens' Tombs*, 1st edition, ed. Mark Altaweel and McGuire Gibson, trans. Mark Altaweel, Oriental Institute Publications 142 (Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014), 28.

[24]Spurrier, 'Finding Hama', 165.

[25]May, 'Neo-Assyrian Women, Their Visibility, and Their Representation in Written and Pictorial Sources', 263.

is dangerous to assume, especially because the true identity of the goddess upon the seal has yet to be determined.

In addition to the seals found within the tombs, there is another, separate artefact found, which potentially corroborates with Queen Hama's seal. A pendant which was unearthed from Tomb 3, coffin 1, seems to depict a scene in which the queen is standing before the goddess Ishtar in a supplicatory pose. The dress and general appearance of the figures is eerily similar to those depicted on Hama's seal.[26]

It should be noted that not every piece of jewellery found connects to the Neo-Assyrian religion. Some pieces, in fact, are the opposite. A pair of bracelets found appear almost heretical by the standards of Neo-Assyrian art, which was tightly controlled by the state.[27] Whereas the standard symbol of Neo-Assyrian divinity was a sun disk surrounded by a pair of wings, the symbols upon the bracelets appear to have a symbol of four bird wings flaring out from a central point. This symbol can potentially be traced to the Ynus group which existed in the area around Carchemish.[28] This is intriguing and raises further questions. If Dominique is correct, there is a clear foreign connection. Perhaps these bracelets and their unorthodox symbolism were a tiny act of defiance by women who had, effectively, been ripped away from their homes by the ever-expanding Neo-Assyrian Empire? These bracelets are not the only indication of foreign women in the palace either. In tomb II, excavations revealed a pair of queens, buried along with several personal belongings. Interestingly, having investigated the belongings found withing these women's tombs, it is theorized they came from Judea.[29] Unfortunately for our investigation, none of these burials or artefacts lead to a connection between the Neo-Assyrian queens and the state religion.

However, as previously mentioned the amount of information regarding many of the queens is limited. That drought of information extends to other women within the palace as well. We do have more archaeological evidence, however. For example, a grave was discovered at Nimrud which, contained the body of a woman buried with a necklace of semi-precious stones. In addition to this fine jewellery, a bronze fibula was included with the burial. The inscriptions upon the fibula included a picture of a lyre, as well as a Neo-Assyrian symbol for divinity. Unfortunately, without more evidence, documentation, or additional grave goods, it is safer to assume that the woman was not a queen, but instead a court musician or a concubine.[30]

4.5 Administrative Documents

As previously mentioned, the Neo-Assyrian queens were probably capable of wielding considerable influence. However, the form that influence took was probably in the form of form of soft power. They were doubtless influential, but they did not lead armies or ap-

[26] Ibid., 266.
[27] Dominique Collon, 'Getting It Wrong in Assyria: Some Bracelets from Nimrud', *Iraq* 72 (2010): 161.
[28] Ibid., 160.
[29] MacGinnis, 'New Light on Nimrud', 174.
[30] Melville, 'Neo-Assyrian Royal Women and Male Identity', 41–42.

point governors. Instead, their roles would have focused on business or religious tasks.[31] It is the religious connections we are, ultimately, attempting to understand. How connected were the queens to the religious establishment? Having already discussed artefacts, we must now shift to another source of information: documentation from the period.

Unlike the rather uncertain evidence available when discussing artefacts, there is some documentation directly connecting the Neo-Assyrian queens to the temples. Less gratifyingly, the actual quantity of textual evidence available is not as broad as would be ideal.[32] What we do have has proven useful, however. Perhaps the most important set of documents found when trying to understand the Neo-Assyrian queens come in the form of wine lists, which detail the wine rations which would be dolled out to the queens' retinues. Judging from the amounts listed, and assuming they are accurate, it is probable that the Neo-Assyrian queens had a considerable number of retainers, numbering in the hundreds.[33] While this tells us nothing regarding any religious connections, it does prove the importance of the queens. It can be assumed that, with such large entourages, the queens were not simply eye-candy. This appears to be supported by other documents found at Nimrud.

In addition to wine-lists, there were archival texts found which provide information of the status of women within the palace at Nimrud.[34] Here, finally, we start seeing some written evidence that connects the Neo-Assyrian queens with the state's religious institutions. Documents have been found which do connect the queens to the Neo-Assyrian temples. However, the documents imply that the queens' connection was primarily administrative, sending provisions and dedicating various expensive items to the dedicated to the gods.[35] We cannot discount other aspects of Neo-Assyrian documentation either. While many Neo-Assyrian queens were not named in administrative texts, some were, and these names provide perhaps the most telling connection. Several of the Neo-Assyrian queens incorporated the chief consort goddess Millissu into their naming conventions. Examples include Mullissu–mukannisat–Ninua, and (Mullissu–ina)–Ešarra–ḫammat.[36] This naming convention was probably to cement the idea that the queens were the earthly representation of Millissu, who was in turn the earthy representative of Assur.[37]

There is some other small evidence which has been recovered in the form of administrative texts and letters which could be interpreted as a woman from the palace participating in a healing ritual, although it is inconclusive.[38]

[31]Sarah C. Melville, 'Neo-Assyrian Women Revisited', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139, no. 3 (2019): 689.

[32]Gansell, 'Dressing the Neo-Assyrian Queen in Identity and Ideology', 67–68.

[33]Sanaa Teppo, 'Women and Their Agency in the Neo-Assyrian Empire' (University of Helsinki, 2005), 42.

[34]Melville, 'Neo-Assyrian Royal Women and Male Identity', 39.

[35]M. Erica Couto-Ferreira, 'When Women Get Ill: Gendered Constructions of Health and Disease in Cuneiform Texts on Healing', in *Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura (University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2018), 127.

[36]May, 'Neo-Assyrian Women, Their Visibility, and Their Representation in Written and Pictorial Sources', 267.

[37]Ibid., 266.

[38]Couto-Ferreira, 'When Women Get Ill: Gendered Constructions of Health and Disease in Cuneiform

In addition to these insinuations of divinity, there is at least one case in which a queen was important enough on her own that her name was connected to the state temples and cults. Queen Naqia was an extremely powerful and influential monarch during her time. Due to this high standing, Queen Naqia's likeness was captured in one of only three reliefs featuring large-scale portrayals of Neo-Assyrian queens. Thankfully, in this case the queen's identity is known for certain, due to the inscription of her name onto the bronze relief itself. What makes this relief especially useful when attempting to understand the Neo-Assyrian queens' connection to the state religion is found in the way Naqia is depicted. The text found upon the relief describes an important ritual, and likely originated from either an altar base or divine throne base.[39] It should be noted however, that Naqia's pose mimics that of the king, probably her son. She is, in effect, being portrayed as a king, rather than as a powerful queen. In that context, Naqia could be the exception, rather than the rule.[40]

Unfortunately, some of the evidence within the texts supports the opposite stance and implies that Neo-Assyrian queens were not only unconnected to the state religion, but actively prohibited from entering sacred sites without permission. The document specifically mentions a queen, who asks via letter for permission to enter a sacred site at Assur. She was granted access, but that she had to ask for permission at all is not encouraging.[41]

Lastly there was also a written tablet retrieved from one of the tombs. While not strictly evidence connecting to the state religion, the curse tablet of Queen Yaba is remarkable. The writing declares that the tomb of the queen is under the protection of Ereshkigal, Anunnaki, and Shamash. It goes on to curse any who might loot the tomb to have their spirit walk the underworld in torment for eternity.[42] While this fails to connect to the Neo-Assyrian religion in a direct sense, it does give us an understanding of Queen Yaba, and highlights the power that the queen seems to have wielded, even after death.

4.6 Inscriptions and Pictorial Evidence at Nimrud

Having thoroughly covered documentation, we move now to another category of potential evidence, inscriptions. The evidence here is both interesting and disappointing. It is not uncommon to find such inscriptions on artefacts within the tombs at Nimrud, as many of said artefacts buried with the queens bore religious iconography. These artefacts include the previously mentioned seals, one of which, buried in Tomb 1, bore an inscription mentioning the god Horus.[43] Unfortunately, these seals, excluding the previously mentioned Millissu seal, do not provide conclusive evidence of a connection to the state religion.

Other inscriptions exist however, including another curse which is similar to the previously mentioned tablet of Yaba. Unlike Yaba's tablet however, this curse was inscribed

Texts on Healing', 129.

[39] Ibid., 127–28.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., 127.

[42] Hussein, *Nimrud, a City of Golden Treasures*, 12.

[43] Ibid., 6.

into the surface of the coffin of Queen Mullissu–mukannisat–Ninua, found in Tomb 3. This curse was also designed to ward away grave robbers who might disturb the interred queen.[44] Again, this curse provides an insight into the possible religious power of Queen Mullissu–mukannisat–Ninua, especially because of her name, but provides nothing concrete.

There are also monumental inscriptions, many of which have been found at the site of Nimrud. These inscriptions include those dedicated to several queens and are primarily dated to the Sargonic period. This indicates that, during the rule of the Sargonic kings in Neo-Assyria, the queens had become part of the royal establishment, but also indicates a level of power prior queens would not have had access to.[45] If we reach slightly, this rise in importance in the royal household might equate to a greater level of ritual and religious importance as well.

4.7 The Queens' Burials

Finally, we come to the last possible source of evidence regarding the Neo-Assyrian queens. Surely the bodies of the queens or their coffins show some evidence of connections between the queens and the state religion? Unfortunately, the evidence here is less obvious than one might expect. That is not to say there are no connections of course. For example, Mesopotamians practiced the burying of their dead below the family dwelling. That this practice continued for centuries and was utilized by the Neo-Assyrian royalty is remarkable.[46] The actual tombs, however, are a somewhat harder source to utilize when discussing the Neo-Assyrian queens and their connection to the Neo-Assyrian state religion.

Multiple methods were utilized for interring the dead. Perhaps the most intriguing of these methods was the usage of bronze bathtub-like coffins, as seen most prominently in Tomb 3. The bronze tub burials, of which three have been found in Tomb 3, are not of exactly the same dimensions. One, for example, is 1.30 m × 59.4 cm, height 51.5 cm. This one was stacked against one of the walls, atop another bronze coffin which was slightly larger, being about 1.40 m × 49 cm, height 57 cm. All of the bronze coffins do share a distinctive shape, having tall, straight sides, with the ends pointing towards the north being of a curved shape, rather than straight.[47] These bronze coffins are actually very similar to a terracotta style of burial, being of similar shape, though being made of a considerably less expensive material.

But where is the religious connection? Unfortunately, religious connotations are tenuous, going by our current data. It has been theorized that the bronze coffins, bearing a similarity to a terracotta burial found in the Nabu Temple at the Nimrud site, contain priestesses of said temple.[48] It seems unlikely that priestesses would be given such elaborate burials, however.

[44] Hussein, *Nimrud, a City of Golden Treasures*, 28.

[45] May, 'Neo-Assyrian Women, Their Visibility, and Their Representation in Written and Pictorial Sources', 258–59.

[46] Hussein, *Nimrud, a City of Golden Treasures*, 55.

[47] MacGinnis, 'New Light on Nimrud', 163.

[48] Ibid., 168.

It should be noted that, unlike the lack of uniformity between the queens' coffins, we see some uniformity in regard to the wrappings used. Many of the queens so far discovered were wrapped in textiles, or had textiles piled upon them, of a specific sort. Not one example discovered thus far appears to have been made from animal fibre, and is instead almost entirely made from vegetable materials, like flax. This is concurrent across examples which have been in found in Tombs 1, 2, and 3. They appear to have also been of exceptional beauty and quality, though there is little evidence of any dye being used. A specific example can be seen on the body of the queen in the Bronze coffin in Tomb 2.[49] Unfortunately, the textiles themselves have been badly deteriorated by age and exposure, so any potential religious connection has long since been lost.[50]

4.8 Conclusion

To conclude, the Neo-Assyrian queens' exact standing regarding the state religion of the Neo-Assyrian Empire has not been conclusively proven. A considerable amount of evidence has been found to support the opinion that the queen was an important part of the palace administration. There has also been evidence found which connects the queens to the state religion. Unfortunately, the form that connection took is still frustratingly vague, with our only evidence in the form of incomplete administrative texts and suppositions over stamp seals. However, the fact that the Neo-Assyrian queens were more than simple eye-candy has hopefully been debunked.

References

Albenda, Pauline. 'Dur-Sharrukin, the Royal City of Sargon II, King of Assyria'. *Society for Mesopotamian Studies*, no. 38, 5–13. (Cited on page 42).

Brown, Brian. 'Kingship and Ancestral Cult in the Northwest Palace at Nimrud'. *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 10, no. 1 (2010): 1–53. Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1163/156921210X500495. (Cited on page 42).

Budin, Stephanie Lynn and Jean MacIntosh Turfa, eds. *Women in Antiquity: Real Women across the Ancient World*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016. (Cited on page 44).

Collon, Dominique. 'Getting It Wrong in Assyria: Some Bracelets from Nimrud'. *Iraq* 72 (2010): 149–62. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021088900000619. (Cited on page 45).

Couto-Ferreira, M. Erica. 'When Women Get Ill: Gendered Constructions of Health and Disease in Cuneiform Texts on Healing'. In *Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura, 109–32. University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2018. (Cited on pages 46–47).

[49] Elisabeth Crowfoot, 'Textiles from Recent Excavations at Nimrud', *Iraq* 57 (1995): 113.
[50] Ibid.

Couzin-Frankel, Jennifer. 'Mission Aims to Salvage What's Left of Nimrud'. *Science* 357, no. 6358 (2017): 1340–41. https://doi.org/10.1126/science.357.6358.1340. (Cited on page 43).

Crowfoot, Elisabeth. 'Textiles from Recent Excavations at Nimrud'. *Iraq* 57 (1995): 113. Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.2307/4200405. (Cited on page 49).

Gansell, Amy Rebecca. 'Dressing the Neo-Assyrian Queen in Identity and Ideology: Elements and Ensembles from the Royal Tombs at Nimrud'. *American Journal of Archaeology* 122, no. 1 (2018): 65–100. Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.3764/aja.122.1.0065. (Cited on pages 44, 46).

Hussein, Muzahim Mahmoud. *Nimrud, a City of Golden Treasures: The Queens' Tombs*. 1st edition. Edited by Mark Altaweel and McGuire Gibson. Translated by Mark Altaweel. Oriental Institute Publications 142. Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2014. (Cited on pages 44, 47–48).

Kertai, David. 'The Queens of the Neo-Assyrian Empire'. *Altorientalische Forschungen* 40, no. 1 (2013). Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1524/aof.2013.0006. (Cited on page 43).

MacGinnis, John. 'New Light on Nimrud: Proceedings of the Nimrud Conference 11th-13th March 2002. Edited by J. Curtis, H. McCall, D. Collon and L. al-Gailani Werr. Pp. 290. London, British Institute for the Study of Iraq, 2008.' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 25, no. 3 (2015): 501–2. Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1356186314000881. (Cited on pages 42–45, 48).

May, Natalie N. 'Neo-Assyrian Women, Their Visibility, and Their Representation in Written and Pictorial Sources'. In *Studying Gender in the Ancient Near East*, edited by Saana Svärd and Agnès Garcia-Ventura, 249–88. University Park, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns, 2018. (Cited on pages 44–46, 48).

Melville, Sarah C. 'Neo-Assyrian Royal Women and Male Identity: Status as a Social Tool'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124, no. 1 (Jan.–Mar. 2004): 37. Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.2307/4132152. (Cited on pages 42, 45–46).

———. 'Neo-Assyrian Women Revisited'. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 139, no. 3 (2019): 687. Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.7817/jameroriesoci.139.3.0687. (Cited on page 46).

Radner, Karen. *Ancient Assyria: A Very Short Introduction*. First edition. Very Short Introductions 424. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015. (Cited on page 42).

Spurrier, Tracy L. 'Finding Hama: On the Identification of a Forgotten Queen Buried in the Nimrud Tombs'. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 76, no. 1 (2017): 149–74. Accessed 4 June 2023. https://doi.org/10.1086/690911. (Cited on pages 43–44).

Teppo, Sanaa. 'Women and Their Agency in the Neo-Assyrian Empire', University of Helsinki, 2005. http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe20051731. (Cited on page 46).

Part II

2024

5 The Mixtec and Zapotec Writing Systems ca. 600 BCE–pre-1521 CE

Chantal Bresse (HI498)

The ancient history of any civilization is enriched when all facets of its culture are considered. This paper explores a lesser known aspect of Mesoamerica—writing—specifically prior to colonization. Furthermore, the paper restricts its focus to the Mixtec and Zapotec as the deciphering of these two writing systems is much less advanced than that of the Maya.

The paper considers examples of various genres of literature: genealogical, divinatory, epic, or propagandist. I examine the characteristics and evolution of the two writing systems through their history with a particular focus on their relationship with the social and political context.

As a preface, I discuss the definition of writing and the key characteristics of the spoken languages that influence the choice of writing systems, the impact of colonization on the Indigenous peoples, their writing and self-expression. For contextualizing purposes, a concise overview of the calendars that are central to the Mesoamerican ideology, and thus their writing, is given.

The painted books of Mesoamerica were once seen by Europeans as curiosities of fantastical and exotic art. There was a range of reactions in the early colonial period; the Catholic clergy responsible for the conversion of Indigenous people arranged to burn thousands of those books, especially those relating to divination. Others confiscated them to better learn of their content and to help with conversion endeavours. What most scholars did not realize for centuries was that these manuscripts, typically termed 'codices', are, in fact, writing.

This paper examines two of the ancient Mesoamerican writing systems, those of the Mixtec and Zapotec. To contextualize those two writing systems, I first discuss the definition of writing, followed by a brief historiography and the motivations that led to the emergence of writing. Secondly, the shared linguistic and geographical characteristics of the Mixtec and Zapotec are explained to provide a better understanding of their respective contexts. The last section considers the interrelationship of characteristics of the two writing systems in their respective social and political contexts and as they evolved over time.

The purpose here is not to present an in-depth work of linguistics or decipherment. Rather, the objective is to view Mesoamerican history from the perspective of their writ-

ings. This topic considers to a lesser degree other cultures to contextualize the Mixtec and Zapotec in the broader Mesoamerican mosaic of languages. The timespan covered is from the oldest known samples of writing to the conquest in the early sixteenth century.

5.1 What is Writing?

What is writing? This question needs to be explored before delving into the Mesoamerican systems as such. This is particularly true for people whose experience derives from alphabetic writing systems. At the most basic level, literacy has 'two processes, writing and reading, the communicator and the receiver'.[1] The act of writing allows for the dissemination of a message from a communicator to a receiver who will read the message at a different time in the future. This type of exchange differs from the vast majority of human interactions wherein people speak and listen to each other at the same time.

5.1.1 Brief Historiography of Linguistics

A typical Western view has been that writing developed over time culminating in an alphabetic script.[2] In the nineteenth century the idea was that writing systems would progress through stages of incremental advancements alongside the society which utilizes them, following a predictable evolutionary path akin to Darwin's theory. Trigger is critical of these views and gives the example of the Chinese and Japanese scripts that were considered to reflect backward societies. He points out that this point of view is hard to defend in the face of the economic and social progress seen in the twentieth century in those countries. This counters views that imply the need 'to adopt the alphabetic scripts as a precondition for modernization'.[3] However, this idea persisted; in the early 1960s, Ignace Gelb, a scholar specialized in Assyriology and ancient writing systems, proposed that writing develops through stages, beginning with pictographs, followed by the writing of word-characters such as those of Chinese, the writing of syllables, and culminating in wholly alphabetical writing.[4] Accordingly, he projected that Chinese would eventually be written alphabetically.[5] This is mentioned to exemplify the general views of the time and not to denigrate Gelb's contributions to his field. Joyce Marcus comments that in fact

[1] Stephen D. Houston, 'Overture to The First Writing', in *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, ed. Stephen D. Houston (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7.

[2] Elizabeth Hill Boone, 'Introduction: Writing and Recording Knowledge', in *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, ed. Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 4.

[3] Bruce G. Trigger, 'Writing Systems: A Case Study in Cultural Evolution', in *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, ed. Stephen D. Houston (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 41.

[4] Joyce Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems: Propaganda, Myth, and History in Four Ancient Civilizations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 18.

[5] Nikolai Grube and Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, 'Escritura y literalidad en Mesoamérica y en la región Andina: Una comparación', in *Libros y escritura de tradición indígena: ensayos sobre los códices prehispánicos y coloniales de México*, 1st ed., ed. Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, Peer Schmidt and Xavier Noguez (Toluca, México: Colegio Mexiquense : Universidad Católica de Eichstätt, 2002), 30.

the later stages of Gelb's evolutionary model retained legacies of preceding stages.[6] One example is the glyph that meant 'bull' a later variation of which was used to represent the sound /a/ as in <aleph>, culminating in the Latin alphabet letter <A>.

In the same vein, linguists and historians had long considered that the Indigenous people of the Americas were pre-literate and lacked a fully developed writing system. This classification implies that one of the objectives of the cultural evolution of humankind should be the development of a script capable of reproducing a language.[7] These Eurocentric biases stemmed from a lack of knowledge about the characteristics of different languages. In the context of Mesoamerica, these perceptions have had two negative effects. The first is that they result in the abilities of these societies and their repertoire of knowledge being underestimated. Marcus points out that the need for writing is not a necessary component of a 'civilization'. This scholar gives the example of the 'Andean civilization which shows us that a powerful militaristic state could integrate multiple ethnic groups over a distance of 4,000 kilometres without any writing at all'.[8] Grube and Arellano Hoffman also point out that the early state formation at Teotihuacan or with the Wari/Tiwanaku of the Andes were achieved without writing.[9] The second negative effect is that this perception hindered the study of their cultures and languages. König mentions that it was not until the second half of the twentieth century that art historians began to investigate the content of the painted books. Prior to that point, they were mostly considered to contain merely beautiful illustrations.[10]

5.1.2 Logographic and Phonographic Writing Systems

In the 1980s, the accepted evolutionary model of writing began to be replaced with others. Linguist Geoffrey Sampson proposed a classification system which categorizes writing systems as either glottographic or semasiographic, the first being a system of writing with symbols that correspond with speech and the second derived from the Greek words σημασία (*sēmasia*, 'signification') and γραφία (*graphia*, 'writing'), i. e., writing with signs.[11]

The first option involves having signs that convey the *sounds* of a spoken language, for example, by means of the letters of an alphabet each of which has a phonetic interpretation. In and of themselves, letters provide no reference to meaning. Scholar Alice Faber notes that the distinction between phonographic (this case) and logographic (the other case) lies in whether most of the symbols have inherent meaning: e. g., the symbol <+> does, whereas the letter <d> does not.[12]

[6] Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 18.

[7] Grube and Arellano Hoffmann, 'Escritura y literalidad en Mesoamérica', 30.

[8] Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 3.

[9] Grube and Arellano Hoffmann, 'Escritura y literalidad en Mesoamérica', 43.

[10] Viola König, 'La escritura Mexica', in *Libros y escritura de tradición indígena: ensayos sobre los códices prehispánicos y coloniales de México*, 1st ed., ed. Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, Peer Schmidt and Xavier Noguez (Toluca, México: Colegio Mexiquense : Universidad Católica de Eichstätt, 2002), 111.

[11] Grube and Arellano Hoffmann, 'Escritura y literalidad en Mesoamérica', 32.

[12] Alice Faber, 'Phonemic Segmentation as Epiphenomenon: Evidence from the History of Alphabetic Writing', in *The Linguistics of Literacy*, ed. Pamela A. Downing, Susan D. Lima and Michael Noonan, vol. 21, Typological Studies in Language (TSL) (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company,

An example can be seen in alphabetic writing as the letters or combinations of letters are arranged to represent sounds of the spoken language. In this instance, a unilingual speaker of Italian will recognize the individual letters of the Latin alphabet in an English text but will not be able to decipher its meaning since the order and grouping of the letters are intended to represent sounds and words of English. The number of letters needed in an alphabet is quite small and is easily adapted to other languages. It is a phonographic script which mostly relies 'upon the representation of sounds to record speech'.[13] However, this type of script has limitations since it cannot easily represent linguistic features such as tones.

Another option is to use a semasiographic (or logographic) script with signs that represent meaning rather than sounds. The advantage is that speakers of different languages can all recognize a given written text—They will read them in their respective languages. This explains why most speakers of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean can all read Han characters.

5.1.3 Examples of the Two Writing Systems

Ultimately, a writing system of whatever type encodes spoken language; the relationship can be direct or indirect. With phonographic scripts 'the written symbols correspond to syllables or phonemes',[14] therefore the relationship is direct. In the case of logographic scripts, the relationship is indirect: a written sign first represents an object which in turn references the spoken language.[15] This distinction between the two types of scripts is not always clear-cut or black and white—writing systems can feature elements of each to varying degrees. Simple icons might not easily represent abstract concepts. A pictograph of an eye can be interpreted as an eye, but could also refer to the idea of vision, or an indication to look.[16] Maya, for example, is not purely logographic; it is logosyllabic. It utilizes glyphs that have meaning and uses other glyphs to help with the reading. These added syllabic glyphs offer a phonetic complement that helps with the pronunciation or correct reading of a glyph. Another example is the double dot at the left of a glyph that indicates that the value of a syllable is doubled[17] (see Figure 5.1 on page 57). Glyphs are arranged and combined in a variety of ways. They are added at the top, before the main glyph, placed inside or blended into the main glyph.[18] Nonetheless, this system mostly relies on logographic glyphs with a smaller number of syllabic ones.

To a lesser degree, phonographic scripts also utilize other elements to make it clear what the written signs represent. An example from French is the cedilla that is placed under the letter <c> when in front of either of the vowels /a/, /o/, or /u/. The cedilla

1992), 118.

[13] Trigger, 'Writing Systems: A Case Study in Cultural Evolution', 30.

[14] John S. Robertson, 'The Possibility and Actuality of Writing', in *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, ed. Stephen D. Houston (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 20.

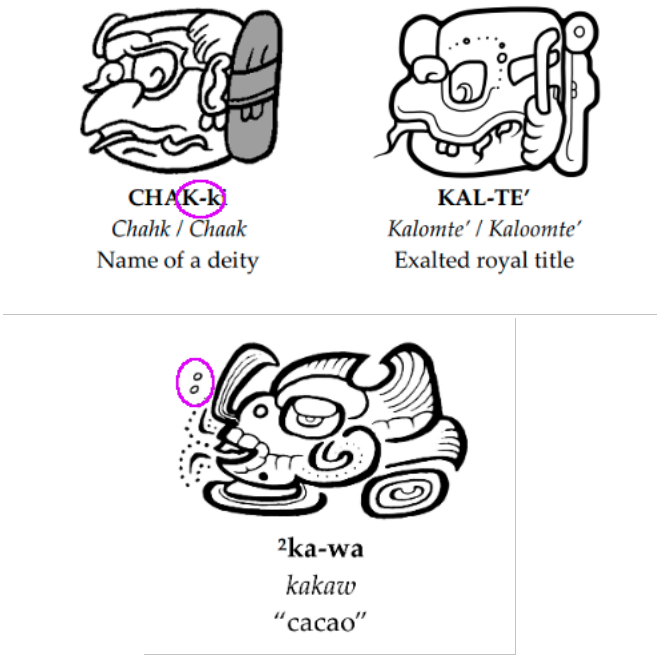
[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 22.

[17] Harri Kettunen and Christophe Helmke, *Introduction to Maya Hieroglyphs*, Seventeenth Revised Edition (Wayeb, 2020), 19–20.

[18] Ibid., 17.

Top: An Added Syllabic Glyph (greyed out) clarifies the intended reading as *Chak-ki* rather than *Kal-te*.
Bottom: The double dot near the glyph *ka-wa* signifies that the first syllable is pronounced twice to indicate the word *ka-ka-w* (i. e., 'cacao') instead of *ka-wa*.



After Harri Kettunen and Christophe Helmke, *Introduction to Maya Hieroglyphs*, Seventeenth Revised Edition (Wayeb, 2020), 19–20

Figure 5.1: Illustration of the use of glyphs

indicates that the <c> is not pronounced /k/ but rather as /s/. So, <façade> sounds like [fasad] and not like [fakad] as would otherwise be expected. These explanations of the two broad groups of scripts, phonographic and logographic, are a brief overview intended to orient the reader to the topic of the paper and allow for a better appreciation of the Mesoamerican writing systems.

5.2 Why Writing?

A second question arises: why write in the first place? At the centre of writing systems are two elements. In the Mesoamerican context, the first was the importance of calendrics in naming people and guiding life events. The second impetus stemmed from socio-political objectives or needs which utilised woven threads of propaganda, myth, and history. From the start of the stratification of society, a male ruler or a ruling marital pair would associate him- or itself with historic or mythical ancestors of the past to legitimize their position. The ruler was considered an incarnation of this mythical figure and represented the gods in the human world. Another objective would be to emphasize his ability to protect the community against enemies. Monuments and stone carvings,

especially in the earlier periods, were made as vertical propaganda intended for everyone in the lower classes in their society to see. It was not necessary to be able to read the glyphs to grasp the main intended message, although literate people, of course, could. In this type of writing, the number of glyphs was low and the pictorial elements conveyed a message in and of themselves. Codices, on the other hand, were mostly intended as horizontal propaganda and the target audience was the noble class. In this type of writing, rulers carefully documented their lineage descending from an apical ancestor so as to portray themselves as rightful rulers in the eyes of other nobles. Rulers would also document the extent of their territory and, where applicable, conquered polities, as well as record tributes.[19] Marcus suggest that 'writing was both a tool and a by-product of this competition for prestige and leadership positions'.[20]

5.2.1 Calendrics

The Mesoamerican numeral system was vigesimal (i. e., base 20), as reflected in the ritual calendar. It is likely that this calendar had been in use for quite a long time before appearing in carved form in stone. What supports this assertion is that the calendar became widespread throughout Mesoamerica before any such carvings appeared. The oral traditions and spiritual views of their world were by then well established, and writing followed. The ritual calendar consisted of 260 days, in Zapotec the *piye*. The *piye* was divided into four units of sixty-five days called *cociyo* with each of the four units named after the day on which it began, namely, *chilla, lana, goloo,* and *guilloo*. Each of these consisted of thirteen days called *cocii*. Each numbered day, one to thirteen, was associated with one of the twenty-day names. This resulted in 260 combinations. The earliest known purpose of the calendar was to name children at birth, or shortly after, in the event that a child was born on an unfavourable day.

The secular calendar was a later addition. A year was known as *yza* in the Zapotec language. This calendar consisted of 365 days, *copiycha*, with eighteen months—*peo*—of twenty days plus an extra five days.[21] Together, the two calendars form a cycle of fifty-two years, the Calendar Round. This Calendar Round was used throughout Mesoamerica. Normally, it floated in time as it was not anchored. However, this is not always the case; one lowland group fixed their calendar according to a specific creation date.

For the Mixtec and Aztec, day names came later, and most of them correspond to those of the Zapotec. The assertion that Aztec and Mixtec writing came much later is further evidenced by their application of day names to animals such as crocodiles, monkeys, or jaguars that did not live in Aztec or Mixtec areas; it is in Oaxaca that all these animals live.[22] The names of the days, and the order they were assigned to the numbered days or years, varied between cultures.[23]The concept of time in Mesoamerica was different.

[19]Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 12–16.

[20]Ibid., 15.

[21]Joyce Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 1st ed., vol. 18, Memoirs of the Museum of Anthropology, No. 61 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2020), 26.

[22]Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 25–27.

[23]Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 26–27.

They understood time as cycling over and over, and 'there was no dividing line between "mythical time" and "real time"'.[24]

5.2.2 Socio-political Objectives

A second core element of the writing was the political emphasis, especially before the conquest. For example, writing could pertain to ascending a throne, war and conquests, peace agreements, or establishing genealogies of the nobility. It could also emphasize apical ancestry, i. e., the first ancestor from which the lineage descended, records of marriages, depictions of deceased members, naming places, or demonstrating the sacrifices and rituals performed. The writings mainly consisted of demonstrating the legitimacy of rulership to their respective polities. Unlike the Maya and Aztec, the Mixtec and Zapotec considered the marital pair as the legitimate rulers. The genealogy of each—i. e., the man and the woman—had key importance in establishing the right of the marital pair to rule. Noble marriage arrangements, as also commoner marriages, were thus carefully considered under the guidance of priests in order to maintain peace between localities and families.

Literacy was the domain of the nobility and of the highly trained priests, diviners, and sages who produced and owned the books. Priests and diviners were part of an elite class who could be born in royal families but often were not, in which case they would live in the community. According to Elizabeth Hill Boone, the commoners—and, surprisingly, most nobles—could not read the manuscripts. In the case of divinatory books specifically, they were seen by anyone in society who consulted a priest. Through these interactions, members of society became familiar with ancient knowledge; they believed the gods spoke to them via the books as interpreted by the priests. Everyone from the farming class to the nobility consulted a priest to name a child, find an auspicious time to get married and have children, and when to plant or harvest, conduct business, or travel. These regular interactions with the priesthood gave cohesiveness to their societies. However, other types of books were not available to the commoners, such as tribute lists, genealogies, and history books.[25] That said, not all authors agree with this point of view about literacy. Carmen Arellano Hoffman, for example, says that the percentage of the population that was literate cannot be determined. Considering the Aztec of Central Mexico in particular, she states that it was not only members of the noble class who would be instructed in reading and writing, but also talented children of craftsmen or merchants. In this regard, social divisions were not rigidly maintained, especially when it came to select students where aptitude was the foremost criterion, as with military training, for example.[26]

[24] Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 14.

[25] Elizabeth Hill Boone, *Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate*, 1st ed., Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007), 238.

[26] Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, 'El escriba Mesoamericano y sus utensilios de trabajo. La posición social del escriba antes y después de la conquista Española', in *Libros y escritura de tradición indígena: ensayos sobre los códices prehispánicos y coloniales de México*, 1st ed., ed. Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, Peer Schmidt and Xavier Noguez (Toluca, México: Colegio Mexiquense: Universidad Católica de Eichstätt, 2002), 219–20.

At first glance, these differing opinions seem contradictory. However, it is possible that both scholars are correct. Hill Boone focuses specifically on divinatory books produced much earlier than the Aztec writings discussed by Arellano Hoffman. It is quite unlikely that commoners such as farmers would need to learn to read and/or write. It also appears quite plausible that the noble and elite would learn to read and perhaps also write and draw. The key point that Hill Boone raises is that everyone through all social classes would be familiar with the existence and visual appearance of the divinatory books given the repeated interactions with priests. The scribe and associated specialist functioned as an important team in society. This role is depicted in codices of several cultures (see Figure 5.2).

'Bilderhandschrift: Sog. Codex Mexicanus Bzw. Codex Yuta Tnoho', Östereichische Nationalbibliotek, Section from 50, i. e., Folio 48b, accessed 8 July 2024, https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_8693413&order=1&view=SINGLE. Image license: Einzelne Bücher und Seiten können Sie gerne über diverse Social-Media Plattformen o.ä. verbreiten.

Figure 5.2: A Mixtec scribe with his paintbrush

The Zapotec made significant use of hieroglyphs on stone. This was not the case with the Mixtec, from whom the largest number of books survived the burning during colonization. In the case of the Zapotec, there are no known pre-colonization books. However, there are colonial documents and maps that relate to their history and lands. Perhaps this significant difference reflects their different political arrangements. Another possibility is that potential writing samples upon perishable materials might not have survived. The Zapotec began to employ writing much earlier and they were in a very different phase of social dispersion and collapse in the centuries preceding the arrival of the Spaniards. The situation of the Mixtec for the same period was quite different; they were producing codices.

5.3 Mixtec and Zapotec Commonalities and Differences

5.3.1 Language Family

In the early sixteenth century, 'it is estimated that the Mesoamerican territory encompassed at least 100 and up to 300 languages with eleven linguistic families'.[27] The main writing systems are from the Zapotec, Mixtec, Maya, and Nahuatl (Aztec) peoples. Mixtec and Zapotec language variants are part of the Otomanguean language family, which is the 'most widespread and most diversified'.[28] The ancient speakers of these languages occupied a central position in Mesoamerica and were actors in a nascent civilization with 'agriculture, complex states, elaborate monuments, and even writing'.[29] Thus, these language writing systems provide windows into their ancient cultures and histories.

Campbell says that the decipherment of Mayan languages is much more advanced and that the Otomanguean languages are not only older than Mayan, but they are also very complex, difficult to describe and study.[30] These difficulties partly explain the poor level of decipherment of Zapotec and Mixtec, though the evolving field of historical linguistics will undoubtedly improve the situation. Furthermore, most of those languages are tonal and make use of mainly logographic writing systems. As mentioned above, the writing systems of Mesoamerica were not one hundred percent logographic, but rather mixed systems, partly pictographic, partly logographic, and partly syllabic.[31]

When the Spaniards first encountered the Aztec they adopted the Nahuatl words to refer to other cultures. This happened since the Aztec became their guides to push into other areas. Hence, it needs to be noted that 'Mixtec' and 'Zapotec' are not words from their respective languages. For example, *mixtecâ* is Nahuatl and refers to the 'inhabitants of the land of the clouds'. Instead, the Mixtec refer to themselves as *Ñuu Dzaui*, the 'people of the Rain God'.[32] For the Zapotec, *Zapochtheca* in Nahuatl means 'cloud' (*za(a)-*) and 'merchant' (*-pochteca*).[33] There is not always a consensus regarding the exact origin of the nomenclature; that said, the objective here is to point out that much of the terminology related to Mesoamerica retains the Nahuatl words that the Spaniards recorded in the early colonial times. The Indigenous peoples of today are reclaiming their identity by replacing those Nahuatl references with words from their respective languages. This is evident in several of the sources consulted here.

[27] José Antonio Flores Farfán, 'Introduction: On Typological Change in Mesoamerica', *STUF - Language Typology and Universals* 71, no. 3 (3 2018): 327–38.

[28] Eric W. Campbell, 'Otomanguean Historical Linguistics: Exploring the Subgroups', *Language and Linguistics Compass* 11, no. 7 (April 2017): 1.

[29] Eric W. Campbell, 'Otomanguean Historical Linguistics: Past, Present, and Prospects for the Future', *Language and Linguistics Compass* 11, no. 4 (April 2017): 1–2.

[30] Ibid., 2, 10.

[31] Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 18.

[32] Maarten Jansen and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez, *Codex Bodley: A Painted Chronicle from the Mixtec Highlands, Mexico*, Treasures from the Bodleian Library 1 (Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2005), 12–13.

[33] Enrique García Escamilla, Enrique Rivas Paniagua and Librado Silva Galeana, *Diccionario del náhuatl en el español de México (rústico)*, Nueva edición, corregida y aumentada, ed. Carlos Montemayor (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2019), 304.

5.3.2 Geography

In addition to sharing a linguistic ancestry, the Mixtec and Zapotec were—and still are—in relative geographical proximity. They occupy the states of Oaxaca, Puebla, and Guerrero in Mexico.[34] The topography of those states consists of the Sierra Madre Oriental mountain range which runs north-west from the city of Monterrey to the east of the Valley of Oaxaca. The Sierra Madre del Sur mountain range starts from the state of Michoacán, continues down through Guerrero and ends eastward in the south of Oaxaca in addition to a transversal volcanic belt that runs west to east. The peaks of the mountains in these ranges easily reach over 3,000 m (see Figure 5.3).

The Mixtec occupied areas northwest of the Valley of Oaxaca in pockets of small narrow valley floors amid the mountain of the Mixteca Alta. They also occupied the Mixteca Baja, further west. This region has a hotter climate and poor agricultural soil despite the abundant rainfall.[35] The Zapotec resided mostly in the Valley of Oaxaca which has three valleys making an upside-down Y-shaped basin surrounded by high mountains. This semi-arid valley floor has a high-water table that support 700 km² of agriculturally productive land.[36] The earliest known settlements were at San José Mogote in the northern Etla arm which is narrow and has 'the best opportunities for irrigation', the southern Valle Grande has the most arable land, and the southeastern Tlacolula arm. Those three arms join in a central area where Monte Albán is located about twenty kilometres south of San José Mogote.[37]

Isolda Luna-Vega and Ral Contreras-Medi, 'Contributions of Cladistic Biogeography to the Mexican Transition Zone', in *Global Advances in Biogeography*, ed. Lawrence Stevens (InTech, 2012–03–30), 160. Image license: CC BY 3.0.

Figure 5.3: Main Mexican mountain chains

[34] König, 'La escritura Mexica', 111.

[35] Arthur A. Joyce, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos the Ancient Peoples of Southern Mexico* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 40.

[36] Ibid., 38–39.

[37] Richard E. Blanton et al., 'Before Monte Albán', in *Ancient Oaxaca: The Monte Albán State*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 42–71.

5.4 The Mixtec

It is from the Mixtec culture that we have the greatest number of pre-colonial codices still today. The Mixtec major dialects are grouped by the regions of Mixteca Alta, Mixteca Baja, and Mixteca de la Costa; most preserved codices are from the Mixteca Alta.[38] The Spaniard clerics burned thousands of books that dealt specifically with religion as they thought of them as 'works of the devil' and the secular manuscripts quickly lost their relevance in the new context.[39] Therefore, the Mixtec codices represent a significant proportion of extant painted books, which is fewer than twenty dated to the pre-colonial period, most being from the fifteenth century. There are several Mixtec codices from the early colonial period. What is notable is that their content and style are entirely Indigenous. The Egerton and the Becker II codices are such examples.[40]

The books were either made with paper from the bark of the *āmatl* tree (Nahuatl; *amate* in Spanish), or made of tanned deer hide. The long strip would be folded in screenfold, like the bellows of an accordion. Both sides of the pages were usually utilised (see Figure 5.4 on page 64). These codices are currently housed in museums around the world and are well preserved given their fragility and age. They are named after their European owners who secured, sold, or donated them or the libraries in which they are housed. Those codices are Bodley, Selden, Vindobonensis, Zouche-Nuttall, and Colombino-Becker, with one of its two fragments in Mexico City and the other in Vienna.[41] Boone cautions, however, that despite years of research by over a dozen scholars, the codices have not always been firmly attributed to specific locations and that their precise provenience is still controversial.[42] Altogether, those books represent most of the Mixtec pre-colonial writing. Specialists and craftspeople would contribute to the making of the books. They would contribute to the preparation of the writing surfaces in either paper, deer hide or cotton cloth, the making of the dyes to create the colours, the manufacture of writing implements, and some would paint at the direction of another person.

Other Mixtec writing examples can also be found on polychrome ceramics painted in a similar style to the codices. During the colonial era, there were numerous maps and other historical documents painted on paper, or *lienzos*, which are large cotton fabric or strips sewn together. In this latter group, there are about twenty that are the most important. The colonial maps painted by the Mixtec retained the Indigenous style. The purpose of those maps was to demonstrate their land rights, to which they maintain claim until today.[43] As with the Zapotec, the Mixtec were conquered twice in a short span, first by the Aztec in the fifteenth century, and then by the Spaniards in the early sixteenth century.

The Mixtec maintained localized communities. Their very own environment influenced this. The rugged topography of the mountain ranges with narrow canyons and river valleys results in fragmented pockets of ecological niches that are located close to

[38] König, 'La escritura Mexica', 111–12.
[39] Jansen and Pérez Jiménez, *Codex Bodley*, 12.
[40] König, 'La escritura Mexica', 115.
[41] Jansen and Pérez Jiménez, *Codex Bodley*, 12; Boone, *Cycles of Time and Meaning*, 216.
[42] Ibid., 210, 213.
[43] König, 'La escritura Mexica', 111–16.

NB: This Codex is 11.13 m in length, folded into 47 pages, each measuring 23.5 × 19 cm.

'The Tonindeye (Nuttall) Codex', The British Museum, accessed 10 July 2024, https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/1613748259,%20https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/1613748259. Image license: CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Figure 5.4: Mixtec Codex Tonindeye/Zouche-Nuttall

each other. This environment promoted the diversity of cultural groups and their ability to maintain independent polities. Unlike other Mesoamerican cultures they did not build pyramids. Rather, they would erect palaces for the ruling families. Each community had a noble marital couple that ruled the polity together. It was through both man and woman that their respective legitimacy was established. This is different from the Maya who had the one-male-ruler model. These characteristics are reflected in diverse ways.

Their writings provide other information about their society. The pre-colonial Mixtec codices were written in the Postclassic era, from the thirteenth century BCE through 1521. Therefore, there are inevitable biases: the representation of the nobility as a small ratio of the population, what remains of the record, both archaeological and from manuscripts, and the narrower timespan of known writing samples. Nonetheless, these writings do open a window into their culture. As indicated earlier, the Mesoamerican societies were divided along the line of the nobility with most people in the lower classes. The ruling marital pairs were depicted in the codices sitting on a mat, facing each other. They were, and are still today, considered a 'mat and throne' society. The representation of the marital pairs, their apical ancestors, descendants, and relatives served to depict their legitimacy. There was a political motivation for painting and writing genealogies. This group of genealogical books remained in the care of priests and were not intended to be used as vertical propaganda from the nobility to the common class. They were rather used horizontally to keep the members of the elite informed of 'where they stood in relation to the main line of royal succession'.[44] The priests kept the books and assisted with disputes. It is not surprising either that 'certain Mixtec rulers had codices repainted so as to appear

[44]Marcus, *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, 12.

in genealogies into which they had not really been born'.[45] Another way to usurp the throne was through strategic marriage alliances or the destruction of stone monuments.[46]

5.4.1 Examples of Mixtec Writing

Looking at a few pages of the Codex Bodley as an example, key characteristic Mixtec features can be seen (see Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6 on page 66). The scribes would start by dividing the space with red lines to demark registers, typically three or four. Usually this was in a horizontal direction, but as needed vertical lines would be placed to section off portions of the narrative for clarity purposes, add notes, or indicate a change of topic. The reading was done in boustrophedon, which explains why the red lines were left open at either end of the pages. The writing conventions of the ritual and secular calendars have a dot only system to represent numbers. In contrast, the Zapotec and Maya used a dot-bar convention where the bar represents the number five, and each dot has value one.

The individuals are represented with their name and sometimes nickname, there is a small black line that joins the name to the person, or the name floats nearby. The ruling marital pairs are easily identified as they are seated facing each other on a mat. The members of the priesthood have some or all their bodies painted in black. They can also be recognised by their *xicollis*, a white garment with black markings. A Mixtec characteristic is to indicate 'in the year of' with the AO symbol shown with a number in dots and a glyph. Other items depicted are bundles, sacrificial knives, temples, gifts such as cloth and tobacco, thrones, localities, and actions such as self-sacrifice, sacrifices, and offerings.

These 2 pages are the story of Lord 5-Alligator about to start his priestly duties and later his marriages.
NB: It might be preferable to view the images of this codex on the website.

'Bodleian Library MS. Mex. d. 1', 7–8 (The Dynasty of Ñuu Tnoo (Tilantongo)), accessed 8 July 2024, https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/b5e31922-12ac-4a15-984c-870ef2ee4de6/. Image license: CC BY-NC 4.0.

Figure 5.5: The story of Lord 5-Alligator

[45] Ibid., 7.
[46] Ibid., 12.

Lastly, there is an example of rebus writing on page 15 of the Bodley Codex (see Figure 5.6 on page 66). The sound for a town, *Chiyocanu*, meant 'great platform' and since the sound for 'great platform' and 'bent platform' was almost the same, 'the scribe could draw a man bending a platform to represent Chiyocanu'.[47]

'Bodleian Library MS. Mex. d. 1', 15, accessed 8 July 2024, https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/b5e31922-12ac-4a15-984c-870ef2ee4de6/. Image license: CC BY-NC 4.0.

Figure 5.6: Detail of Codex Bodley showing the rebus principle

5.5 The Zapotec

5.5.1 San José Mogote

The Zapotec writing is considered to be the oldest in Mesoamerica and spans over 1,000 years into the early colonial period.[48] Around 1500–1200 BCE, people still lived in egalitarian small settlements. The achievements of individuals in trade, oratory skills, or

[47] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 52.
[48] Ibid., 385.

leadership gave them prestige and status. It was around 1000 BCE that a shift occurred to *inherited* status instead.[49]

The earliest carved stones from ca. 1150–850 BCE were discovered at San José Mogote, a dominant centre in the Etla Arm of the Valley of Oaxaca. They depict a feline and a raptorial bird.[50] Archaeological finds in this location also include bloodletting instruments such as obsidian lancets or stingray spines from ca. 1000 BCE.

San José Mogote became an important centre for a group of eighteen to twenty-three settlements. It is in this context of increased competition that writing emerges.[51] In the phase ending at 700 BCE, the blood motif of a circle and triangle appears. An example depicts a sacrificed victim who is likely a defeated rival chief. The victim is placed on the flat surface of a carved step leading to a temple complex. His heart is removed, the blood flows over the edge of the stone ending with the blood motif. His depiction without clothes serves as further humiliation.[52] The victim is 'identified by a glyph showing his name in the 260-day ritual calendar', suggesting high status.[53] This also shows that the ritual calendar was already well established and central to naming customs. Additionally, the judicious placement of the carved figure over a step lets people step on the body; a purposeful political narrative to bolster the chief's legitimacy.

At this juncture of Zapotec history, and given the already established phase of rank society, it is quite feasible that there already was an existing writing system in which scribes explored text layouts, reading direction or the forms of signs. The evidence from this phase is minimal and only exemplified by durable items such as stone, painted stuccos, or bones. Other writing surfaces such as bark paper, cured deer hides, wooden surfaces, or other mediums have not been preserved from that far back in time.[54] Minimally, the remaining evidence points to a nascent impetus to communicate with symbols.

5.5.2 Monte Albán

There was constant conflict and rivalry between San José Mogote and at least two other important chiefdoms from the other valleys. In fact, the depiction of the slain enemy chief might have triggered the burning of their main temple around 600 BCE that was never rebuilt.[55] A century later San José Mogote moved to Monte Albán, a central and defensible site. This move led by the elite included people from subject villages with a total number of about 2,000 people. The founding of Monte Albán was like a 'big bang'; a purposeful and sudden move initiated by the elite. It was motivated by centuries of warfare, but also by the commoners' dwindling trade opportunities, their loss of the burnt

[49] Ibid., 4.

[50] Ibid., 64.

[51] María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi, 'Los zapotecos, la escritura y la historia', in *Escritura zapoteca: 2,500 años de historia*, ed. María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi (México: INAH, CIESAS, 2003), 23.

[52] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 63–70.

[53] Joyce, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos*, 123.

[54] Javier Urcid, 'Ritual and Society in Ancient Central Oaxaca (350–850 CE)', in *Real Fake: The Story of a Zapotec Urn* (Toronto, Ontario: Royal Ontario Museum, 2018), 35.

[55] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 62, 70.

temple and desire to maintain a prestigious and protective relationship to their elite who provided the contact with the divine.[56]

The situation at Monte Albán was not without problems as the warfare and chiefly competition continued for several more centuries.[57] It is at this juncture that monumental structures were commissioned, starting with Building L and the depiction of around three hundred sacrificed captives. The San José Mogote propaganda is expanded with the strategy of depicting the slain rivals with their names. In this context, the practice of naming was a catalyst for writing.[58] Already at this stage there is evidence that the writing reflects the spoken language given the use of 'tone pairs and homonyms that work only in Zapotec', and the fact that 'the order of the glyphs reflects Zapotec syntax.'[59]

By 300 BCE, there is 'clear evidence for social complexity in the Valley of Oaxaca.'[60] The Main Plaza included 'a huge public plaza measuring roughly 300 m north–south by 150 m east–west.[61] It was a political, administrative, religious, and public place for ceremonies. The Main Plaza included numerous structures: stelae, a ball court, noble residences at the north platform, the prisoner gallery, public areas at the south platform and masonry tunnels to drain excess water leading to a reservoir.[62] The North Platform was private for the rulers and elite. The South Platform was intended for communal rituals (see Joyce, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos*, 142).

It is also here that 'pure' writing was found, that is, writing using glyphs only. This is on stelae 12 and 13, located near the Prisoner Gallery at the south end of Building L.[63] Stela 12 also has what is possibly the earliest example of rebus writing where the word *yobi* in Zapotec meant both 'thumb' and 'first-born-son', thus the glyph with the 'thumb' was used to refer to the more abstract concept of the first-born-son. Marcus renders the reading of Stela 12 top to bottom as: 'In the Year 4 Lightning, [a man named] 8 Water, a first-born son, was seated in office'.[64] The readings are so far tentative.

5.5.3 Monte Albán Expansion

From 400 BCE to 200 BCE, the population grew from 5,000 to 17,000 inhabitants in and around the city,[65] later reaching 22,000 at its peak.[66] The warfare continued with goals of territorial expansion, subjecting other communities, and eliminating leadership competition. There was also a need to gain control of more agricultural land and of the trade in high-status goods.[67] Around 100 BCE, Building J was erected. It has an unusual north-

[56] Joyce, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos*, 130.
[57] Ibid., 129.
[58] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 105.
[59] Ibid., 385.
[60] Joyce, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos*, 121.
[61] Ibid., 131.
[62] Urcid, 'Ritual and Society', 51.
[63] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 103.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Romero Frizzi, 'Los zapotecos, la escritura y la historia', 23.
[66] Urcid, 'Ritual and Society', 31.
[67] Joyce, *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos*, 152.

east/southwest alignment, tunnels, and is shaped like an arrowhead.[68] This new building located near the South Platform reflects the changes in a socio-political shift towards imperialism.[69] Unlike the earlier Prisoner Gallery that showed defeated individual rivals, this building was meant to identify the subjugated places. The impressive display of over sixty carved slabs was arranged on the walls of the Building J as a public map to impress the inhabitants of the conquered sites. From 250 CE to 600 CE, this place was also where the Zapotec would receive visitors from Teotihuacán who lived 500 kilometres north. These were diplomatic relationships to maintain trade, delimit their respective territories with a buffer zone in the Nochixtlán Valley, and participate in rituals. Teotihuacán had an enclave for Zapotec people that lived in an area of one to two hectares which was likely related to diplomatic and trade concerns.[70]

The new convention of naming a place was the hill sign which consisted of three elements. The first is an upside-down head with closed eyes and a unique hairstyle, headgear, or facial markings. Both Urcid and Marcus relate this to the earlier work of Alfonso Caso, a Mexican archaeologist who wrote in his 1947 book, *Calendario y escritura de las Antiguas culturas de Monte Albán*'s, that headgear possibly represented tutelar deities and indicated that the local chief was dead.[71] All the heads faced the same direction supporting the idea of a purposeful display. The second element was the hill sign with its characteristic vertical projections at each side that meant 'place of'.[72] The third element was a place specifier located above the hill sign. This element could be made of single or combined signs by suggesting 'the representation of toponyms by means of a phonetic system similar to that used by the Aztecs, who made use of phonetic indicators and, to a lesser degree, of the homophonic principle.'[73]

The defeated rivals each had unique hairstyles, headgear, facial markings, and adornments that identified them to a unique community. Some of the hill signs also had several other glyphs, arranged in either columns beside or around the hill sign. Some of the conquest slabs do not have an inverted head; this can be explained by a peaceful treaty or marriage alliance.[74]

Stela 1 at the South Platform of the Main Plaza is thought to depict a newly seated ruler wearing a jaguar costume, an elaborate headdress, and holding a staff as a symbol of his military role. These elements, plus the oversized jaguar pelt cushion and large throne, emphasize the office of kingship he now holds. The placement of this stela alongside depictions of prisoners creates a scene where the new ruler is depicted as reviewing a procession of bound prisoners. This stela has two columns of glyphs, with at least three year signs and year bearers. He also has a new name which was typically given for ascending a throne, it is possibly 12 Jaguar or 13 Owl. A new ruler could resort to exaggerations of his military abilities to compensate for his lack of the prerequisite lineage and would

[68] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 125.

[69] Ibid., 386.

[70] Ibid., 193–94.

[71] Javier Urcid, *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art & Archaeology, no. 34 (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 44.

[72] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 120–25.

[73] Urcid, *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*, 45.

[74] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 179.

commission this type of propagandist scene.[75]

Writing was not only confined to the monumental context. Other objects, often portable, were inscribed with writing. Numerous examples have been found from the apogee of Monte Albán in the Late Classic. In the funerary context, the Zapotec noble and elite tombs had carved lintels, polychrome murals, niches to place offerings, carved cylinders, sacred boxes containing ancestor memorabilia, funerary urns, and other objects such as bones and pulque beakers. In addition to the iconography, the objects had writing; often it would be to memorialize the marital pair, their names and sometimes nicknames, and to honour the primordial Zapotec founding couple, Lord 1 Jaguar, and Lady 2 Maize.[76]

5.5.4 Monte Albán Collapse

Monte Albán started to lose its inhabitants from the Late Classic (600–900 CE) and never returned to being a centre of power. It perhaps was a victim of its own success, or it became an exceedingly difficult situation to maintain for the rulers. The process was gradual; the daily lives of the commoners did not change much, however there were repercussions for the nobles who found themselves in a new political situation.[77] Arranging marriages between families of similar status and forming their own trade alliances became important means of creating their own network and to avoid being taken back by Monte Albán.[78] In this context, the nobles from secondary cities started writing their own genealogical registers to create their own political agenda. This was also a shift away from vertical to horizontal propaganda where the intended audience was their noble peers.[79] At that point they could use the registers to support their own claims of privilege. Their rituals also became more private with perhaps a few guests.

Monte Albán shifted from being the centre of power and became a place of legend with a sacred character. It no longer was viewed as the Zapotecan capital, or even a large city. It became the place where a new history started, where the sun was born, a symbolic separation between human history and the primordial history. As a result of this shift of perception and the changes in the new socio-political reality, Monte Albán became a place of pilgrimage. The elite families dispersed in the valleys, both Zapotec and Mixtec, would visit to make offerings, pray for health, and bury their dead. At that point, society was divided into two classes: the nobles and the commoners. Since the costs associated with these journeys were significant, supplying the tombs and their ornamentation, it was the nobility who could afford going to Monte Albán.[80] As a parallel to these changes, the long-lasting script lost its prestige. Scribes created logophonetic scripts where signs are more representative of the spoken language.[81] The intended audience was smaller and for the speakers of their respective language.[82]

[75] Marcus, *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*, 204.
[76] Ibid., 215–17.
[77] Ibid., 364.
[78] Ibid., 223.
[79] Ibid., 346.
[80] Romero Frizzi, 'Los zapotecos, la escritura y la historia', 29–31.
[81] Urcid, 'Ritual and Society', 64.
[82] Romero Frizzi, 'Los zapotecos, la escritura y la historia', 29–31.

5.6 Conclusion

The ancient history of any civilization is enriched when all facets of their cultures are considered. This is especially true for the ancient Americas. Long dismissed as simple pictorials, the writing created by the complex societies of Mesoamerica were underestimated as a result. There is the added difficulty of considering a writing system quite unlike one's own.

The level of decipherment of Maya is quite advanced. This is not the case however for Mixtec and Zapotec. This is due in part to the fact that they are part of the Otomanguean language family that Marcus describes as very complex and difficult to describe. Through this brief research paper, the value of looking at language and writing becomes apparent in reflecting aspects of Mixtec and Zapotec societies that would otherwise not have been appreciated.

References

Arellano Hoffmann, Carmen. 'El escriba Mesoamericano y sus utensilios de trabajo. La posición social del escriba antes y después de la conquista Española'. In *Libros y escritura de tradición indígena: ensayos sobre los códices prehispánicos y coloniales de México*, 1st ed., edited by Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, Peer Schmidt and Xavier Noguez, 217–56. Toluca, México: Colegio Mexiquense: Universidad Católica de Eichstätt, 2002. (Cited on page 59).

'Bilderhandschrift: Sog. Codex Mexicanus Bzw. Codex Yuta Tnoho'. Östereichische Nationalbibliotek. Accessed 8 July 2024. https://digital.onb.ac.at/RepViewer/viewer.faces?doc=DTL_8693413&order=1&view=SINGLE. (Cited on page 60).

Blanton, Richard E., Gary M. Feinman, Stephen A. Kowalewski and Linda M. Nicholas. 'Before Monte Albán'. In *Ancient Oaxaca: The Monte Albán State*, 2nd ed., 42–71. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2022. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108921954. (Cited on page 62).

'Bodleian Library MS. Mex. d. 1'. Accessed 8 July 2024. https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/b5e31922-12ac-4a15-984c-870ef2ee4de6/. (Cited on pages 65–66).

Boone, Elizabeth Hill. *Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Books of Fate*. 1st ed. Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007. (Cited on pages 59, 63).

———. 'Introduction: Writing and Recording Knowledge'. In *Writing Without Words: Alternative Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes*, edited by Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter Mignolo, 3–26. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994. (Cited on page 54).

Campbell, Eric W. 'Otomanguean Historical Linguistics: Exploring the Subgroups'. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 11, no. 7 (April 2017): 23. Accessed 19 February 2024. https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12244. (Cited on page 61).

Campbell, Eric W. 'Otomanguean Historical Linguistics: Past, Present, and Prospects for the Future'. *Language and Linguistics Compass* 11, no. 4 (April 2017): 22. Accessed 19 March 2024. https://doi.org/10.1111/lnc3.12240. (Cited on page 61).

Faber, Alice. 'Phonemic Segmentation as Epiphenomenon: Evidence from the History of Alphabetic Writing'. In *The Linguistics of Literacy*, edited by Pamela A. Downing, Susan D. Lima and Michael Noonan, 21:111–34. Typological Studies in Language (TSL). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1992. (Cited on page 55).

Flores Farfán, José Antonio. 'Introduction: On Typological Change in Mesoamerica'. *STUF - Language Typology and Universals* 71, no. 3 (3 2018): 327–38. Accessed 17 February 2024. https://doi.org/10.1515/stuf-2018-0014. (Cited on page 61).

García Escamilla, Enrique, Enrique Rivas Paniagua and Librado Silva Galeana. *Diccionario del náhuatl en el español de México (rústico)*. Nueva edición, corregida y aumentada. Edited by Carlos Montemayor. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2019. (Cited on page 61).

Grube, Nikolai and Carmen Arellano Hoffmann. 'Escritura y literalidad en Mesoamérica y en la región Andina: Una comparación'. In *Libros y escritura de tradición indígena: ensayos sobre los códices prehispánicos y coloniales de México*, 1st ed., edited by Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, Peer Schmidt and Xavier Noguez, 27–72. Toluca, México: Colegio Mexiquense : Universidad Católica de Eichstätt, 2002. (Cited on pages 54–55).

Houston, Stephen D. 'Overture to The First Writing'. In *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, edited by Stephen D. Houston, 3–15. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004. (Cited on page 54).

Jansen, Maarten and Gabina Aurora Pérez Jiménez. *Codex Bodley: A Painted Chronicle from the Mixtec Highlands, Mexico*. Treasures from the Bodleian Library 1. Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2005. (Cited on pages 61, 63).

Joyce, Arthur A. *Mixtecs, Zapotecs, and Chatinos the Ancient Peoples of Southern Mexico*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. (Cited on pages 62, 67–68).

Kettunen, Harri and Christophe Helmke. *Introduction to Maya Hieroglyphs*. Seventeenth Revised Edition. Wayeb, 2020. https://wayeb.org//download/Kettunen_Helmke_2020_Introduction_to_Maya_Hieroglyphs_17th_ed.pdf. (Cited on pages 56–57).

König, Viola. 'La escritura Mexica'. In *Libros y escritura de tradición indígena: ensayos sobre los códices prehispánicos y coloniales de México*, 1st ed., edited by Carmen Arellano Hoffmann, Peer Schmidt and Xavier Noguez, 109–55. Toluca, México: Colegio Mexiquense : Universidad Católica de Eichstätt, 2002. (Cited on pages 55, 62–63).

Luna-Vega, Isolda and Ral Contreras-Medi. 'Contributions of Cladistic Biogeography to the Mexican Transition Zone'. In *Global Advances in Biogeography*, edited by Lawrence Stevens. InTech, 2012–03–30. Accessed 6 March 2024. https://doi.org/10.5772/37761. (Cited on page 62).

Marcus, Joyce. *Mesoamerican Writing Systems: Propaganda, Myth, and History in Four Ancient Civilizations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992. (Cited on pages 54–55, 58–59, 61, 64–65).

———. *Zapotec Monuments and Political History*. 1st ed. Vol. 18. Memoirs of the Museum of Anthropology, No. 61. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2020. (Cited on pages 58, 66–70).

Robertson, John S. 'The Possibility and Actuality of Writing'. In *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, edited by Stephen D. Houston, 16–38. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004. (Cited on page 56).

Romero Frizzi, María de los Ángeles. 'Los zapotecos, la escritura y la historia'. In *Escritura zapoteca: 2,500 años de historia*, edited by María de los Ángeles Romero Frizzi, 13–69. México: INAH, CIESAS, 2003. (Cited on pages 67–68, 70).

'The Tonindeye (Nuttall) Codex'. The British Museum. Accessed 10 July 2024. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/1613748259,%20https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/1613748259. (Cited on page 64).

Trigger, Bruce G. 'Writing Systems: A Case Study in Cultural Evolution'. In *The First Writing: Script Invention as History and Process*, edited by Stephen D. Houston, 39–68. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004. (Cited on pages 54, 56).

Urcid, Javier. 'Ritual and Society in Ancient Central Oaxaca (350–850 CE)'. In *Real Fake: The Story of a Zapotec Urn*, 31–72. Toronto, Ontario: Royal Ontario Museum, 2018. https://archive.org/details/RealFakeZapotecUrn. (Cited on pages 67–68, 70).

———. *Zapotec Hieroglyphic Writing*. Studies in Pre-Columbian Art & Archaeology, no. 34. Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001. (Cited on page 69).

6 Art Imitating Life, Life Imitating Art: Environment, Religion, and Art in Dorset Culture

Isabella G. Murray (HI498)

With no literature left behind and no direct ancestors, the Dorset culture leaves many unanswered questions for those who attempt to study it. The art discovered at Dorset sites is often the best source to answer questions regarding their culture, with supplements from radiocarbon analysis, grave sites, and ethnographic analogy. Piece by piece, it has been made apparent that there is some intersection between environment, religion, and art.

This paper examines that intersection with particular focus on art as a historical source. Following an in-depth analysis of the harsh Canadian Arctic environment and the theoretical shamanistic and animistic belief system of the Dorset, the paper analyzes various artistic carvings and their supposed meanings. This paper draws attention to popular theories as well as their objections to create a holistic approach to an unknown culture. It grapples with what art can and cannot tell scholars about an extinct people.

Does art imitate life or does life imitate art? How does a person see the world and how do they wish to depict it? What are they telling someone else to see? Embedded in art are pieces of a culture's society, economics, religion, politics, societal norms and not-norms, as well as environment. Paintings are picked apart for these deeper meanings and historical insights that may be hidden within the colour, style, or subject. Are the strokes straight, short, or stippled, and what does that tell a person about the artwork and the culture that produced it? Like the pages of written documents, visual art forms can be strong historical sources. This is where art imitates life.

At the same time, art offers new ways of seeing the natural world. It can be illusory, altered, and unserious. It can bring different meaning to everyday normal things by virtue of its style. This is where life imitates art—when a person can now see something they never saw before because of the artistic rendition of it. This, of course, makes studying art difficult. It is even more difficult when the art's creators are no longer living. The Dorset people were a preliterate people who preceded the modern Inuit and had a rich and well-preserved material culture with art of many forms and endless possibilities of meaning. This paper will aim to synthesize the abundant research of archaeologists and prehistorians that tries to explain their art and its potential meanings in regard to environment and spiritual beliefs, whilst also exploring what art can and cannot tell scholars.

By means of archaeological and geoarchaeological evidence and ethnographic analogy, this paper will illustrate the tangible environment and abstract religion of the Dorset people as represented in art. It will introduce in detail the climate, flora, and fauna as well as further geographical attributes of the environment. It will define the cosmologies and supposed religious practice of animism and shamanism deeply rooted in the physical world. Finally, the paper will analyze art pieces representing various styles and the proposed interpretations of these pieces. Overall, connections between environment, religion, and art will be shown to be strongly evident in Dorset material culture.

6.1 Dorset Environment

Occupation of the Canadian arctic by the Dorset culture began ca. 800 BCE and ended ca. 1000–1500 CE.[1] The demise of the Dorset has been debated widely, but recent radiocarbon dating provides evidence of persistence to at least 1340.[2] The greater Dorset period is further categorized into three subperiods:

- Early Dorset, 800 BCE–1 CE
- Middle Dorset, 1–500 CE, and
- Later Dorset, 500 CE through the end of their existence[3]—this being the period for which the most material evidence remains and the one on which this paper will mainly focus.

The Dorset are preceded by the Palaeo-Eskimos, the first inhabitants of the North American Arctic, and followed by the Thule Inuit, the direct ancestors of the modern Inuit people. There is no genetic relation between the Thule and Dorset.[4]

Where applicable, this paper will refer to the Dorset as *Tunit* or *Tuniit*, which is the term used for them in the oral history of the Inuit people.[5]

Dorset sites have been found as far north as Ellesmere Island and Greenland and as far south as Newfoundland,[6] as well as on the central Canadian coast and the west coast of Hudson Bay.[7] Key sites referenced in this paper (e. g., Baffin Island, Igloolik, and Button

[1] Ian J. MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', *Anthropologica* 55, no. 1 (2013): 178.

[2] T. Max Friesen, 'Radiocarbon Evidence for Fourteenth-Century Dorset Occupation in the Eastern North American Arctic', *American Antiquity* 85, no. 2 (2020): 236.

[3] Patrick C. Jolicoeur, 'Dorset Harpoon Endblade Hafting and Early Metal Use in the North American Arctic', *ARCTIC* 74, no. 3 (September 2021): 278.

[4] Matthew J.O. Svensson et al., 'Methods for Determination of the Source of Iron in Precontact Inuit and Dorset Culture Artifacts from the Canadian Arctic', *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 36 (April 2021): 2.

[5] Robert McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 1. paperback ed (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press [u.a.], 2001), 135.

[6] Robert W. Park, 'The Dorset-Thule Succession in Arctic North America: Assessing Claims for Culture Contact', *American Antiquity* 58, no. 2 (April 1993): 203.

[7] Emily E. Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art: Aesthetics and History in and beyond the Arctic* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 71.

Connormah, *The Canadian Arctic Archipelago*, 19 June 2011. Image license: CC SA 3.0 Ported.

Figure 6.1: Map highlighting the Canadian Arctic Archipelago

Point) are located in the most densely populated area, the Canadian Arctic Archipelago (see Figure 6.1).[8]

6.1.1 Abiotic and Biotic Elements

The Arctic has cold and dry weather as typical of a tundra and is underlaid by permafrost; this has been extremely helpful in the preservation of artefacts.[9] A period of environmental deterioration marked the beginning stages of Dorset development[10] while a warming trend marked the Late Dorset period.[11] Human adaptations to the Arctic are miniscule and take place over long stretches of time, leaving its inhabitants defenceless against environmental changes. Even slight changes become detrimental (such as starvation due to climate change), which is why the Dorset period is littered with tragedies.[12] The environment is rugged, with glacier-capped mountains north of Baffin Island and gravel beaches on the sea-facing coasts.[13] Terrain towards the interiors of the islands of the archipelago are characterized by marshy tundra, glacial moraines, and eskers. Soil

[8]Friesen, 'Radiocarbon Evidence for Fourteenth-Century Dorset Occupation in the Eastern North American Arctic', 222.

[9]McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 7–8.

[10]Ibid., 145.

[11]Park, 'The Dorset-Thule Succession in Arctic North America: Assessing Claims for Culture Contact', 217.

[12]McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 107.

[13]Ibid., 96–98.

processes in tundra regions this far north are extremely slow and only a few centimetres thick, which accounts for the lack of flora[14]—the less a plant's soil depth, the less its access to water and nutrients. Shallow soil depth also means the soil cannot offer the mechanical support many plants need to grow and thrive (e. g., tall woody plants).[15]

Early characterizations neglect inland sites and characterize the Dorset as coastally-oriented. This is for a number of reasons: discovery of primarily coastal sites as well as the contesting of land mammal hunting (such as caribou or muskoxen) because of the Dorset's lack of bow and arrow. While these reasons might well suggest that the Dorset would not have lived inland, it remains that swathing generalizations based on the examination of a specific site or specific material remains can be harmful to interpretations of these ancients, especially as new sites and evidence are continually discovered. That being said, as a society with very little available information and no direct lineal descent, generalizations can often be helpful stepping stones in the study of these people—providing we remember not to be definitive and keep conclusions open to change. The Dorset culture resembles a puzzle that came with almost all of its pieces missing; each new piece discovered allows for a broadening of knowledge and a chance to revisit well-supported 'facts' in the field that perhaps are not as certain as once believed.

For example, newer research has since allowed some archaeologists to conclude that not all Dorset sites are marine mammal focused as some sites are much farther inland, on the shores of lakes.[16] In general, winter villages were built where hunting at a local level would have been able to sustain the sedentary Dorset throughout the coldest and darkest period of the year, regardless of location.

The ways houses were built offers insight into the harsh climate of the period and the effort required to protect against it. Early Dorset winter houses were built more deeply into the ground for insulation and wind protection purposes. Turf was used to insulate the walls, animal skins might have been put over the roofs, and snow was placed over the houses for further insulation.[17] Winter houses also had cold-trap entrance passages to prevent cold air from coming in through the door—by giving it a sunken area to settle—as well as raised rear sleeping platforms, which further signals that the coldest air remained at the lowest level of the house.[18] Winter houses were lit and heated with soapstone lamps using seal or other sea mammal oil.[19]

Arctic waters are incredibly rich in large sea mammals, which is why the Dorset relied on them for resources such as lamp oil.[20] Pods of small whales could be trapped in pools surrounded by ice, and straits with thin ice and open water held sea mammals sea-

[14]David B. Landry et al., 'Combined Geophysical Approach in a Complex Arctic Archaeological Environment: A Case Study from the LdFa-1 Site, Southern Baffin Island, Nunavut', *Archaeological Prospection* 22, no. 3 (July/September 2015): 159.

[15]Nishanta Rajakaruna and Robert S. Boyd, 'Edaphic Factor', in *Encyclopedia of Ecology* (Elsevier, 2019), 361.

[16]Brooke S. Milne, Robert W. Park and Douglas R. Stenton, 'Dorset Culture Land Use Strategies and the Case of Inland Southern Baffin Island', *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 36, no. 2 (2012): 268–69.

[17]McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 130–31.

[18]Park, 'The Dorset-Thule Succession in Arctic North America: Assessing Claims for Culture Contact', 205.

[19]McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 50.

[20]Ibid., 19.

sonally, e. g., seals, walrus, belugas, and narwhals in the summer and seals and walrus in the winter. Polar bears occupied both land and sea and rivalled the Dorset as the most powerful predator; both hunted sea mammals and both occasionally hunted each other.[21] Though dangerous and difficult to hunt, these animals supplied meat, skins, ivory, and blubber.[22] Faunal evidence from a site in Victoria Island shows exploitation of Arctic char and caribou, and focused exploitation of ringed and harp seals.[23] In the interior lake region of Baffin Island, other fauna and avifauna resources found include fish and most Arctic wildfowl.[24] Further evidence of caribou crossings and fish weirs attest to this.[25]

The hunting of caribou and muskoxen has been contested by many archaeologists. One of the reasons for this is because of the Dorset's lack of bow and arrow; consequently, alternative tools and hunting methods have been suggested. Lances and drive lanes may have been used to channel the animals to fenced areas to be ambushed, creating the features on the landscape that are attributed to the *Tunit* in the modern Inuit oral tradition.[26] There are very few bones of large canines and no evidence of dog sleds. Dogs would likely have been eaten had they been present among Dorset groups especially at the beginning of Dorset development considering the severe conditions of the environment.[27]

6.2 Dorset Religion

Environment, while generalized, is still a tangible thing which can be seen and tested to provide answers for archaeologists and which can be further supplemented by oral histories. Those who study religion are faced with a much more difficult starting ground—in fact, such ground does not exist. With no written sources and given an extinct people who have no known descendants, the study of Dorset religion is of necessity based upon generalizations pulled from other groups in similar environmental areas and time periods supplemented by the study of material culture, largely in the form of art.

6.2.1 Cosmologies

As H. Newell Wardle says in his work about Inuit myth evolution, 'religiosity is markedly influenced by externals'.[28] Inuit oral traditions that have been passed down for generations can give insight into the way cosmology was perceived by people living in the Canadian Arctic. Ancient tales tell not only of the origins of the people themselves, but of the celestial bodies and physical world as well. Cycles of dualisms (e. g., light and dark, certainty versus uncertainty) can be explained. Understanding the universe is integral

[21] Ibid., 162.

[22] Ibid., 98–99.

[23] Milne, Park and Stenton, 'Dorset Culture Land Use Strategies and the Case of Inland Southern Baffin Island', 272–73.

[24] Ibid., 275.

[25] Park, 'The Dorset-Thule Succession in Arctic North America: Assessing Claims for Culture Contact', 205.

[26] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 144.

[27] Ibid., 145–46.

[28] H. Newell Wardle, 'The Sedna Cycle: A Study in Myth Evolution', *American Anthropologist* 2, no. 3 (July–September 1900): 568.

to understanding and coping with key points of survival. The sun and its light and heat govern hunting; the moon affects tides; stars in dark night skies can provide navigational help. The universe is charactertized by uncontrollable aspects like weather, access to food, and health. This is what broader religions often arise from—a desire to attribute answers to unanswerable questions in a way that can make life easier to navigate. The physical world , i. e., the 'externals,' forms the basis of cosmology.[29]

The current understanding of Dorset cosmology is that the world was conceived as a set of (at least) four horizontal planes stacked upon each other. This conclusion is drawn from a comparison of the worldviews of other Arctic or northern peoples:

- The top plane comprised the sky, including the sun, moon, stars, clouds, and (presumably) the spirits and forces that corresponded to those elements
- The next plane would have been inhabited by humans and land animals
- Below that, the under-ice sea world held fish, sea mammals, and possibly other creatures
- At the very bottom lay the underworld.[30]

The Dorset also may have conceptualized the categories 'human' and 'animal' differently. The assumption of an animistic cosmology would connect it to shamanism. This is, like everything suggested in this section, an interpretation based on ethnographic analogy.[31]

6.2.2 Shamanism

Arctic shamanism is intrinsically connected to the animistic concept whereby every thing, living or not, has a spirit. These spirits all contribute to the way the world functions and, in particular, to things that affect human survival.[32] Shamanism sees everything in the universe as interconnected; what is important here is how people can influence these forces.[33] The shaman is the only force able to mediate between spirits and community. The role of the shaman is thus dependent on the community believing that the practices and rituals used will effectively secure the spirits' beneficence. Not only does the shaman manage the spirits' moods and decide when and how to perform rituals to control or appease them, the shaman's role also provides a sense of community togetherness.[34]

Shamans could make use of helping spirits, often encountered in dreams, trances, or in solitude on the tundra. Typically, such spirits would have been thought to take the form of animals and their helping 'powers' would have related to the abilities of the animal in

[29] John Bennett and Susan Diana Mary Rowley, *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, McGill-Queen's Native and Northern Series 36 (Montreal ; Ithaca [N.Y.]: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 160.

[30] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 156–57.

[31] Matilda I. Siebrecht and Sean P. A. Desjardins, 'In the Eye of the Beholder: Using Microscopic Analysis in the Interpretation of Tuniit (Dorset Paleo-Inuit) Art', *Arctic Anthropology* 59, no. 1 (September 2023): 42.

[32] Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 40.

[33] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 155.

[34] Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 40–41.

question, e. g., attributes such as strength, speed, or cleverness. These would have been thought transferred to the person for hunting, survival, or community purposes. Things like calming weather, curing illnesses, or attracting animals near to human dwellings were tasks of the shaman.[35] Religious artefacts were likely also often used in shamanic rituals and performances.[36]

Understanding Dorset religion in this way—as if it is identical to religions of other northern inhibitors—is an approach that has been critiqued by some. It is reductive to assume that they developed identical or nearly identical religious practices, especially solely on the basis of environment—religion is much more complex than that. Certainly, there is no conclusive evidence that Dorset religion *was* identical to others, but neither is there evidence to the contrary. Common patterns occurring amongst people who all live in the same or similar environmental conditions have merit especially to the extent cosmologies and religion are, at least in some part, derived from the physical world. However, there is always opportunity in this field to look at things with new and diverse perspectives.[37]

6.2.3 Burials

The closest archaeologists can get to somewhat concrete evidence regarding the Dorset view of the world and the role of people in that world is through examining the methods of disposal of the dead.[38] Rare human Dorset remains from Igloolik (belonging to the few remains from Nunavut) offer insight in this. Late Dorset non-utilitarian artefacts, such as polar bear carvings, for instance, were found in pit graves and appear to have been intentionally selected and placed in the graves.[39] Gravel mounds covered some of the pit graves. In combination with the artefacts, this structure might indicate certain underlying burial ideas or ceremonies allowing for the spirits of the dead to cross over to another world.[40] On the floor of the pit grave were carefully placed bones and artefacts. The maxillary, tusk, and rib bones of walrus were assembled into a skeleton design, taking on a focal position. Seal and caribou bones were also found in the grave. A probable fireplace is also present, alongside other artefacts and a human long bone placed there.[41] On top of the 'fireplace' is a harpoon head decorated with a human face presumably formerly used for walrus hunting.[42]

The emphasis on the game animal in this grave has led archaeologists to speculate that the assemblage was core to some type of ceremony or activity centred on it.[43] Because this was a grave, there is also high speculation that it must have been linked to the Dorset's conception of what happened to a person and spirit after death. The presence of

[35] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 157–58.

[36] Ibid., 155.

[37] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 179.

[38] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 147.

[39] Niels Lynnerup et al., 'Human Dorset Remains from Igloolik, Canada', *ARCTIC* 56, no. 4 (December 2003): 350–51.

[40] Ibid., 351–52.

[41] Ibid., 352–53.

[42] Ibid., 357.

[43] Ibid., 356.

religious thought in relation to death is often unavoidable because many religions seek to address the question of the unknown afterlife. Though it does not reveal much, this grave excavation suggests a link between religion and the environment as exemplified by various animal presence as a key part in the treatment of the Dorset's dead.

6.3 Dorset Art

Art is a window into the life of its creator(s) and the society and culture in which it was produced. There are copious reasons for why art is made, many of which can never confidently be known. Religion is one of these reasons. Many art pieces through thousands of years and hundreds of cultures have been produced in religious contexts and imbued with religious meaning. The rich Roman Catholic art of the Italian Renaissance is a strong example of this. In such contemporary (and historical) contexts, art can be seen as a cultural pattern and symbolic system that can impart meaning about the way people experience the world to anthropologists, archaeologists, and art historians. Art transforms ideas into things that are visible and tactile—it is a way of making religious belief tangible.[44] As the Dorset art tradition is abundant, especially that of the Late Dorset, analyses of its art inevitably invite discussion of Dorset religion.

6.3.1 General Descriptions

The Dorset art to which archaeologists have access is generally limited to the portrayal of individual creatures in naturalistic or stylized miniatures (see Figure 6.2 on page 83). The carvings are small, portable, and made of ivory, wood, bone, antler, tooth, and, occasionally, stone.[45] It is in the nature of sculpture to be intended to be touched, held, and turned over. There is not always a 'front' or 'top'; rather, sculptures are three-dimensional. The lack of a base as well as high-use wear might then suggest that these are not merely 'passive' art pieces, but rather that they were carved for active handling or use, whatever that use might have been.[46] The fact of contact with the carving is an important part of its reception. It is a 'sensuous rather than rational experience', one that is intrinsically different from two-dimensional paintings, and this must be considered in interpretation.[47]

Naturalistic carvings are close to flawless replicas of the animals depicted, whether seals, walruses, polar bears, birds, caribous, weasels, or wolves. Stylized or symbolic carvings are more abstract and unrealistic portrayals, but sufficiently natural that what is intended to be represented can be understood nevertheless by simple contemplation of the object. For example, there is a carving of a polar bear who appears to be in a flying posture, with human-like rear legs (see Figure 6.3 on page 83). The bear and human aspects of the carving are identifiable despite its stylization.

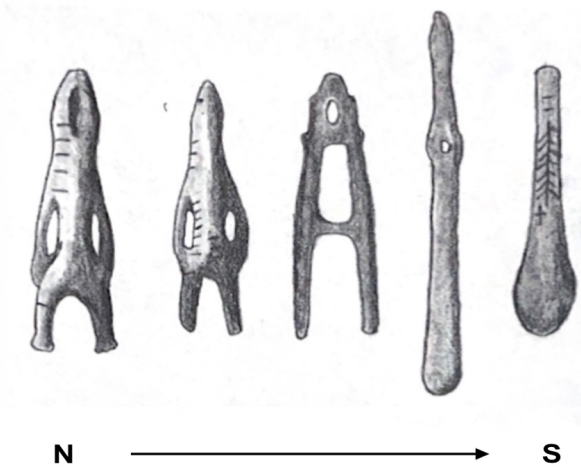
[44] Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 68.

[45] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 179.

[46] Siebrecht and Desjardins, 'In the Eye of the Beholder', 51.

[47] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 181.

Left: naturalistic Right: stylistic



After Emily E. Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art: Aesthetics and History in and beyond the Arctic* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 89

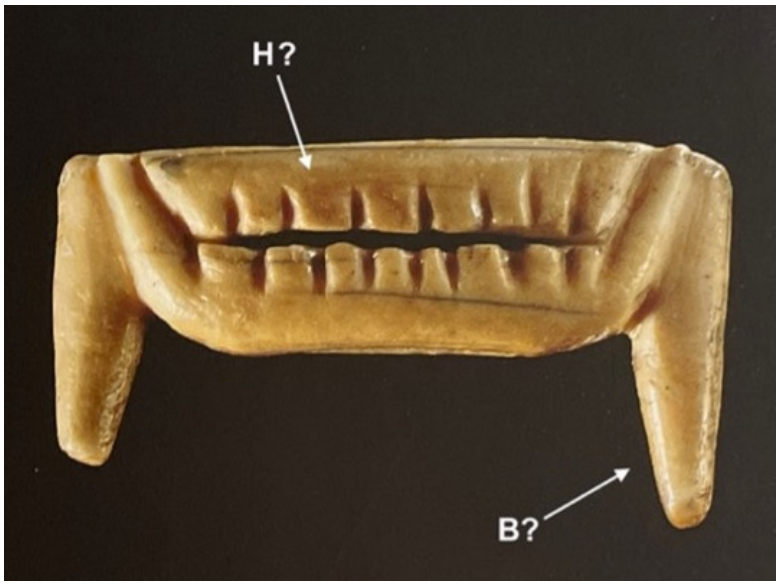
Figure 6.2: Drawings of Dorset bear carvings

Left: naturalistic depiction Right: abstract depiction

After Robert McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 1. paperback ed (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press [u.a.], 2001), 163

Figure 6.3: Dorset polar bear carvings highlighting the flying posture

Other stylizations only portray parts of animals, such as skulls, hooves, teeth, and tusks. Ivory carvings of human and animal teeth have been designed to be bitten down upon so as to be held in front of the mouth (see Figure 6.4). The bear (or other animal predator) canines might represent human-to-animal transformations (or vice versa) and are believed to have been used by shamans.[48]



After Robert McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 1. paperback ed (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press [u.a.], 2001), Plate 11

Figure 6.4: Ivory teeth, highlighting human (?) teeth and larger bear canines

Transformative or hybrid carvings, whether animal-human (see Figure 6.5 on page 85) or animal-animal (see Figure 6.6 on page 85), are common in Dorset art. Therianthropes could be symbolic of beings that can cross barriers between the physical and celestial worlds.[49] Animal-animal carvings, which have more complex and uncertain meaning(s), could also be about the transformative powers of the shaman, or alternatively potential mythical or mythological creatures, offering insight into the unknown religion or folklore of the Dorset people. In a manner similar to amulets—which many of these carvings have been hypothesized to be—the animal-animal hybrid offers the appropriation of beneficial, desired qualities of more than one animal for the wearer. For example, consideration of Figure 6.6 suggests that the falcon body was chosen for qualities regarding flight and speed, whereas the bear head could have been chosen for qualities such as strength and intelligence.[50]

Overall, bears are the most commonly portrayed animal; this might be connected to the status of the bear as the Dorset's most powerful predator.[51] Birds are typically

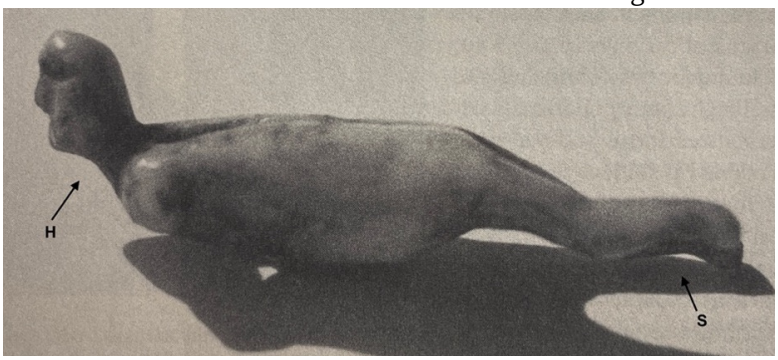
[48]McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 159–61.

[49]MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 180.

[50]Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 95.

[51]McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 162.

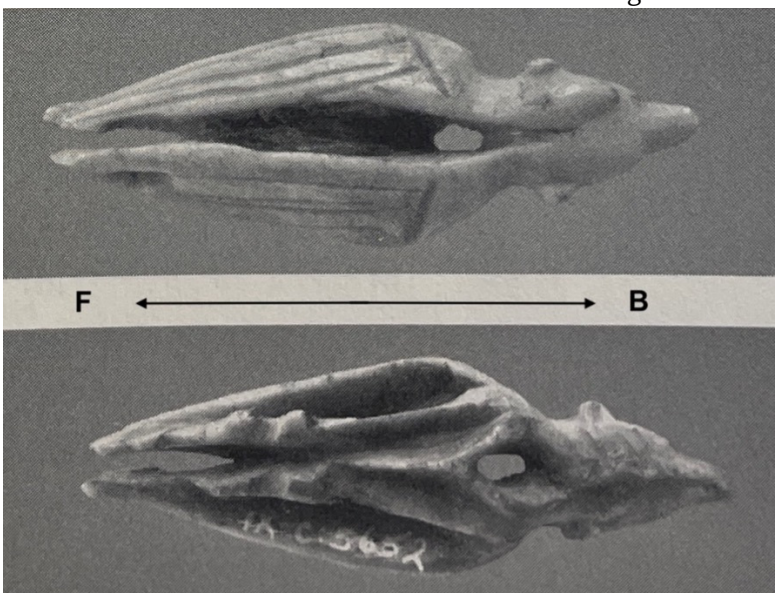
Left: human characteristics Right: Seal characteristics



Emily E. Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art: Aesthetics and History in and beyond the Arctic* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 94

Figure 6.5: A man-seal carving

Left: falcon characteristics Right: bear characteristics



After Emily E. Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art: Aesthetics and History in and beyond the Arctic* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 95

Figure 6.6: A bear-falcon carving

portrayed naturalistically (see Figure 6.7). Some examples of carvings are nesting ducks with eggs, falcons swooping as if to grab prey with their talons, or owls whose heads are turned completely backwards.[52]

Note the hole, suggesting that this may have been worn on a string as a necklace, such that the face of the bird would look up at the wearer.

After Robert McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 1. paperback ed (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press [u.a.], 2001), Plate 13

Figure 6.7: Small naturalistic carving of a baby bird or owl

Seals are also customarily depicted naturalistically. Walrus carvings, in contrast, appear to be much more stylized, which draws suggestions of the dynamic of the walrus in Dorset culture and its supposed link to religion (see Figure 6.8 on page 87).[53]

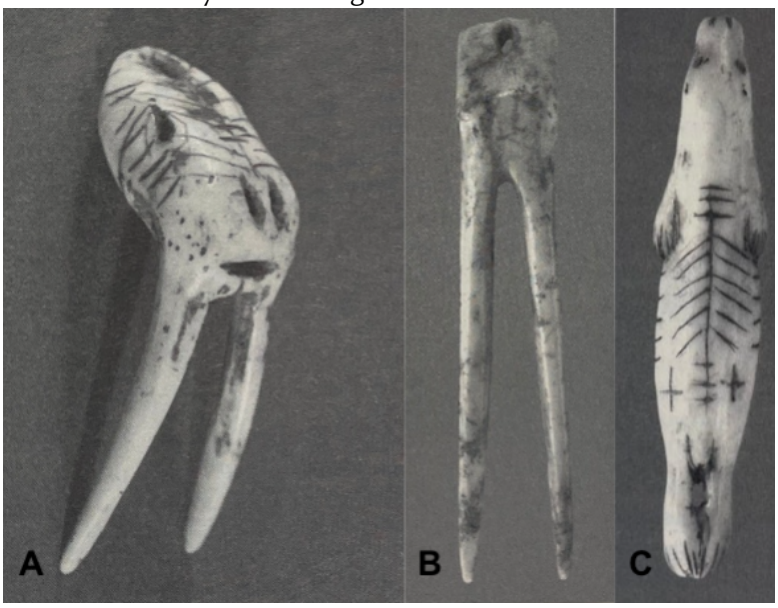
Stylistic continuities in general lead to interpretations of the carvings as part of narrative and religious traditions because they are out of the ordinary.[54] A common motif on stylized carvings is the x-ray or skeletal design. These are interpreted as representing the 'imperishable' spirit of the creature being portrayed. 'X's placed on joints, necks, and heads of animal and human carvings are interpreted as implements in a type of preventative magic (see Figure 6.9 on page 87).[55]

[52]McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 166.

[53]Ibid., 167.

[54]MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in

A: walrus head amulet
B: stylized walrus tusks
C: more naturalistic full-body seal carving



After Emily E. Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art: Aesthetics and History in and beyond the Arctic* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004), 93–94

Figure 6.8: Walrus carvings

After dalbera, *Ours nageant*, 15 November 2008, 20:49. Image license: CC Attribution 2.0 Generic.

Figure 6.9: Polar bear carving with skeletal design and X markings

In contrast, utilitarian objects are rarely decorated.[56] The decorations in combination with the high degree of specificity further lead to ideas of religious meaning. As well, the abundance of animal carvings over humans and other non-living objects indicate a preoccupation with animals and points to the significance of these creatures.[57]

6.3.2 Connections to Religion

To see shamanism and magico-religious beliefs underlying the carvings is the 'dominant perspective' of Dorset archaeologists, mainly pushed by the work of George Swinton.[58] Swinton is an important contributor in the discussion of Dorset art and is referenced in almost all works on art and its connections to culture. For him, the content is more important than the shape and style of the carving. The content of the art is reflective of the social context in which the piece was made, so Dorset thought and action is embedded in the carving itself. An example of this is choice in portrayal of bear or human, then whether the bear is walking or flying. These choices key into the socio-religious use of the carvings. Swinton thus sees Dorset carvings as physical remnants of religious tradition, essential to the rituals and shamanistic practices and most likely crafted by shaman-artists.[59]

Highly stylized figures suggest the spiritual power of the animal depicted. The example of the flying bear, with forelegs pressed lengthwise along the body and hindlegs stretched behind, is prevalent here particularly because of its unnatural quality: bears cannot fly, so the creation of a piece where it might cue to an equally atypical explanation, such as religious belief and practice. This style of carving could represent a shaman and helping spirit transcending physical planes in the universe or going on a quest.[60] The prevalence of bears in Dorset art is important because of the bear's role in the environment. Polar bears are the only Arctic animal to hunt sea mammals, alongside humans, and they could also occasionally be predators of humans. This paints the bear as a human-like creature with incredible power, cementing its status as a likewise powerful spirit creature. Bears can cause harm to humans, but might also be helpful through the work of the shaman.[61]

Another indicator of religious use is perforation in the carvings which allows them to be attached to cords or clothing and worn on the body as an amulet. Amulets transfer the perceived abilities of the animal to the wearer, particularly where hunting abilities are concerned.[62] Caribou parts are typically perforated for this reason. A carving of a caribou foot could convey that the wearer wants the former's fleetness.[63] Animal parts are also

Dorset Carving', 180.

[55] Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 76.

[56] Ibid., 73.

[57] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 180.

[58] Ibid., 178.

[59] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 152–54.

[60] Ibid., 164.

[61] Ibid., 162.

[62] Ibid., 166.

[63] Ibid., 168.

generally connected to totemism and hunting magic.[64] Perforated carvings could also be attached to shamanic equipment and used in ceremonies or rituals.[65] Such carvings, as active sculptures, could also indicate the performative nature of Dorset art. Perhaps the carvings were actors in dances, theatre, music, and storytelling practices, connecting them to a greater oral tradition.[66]

The underlying material can also convey religious meaning. Art with a high likelyhood of public use is made of wood. Wood is not preserved as well as other materials, so it could be more popular than the surviving exemplars suggest. At Button Point, driftwood from the sea was the material for almost all of the art found. The sea is also the provider of those sea mammals which were key to Dorset survival in terms of food, clothing, sinew, ivory, bone, and oil, which gives light and heat. The sea gives life in a variety of forms, leading archaeologists to believe that wood was considered to be a special, and possibly religious, material. Wood also has characteristics key to shamanistic practices. For example, the easily carvable nature of wood allows for dramatic demonstrations like gouging.[67]

Another interpretation of religion outside of communal shamanism is that deceased bears could come into contact with deceased Dorset ancestors. Portrayals of bears that are skinny or have skeletal designs might be indicative of this belief. As well, carvings of shamans travelling mounted on bears might not be shamans, but rather deceased ancestors' spirits.[68] Innumerable interpretations can be made when this art is considered from different angles.

6.3.3 Objections

Research in areas like art and religion is of course by nature speculative, leading to many objections regarding the connection between religion and art in Dorset culture. While most archaeologists do not deny that some art was connected to shamanism, there is contention in attributing all art to that same purpose. The popular identification of Dorset art carvings as amulets, for example, comes out of ethnographic literature on the modern magical practices of Inuit.[69] But extreme cultural distance from the Dorset people makes it impossible to accurately reconstruct why Dorset art was made nor how it was used.[70] Ethnohistorical analogy from the modern Inuit religion is not a stable method of interpretation particularly because of the weak link between Inuit and the Dorset,[71] though many studies have aimed to figure out the connection between the Late Dorset and the Thule Inuit.

[64] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 185.

[65] Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 92.

[66] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 180.

[67] Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 74–75.

[68] Ibid., 91.

[69] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 188.

[70] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 164.

[71] Ibid., 155.

Genetic studies show that the Dorset and Thule have no genetic relation.[72] There is no conclusive evidence that the Dorset and Thule acculturated.[73] Inuit traditional knowledge passed down by elders does suggest their contemporaneous existence, followed by conflict and flight of the *Tuniit*. How close the two groups actually were is not described in detail, but their coexistence is validated given that the migration and meeting of a new people would be a significant part of Inuit history and likely remembered. The issue lies with linking these stories to concrete data.[74] Thousands of years of separate culture and tradition stand between the Dorset and Thule people, thus making ethnographical analogy a troublesome methodology to rely on.[75]

Any archaeological interpretation is influenced by bias and subjectivity; the past is contaminated by the present. Dorset art, being sculpture, further contributes to this as sculpture is one of the most difficult media in art to understand.[76] The division between naturalistic and stylized carvings is an example of this. This categorization is a superimposition by modern archaeologists—there is no proof that the ancients categorized their art in that way. This is a restrictive method of interpretation that may restrict future diverse conclusions from being made.[77]

There is a multiplicity of other suggested uses for Dorset art. Craftsmanship and carving was an integral part of Dorset society because of the need for tools and the types of materials available, so it would be wrong to conclude that only a specific member of society, such as a shaman, could make art. The art simply could have been a way for people to 'reproduce' the physical world around them.[78] Carvings could be game pieces, toys, or gifts to children or lovers.[79] Childhood is often overlooked in the study of the Dorset, but it is vital to consider the impact children had on the formation of their society as they are the future of it. Both naturalistic and stylized carvings could very well have been toys made to entertain children while their parents were busy.[80] Sculptures, human and animal alike, could also have been pieces to pair with oral stories that taught important lessons or entertained family and friends.

Recalling the illustration of the Dorset environment and its hostile nature at the beginning of this paper, art could have been a means the Dorset used to grapple with their habitat. These carvings could be trying to soothe, protect, cope, or express grief. They could represent a form of commemorative trophies for hunters. Bears are incredibly dangerous and difficult to kill without modern technology, so anyone who was able to kill

[72] Svensson et al., 'Methods for Determination of the Source of Iron in Precontact Inuit and Dorset Culture Artifacts from the Canadian Arctic', 2.

[73] Robert W. Park, 'Growing Up North: Exploring the Archaeology of Childhood in the Thule and Dorset Cultures of Arctic Canada', *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 15, no. 1 (January 2005): 54.

[74] Friesen, 'Radiocarbon Evidence for Fourteenth-Century Dorset Occupation in the Eastern North American Arctic', 223.

[75] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 188.

[76] Ibid., 182.

[77] Siebrecht and Desjardins, 'In the Eye of the Beholder', 52.

[78] McGhee, *Ancient People of the Arctic*, 172.

[79] MacRae, 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving', 192.

[80] Park, 'Growing Up North', 60.

one would have been recognized as a great hunter. The high level of detail on art pieces could be a means to depict a kill accurately.[81] Alternatively, Dorset art could have represented physical manifestations of dreams or wild imaginations, made for fun or out of boredom or due to creative urges, used for political or philosophical purposes, or made for the purpose of simple self-expression (including, and particularly related to gender). There are many instances where the art can be seen as religious. But there are also many instances where the art is likely not, and these should be considered with equal weight.

6.4 Conclusions

The Canadian Arctic Archipelago is a cold land, barren of flora, harsh and unforgiving toward those who seek to adapt to it. The icy seas are full of sea mammals, the plains host caribou and muskoxen, while birds flock in the skies. These animals were integral to Dorset survival and were the only other living things in the environment. These living beings were all attributed souls based on the religious concept of animism, which is connected to the practice of shamanism. Through shamanism, the spirits of animals and other unknown forces that control weather, resources, and illness, could be harnessed so that humans could also become an influential force in the world. Shamans used rituals and religious objects to carry out the mediation between the human and spirit world and the different planes of the universe.

Dorset art carvings of realistic and symbolic animals resemble the physical world around them and reflect Dorset religious beliefs and practices. Some suggested interpretations for them are as amulets and/or performance pieces in rituals and ceremonies. There are various interpretations unrelated to religion as well. Art is a strong but limited source and scholars using it can only produce intimations in the search of Dorset society and religion, no matter how popular or strongly supported those intimations are. Can anyone ever know the true purpose of an art piece is when the creator is not around to discuss it? This essay raises the timeless question of mimesis in its search for meaning in art: Is Dorset art imitating the life they lived, the beliefs they practiced? Is life imitating the beauty and tragedy of Dorset art, the perspective of life that they imbued into art?

Some archaeologists believe that Dorset art imitated the life around them—a life intrinsically tied to the cosmology and religious practices of its people. But other perspectives suggest that perhaps it was life imitating art: that art was an integral part of living, that life sought to be expressive, as art is, and that Dorset people coped with the environment through art, regardless of whether or not it was intended as religious. Art wants to be life. Life wants to be art. Researchers strive to know the unknown and grasp at any source they can to get even a little closer. The cycle goes on.

References

Auger, Emily E. *The Way of Inuit Art: Aesthetics and History in and beyond the Arctic*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2004. (Cited on pages 76, 80, 82–85, 87–89, 91).

[81] Auger, *The Way of Inuit Art*, 91–92.

Bennett, John and Susan Diana Mary Rowley. *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*. McGill-Queen's Native and Northern Series 36. Montreal ; Ithaca [N.Y.]: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004. (Cited on page 80).

Connormah. *The Canadian Arctic Archipelago*. 19 June 2011. Accessed 17 July 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Canadian_Arctic_Archipelago.svg. (Cited on page 77).

dalbera. *Ours nageant*. 15 November 2008, 20:49. Accessed 17 July 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ours_nageant_(Mus%C3%A9e_du_quai_Branly)_(3034045389).jpg. (Cited on page 87).

Friesen, T. Max. 'Radiocarbon Evidence for Fourteenth-Century Dorset Occupation in the Eastern North American Arctic'. *American Antiquity* 85, no. 2 (2020): 222–40. Accessed 7 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1017/aaq.2019.88. (Cited on pages 76–77, 90).

Jolicoeur, Patrick C. 'Dorset Harpoon Endblade Hafting and Early Metal Use in the North American Arctic'. *ARCTIC* 74, no. 3 (September 2021): 276–89. Accessed 7 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.14430/arctic73149. (Cited on page 76).

Landry, David B., Ian J. Ferguson, S. Brooke Milne and Robert W. Park. 'Combined Geophysical Approach in a Complex Arctic Archaeological Environment: A Case Study from the LdFa-1 Site, Southern Baffin Island, Nunavut'. *Archaeological Prospection* 22, no. 3 (July/September 2015): 157–70. Accessed 9 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1002/arp.1505. (Cited on page 78).

Lynnerup, Niels, Jørgen Meldgaard, Jan Jakobsen, Martin Appelt, Anders Koch and Bruno Frøhlich. 'Human Dorset Remains from Igloolik, Canada'. *ARCTIC* 56, no. 4 (December 2003): 349–58. Accessed 8 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.14430/arctic632. (Cited on page 81).

MacRae, Ian J. 'How Are We to Imagine Them?: Shamanism, Structuralism and The Zoomorphic Series in Dorset Carving'. *Anthropologica* 55, no. 1 (2013): 177–96. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24467383. (Cited on pages 76, 81–82, 84, 86, 88–90).

McGhee, Robert. *Ancient People of the Arctic*. 1. paperback ed. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press [u.a.], 2001. (Cited on pages 76–81, 83–84, 86, 88–90).

Milne, Brooke S., Robert W. Park and Douglas R. Stenton. 'Dorset Culture Land Use Strategies and the Case of Inland Southern Baffin Island'. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 36, no. 2 (2012): 267–88. (Cited on pages 78–79).

Park, Robert W. 'Growing Up North: Exploring the Archaeology of Childhood in the Thule and Dorset Cultures of Arctic Canada'. *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 15, no. 1 (January 2005): 53–64. Accessed 9 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1525/ap3a.2005.15.53. (Cited on page 90).

———. ‘The Dorset-Thule Succession in Arctic North America: Assessing Claims for Culture Contact’. *American Antiquity* 58, no. 2 (April 1993): 203–34. https://www.jstor.org/stable/281966. (Cited on pages 76–79).

Rajakaruna, Nishanta and Robert S. Boyd. ‘Edaphic Factor’. In *Encyclopedia of Ecology*, 361–67. Elsevier, 2019. Accessed 11 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-409548-9.11159-5. (Cited on page 78).

Siebrecht, Matilda I. and Sean P. A. Desjardins. ‘In the Eye of the Beholder: Using Microscopic Analysis in the Interpretation of Tuniit (Dorset Paleo-Inuit) Art’. *Arctic Anthropology* 59, no. 1 (September 2023): 39–56. Accessed 9 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.3368/aa.59.1.39. (Cited on pages 80, 82, 90).

Svensson, Matthew J.O., Stephen A. Kissin, Marie-Claude Corbeil, Peter Whitridge and James W. Helmer. ‘Methods for Determination of the Source of Iron in Precontact Inuit and Dorset Culture Artifacts from the Canadian Arctic’. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 36 (April 2021): 102814. Accessed 9 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2021.102814. (Cited on pages 76, 90).

Wardle, H. Newell. ‘The Sedna Cycle: A Study in Myth Evolution’. *American Anthropologist* 2, no. 3 (July–September 1900): 568–80. https://www.jstor.org/stable/658969. (Cited on page 79).

7 The City of Uruk 4000–3100 BCE: Trade in Uruk and Mesopotamia

Preston Thacker (HI282)

Trade played a large role in the development of Mesopotamian Uruk's culture and economy, allowing it to flourish and emerge as one of the first trade empires in recorded human history.

This paper will cover the development of Uruk through the lens of its trading ability, as well as focus on how the trade goods produced by Uruk influenced its own culture as well as those of other peoples around them. This study considers the many trade goods with sufficient evidence of Uruk having produced and traded them to other cities and examines the city of Hacinebi as a case study as it has some of the best-preserved evidence of trade from Uruk.

The findings show that trade did play a significant role in allowing Uruk to become the dominant city of early Mesopotamia and created the bases that many future Mesopotamian cities would emulate for their own trade needs.

Uruk was one of the earliest cities of Mesopotamia. It began like most other villages but began to see a rapid increase in population with the rise of urbanization. This led to Uruk being granted the title of the 'first city' in some history textbooks. It is deserving of the title but for more reasons than most people know. Uruk established itself by becoming the founder of a colossal trade empire which spanned Anatolia (roughly the area spanned by modern-day Turkey) all the way to Egypt and Iran. This network accelerated the advancement of Uruk's culture and technology and allowed the city access to goods it otherwise would have never seen. It also enabled Uruk to develop new forms of controlling its trade through the use of diplomacy and force if necessary.

7.1 Uruk Expansion

The city of Uruk existed for over 1000 years and was located in southeastern Mesopotamia (or modern-day Iraq) between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. During this time, the city experienced many highs and lows, but one aspect in particular that played a large role in its development was its extensive trade network. Its vastness led to a mass exportation of Uruk culture to outlying towns and cities according to a pattern known variously as the 'Uruk expansion' or 'Uruk Phenomenon'. There are many prevailing theories as to why exactly this expansion occurred; however, none have ever been proven decisively.

The Uruk period began ca. 4000 BCE and lasted until ca. 3000 BCE,[1] during which time the city established itself as a major power in southern Mesopotamia. Its strength and influence then allowed it to expand outward courtesy of its trade network to other towns and city-states undergoing their own early urbanization processes. As a result, we can see many examples of Uruk's culture and influence within other cities located both nearby and as far as northern Mesopotamia. The cities of Tell Al-Hawa and Nineveh are two prime examples which experienced the Uruk expansion firsthand. Tell-Al-Hawa was a major trade city which suffered a decline in size and importance once southern influences began moving north, while Nineveh flourished as the new central trading post along the Euphrates, perfectly situated in the middle to act as a trading post between Uruk and the north.[2] The influx of raw materials now available to Uruk in the south by virtue of its network also helped to further the expansion both over land and across the rivers.

The expansion itself is too large to have any one cause to which can be pointed as it encapsulated much of Mesopotamia. Instead, archaeologists and scientists studying the phenomenon have come up with multiple reasons for the expansion, which range from a rapid growth in population to the invention of new technologies and the attraction of urbanization to other cities. One leading hypothesis has been proposed by Guillermo Algaze. He hypothesizes that the expansion was a sort of 'informal empire' which shared many similarities with the later colonial empires of Europe.[3] Part of his evidence comes from the many Mesopotamian enclaves that can be found in cities such as Nineveh, which contain southern motifs and Uruk-style pottery.[4] These enclaves highlight the impact and importance of Uruk's trade, which fueled the expansion.

7.1.1 Hacinebi

Hacinebi is a well-known Mesopotamian colony, located on the Euphrates River close to Uruk's enclaves.[5] It was an indigenous settlement which had developed its own culture separately from the people of Uruk; however, its proximity to Uruk's trade enclaves resulted in Uruk's material culture and goods beginning to appear in archaeological digs, initially in the form of as additional material, meaning that it did not take over Hacinebi's culture but rather flourished alongside it. The first sign of a cultural merging came in the form of bitumen being used in construction projects within the city, as bitumen was not found naturally near Hacinebi and, therefore, had to have been imported from Uruk or some other southern locus.[6]

[1] Kjetil Sundsdal, 'The Uruk Expansion: Culture Contact, Ideology and Middlemen', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 44, no. 2 (2011): 164.

[2] Ibid., 170–71.

[3] Guillermo Algaze et al., 'The Uruk Expansion: Cross-cultural Exchange in Early Mesopotamian Civilization [with Comments and Reply]', *Current Anthropology* 30, no. 5 (December 1989): 571.

[4] Ibid., 578.

[5] Gil J. Stein et al., 'Uruk Colonies and Anatolian Communities: An Interim Report on the 1992–1993 Excavations at Hacinebi, Turkey', *American Journal of Archaeology* 100, no. 2 (April 1996): 205–8.

[6] Ibid., 216–17.

7.2 The Uruk Trade Network

As mentioned above, the Uruk trade network played a significant role in the expansion of its culture and material production, but how exactly did this network come to be? Southern Mesopotamia is poor in accessible natural resources, these being limited to water, clay, reed, and bitumen, as well as timber and stone.[7] For this reason, Uruk established a network of smaller settlements in southern Mesopotamia, which it then attached to northern Mesopotamian cities in order to compensate for the rapid growth it was experiencing.[8] These included Tell Brak, Tell Al-Hawa, Habuba Kabira, and Tell Hamoukar.[9] Uruk trade also reached much farther afield, to Anatolia, Iran, and possibly Egypt, which may have supplied luxury goods such as gems and silver.[10] Later in the Uruk period, the city began to add to the number of trade goods it produced and exported to other cities to include more complex and culturally important items. Some of these items included bitumen, copper, bevelled-rim bowls (herinafter BRBs), textiles, oil, wine, honey, and sauces for fish.[11]

This trade network reached across Mesopotamia and beyond in order to facilitate the exportation and importation of just about any good the people of Uruk could want or need and promoted the spread of Uruk culture to many other regions through its material goods and trade colonies.

7.3 Specific Trade Goods

Many different objects were traded in Uruk and Mesopotamia throughout the Early to Late Uruk periods. From agricultural goods such as fish, grain, and wheat to more material goods, e. g., copper, bitumen, and BRBs, there was no shortage of goods moving through Uruk and southern Mesopotamia. Below is a compilation of information on just a few of the trade goods that Uruk exported to the rest of Mesopotamia and beyond.

7.3.1 Bitumen

Bitumen is a natural petroleum tar substance found in the Near East and one of only a few resources that were unique to Uruk, making it highly valuable for trade. This made it a very common export trade product for Uruk, especially during its later period, as it was desired by cities living close to water due to its application as a finish on ships. While it made for strong waterproofing of ships , it also served as a sealing ingredient in the construction of structures like the walls around a city, as in the case of Iraq, where ancient bitumen-infused walls still stand, thousands of years later.[12]

[7] Sundsdal, 'The Uruk Expansion', 169–70.

[8] Geoff Emberling and Leah Minc, 'Ceramics and Long-Distance Trade in Early Mesopotamian States', *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 7 (June 2016): 820.

[9] Sundsdal, 'The Uruk Expansion', 167–68.

[10] Ibid., 170.

[11] Emberling and Minc, 'Ceramics and Long-Distance Trade in Early Mesopotamian States', 793.

[12] Mark Schwartz and David Hollander, 'The Uruk Expansion as Dynamic Process: A Reconstruction of Middle to Late Uruk Exchange Patterns from Bulk Stable Isotope Analyses of Bitumen Artifacts', *Journal of*

Bitumen artefacts are found not only in Uruk; they appear elsewhere all across Iraq and other archaeological sites that make up Uruk trade colonies and outposts. Bitumen artefacts have been found within Hacinebi and Sheikh Hassan as well as later sites, Jebel Aruda and Habuba Kabira.[13] Evidence from Hacinebi suggests that bitumen was transported between cities as solid blocks stored in bowls or other containers to be then melted down for use.[14] Bitumen was used for other purposes besides waterproofing and construction, as it was popular in artwork as well as hafting for tools.[15] Depending on the point in time during the Uruk period under consideration, bitumen was traded and handled in different ways. In the late Uruk period, bitumen was produced on a near-industrial scale, but its trade has shifted from a north-south trade route between central and southern Mesopotamia to an east-west land route across modern-day Iraq.[16]

7.3.2 Copper

Another favourite of Uruk was copper, used to make both luxury goods for trade and also the weapons that the soldiers needed to defend said trade. Unlike bitumen, copper was primarily an import rather than an export as Uruk did not have a reliable way to obtain it naturally. What Uruk did export, however, was tools made from copper that had been processed from the materials sent there. Copper was also used by Uruk as a form of early currency, being valued similarly to other cheap commodities such as bronze, barley, and lead.[17] This is unsurprising, as almost anything could be used as a form of currency during the Uruk period, including one's own person.

Copper trading was done primarily along the Euphrates River, which fostered the spread of Uruk metalworking practices to Hacinebi and other cities in Anatolia.[18] Uruk had likely developed its methods of casting copper out of necessity due to not having access to the material naturally and therefore having to find the best ways of making use of what it could import, while other cities that did have natural access to copper would then go on to copy Uruk's metal working prowess.[19]

7.3.3 Bevelled-rim Bowls

One of the most widespread early trade goods discovered in Uruk, the bevelled-rim bowl (a. k. a. 'bevel-rimmed bowl in some publications)' was likely a measuring vessel used in payments for service and most likely originated in Uruk. BRBs were one of the first mass-produced trade goods for which there is evidence in ancient Mesopotamia, with the earliest known examples being dated to ca. 3800 BCE. In Early Uruk, they were produced most likely by firing clay before sculpting it by hand, while later versions would not only

Archaeological Science: Reports 7 (June 2016): 885.

[13]Schwartz and Hollander, 'The Uruk Expansion as Dynamic Process', 897.

[14]Stein et al., 'Uruk Colonies and Anatolian Communities', 216.

[15]Schwartz and Hollander, 'The Uruk Expansion as Dynamic Process', 885.

[16]Ibid., 897.

[17]Anamaria Berea, 'Trade as a Premise for Social Complexity', *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences* 102, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 29–30.

[18]Ibid., 30.

[19]Sundsdal, 'The Uruk Expansion', 169.

incorporate other building materials such as bitumen and copper but were also produced using moulds in order to speed up production.[20]

Pharos, *Bevelled-Rim Bowl*. Image license: Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

Figure 7.1: Typical bevelled-rim bowl

Despite being one of the most common goods coming out of southern Mesopotamia and Uruk, the BRB's exact purpose is still a rather large unknown.[21] The most likely purpose of the vessel as stated above was a vessel for measuring payments in the form of food rations; however, there have been other reasons theorized. These range from the bowls being a trade commodity in and of themselves—or, at the very least, their moulds having been traded—bowls in the literal sense, and/or storage vessels for materials in the house. All these proposed uses have points to support their use in these ways, which suggests that they were likely used for more than one purpose.

7.3.4 Pottery

Another trade good that the people of Uruk, in particular, were known for making was pottery in its many forms. Uruk pottery was found all over the Near East, from Susa in Elam to Egypt, Anatolia, and even the Zagros Mountains, and later, Uruk would begin to import items like lapis lazuli from Egypt to incorporate into said pottery.[22] This range of locations shows that Uruk pottery was highly sought-after. It is possible that Uruk either guarded the secret of pottery production method or that the technique was rarely taught, as following the decline of Uruk culture in southern Mesopotamia, Uruk-style pottery seems to have vanished entirely to be replaced by either older styles like the old Ubaid style or other, more local styles which retained small Uruk influences.[23] Uruk style

[20]Jorge Sanjurjo-Sánchez et al., 'Geochemical Study of Beveled Rim Bowls from the Middle Syrian Euphrates Sites', *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 7 (June 2016): 809.

[21]Ibid., 808.

[22]Berea, 'Trade as a Premise for Social Complexity', 30.

[23]Sundsdal, 'The Uruk Expansion', 172–73.

ceramics and pottery were found all over the 'known world' of the time and it is by this metric that its material importance can be assessed.

Uruk pottery was often traded for luxury goods from foreign cities and tribes where Uruk style pottery was found on digs. Silver, lead, and gold were imported from sources in highland Iran, while silver was also imported from highland Anatolia. Limestone, quartz, amethyst, and obsidian tools and vessels were imported from eastern Anatolia, while lapis lazuli was imported from Afghanistan and Egypt.[24] Goods even as far away as to be from India have been found to have been traded for pottery and ceramics made in Uruk. This massive spread can only be attributed to Uruk's trade network which allowed them to control the flow of goods that far away.

7.3.5 People

A common trade commodity of the day, slaves were one of the most profitable trade goods in Mesopotamia. From a modern, Western perspective, to consider a person a 'trade good' might be disturbing, but in ancient Mesopotamia, the practice of slavery was fairly common. Early documents show that female slaves, in particular, were highly valued and were listed on the same documents as state-owned cattle.[25] Female slaves were believed to be highly prized due to their ability to perform both household tasks but also in the production of textiles and other labour-intensive jobs.[26] The sale of slaves is also mentioned in royal documents, which reveal the trading of slaves between royal and elite families along with the land to which they were attached.[27]

7.4 Trade Seals and Bullae

When trading with other nations or even with other members of their own city, the people of Uruk employed trade seals, which appeared in two different forms, stamp and the later cylinder seals alongside the bullae.

7.4.1 Stamp Seals

Stamp seals were the earliest form of trade seal employed by Mesopotamians so far as we are aware and most likely originated in northern Mesopotamia before being adopted by the south.[28] Some of the earliest examples of stamp seals appeared in Hacinebi, whose stamps resemble those of other early northern settlements.[29] They were used to seal containers such as bags and vessels but also to mark ownership of raw materials.

[24] Algaze et al., 'The Uruk Expansion', 581.

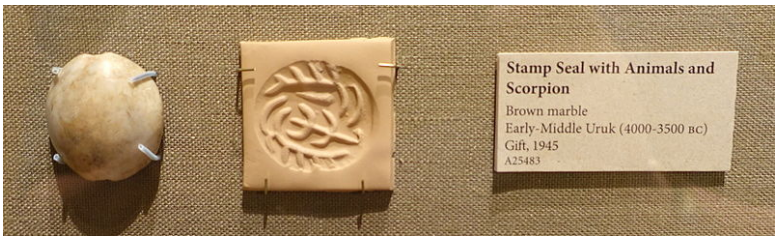
[25] Gareth Brereton, 'Mortuary Rites, Economic Behaviour and the Circulation of Goods in the Transition from Village to Urban Life in Early Mesopotamia', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 26, no. 2 (2016): 209.

[26] Algaze et al., 'The Uruk Expansion', 573.

[27] Norman Yoffee, 'Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (October 1995): 295.

[28] Sundsdal, 'The Uruk Expansion', 175.

[29] Schwartz and Hollander, 'The Uruk Expansion as Dynamic Process', 895.

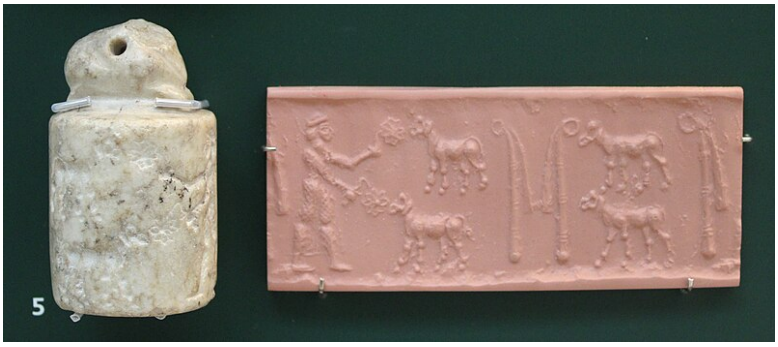


Daderot, *Uruk Stamp Seal*, 22 August 2014, 14:48:24. Image license: Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication.

Figure 7.2: Stamp seal from the Middle Uruk period

Although useful initially, stamp seals were eventually phased out in favour of southern Mesopotamian cylinder seals.

7.4.2 Cylinder Seals



Zunkir, *Cylinder Seal BM 116722*, 9 March 2020, 12:17:08. Image license: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International.

Figure 7.3: Calcite cylinder seal

Cylinder seals were a later developed form of the earlier stamp seal and were much more convenient to use. Being cylindrical in shape, they were used to place a repeating pattern on soft clay by rolling the seal along whatever needed to be marked. Unlike stamp seals, cylinder seals likely originated in southern Mesopotamia, possibly even in Uruk itself, and quickly took over as the dominant trade seal used across all of Mesopotamia.[30] Cylinder seals were a sign of authority in Mesopotamia and symbolized the power held by the one who administered it as well as the ownership of the trade good it was attached to.[31] Both types of seals were used for more or less the same purposes but differed in complexity and origin.

[30]Sundsdal, 'The Uruk Expansion', 164.

[31]T. F. Potts, 'Patterns of Trade in Third-millennium BC Mesopotamia and Iran', *World Archaeology* 24, no. 3 (1993): 383.

7.4.3 Bullae

The bulla was another device used in the trade system of ancient Mesopotamia. A bulla was a hollow ball, typically made of clay mixed with other materials or, in rare instances, made of metal. It was used to track the quantity of a product that was part of a trade deal, first by including representative tokens inside the bulla which could be broken open for verification; later, indentations weremade on the bulla exterior by impressing the tokens.[32] The bulla could still be broken open to verify exact amounts even when indents were beginning to be used. As time passed and writing became more complex and widespread, bullae were combined with cylinder seals in order to mark ownership of a shipment.[33]

7.5 Mortuary Goods

As an ancient civilization, almost everything we know about Uruk (and Mesopotamia generally, for that matter) comes from written records and physical evidence obtained from archaeological digs. One of the most common types to dig occur are burials and tombs. Mortuary goods are, therefore, one of the most common ways in which important commercial goods are discovered and studied. Luxury goods like gold, silver, copper, lapis and carnelian have been found in burial sites in Hacinebi, which made their way to the city by virtue of the Uruk trade network.[34] Mortuary goods have also allowed for the tracking of the rise and fall of the Uruk trade empire as we see a stark decrease in the number of grave goods toward 3300 BCE, which correlates with when it is believed that Uruk influence began to wane.

Surprisingly, despite being the believed source of many of the exotic luxury goods found in northern Mesopotamia, burials, which included goods produced in Uruk, were either quite rare in Uruk culture, or were buried away from population centres and have yet to be discovered. Many trade colonies set up by the city have shown no traces of burial activity close to the colonies, even those in northern Mesopotamia, whose culture themselves was more practiced in the art of Mesopotamian style burials which included trade goods. To date, only a single burial has been found in a northern Mesopotamian Uruk colony.[35]

7.6 Development of Writing

While it is very likely that Uruk already had a writing system before the massive Uruk trade network was formed, the network would eventually grow to a size that necessitated the development and expansion of said system. The Uruk trade network spanned the entirety of southern and northern Mesopotamia and even beyond to Anatolia, Israel, Egypt, Iran, and Afghanistan; and when a trading system becomes that large, it cannot operate efficiently or effectively without a developed way of tracking everything going on.

[32] Stein et al., 'Uruk Colonies and Anatolian Communities', 207.

[33] Yoffee, 'Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States', 285.

[34] Brereton, 'Mortuary Rites, Economic Behaviour and the Circulation of Goods in the Transition from Village to Urban Life in Early Mesopotamia', 203.

[35] Ibid., 207.

One of the earliest forms of writing—taken in the broadest sense of the term—we have relating to trade in Uruk is the 'annotated' bulla, discussed earlier. From the bulla came the idea to flatten the clay better to observe the indents made to track the quantity of the trade good and from this came the idea of writing on clay tablets.[36] This was not the moment that writing was invented in Mesopotamia, as writing had existed since primitive times in the form of symbols and paintings, but unlike gradual increases in writing, trade had a direct link to the rapid development of cuneiform writing in Uruk.[37]

7.7 Conclusion

Trade in southern Mesopotamia was an important aspect of the culture and development of the people who lived there. The variety of different trade goods that can be found across the Near East highlights just how important these goods were. Just about everything had a value placed on it, from basic necessities like food to luxury goods such as gold and silver to people themselves. Everything was for sale, and everything needed to be available everywhere. Uruk is known to many as the 'first city', but it might be more appropriate to call Uruk the 'first hub of commercial industry and identity' when it formed the first known world-spanning economic empire.

References

Algaze, Guillermo, Burchard Brenties, A. Bernard Knapp, Philip L. Kohl, Wade R. Kotter, C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, Glenn M. Schwartz et al. 'The Uruk Expansion: Cross-cultural Exchange in Early Mesopotamian Civilization [with Comments and Reply]'. *Current Anthropology* 30, no. 5 (December 1989): 571–608. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2743567. (Cited on pages 96, 100).

Berea, Anamaria. 'Trade as a Premise for Social Complexity'. *Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences* 102, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 17–38. Accessed 15 July 2024. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/jwashacadscie.102.2.17. (Cited on pages 98–99).

Brereton, Gareth. 'Mortuary Rites, Economic Behaviour and the Circulation of Goods in the Transition from Village to Urban Life in Early Mesopotamia'. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 26, no. 2 (2016): 191–216. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0959774316000032. (Cited on pages 100, 102).

Daderot. *Uruk Stamp Seal.* 22 August 2014, 14:48:24. Accessed 24 July 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stamp_seal_with_Animals_and_Scorpion,_Early-Middle_Uruk,_4000-5000_BC,_brown_marble_-_Oriental_Institute_Museum,_University_of_Chicago_-_DSC07200.JPG. (Cited on page 101).

[36] Yoffee, 'Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States', 285.
[37] Ibid., 286.

Emberling, Geoff and Leah Minc. 'Ceramics and Long-Distance Trade in Early Mesopotamian States'. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 7 (June 2016): 819–34. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2016.02.024. (Cited on page 97).

Pharos. *Bevelled-Rim Bowl*. Accessed 24 July 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Beveled_rim_bowl_MET_hb62_70_25.jpg. (Cited on page 99).

Potts, T. F. 'Patterns of Trade in Third-millennium BC Mesopotamia and Iran'. *World Archaeology* 24, no. 3 (1993): 379–402. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1080/00438243.1993.9980215. (Cited on page 101).

Sanjurjo-Sánchez, Jorge, Juan-Luis Montero Fenollós, Maria Isabel Prudêncio, Víctor Barrientos, Rosa Marques and Maria Isabel Dias. 'Geochemical Study of Beveled Rim Bowls from the Middle Syrian Euphrates Sites'. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 7 (June 2016): 808–18. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2016.02.018. (Cited on page 99).

Schwartz, Mark and David Hollander. 'The Uruk Expansion as Dynamic Process: A Reconstruction of Middle to Late Uruk Exchange Patterns from Bulk Stable Isotope Analyses of Bitumen Artifacts'. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 7 (June 2016): 884–99. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jasrep.2016.01.027. (Cited on pages 97–98, 100).

Stein, Gil J., Reinhard Bernbeck, Cheryl Coursey, Augusta McMahon, Naomi F. Miller, Adnan Misir, Jeffrey Nicola, Holly Pittman, Susan Pollock and Henry Wright. 'Uruk Colonies and Anatolian Communities: An Interim Report on the 1992–1993 Excavations at Hacinebi, Turkey'. *American Journal of Archaeology* 100, no. 2 (April 1996): 205–60. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.2307/506903. (Cited on pages 96, 98, 102).

Sundsdal, Kjetil. 'The Uruk Expansion: Culture Contact, Ideology and Middlemen'. *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 44, no. 2 (2011): 164–85. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1080/00293652.2011.629812. (Cited on pages 96–101).

Yoffee, Norman. 'Political Economy in Early Mesopotamian States'. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, no. 1 (October 1995): 281–311. Accessed 12 December 2023. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.001433. (Cited on pages 100, 102–103).

Zunkir. *Cylinder Seal BM 116722*. 9 March 2020, 12:17:08. Accessed 24 July 2024. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Uruk_period_cylinder_seal_BM_116722.jpg. (Cited on page 101).

A Invitation to Prospective Instructors

Does your Ancient Studies course include an essay component? If so—please consider offering your students a chance to have their paper included!

A.1 Why Participate

There are many reasons one might consider supporting the journal; among others:

- past experience has shown that students are excited by the opportunity to showcase their work
- they get experience in publishing an article in a friendly environment
- we support them in producing the very best work, which they can later use in academic and job applications, and
- it's an opportunity for *your course* to get exposure.

Best of all, there's next to no work required on your part—the students and editors do all the heavy lifting!

A.2 How to Contribute

Participation is easy:

- when the course begins, tell your students that the best papers will be nominated for inclusion in the journal
- make a recent copy of the journal available to them
- draw their attention to Appendix B—Requirements and Guidelines for Students so they have an idea of the process should their paper be selected, and, finally,
- when the course ends, or once papers have been graded, contact us with your top three (3) A-grade recommendations[1] so that we can follow up.

[1] In light of privacy and ethical issues it is understood that you will have obtained students' consent in advance.

nb: There is no way to know in advance what the selection pool will look like at the end of a term, and for this reason, we are happy to consider up to three (3) submissions. Which and how many are ultimately selected will depend upon a number of considerations, so please be clear in advising students that these are *nominations*, not guarantees.

That's it! If you have any questions, drop us a line, and our heartfelt thanks for your kind consideration of this request.

B Requirements and Guidelines for Students

Has your paper been nominated for inclusion in this journal? Are you considering offering it? Here are the things you need to know.

B.1 Technical Requirements

Submissions to this journal are produced using XeLaTeX, a sophisticated typesetting system which relies upon the open-source XeTeX[1] engine. In order to produce the final result, we require the following files:

- the paper to be published as it presently stands, in docx format[2]
- an abstract of no more than 200 words (shorter is better),[3] in the same format, and
- a Zotero[4] RDF file containing all bibliographic items.

If you have not used Zotero before, contact us, we can help! In our experience, students who use Zotero for the first time wish they had done so from the start!

B.2 Submission Guidelines

Assuming that you have the files required, there are a few changes you will want to make to your paper if it does not already comply.

B.2.1 Chicago Manual of Style

The journal adheres the Chicago Manual of Style. Please follow the conventions prescribed there as much as possible. That said,

[1] 'XeTeX', Wikipedia, 28 May 2024, 0:29 a.m. (Z), accessed 26 July 2024, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=XeTeX&oldid=1225999452. Page Version ID: 1225999452.

[2] What software was used to generate it, e. g., whether MS Word or Google Docs, is neither here nor there.

[3] For some guidelines producing an abstract, see, e. g., 'How to Write an Abstract (With Examples)', accessed 26 July 2024, https://prowritingaid.com/how-to-write-an-abstract.

[4] 'Zotero | Your Personal Research Assistant', accessed 26 July 2024, https://www.zotero.org/.

- in titles and headers, use title case, but
- in figure captions, use sentence case.

B.2.2 Orthography

The journal is published using traditional Canadian orthography as defined by Katherine Barber, ed., *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Be advised that as of the time of writing, on-line and computer dictionaries, even when they claim to be Canadian, are no longer reliable. By all means, pay attention to them—they can certainly help—but ultimately, there is no substitute for knowing how to do it yourself. Where budget is a concern, the following are recommended as suitable substitutes:

- Katherine Barber et al., eds., *Canadian Oxford Dictionary of Current English* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 29 April 2005)
- Katherine Barber, Heather Fitzgerald and Robert Pontisso, eds., *Student's Oxford Canadian Dictionary*, 2 edition (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 8 August 2007)
- Robert Pontisso et al., eds., *Collins Canadian Dictionary: All the Words You Need, Every Day*, Second edition (Toronto, Ontario: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016).

Do your best to adhere to Canadian spellings, but do not worry—the editors will ensure that nothing has been missed.

B.2.3 Title and Subtitle

Try to keep titles short and to the point—typesetting long titles can lead to problems. The same is true for headings and captions, for that matter.

B.2.4 Section Headings

We understand that some instructors prefer that students not use headers. However, for our purposes (journal article publication), headers are an asset to the reader: they serve as sign-posts along the way and can help if and when a reader wishes to return to an earlier section. In certain cases, subheads may also be desirable.

Beginning with the body of your paper (the introduction is self-evident, and requires no header), divide the paper up into logical chunks. Identify each of these with a succinct header, marked as such using the Heading1 style in your word processor. Typically, the last section will be something like 'Conclusion(s)' or 'Summary', as the case may be.

Where it may be helpful, split top-level sections into subsections using the Heading2 style.

Under no circumstances should you go beyond the Heading3 style—readers typically cannot keep easily keep track of more than three (3) levels.

B.2.5 References

Your paper may or may not already adhere to the Chicago style, and if it does, it may use 'Notes–Bibliography' format, which is ultimately the form used by this journal. However—in the interest of facilitating the conversion process, a parenthetical reference style is strongly preferred at this stage.

If the paper was prepared using Word or Google Docs with Zotero synchronization, it's a simple matter to change the style from whatever it is to the Chicago 'Author-date' format.[5]

If Zotero synchronization was not used, simply replace all references with parenthetical references manually, in the form

(Author year, page)[6]

In the event that an author has more than one publication in a given year, differentiate them as e. g., 2001a, 2001b, etc.; just make sure that the bibliography reflects this disambiguation.

B.2.6 Image Use

The use of appropriate images is encouraged! As you've no doubt heard it said, 'a picture is worth a thousand words'. Furthermore, the judicious use of images can make reading an article more interesting. If you are interested in looking for relevant legal images, consider 'Google Advanced Image Search'[7] with the Creative Commons licenses usage rights selected, or alternatively do a search at 'Creative Commons Homepage'.[8]

Aside from relevance, the major concern here is legality—all images which appear in your paper must be legitimate. This means that each image, on a case by case basis, must conform to one of the following requirements:

- the image is in the public domain
- it is explicitly licensed for use here, e. g., by Creative Commons license, or the like
- you have explicitly expressed permission to use it from the person who or entity which holds the rights to it, or
- you have modified the image in some way and made it yours by annotation, mash-up, etc.

[5] See the Zotero tab in your word processor.

[6] Just put the page, section number, or other reference; don't put any preliminary 'p.' or the like.

[7] 'Google Advanced Image Search', accessed 26 July 2024, https://www.google.com/advanced_image_search.

[8] 'Creative Commons Homepage', Creative Commons, accessed 26 July 2024, https://creativecommons.org/.

In all but the last case, you should enter the license details into the Extra field of the corresponding Zotero record along the lines of the following example:

Image license: CC BY-SA 4.0 Ported.

(include the full stop/period and follow it with a carriage return/enter key). In the event that you have obtained permission from the copyright holder, please forward that evidence along with your submission.

Each image should

- be in eps, jpg, pdf, or png format and of good quality
- have a *short* and relevant caption (any necessary commentary can be included as a preamble to the image)
- be cited appropriately; in the case of modified images as outlined above, this should begin with 'After '.

Images will be resized as necessary.

B.2.7 Inconsequential Matters

Because your docx file will be converted to typesetting format (using the pandoc utility, as it happens), certain things will be disregarded in your source file and set appropriately in the final product automatically. These include such things as

- document language
- margins, spacing, and leading[9], and
- font and point size.

Do not waste any time on any of this—just make sure your content is crisp, clear, and correct. We will sort out the format.

B.3 Production Process

Once you are fairly certain that you have reasonably covered these concerns, send the files along. For practical purposes, you should do this as soon as you can and in any case by the end of the applicable exam period.

At that point, the editors will go over everything with a fine-toothed comb and begin a bilateral editing process with recommendations and/or requests for your consideration. Ordinarily, this will be done using the MS Word review tool.

Once both parties (viz., author and editors) are happy with the product, the files will be converted and typeset. Typesetting has its own criteria, so it is possible that some additional changes will be required at that point, but we try to deal with the lion's share at the MS Word stage for the convenience of all concerned.

[9] Pronounced 'ledding'—the spacing between lines

B.4 Deadline

In order for the production run and distribution to be completed in a timely manner, it is expected that the bilateral consultation process will be completed no later than end of June.

NB: Papers which are in process but not finalized in that time frame may be offered a slot in the next issue. Be advised, however, that this cannot be guaranteed.

B.5 Questions

Help is always just an email or Zoom meeting away! If any of this is unclear or requires clarification, or you require assistance along the way, just ask!

Bibliography

Barber, Katherine, ed. *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2004. (Cited on page 108).

Barber, Katherine, Heather Fitzgerald and Robert Pontisso, eds. *Student's Oxford Canadian Dictionary*. 2 edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 8 August 2007. (Cited on page 108).

Barber, Katherine, Robert Pontisso, Tom Howell and Heather Fitzgerald, eds. *Canadian Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 29 April 2005. (Cited on page 108).

'Creative Commons Homepage'. Creative Commons. Accessed 26 July 2024. https://creativecommons.org/. (Cited on page 109).

'Goddess Nisaba'. Pinterest. Accessed 22 July 2024. https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/422986589981852473/. (Cited on page 2).

'Google Advanced Image Search'. Accessed 26 July 2024. https://www.google.com/advanced_image_search. (Cited on page 109).

'How to Write an Abstract (With Examples)'. Accessed 26 July 2024. https://prowritingaid.com/how-to-write-an-abstract. (Cited on page 107).

Maclennan, Caleb. 'The Libertinus Font Family', 24 July 2024, 0:11 a.m. (Z). Accessed 26 July 2024. https://github.com/alerque/libertinus. (Cited on page 2).

'Nisaba'. Wikipedia, 30 November 2023, 10:18 p.m. (Z). Accessed 26 July 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Nisaba&oldid=1187699330. (Cited on page vii).

Pontisso, Robert, Lorna Gilmour, Robert Groves and Mary O'Neill, eds. *Collins Canadian Dictionary: All the Words You Need, Every Day*. Second edition. Toronto, Ontario: HarperCollins Publishers, 2016. (Cited on page 108).

'XeTeX'. Wikipedia, 28 May 2024, 0:29 a.m. (Z). Accessed 26 July 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=XeTeX&oldid=1225999452. (Cited on page 107).

'Zotero | Your Personal Research Assistant'. Accessed 26 July 2024. https://www.zotero.org/. (Cited on page 107).