

Buried History

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Australian Institute of Archaeology**



2019 Volume 55

Buried History

Buried History is the annual journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology. It publishes papers and reviews based on the results of research relating to Eastern Mediterranean, Near Eastern and Classical Archaeology, Epigraphy and the Biblical text, and the history of such research and archaeology generally for an informed readership. Papers are refereed in accordance with Australian HERDC specifications.

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Cover: An artistic rendering of a pankratic scene (The 'Wrestler's' mosaic NM 2018.135)

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Christopher J. Davey

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Editorial

This edition of *Buried History* seems to have survived the pandemic with only a delay. It may be a sign of the times that we begin with tributes to three long-standing supporters of the Institute. Tributes to supporters who have died this year are already in preparation for the next issue.

Helen Merrillees is the first person to be remembered. Her husband, Dr Robert Merrillees, focusses on her scholarly aspirations and achievements. His tribute is well illustrated with photos from the Merrillees' family collection. Professor Alan Millard has prepared a tribute to Terence Mitchell. Terence was an ancient Near Eastern scholar and as a young graduate from Cambridge in the 1950s, undertook investigations for Walter Beasley, the founder of the Institute. This was some of his first employment. Terence soon took up a position at the British Museum, which he held for the rest of his life. He was a regular contributor to *Buried History*, a supporter of the Institute and a friend to many of those associated with it. His family have graciously provided images to illustrate the tribute. We also acknowledge John Curtis, Terence's successor at the British Museum, who assisted in the preparation of the tribute.

Professor Cambitoglou had a significant influence on Classical archaeology in Australia and on the Nicholson Museum, an organisation that was important to Walter Beasley. We are indebted to his University of Sydney colleagues, Drs James Fraser and Stavros Paspalas, for acknowledging Professor Cambitoglou's many important achievements.

While this volume was in preparation several other Institute supporters and contributors to archaeology in Australia have passed away; there will be tributes in our next edition. For the moment we acknowledge Professor Francis Andersen, a Fellow of the Institute, Dr Noel Weeks, Australia's leading Assyriologist, and Emeritus Professor Bob Englund, UCLA, an originator of CDLI (Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative). Bob regularly advised the Institute on digital procedures for recording cuneiform tablets and was a valuable referee for this journal. We offer condolences to the families of all of these friends.

Sandra Gordon, a post-graduate student at the University of Sydney, has contributed a paper on a north African mosaic newly acquired by the Nicholson Museum of the University of Sydney. We appreciate her contribution

and acknowledge her supervisor, Dr James Fraser, for providing this paper.

We are indebted to Jean-Marie Olivier who has written a piece tracing some of the history of *Codex Angus*, which was the subject of a 2017 *Buried History* paper by Dr Albrecht Geber. It is a fascinating glimpse into Christian manuscript movement in eastern Europe. The paper was submitted in French and has been published as submitted to retain the scholarly details. Prof Olivier has also supported the dual publication of his paper in the English house style of *Buried History*.

Jean-Marie Olivier is now retired from the Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes (CNRS) where he over saw the Section of Byzantine narrative sources and published works such as a *Catalogue des manuscrits grecs de Tchecoslovaquie* [*Catalog of Greek manuscripts from Czechoslovakia*] (Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1983) and after the political changes in 1989, *Supplément au répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs* [*Recently discovered Greek manuscripts in the Czech Republic*] (Turnhout: Brepols 2018).

Dr Noel Weeks drafted several papers in the last months of his life. He was originally a Zoologist and brought a scientific frame of mind to his study of the ancient Near East. The paper published herein was written after a lifetime of study and describes his understanding of ancient Mesopotamian religion. A second paper is being recast into a tribute to Dr Weeks, tracing his academic life and will appear in the next edition of *Buried History*. We are grateful to Dr Luis Siddall, who shared the journey with Dr Weeks during the last months of his life and has been preparing his papers for publication. He retained the 'lecture' style of the paper we include.

There are two reviews of books dealing with early Christianity. One is concerned with archaeology and the other with contemporary literature. Both seek to illuminate the meaning and significance of early Christianity from its cultural, linguistic and philosophical contexts.

As always, we recognise our referees and members of the Editorial Board who have provided valuable practical advice on the contents of this edition.

Christopher J Davey
Editor



PARVINE HELEN MERRILLEES (1932 – 2019)

Parvine Helen Merrillees (née Razavi) was born in Isfahan, Iran, on 16 April 1932, and spent her early childhood in Hamadan, of which she had nothing but the happiest memories. Her mother was Florence Isabella Leahy, of Irish descent, and father, Hassan Razavi, a Persian citizen. They had met and married in England. By background and inclination, she considered herself stateless – she scorned nationalism – and was proud of possessing the passports of four different countries, Australia, Iran, Ireland and the United Kingdom. She did her secondary education at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Hove, England, and subsequently attended the Nightingale Training School at St. Thomas' Hospital in London, qualifying as a Registered Nurse in 1954. Though she did not continue with the nursing profession, she felt it compensated for the less than rewarding experience she had had at school and prepared her well for the next step in her career on which she had firmly set her sights, a tertiary qualification. It required several more years of patient but determined effort to gain entry to the University of London.

Having obtained a London County Council Major County Award, for which she was eternally grateful, Parvine, as she was known to her Persian relations, Helen to almost everyone else, and Raz to her nursing colleagues, took her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree in 1962 at University College London, where she was taught ancient history by Professor Arnaldo Momigliano and Miss Margaret (Peggy) Drower. To them she felt she owed a great debt for the introduction they gave her to the academic world, both its joys and its pains. Her first appointment after graduation was in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities (now Middle East) at the British Museum, where she was employed in the only position then available as a technical assistant with the unusual title of 'half a stonemason'. Her duties were to make seal impressions for Dr A.D.H. Bivar, then Lecturer in Iranian Art at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, who needed them for the British Museum catalogue of Sassanian gemstones. Thus began her lifelong interest in ancient Near Eastern cylinder and stamp seals.



Figure 1: Helen, her uncle Ahmad and her mother, Florence, in 1958.

In 1963 Helen married Robert Stuart Merrillees, an Australian archaeologist and later diplomat. With their return to Australia in 1965, working as a bibliographer in the Institute of Aboriginal Studies in Canberra and having two daughters, Antoinette and Dolla, to look after, Helen had little further opportunity to pursue her archaeological interests as a student. With Robert's diplomatic posting to Cambodia in 1967 and more spare time, Helen, drawing on the postgraduate research she had begun in London on Greco-Persian seals, developed a more wide-ranging specialisation in ancient Near Eastern glyptic. This process was consolidated during her Robert's transfer to New York from 1969 to 1972 when she became acquainted



Figure 2: Helen in 1963.

with Professor Edith Porada, the world's leading authority on the subject, and was able to attend some of the latter's lectures and classes. Professor Porada was also the supervisor of Dr Dominique Collon, then a postgraduate student at Columbia University who was living with the Merrillees family in Manhattan. She went on to become an eminent expert on glyptic in her own right, remaining Helen's close friend and collaborator.



Figure 3: Helen with her father, Hassan, and daughters, Antoinette and Dolla, in New York State, 1970.

With this background, Helen progressively undertook, in between overseas assignments, a catalogue of the ancient Near Eastern seals in museum collections in Australia and had the results published in Occasional Paper No. 3 by the Archaeology Research Unit of Deakin University in Melbourne in 1990, under the title *Cylinder and Stamp Seals in Australian Collections*. Inevitably, no sooner was this catalogue finished than it was brought to her attention that an unknown collection existed in the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, and she was invited by the Director, Dr Timothy Potts, to write up this collection as well. She completed the catalogue of these specimens and submitted the manuscript to Dr Potts, who left before it was published. As his successor declined to honour this commitment and bring out the promised work, it was



Figure 4: With Nicolas and Nicola Coldstream in France. Nicolas was the Yates Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology at University College London, and he and Nicola have been longstanding colleagues and friends of Helen and Robert.

thanks to the enlightenment and generosity of Professor Paul Åström of Sweden that Helen's catalogue eventually saw the light of day in Jonsered in 2001 in *Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology* Vol. CXXIX under the title, *Ancient Near Eastern Glyptic in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia*.

Four years in Stockholm from 1991 to 1995 gave Helen the opportunity to catalogue the cylinder and stamp seals in the Museum of Mediterranean Antiquities (Medelhavs-

museet) that had not been included in the initial listing published by Hans Henning von der Osten in 1961. In this she was greatly aided by Dr Eva Rystedt, later Professor of Classical Archaeology at Lund University. After arriving in Athens in 1996 she recorded, with the co-operation of Dr Katie Demakopolou, all the Near Eastern seals without provenance in the National Archaeological Museum. Following Robert's enforced retirement from the Australian diplomatic service in 1998, she devoted her later efforts



Figure 5: With Robert at Larnaca Museum in 2013.



Figure 6: Helen holding her Australian seal catalogues.

to cataloguing the cylinder seals in the Old and New Collections of the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, a major undertaking for the publishing house of Paul Åström which regrettably she did not live to see finalised. None of these catalogues was ever prepared for publication and all exist as resources for others to consult and use as needed.

In the meantime, however, Helen had embarked on two major publishing ventures which gave her an outlet for

her many talents and great professional and personal satisfaction. The first was the *Catalogue of Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Cylinder Seals VI. Pre-Achaemenid and Achaemenid Periods*, published in 2005 by the British Museum Press in London. In it she fulfilled all of her long-held ambitions. She not only drew all the illustrations with a mastery of form, detail and shading, but drew on her deep knowledge of the field and included sections on the history and development of the collection, as well the historical background. For her, antiquities were a means to an historical end, not an end in themselves. Her second substantial project was the total re-edition of her inaugural work on glyptics in Australian collections. This was done at the invitation of Dr Christopher Davey and appeared in a handsome format in 2015 under the title *Ancient Near Eastern Seals in Australian Collections* as *Buried History* Monograph 4 of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, Melbourne.

Helen did not see herself as a scholar or authority but as an enthusiast for exploring and explaining the past. She considered her research a contribution to knowledge, not as a means of advancing her career or reputation, and felt strongly that her efforts should be recognised and appreciated for the selfless historical interests they served. She enjoyed the studying, less so the writing, and was endlessly indebted to Dominique Collon for all the help and advice she received over the years on the drafts of her various seal catalogues. Apart from some articles and sections in other people's works, she did not indulge in other academic pursuits such as lecturing and participating in conferences – she had a horror of public speaking – and always welcomed the chance to see, hear and talk about Persia. She had hoped, in vain, to have her father's typewritten memoirs published, and inspired by his example, egged on by Antoinette and Dolla, and encouraged by Robert, she wrote her own memoirs up to 1963, but not for publication.

Helen, who died in Auxerre, France, on 23 November 2019, would wish to be remembered academically not for her literary output but for her attachment to and search for the truth for its own sake.

Robert Merrillees
Mailly le Château, France

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62614/dy9vnn71>



Portrait by Julian Gordon Mitchell (nephew) Photo: courtesy of Laura Amalir

TERENCE CROFT MITCHELL (1929-2019)

A quiet, genial Assistant Keeper would often greet inquirers coming to the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities at the British Museum with a friendly smile. Serious questions were answered thoughtfully and positively; the cranky received kindly advice. Terence Mitchell worked at the Museum from 1959 to 1989, becoming Acting Keeper of the Department in 1983 and Keeper from 1985 to 1989. A major task given to him in his earlier years there was to edit three large volumes of typescript reports about excavations at Ur which

Sir Leonard Woolley had left unpublished. Terence found they needed much attention, the third demanding correlation with the excavation records kept in the Museum and considerable expansion and annotation. They are *Ur Excavations IX: The Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods* (1962), *Ur Excavations VIII: The Kassite Period and the Period of the Assyrian Kings* (1965) and *Ur Excavations VII: The Old Babylonian Period* (1976). His care and perseverance in this major task have put all concerned with the ancient city of Ur in his debt. Those



Figure 2: A portrait of Terence as a schoolboy by his father, Arthur Croft Mitchell.
Photo: courtesy of Laura Amilir.

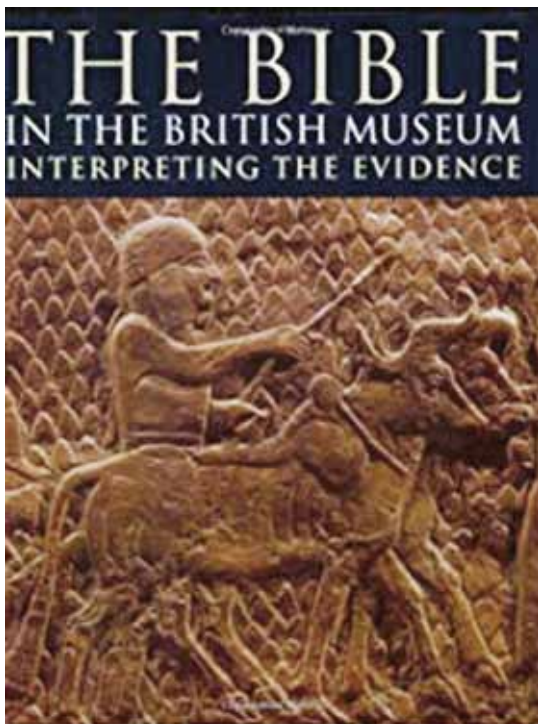


Figure 3: Cover of *The Bible in the British Museum*.

characteristics are evident in all his writings, notably the five chapters on the history of Israel and Judah he contributed to the *Cambridge Ancient History* and his entries in *The New Bible Dictionary* (1962, 3rd ed. 1996; e.g. Arabia, Flood, Nations – Table of). After retirement he was allowed a desk in the Department where he continued his research, completing his *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum: Stamp Seals III, Impressions of Stamp Seals on Cuneiform Tablets, Clay Bullae and Jar Handles* (2008), for which Ann Searight made drawings, and writing other papers, some of them



Figure 4: Terence on his first archaeological trip.
Photo: courtesy of Laura Amilir.

still to be published. The greatly enlarged lecture on ‘Biblical Archaeology in the Persian Period,’ which he gave in 2005, demonstrates the range of his knowledge. It has become part of the volume honouring him (see below). Beside technical studies, he wrote a booklet *Sumerian Art Illustrated by Objects from Ur and Al-Ubaid* (1969) to inform interested members of the public about the Museum’s collection. Many visitors have benefitted from his guidebook, *The Bible in the British Museum* (1988) which has been revised and reprinted several times, the photographs eventually in colour (2016). It demonstrates Terence’s concern to make the material intelligible and clarify its relevance to understanding the Bible, without sacrificing academic rigour.



Figure 5: The Colossal lion marble sculpture from Knidos displayed in the British Museum's Great Court, London. It is believed to commemorate the naval Battle of Cnidus in 394 BC when Conon defeated the Lacedaemonians. Terence liked to meet his visitors at this statue, which he would explain was originally placed atop a hilltop monument where it would have been seen by all passing seafarers, one such being the Apostle Paul (Acts 27: 7).

Image: Wikimedia Commons, [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0](#) altered.

Terence Croft Mitchell was born on 17th June, 1929, his father being Arthur Croft Mitchell, an artist whose paintings are in several public galleries, and his mother Evelyn Violet née Ware. He died on Easter Sunday, 21st April, 2019.

During the Second World War he was evacuated to the United States for schooling. He returned to Bradfield College for his secondary education and studied Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge for his degree, taking his M.A. in 1956. He spent most of 1956-58 in research at Tyndale House, Cambridge, a period that resulted in his first papers including 'Archaeology and Genesis I-XI', *Faith and Thought* 91.1 (1959) 28-49 and 'The Old Testament Usage of *'n̄sāma,*' *Vetus Testamentum* 11 (1961) 177-87, in which he argued that the word for 'breath' in Genesis 2:7 is used only of human beings and so may be the biblical distinction between them and animals. After undertaking a project for some months for Walter Beasley, founder of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, he was appointed to the British Museum post.

Terence was a convinced evangelical Christian for whom the Bible was most important, hence his articles just

mentioned. He regularly attended churches in London and gave his time unselfishly to supporting Christian organizations, serving as Chairman of Faith and Thought (formerly the Victoria Institute) 1986-2009 and as Lay Chairman of the Chelsea Deanery Synod (1981-84), as well as being a long-standing member of the Gideons. As a student he came to the attention of the Christian Assyriologist Donald Wiseman, then at the British Museum, who was always eager to guide young scholars to work in biblical archaeology and ancient languages. That led Terence to join the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research which held annual groups to study different approaches to the Bible. He attended the Biblical Archaeology and Old Testament Groups as often as he could, building lifelong friendships with the Egyptologist Kenneth Kitchen and the writer. He would diffidently offer to read a paper and graciously accept comments, eventually producing a published text.

Terence was a modest man, a stalwart, reliable scholar whose works display his concern for fact and common sense in dealing with the ancient world. He was well-liked by colleagues world-wide who appreciated his geniality and his generosity in sharing information to help their research whenever he could. He was a life-long bachelor,

never finding the perfect partner he would have liked, and continuing to live in the large house in Chelsea which he and his younger brother inherited. For many years he bravely cycled through London traffic from his home to the Museum.

Terence's friends had planned to present a collection of essays to him to mark his 90th birthday. He died one month before that was possible and instead *Studies in Ancient Persia and the Achaemenid Period* James Clarke, Cambridge, 2020 (edited by John Curtis, his successor at the Museum) stands as a memorial to him.

Alan Millard
University of Liverpool

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62614/wexfcb02>

Selected Publications

- The Old Testament Usage of *nēšāmā*, *Vetus Testamentum* 11, 1961, 177-87.
- Edited: C.L. Woolley and M.E.L. Mallowan, *Ur Excavations, IX: The Neo Babylonian and Persian Periods*, London: British Museum; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1962.
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- Where was Putu-Iaman?, *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 22, 1992, 69-80.
- Shared Vocabulary in the Pentateuch and the Book of Daniel, in R.S. Hess, G.J. Wenham and P.E. Satterthwaite eds, *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12-50* Cambridge: Tyndale House, 1993, 132-41
- Furniture in West Semitic Texts, in G. Herrmann ed., *The Furniture of Western Asia, Ancient and Traditional* Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1996, 49-60.
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Oil painting by Neil Moore with red-figure amphora UA2003.25
 Purchased with funds from Professor John Young 2003
 Chau Chak Wing Museum, The University of Sydney

Emeritus Professor Alexander Cambitoglou AO (1922-2019)

We mark with sadness the death of Emeritus Professor Alexander Cambitoglou AO on 29 November 2019. With his passing, we lose one of the most influential figures to have shaped the study of Classical antiquity in Australia.

Alexander Cambitoglou was born in Thessalonike, Greece, in 1922. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Thessalonike, a Master of Arts from the University of Manchester, and a doctorate from the University of London. He was awarded a second doctorate from the University of Oxford, where he studied with renowned classical archaeologist and art historian Sir John Beazley, before being appointed Professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Mississippi (1954-56) and then Bryn Mawr College (1956-61).

As a young scholar of considerable promise, Cambitoglou started corresponding about South Italian vase painting with A. D. Trendall, Chair of Greek at the University of Sydney and Curator of the Nicholson Museum (1939-54). This correspondence flourished into a celebrated research collaboration, culminating in Cambitoglou's arrival in Australia in 1961 as Senior Lecturer in Classical

Archaeology at the University of Sydney. With the untimely death in 1962 of Trendall's curatorial successor, Prof James Stewart, Cambitoglou found himself thrust into the role of Acting Curator then Curator of the Nicholson Museum. He became Professor of Classical Archaeology in 1963.

Cambitoglou found a museum with extraordinary depth but needing significant attention. Although Trendall had arranged the collection to accord with his seminal *Handbook to the Nicholson Museum* (1945), the galleries retained an antiquarian feel. Cambitoglou swiftly enacted an ambitious new vision. Closing the museum from 1962-66, he set about preparing contemporary displays in a building that he noted 'does not lend itself to the needs of a modern museum'.¹ The long rows of Gothic windows were sealed to focus attention on the objects, and the high ceiling was lowered to reduce the 'barn-like effect'² of the open hall. Dozens of grime-covered plaster casts were distributed to high schools to de-clutter the galleries and make room for the genuine antiquities in store. New glass cases were introduced, and displays arranged to follow didactically the chronologies and geographies



*A Gallery in the Nicholson Museum at its re-opening in 1966 after four years of renovations by Cambitoglou.
Photo: Courtesy of the Nicholson Museum*

of the regions the collections represent. The result would fundamentally shape the layout, tenor and tone of the museum for the next 50 years.

The revitalised Nicholson Museum was unveiled on 23 September 1966 with speeches by Prof Cambitoglou who overviewed the transformation, and Prof Trendall who was invited to declare the museum open. Trendall described the new museum as a fairy-tale, ‘revealing, as it does, so much beauty that was previously hidden from us beneath a disguise’³.

The transcript of Cambitoglou’s 1966 speech resonates with his vision to create something beyond itself. ‘It is only because of our faith that we were contributing something important to our University, to the city of Sydney, and indeed to Australia that we had the strength to carry out our task’, he remarked, before concluding, ‘since there is no other Museum of Antiquities of this magnitude in the country, the Nicholson Museum’s importance extends beyond this University’s grounds; it is the Australian National Museum of Antiquities’⁴.

At the same time, Cambitoglou undertook a stocktake of the entire collection – the most important in the museum’s history since the accession of Nicholson’s original donation. This inventory addressed thousands of objects that had lain unregistered in the stores, many from Cyprus,

Egypt and the Middle East sent by excavations in acknowledgment of the university’s support. Many artefacts were treated in a new conservation laboratory, and most objects displayed at the reopening had undergone some sort of treatment.

Cambitoglou augmented his displays with detailed handbooks for the collections, and formal publications followed. In 1995, he co-edited with Dr Ted Robinson the volume *Classical Art in the Nicholson Museum*, the first major work on the Classical collection since Trendall’s handbook. In 2008, he authored with Michael Turner the first fascicule of the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* for the Nicholson Museum *The Red Figure Pottery of Apulia*. This was followed in 2014 with the second volume *Red Figure and Over-Painted Pottery of South Italy in the Nicholson Museum*.

In addition to his scholarship, Cambitoglou built a community of people that surround a museum to make it come alive. He revitalized the Society of the Friends of the Nicholson Museum and established the Association of Classical Archaeology, which later served as the bedrock on which the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens was founded. Both organizations sponsored the famous Nicholson Museum music concerts, held annually in the Great Hall of the University of Sydney between 1971-



Ancient Torone, located on the promontory and its hinterland on the right of the photograph, was one of the largest and wealthiest cities of the Chalkidike. It was excavated from 1975 through to 1995 under the direction of Alexander Cambitoglou. Photo: Courtesy Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens.

1995. Featuring international musicians, these concerts were a key feature in the cultural landscape of Sydney, helping energise the museum community and encourage people to visit the galleries. Generous donations and bequests followed, allowing Cambitoglou to expand the collection through the purchase of key objects such as the marble busts of Claudius and Germanicus, an Attic grave stele, a celebrated Cycladic figurine, and a black-figure amphora by the Antimenes Painter depicting Herakles' dule with Kyknos, the brigand son of Ares.

Cambitoglou's curatorship of the Nicholson Museum was one of several achievements that mark an extraordinary career. He enthusiastically promoted Australian research in Greece, beginning excavations in 1967 at the Early Iron Age settlement at Zagora on Andros and in the 1970s at Torone in the Chalkidike. He was well-placed to do so. As a Fellow of one of Greece's oldest learned associations, the Archaeological Society of Athens, he could apply, via the Society, to the Greek Ministry of Culture for permission to undertake archaeological fieldwork in the country. In fact, the Australian campaigns at Zagora in the 1960s and 70s and the early years of the excavations at Torone were conducted solely under the aegis of the Society. Cambitoglou, though, had grander plans in mind, plans that would bring his two homelands, Greece and Australia, still closer. Australia, he felt, needed its own academic representation in

Greece and to this end in 1980 he created his greatest legacy, the Australian Archaeology Institute at Athens, a research and educational facility for Mediterranean studies with heavy emphasis on archaeological fieldwork and research. Australian academics could now apply, through their own Institute, to the Ministry of Culture for permission to conduct excavations, surveys and the like and Australian researchers had a far more direct link to the many museums and collections in Greece. There is no doubt that the AAIA has been a major contributing factor to the flourishing of Australian participation in Greek archaeology. Australian projects, based at a number of universities throughout the country, have been conducted at Zagora, Torone, Plataea, Perachora on the Corinthian Gulf, Vapheio-Palaiopyrgi in Laconia, and in the centre of Athens as well as on the island of Kythera. Literally hundreds of study and publication applications have been made by the AAIA on behalf of Australian research students and academics while the AAIA has collaborated in, or facilitated, on-site study programmes organized by various Australian universities. And we should not forget the highly important educational aspect of fieldwork; scores of Australian students benefitted from their participation in excavations and surveys organized through the AAIA. Back in Australia the Institute's annual Visiting Professor brings a distinguished archaeologist from Europe or north America to tour its member



*Professor Cambitoglou speaking at the Nicholson Museum in the presence of a statue of Hermes.
Photo: Archives of the Nicholson Museum.*

universities throughout the country, a great boon for the promotion of classical archaeology Australia-wide. These are just some of the ways in which Cambitoglou's legacy continues.

Cambitoglou was elected Fellow of the Academy of the Humanities in Australia in 1968, before becoming Arthur and Renee George Professor of Classical Archaeology in 1978. He retired from his Chair in 1989, although continued to serve as Curator of the Nicholson Museum until December 2000 and Director of the AAIA until 2016.

Several honours recognise in Cambitoglou a man who, with wit, grace, tenacity and skill, was able to create an academic environment that placed the study of Classical antiquity in Australia at the forefront of the discipline across the world. He was made Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 1987 for his contributions to archaeology and international cultural relations. In 1991, he became the fourth person in the University of Sydney's history to receive the prestigious title Doctor of the University. When presenting the award, Vice-Chancellor McNicol noted that it was reserved only for 'those few and exceptional individuals whose work has substantially enhanced the reputation of the University'⁵. In 2001 he

was awarded a Centenary Medal for his contribution to the Arts in Australia. Generations of students are grateful to have attended his lectures, excavated on his digs, and visited his museum galleries, while falling under the spell of his enthusiasm and charm.

Beyond his recognition in Australia it must also be remembered that Cambitoglou was a preeminent presence in Greek academic circles. In 1994 he was elected a member of the Academy of Athens, the pinnacle of the country's academic establishment. This was not just an august honour, it was also a position of responsibility which brought many duties with it, all of which Cambitoglou executed with his characteristic thoroughness. In 1998 the Order of the Phoenix was bestowed upon him by the President of Greece. His international standing was reflected by his membership of the Society of Antiquaries, London, and his corresponding membership of the German Archaeological Institute and the Archaeological Institute of America.

Cambitoglou achieved a great deal. He was a rare example of a visionary who could actually implement his plans. In this he was, as he would insist that his interlocutor remember, helped by many like-minded supporters, but the vision was his.

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Endnotes

1. Transcript of speech delivered by Prof Alexander Cambitoglou at the Nicholson Museum, 23/9/1966. *Archives of the Nicholson Museum.*
2. Transcript of speech delivered by Prof Alexander Cambitoglou at the Nicholson Museum, 23/9/1966. *Archives of the Nicholson Museum.*
3. Transcript of speech delivered by Prof A. D. Trendall at the Nicholson Museum, 23/9/1966. *Archives of the Nicholson Museum.*
4. Transcript of speech delivered by Prof Alexander Cambitoglou at the Nicholson Museum, 23/9/1966. *Archives of the Nicholson Museum.*
5. 'Emeritus Professor Alexander Cambitoglou', *University of Sydney News*, 9 April 1991

'The Wrestlers': A Roman mosaic from North Africa

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Abstract: In 2018 the Nicholson Museum, The University of Sydney, acquired a small Roman mosaic known as 'The Wrestlers' (NM 2018.135). The mosaic is of North African origin and is almost certainly the product of a local Tunisian workshop during the 3rd century, a period of intense urbanisation and wealthy local patronage in the Roman provinces. The mosaic depicts two athletes in the final stages of a pankratic competition and is framed by a distinctive red and black border, parallels for which are found in mosaics from Gightis near modern Boughrara in southeastern Tunisia. This paper analyses the mosaic within the context of decorative mosaic art and places it chronologically and stylistically within the broader scope of the mosaic industry in Africa Proconsularis.

Introduction

In November 1969, the Apollo 12 space mission became only the second manned flight to land on the moon. In celebration of the lunar-landing the astronauts, Richard F. Gordon, Charles 'Pete' Conrad and Alan L. Bean embarked on a world-wide goodwill tour on behalf of the President, Richard Nixon. When they visited Morocco in early 1970 as personal guests of the king, Hassan II, they were presented with several gifts, including ancient mosaics. Gordon received 'The Wrestlers' (Figure 1) and Bean, a small mosaic depicting a duck and aquatic plants.¹ At the conclusion of the tour, Gordon returned to America with 'The Wrestlers' and later sold it to the Trevino family who commissioned its conservation. In 2018, 'The Wrestlers' was acquired by the Nicholson Museum, The University of Sydney.

The Nicholson Mosaic

The mosaic now in the Nicholson Museum collection (NM 2018.135) measures 57cm (l) x 54cm (w). The individual tesserae vary in size from 7mm for the white background to 6mm for the coloured background and 5mm for the figures. The mosaic is embedded in a layer of approximately 2cm of modern cement and any trace of the original preparatory layers is no longer evident. According to the condition report at the time of restoration, the mosaic had evidence of earlier repairs to the mortar and some detached tesserae which were replaced. The interstitial mortar of the mosaic was coloured in all areas but lead strips which are characteristic of these surface techniques, were not visible (Pickman 2011: 1). No evidence remains, such as a raised lip, to suggest that the mosaic was originally set into a tray for transport, as is often seen in smaller mosaics (Wootten 2012: 212).



Figure 1: 'The Wrestlers' mosaic (NM 2018.135) 570 x 540 x 20. Photo: Courtesy of the Nicholson Museum.

Composition

The mosaic is a polychromatic composition of small, cube-shaped stone tesserae in matt shades of white, brown, yellow, black, green, blue and red. It is framed by two borders, one of red tesserae laid in a single line which is separated by two rows of white tesserae from the outer border of two rows of black tesserae. The scene depicted on the mosaic is of two pankratic wrestlers executed in ochre with the limbs and some muscles delineated by either red or black lines in order to demonstrate the position of the arms and legs of each combatant. The visible facial features are somewhat rudimentary, with black dots for the eyes and white lines for the nose and mouth. White is also used with black and red to show contours of the body, a technique commonly seen in African mosaics of the late 3rd century (Dunbabin 1978: 35). The mosaic has a white background with a strip of approximately fourteen rows of blue tesserae behind and below the figures. Within the blue section are several rows of red tesserae which provide a ground line and perhaps indicate a shadow of one of the wrestlers towards the centre. The blue and red base serves both to anchor the figures against the background, and perhaps to provide a context for the bout in the form of a body of water, such as a river or sea. It may also represent an elevated *skamma*, a pit designed for mud-wrestling as opposed to dry wrestling in sand (Katzoff 1986: 440).

Technique

The main technique used to compose the Nicholson mosaic was *opus vermiculatum*, or ‘worm-like work’ (Marconi 2014: 22). This method of producing ‘paintings in stone’ (Blanchard-Lemée: 11) required a high degree of skill and involved using several rows of tesserae to outline the main motif. It was commonly used to create *emblemata*, smaller mosaics used as the central panel or around the outside of the mosaic to expand upon and draw attention to different aspects of the theme (Westgate 2000: 104). *Emblemata* were often framed by lavish, meandering, non-figural patterns in addition to the initial straight borders. While larger compositions were by necessity laid *in situ*, the smaller *emblemata* offered the opportunity for the craftsmen to create them in a workshop and transport them to the site on trays to be later set into the floor (Boschetti 2008: 22).

The Nicholson mosaic has up to ten rows following the outline of the combatants, thereby emphasising the contrast between the white background and the skin colours of the figures by creating a ‘halo’ around them and an almost two-dimensional effect. The composition is then completed using *opus tessellatum*, tesserae placed in a regular, repeat pattern or lines. The same combination of techniques can be seen in the undated duck mosaic originally gifted to Alan Bean.

The Pankration

Although the Nicholson mosaic is known as ‘The Wrestlers’, the two figures it portrays are almost certainly

pankratiasts. The pankration or ‘all powers’ was a combination of wrestling and boxing with its origin attributed to Theseus, who was said to have used the same technique to defeat the Minotaur in the labyrinth (Meyer 2012: 97). As a sport, pankratic wrestling appears to have been introduced to the Olympics in 648 BCE (33rd Olympiad) where it was regarded as one of the most brutal and challenging athletic pursuits (Kyle 2015: 120). It was described by several ancient authors but in most detail by Philostratus who outlined the rules of combat which allowed striking, wrestling, kicking, armlocks, chokes and boxing (Phil. *Im.* ii. 6). With demonstrations in which all the strength and agility of the fighters needed to be employed in order to overpower the opponent and win, the pankration tournament eventually became a main event, taking place on the final day of the games (Meyer 2012:19). The pankration, with gladiatorial combat and all pagan festivals, was officially abolished by the Emperor Theodosius I in 393 (Georgiou 2005: 4).

In the pankratic scene portrayed on the Nicholson mosaic the combatants are nude and muscular. They are possibly both wearing skull caps to prevent hair pulling and the



Figure 2: Terracotta Panathenaic prize amphora ca. 500 BC attributed to the Kleophrades Painter, depicting a pankration and judge. H 63.5cm. On display at The Met Fifth Avenue, Gallery 153. Photo: Creative Commons <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/249067>.

wrestler on the left seems to also have a neck chain or strap which may have contained an amulet (Molholt 2008: 136). The contest appears to be in its final stages with the wrestler on the left the dominant fighter. He is employing a favoured pankration manoeuvre, the ‘heel hook’ where one opponent’s foot is locked behind the knee of the other (Hollenback 2010: 20). The opponent is in a ‘turtle’ position with his leg grasped tightly under the dominant wrestler’s arm. The first wrestler seems to now be in position either to drive the immobilised wrestler’s head into the ground or execute another move which will flip the opponent onto his back, effectively signalling his submission and ending the competition.

Artistic depictions of the pankration and other athletic pursuits are known from at least the 6th century BCE and accomplished black and red-figured vase painters such as the Kleophrades Painter (Figure 2), the Berlin painter and the Foundry Painter all featured pankratic scenes on their vases (Gardiner 1906: 4-22). A marble sculpture, The ‘Uffizi Wrestlers’ or *The Pancrastinae* (Figure 3) captures a very similar manoeuvre to the one depicted in the Nicholson mosaic and is believed to be a Roman copy of a lost Greek original of the 3rd century BCE (Clark 1990: 184). In Italy, mosaics, wall-paintings and sculptures depicted pankratiasts and wrestlers often in baths or *thermae*, most notably at Pompeii in the 1st century and in the vast Baths of Caracalla in Rome in the 3rd century (Gensheimer 2018: 126-137). At Ostia, where athletic imagery is prolific in *thermae* and elsewhere (Newby 2005: 59), a well-known mosaic shows two wrestlers, named on the mosaic as Alexander and Helix, the latter of whom was a famous pankratiast early in the 3rd century (Jones 1998: 295).

In North Africa, as in the rest of the Western Roman Empire, wrestling and the pankration were popular spectator sports. Organised games and spectacles were an important component of society and were designed to entertain large groups of people on a regular basis. The games incorporated many Greek-style competitions and became widespread around the end of the 2nd century, continuing until the end of the 4th century. Their popularity was reflected artistically in the corpus of mosaics commissioned by wealthy residents, some of whom may well have sponsored the events (Blanchard-Lemée: 181).

Mosaics in Roman North Africa

Key publications

In 1881 Tunisia became a French protectorate and from this period onwards French scholars and antiquarians were integral to the development of historical and archaeological research in Northern Africa (MacKendrick 2000). A considerable amount of archaeological investigation was conducted and published during the 19th and 20th centuries, mainly in French and Italian, with most attention focused upon the classical period (Diaz-Andreu 2007: 271).



Figure 3: *The Uffizi Wrestlers or The Pancrastinae.*
Photo: Courtesy the Uffizi Gallery Inv. 1914 no.216

As a specialised subject, the study of North African mosaics owes much to the research of Katherine Dunbabin whose publications, in 1978 and 1999 have made a significant contribution to our understanding of Roman mosaics from modern Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. The *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie* (CMT), a project led by Margaret Alexander, sought to catalogue and locate mosaics within their original architectural settings. The CMT was published in four volumes from 1973 to 1999 and included detailed pictorial representations and aerial photography of over one thousand mosaics from Tunisia including the cities of Utica, Thuburbo Majus, El Jem and Carthage (Alexander 1973). In the 1980s, several International Colloquia on Ancient Mosaics were published which featured North African material (Johnson 1987).

More recently, the most significant work on North African mosaics both in terms of conservation and publication has been a collaboration between the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Institute National Du Patrimoine in Tunisia. Several publications have emerged as a result of this project including a catalogue, *Stories in Stone: Conserving Mosaics of Roman Africa: Masterpieces from the National Museums of Tunisia* which coincided with an exhibition at the Getty Villa in 2006. The twenty-seven mosaics in the exhibition came from Tunisia’s leading museums, including the Bardo Museum in Tunis, the Sousse Museum, and the El Jem Museum (Ben Abed 2006b) (see Map Figure 4).

Dating

Although North African mosaics are plentiful and often well-preserved, dating and contextualising them is extremely problematic. Apart from those published



Figure 4: Map of Roman North Africa. Map adapted from Google Earth.

in the CMT, the mosaics are commonly lacking any confirmed provenance or archaeological context. Many were removed from their original architectural position without record, resulting in the absence of their primary format and with it, the important perception of how the viewer may have interacted with the mosaics. Other vital information including spacing, lighting and function were also lost, as well as the opportunity to examine the strata beneath for dating. Establishing a chronology on the basis of iconography and stylistic comparisons is therefore largely subjective, relying on the few mosaics which have been accurately dated through stratigraphy. Unlike Pompeii, for example, where the eruption of Vesuvius in October 79 CE provides a *terminus ante quem* for the dating of buildings, wall paintings and mosaics, North Africa provides few datable events which can be applied directly to the manufacture of mosaics. There is also considerable variation in the timelines for the adoption of styles and techniques between regional workshops which developed their own distinctive characteristics at different rates and at different times (Dunbabin 1978: 33). In-depth studies have been further limited by earlier published images of the mosaics which tended to focus only on the central panels, creating difficulties for those attempting to compare significant details such as distinctive borders for example, which are often omitted from photographs and are now considered as possible stylistic indicators of individual artisans and workshops (Fatta 2019: 96). Until more research and publications come to hand, the dating for most mosaics must therefore remain general in nature.

Workshops

Regional North African schools and workshops for the design and creation of mosaics were probably initially founded by Italian mosaicists and then evolved into distinctive schools (Dunbabin 1978). An early workshop was almost certainly centred in El Djem (Tidemann 2009: 142) with another branch at Hadrumetum (Sousse) (Dunbabin 1978: 18). By the end of the 2nd century most of the

larger cities of *Africa Proconsularis* had a local workshop (Dunbabin 1978: 21), almost certainly in response to the massive urban boom which occurred in the western provinces between the late 1st to early 3rd centuries (Dufton 2019: 269). In Mauretania (modern Morocco), workshops existed in Banasa, Lixus and Volubilis by the late 2nd and into the 3rd century. The designs and execution of these mosaics show local characteristics (Dunbabin 1999: 124) and possibly owe more to nearby Spain than Tunisia (Ben Abed 2006a: 43). The influence of these workshops eventually became evident outside Africa as attested by the grand and extensive mosaics dated to the 4th century at the Villa of Piazza Armerina in Sicily, some of which have been attributed to African workshops (Belis 2016: 2; Catullo 2000).

The larger mosaic workshops appear to have employed a variety of craftsmen with specialised roles, skills and pay levels (Bernard 2017: 80).² They included the *calcis coctor* who was responsible for preparing the mortar, the *pavimentarius* who prepared the floor by setting the lower layers of the mosaic and the *tessellarius* who made the simpler parts of the mosaic such as geometric frames. The master artist, (*pictor musivarius*) executed the most elaborate sections based on drawings made by the designer, (*pictor imaginarius*) after the *pictor parietarius* had enlarged and transcribed the design drawing on to the floor or wall (Ben Abed 2006a: 38). It is likely that pattern books were used to transfer designs from one workshop to another (Ling 1998: 13).

Provenance

In North Africa, Tunisia in particular has an enormous number and variety of Roman-era mosaics, many of which are displayed in the Bardo Museum in the old city of Carthage. An identical version of the Nicholson mosaic is part of the Bardo Museum collection (Figure 5). This mosaic differs from the Nicholson example only in subtle variations of colour and technique. The



Figure 5: *Wrestlers mosaic from from the 'tepidarium' Gightis, 3rd century, Bardo Museum, Tunisia. Artist Unknown. Image: adapted from Ben Abed 2006b*

Nicholson mosaic shows the two combatants with similar musculature and skin colour but in the Bardo example the defeated combatant is depicted with much darker skin and may represent a member of the native Berber population or an older fighter (Molholt 2008: 136). The lower background upon which the battle takes place is the same in both compositions but executed in different coloured tesserae. Where the Nicholson scene appears to take place by the water, the Bardo background is green and brown, perhaps indicating a land-based battle. The execution of the Bardo mosaic is also less refined and careful than the Nicholson example which employs the *opus vermiculatum* technique to far greater effect. In contrast, the Bardo mosaicist has used only two rows around the main figures, thus diminishing the 'halo' as seen in the Nicholson example. The Bardo example also displays the same distinctive red and black border arrangement seen in the Nicholson mosaic.³

The Bardo mosaic is well-provenanced and originated from the coastal port city of Gightis near Rass el Bacha on the Boughrara Gulf in Tunisia (Ben Abed 2006b). The city's foundation dates to the Punic period after which it was annexed to the territory of King Massinissa of Numidia and in the 1st century, integrated into the province of *Africa Nova*. The Roman era city plan included the baths and a palaestra complex near the main entrance as well as a temple to Serapis and Isis, a treasury and several other temples and sanctuaries (Constans 1917).

The Bardo mosaic is one of at least two which were part of a much larger mosaic on the floor of the *tepidarium* in the bath house at Gightis (Ben Abed 2006b: 82-86). The mosaics are dated to the 3rd century and they were clearly derived from the same workshop. The second

mosaic (Figure 6) shows a darker skinned man pinned to the ground by his opponent who is clasping his neck in a movement called the 'neck' or 'ladder grip', where the wrestler who has been forced into the 'turtle' position is subjected to the opponent's legs being wound around his back and then around his neck in what becomes a choke hold (Wright 2012). The dominant wrestler has his opponent's left arm held in his left hand and makes a fist with his right hand as if he intends to punch the prone man in the head or back. The lower man is trying to brace himself using his right hand but clearly to no avail. The upper man's face has been badly damaged, but the lower man is clearly wearing a skull cap. The technique and colours used in both mosaics are identical, as are the red and black borders. There is a third mosaic from Gightis which does not have a specific provenance but almost certainly belongs to the same workshop as the two wrestlers from the baths. This mosaic depicts Venus talking to Mercury framed by an identical red and black border and is also dated to the 3rd century.

Wrestlers and pankratic scenes are found on several other mosaics from Tunisia. A mosaic from Thaenae (modern Thyna) for example, depicts four pairs of wrestlers in various stages of combat including prize giving which includes crowns and a palm frond (Blanchard-Lemée: 190). Another wrestling mosaic, currently in the Bardo Museum was found in the threshold of the *Maison des Lutteurs*, in Utica (Alexander 1973: 11) (Yacoub 1969: 119). These combatants have neck chains and hair fashioned into top knots which was the favoured hairstyle of Roman wrestlers⁴ (Papakonstantinou 2013; Perrottet 2004). There is a pair of wrestlers on either side of a table. On one side the wrestlers are beginning their match while on the other side the contest is already in progress.



Figure 6: *Wrestlers mosaic from from the 'tepidarium' Gightis, 3rd century, Bardo Museum, Tunisia. Artist Unknown. Image: adapted from Ben Abed 2006b*

The table between them bears the competition prizes of a crown and two palms. The mosaic is also dated to the 3rd century (Ben Abed 2006b). The pankration also appears on a large 4th century (4.65 x 4.65m) mosaic from the floor of a bath house at Capsa, modern Gafsa, a prominent inland Roman military stronghold approximately 250km inland from Gightis. The mosaic depicts a dozen or more athletic games in fourteen scenes which represent the sequence of the events from the bout being umpired, followed by prize giving ceremonies and finally the athletes with their awards (Ben Abed 2006: 87). In the pankratic scene, the dominant wrestler has his opponent in a leg hold while simultaneously forcing his head to the ground. The protagonists are wearing top knots and are being observed by an umpire brandishing a palm frond (Blanchard-Lemée: 190-191).

Discussion

The Nicholson mosaic is well-executed and demonstrates the mosaicist's skilful use of *opus vermiculatum*. It was probably the work of a master artist who was proficient in the technique which he has employed to create a distinctive and pronounced 'halo' effect around the two pankratists. Although this technique is common, it is rarely used to such an extent. In fact, the Nicholson example is the only one found to date which shows so many rows around the main figures. As it was clearly of superior craftsmanship, the mosaic was most likely a central panel and was almost certainly a private commission by someone of wealth. It was probably placed in either a bathing or palaestra building or perhaps in the private residence of a patron interested in or involved with wrestling or games. Although it is highly unusual to find pavements which are identical (Ling 1998: 133) the Nicholson mosaic has an almost exact parallel in the mosaic from Gightis which is known to have come from the baths of the city. Another two mosaics are almost certainly from the same workshop and all are dated to the 3rd century. The Nicholson mosaic is of superior quality and may have been made by a more experienced craftsman and copied either contemporaneously or later by the Gightis workshop, perhaps from a shared prototype. The possibility that itinerant craftsmen were responsible for all the mosaics or that the design may have been purchased from elsewhere also cannot not be discounted.

In seeking to place the Nicholson Mosaic in its chronological and stylistic context, it was necessary to consider as many published mosaics as possible from across the North African provinces. Although the mosaic was gifted by King Hassan II to Richard Gordon in Morocco, there is as yet, no archaeological or stylistic evidence to link Gordon's 'The Wrestlers' mosaic to that area. Research into Moroccan mosaics with particular attention to the grand city of Volubilis, with its numerous examples, has to date, not yielded any comparable mosaics, either in terms of subject matter or style.

As to how the mosaic came to be in the possession of the King of Morocco there are several possibilities. As *emblemata* the mosaics were small enough to be sold and easily transported and therefore could have been traded or gifted between the provinces at any time since their initial production. The illegal trade in antiquities from all areas of the Mediterranean in the 19th and 20th centuries is well attested and North Africa is no exception. The mosaics of Hamman Lif in Tunisia for example, were discovered by a French soldier in 1883 and quickly removed. Over the next fifty years the mosaics apparently travelled from Tunisia to France where they were sold by a dealer (Biebel 1936). They finally resurfaced at the Brooklyn Museum, New York in the 1930s, where they are now part of the museum collection (Stern 2008: 244). In terms of the Nicholson mosaic, it would therefore not be unusual to find that it originated in one country but emerged publicly in another.⁵

Conclusion

In summary, the Nicholson mosaic, when considered in the overall context of the stylistic and chronological development of African mosaics generally and coupled with the parallels provided by the Gightis mosaics, was almost certainly produced in Tunisia, probably in the vicinity of Gightis during the 3rd century.

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Endnotes

- 1 The mosaic gifted to Bean was sold in Washington in 2010 as a 'Byzantine mosaic probably from Volubilis'.
- 2 The price Edict of Diocletian (c.301 CE) lists the different wages paid to mosaicists and related professions.
- 3 For complete images showing the red and black borders and other comparable wrestling mosaics see Ben Abed, A. 2006b Stories in Stone: Conserving Mosaics of Roman Africa, *GCI Scientific Program Report Ser.*, Los Angeles: Getty Publications.
- 4 The *cirrus* or top knot is perhaps a mark of Roman boy athletes or possibly an indication of status or rank within a particular sport. Skull caps were often made of leather and fastened under the chin.
- 5 As with all unprovenanced material the issue of authenticity must be considered. In this case it seems unlikely that 'The Wrestlers' mosaic is not genuine, given the quality of the craftsmanship, the use of a distinctive (and therefore easily identifiable) technique, the specific nature of the subject matter and the prevalence of genuine North African mosaics on the antiquities market.

À propos de l'origine du *Codex Angus*

Jean-Marie Olivier

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Dans un article publié dans le t. 53 de cette revue¹, A. Gerber retrace l'histoire récente du cod. *Sydney, University of Sydney. Library. Rare Books and Special Collections* RB Add.Ms. 40 (*Codex Angus*).

Déposé en 1936 au Nicholson Museum de l'Université de Sydney par Samuel Angus (1881-1943), ce Lectionnaire du Nouveau Testament (XI^e s.²) portant les lectures pour les jours de la semaine entre Pâques et la Pentecôte et les samedis/dimanches des autres semaines (l 2378³) avait été vendu (ou donné) en 1935 à Samuel Angus par Adolf Deissmann (1866-1937)⁴ qui avait été son professeur. Celui-ci l'avait reçu en don, en septembre 1929, de l'archiprêtre et théologien bulgare Stefan Stančev Cankov [Стефан Станчев Цанков] (1881-1965).

D'après les informations fournies pas Samuel Angus lui-même, ce manuscrit était depuis des siècles la propriété de l'Église bulgare⁵. Malgré plusieurs demandes, A. Gerber n'a pu obtenir aucune information sur l'histoire de ce manuscrit auprès du Църковно-исторически и архивен институт при Българската Патриаршия de Sofija.

Cette courte note a pour but d'apporter ici quelques informations qui pourraient éclairer un peu l'histoire de ce manuscrit antérieurement à 1929.

Après la publication de l'article d'A. Gerber, l'University Library de Sydney a mis sur son site web⁶ une reproduction numérique en couleurs de ce manuscrit. Il est possible d'y voir sur le contre-plat inférieur, à l'encre rouge, la mention *M. K.* (Planche 1) Cette mention est bien connue⁷. Elle a été apposée par le tchèque Vladimír Sís⁸ (Planche 2) sur les manuscrits emportés le 27 mars 1917 de la *Μονή Κοσινίτσης*⁹, située près de Drama, par les troupes bulgares qu'il commandait¹⁰.

Contrairement à ce que pensait B. Katsaros¹¹, on sait qu'au moins deux manuscrits volés dans la *Μονή Κοσινίτσης* ont abouti dans les collections du Църковно-исторически и архивен институт при Българската Патриаршия de Sofia¹² (codd. *Kosinitsa* 232, aujourd'hui ЦИАИ 949¹³ et *Kosinitsa* non identifié, aujourd'hui ЦИАИ 906¹⁴).

Il n'existait aucun catalogue complet des manuscrits conservés dans ce monastère avant le raid des troupes bulgares. Les manuscrits néo-testamentaires avaient été signalés par Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kérameus¹⁵, Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener¹⁶, Hermann von Soden¹⁷ et Caspar René Gregory¹⁸. Les informations — de première ou de seconde main — fournies par ces auteurs ont été, plus ou moins correctement, synthétisées par B. Atsalos¹⁹ et G. K. Papazoglou²⁰. J'ai recherché



Planche 1: Plat inférieur du *Codex Angus* portant la mention *M. K.* Image: autorisation de *The University of Sydney Rare Books and Special Collections Library*.

dans les publications que je viens de citer si parmi les Évangélistes de parchemin non retrouvés aujourd'hui²¹ (l 1246-l 1248, l 1257 : *Kosinitsa* 117, 119, 12, 205) de contenu similaire à celui du manuscrit de Sydney, certains présentaient des caractéristiques physiques proches de celles de celui-ci (122 folios de parchemin, mesurant environ 264 x 200 mm; deux colonnes d'environ 80 mm de large ; 27 et 33 lignes²²). Je n'en ai trouvé aucun. Je me suis donc demandé si Vladimír Sís ne s'était pas trompé lors de l'apposition de *M. K.* sur le contre-plat inférieur. En effet, les 28 et 29 septembre 1917, sous la conduite de Vladimír Sís, les troupes bulgares pillaient la *Μονή τοῦ Προδρόμου* de Serrés, emportant notamment tous ses manuscrits²³. Sur ces manuscrits figure, généralement de la main de Vladimír Sís, l'une des mentions *M. Cb. Iv., M. Cb. II., M. C. Iv., M. C. II., Cb. Iv., C. II*²⁴. Ces mentions d'origine n'ayant certainement pas été apposées le jour même des raids, je me suis demandé si l'actuel *Codex Angus* ne pouvait pas provenir de la *Μονή τοῦ Προδρόμου* et ce d'autant que je connais au moins



Planche 2: Photo de Vladimir Sís vers 1913 alors qu'il était correspondant de guerre pour le journal *Národní listy*. Un film intitulé «*Citizen Sís: De Maršov à Leopoldov via la Bulgarie*» a été réalisé en 2019 par *Gospodin Nedelčev*. Image: *Wikicommons*.

un manuscrit provenant probablement de la *Movḗ tou Prodromou*, le *Sofia, Naучен център за славяно-византийски проучвания „Иван Дуйчев“ към Софийския университет „Св. Климент Охридски“* 219 qui porte (sur sa contre-garde inf.) les deux mentions *M. K.* et *M. Sv. II.* J'ai donc examiné si l'actuel *Codex Angus* pourrait être l'un des *Lectionnaires* du Nouveau Testament sur parchemin décrits notamment par Christophoros Dimitriadis²⁵. Il n'en est rien.

Faut-il, dans ces conditions, douter de ce que le *Codex Angus* ait appartenu à la *Movḗ Koσivίtσnς*? Je ne le crois pas. Les indications d'origine apposées par Vladimir Sís sont en général dignes de confiance et, puisque les manuscrits de la *Movḗ Koσivίtσnς* n'avaient pas fait l'objet d'un inventaire complet, il n'y aurait rien de surprenant à ce que nous retrouvions un manuscrit néotestamentaire non décrit. Par ailleurs, Vladimir Sís lui-même nous apporte la preuve qu'il a eu l'actuel *Codex Angus* entre les mains. Le Centre «*Ivan Dujčev*» de Sofia abrite un Catalogue des manuscrits de l'Académie (*Περγαμενι ρъкописи на Академия*²⁶). On y lit, à la p. 386, sous le numéro 98 (115) [sur 166 (115)], la description d'un Évangélaire datable du *XIV^e* siècle, fait de 122 folios de parchemin mesurant 265 x 200 mm, écrits sur 2

colonnes mesurant 60 mm, portant 33 lignes d'écriture. À l'exception de la largeur des colonnes, les caractéristiques physiques correspondent à celles du *Codex Angus*. Le contenu indiqué par Vladimir Sís est exactement²⁷ celui du manuscrit de Sydney. On pourrait m'opposer les datations proposées par A. Gerber et Vladimir Sís, mais on a vu plus haut que le *Codex Angus* n'est sans doute pas du *XI^e* s. et, pour avoir longuement comparé les descriptions de Vladimir Sís aux manuscrits de la *Movḗ Koσivίtσnς* et de la *Movḗ tou Prodromou*, je peux attester que souvent les datations proposées par Vladimir Sís sont à prendre avec prudence.

Il me paraît donc possible d'affirmer que le *Codex Angus* — loin d'avoir appartenu durant des siècles à l'Église bulgare — est passé par les mains de Vladimir Sís et provient de la *Movḗ Koσivίtσnς*²⁸.

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Endnotes

- 1 A. GERBER, *An Unexplored 11th Century Gospel Lectionary in Sydney*, in *Buried History. Journal of the Australian Institute of Archaeology*, t. 53 (2017), pp. 11-18.
- 2 Je ne connais ce manuscrit que par sa reproduction numérique (cf. *infra*, n. 6) et ne saurais en proposer une datation précise. Je proposerais plutôt de le dater du *XIII^e* s.
- 3 K. ALAND - M. WELTE - B. KÖSTER - K. JUNACK, *Kurzgefasste Liste der griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments. Zweite, neubearbeitete und ergänzte Auflage [Arbeiten zur neutestamentlichen Textforschung herausgegeben vom Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster/Westfalen, 1]*, Berlin, 1994, p. 369. Informations reprises à l'adresse : <<http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste/>>.
- 4 Cf. C. MARKSCHIES, *Adolf Deißmann. Ein Pionier der Ökumene*, dans *Wegbereiter der Ökumene im 20. Jahrhundert*, edd. C. MÖLLER, C. SCHWÖBEL, C. MARKSCHIES, K. VON ZEDTWITZ, Göttingen, 2005, pp. 32-53 [<https://digi20.digitale-sammlungen.de/fs1/object/display/bsb00046257_00001.html>]; C. MARKSCHIES, *Adolf Deißmann - ein Heidelberger Pionier der Ökumene*, in *Zeitschrift für Neuere Theologiegeschichte/Journal for the History of Modern Theology*, t. 12 (2005), pp. 47-88 [<http://www.academia.edu/>]; A. GERBER, *Deissmann the Philologist [Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche, 171]*, Berlin-New York, 2010.
- 5 A. GERBER, *Art. cit.*, p. 13 et n. 5.
- 6 <<http://hdl.handle.net/2123/17789>>.
- 7 Cf. B. A. ATSALOS, *Les manuscrits grecs de la collection du Centre de recherches « Ivan Dujčev » de Sofia*, dans

- Actes de la table ronde : « Principes et méthodes du catalogage (sic) des manuscrits grecs de la collection du Centre Dujčev », Sofia 21-23 Août 1990 [Αριστοτέλειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλονίκης, Publications du Programme de la coopération entre le Centre « Ivan Dujčev » de l'Université « St. Kliment Ohridski » de Sofia et l'Université Aristote de Thessalonique, 1], Thessalonique, 1992, p. 67.*
- 8 Sur cet extraordinaire personnage (chef de guerre, helléniste, journaliste, auteur de nombreux livres, homme politique, résistant durant l'Occupation nazie, ami de la famille Masaryk), né à Maršov u Tišnova le 30 juin 1889, mort le 2 juillet 1958 dans la prison de Leopoldov où il avait été interné après avoir été arrêté le 3 janvier 1949 et condamné à 25 ans de réclusion pour « trahison », « réhabilité » le 11 avril 1969 [cf. *Rudé právo* du 12.04.1969, disponible à l'adresse : <<http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php>>] qui mériterait une étude biographique, voir *Ottův slovník naučný nové doby*, t. V, 2 : *Rón-sl*, Praha, 1939 [Réimpression : Praha, 2002], p. 1254 ; *Československo biografie, t. III : S-Z (Archivní Část - Archiv-Teil - Partie-Archives)*, Praha, 1941, s. v. Sís Vladimír ; *Český biografický slovník xx. století* : t. III : *Q-Ž*, Praha, 1999, pp. 127-128.
 - 9 Pour les différents noms portés par ce monastère (Μονή Κοσνίνιτσας, Εικοσιφοινίσσης, Εικοσιφοινίσσας, Κοσνίνιτσας, Κόζνιτσας etc.), voir B. A. ATSALOS, *Η ονομασία της Ιεράς Μονής της Παναγίας της Αχειροποιήτου του Παγγαίου, της επονομαζομένης της Κοσνίνιτσας ή Εικοσιφοινίσσης [Δήμος Δράμας. Δημοτική Επιχείρηση Κοινωνικής, Πολιτιστικής και Τουριστικής Ανάπτυξης. Ιστορικό Αρχείο. Σειρά Δημοσιευμάτων, 2], Drama, 1996.*
 - 10 Sur cet épisode, voir, par exemple, du point de vue grec, G. K. PAPAZOGLU, *Η κλοπή τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Εικοσιφοινίσσης — ἄγνωστα ἔγγραφα σχετικά μέ τή λεηλασία τῆς μονῆς ἀπό τοῦς Βουλγάρους (1917)*, dans *Πρακτικά Β΄ Τοπικοῦ Συμποσίου « Ἡ Καβάλα καί ἡ Περιοχή της » (26-29 Σεπτεμβρίου 1986)*, t. II, Kabala, 1988, pp. 3-30 (pagination du tirage à part), réimpression anastatique dans G. K. PAPAZOGLU, *Χειρόγραφα καί βιβλιοθήκες τῆς Ανατολικῆς Μακεδονίας καί Θράκης*, t. I [Δημοκρίτειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θράκης. Θρακική βιβλιοθήκη, 1], Komotini, 1993, n° Δ΄ ; G. K. PAPAZOGLU, *Ἡ λεηλασία τῆς Εικοσιφοινίσσης. Ἐκκλησιαστικά κειμήλια, Βυζαντινοὶ κώδικες καί ἄλλα πολιτιστικά ἀγαθὰ τῆς Εικοσιφοινίσσης κλαπέντα ἀπό τοῦς Βουλγάρους (27 Μαρτίου 1917). Ἐκατὸ χρόνια ἀπὸ τὴν κλοπή (1917-2017)*, Drama, 2017.
 - 11 B. KATSAROS, *Παρατηρήσεις καί σχόλια μέ ἀφορμὴ τὴν ἔκδοση ἑνὸς βιβλίου*, in *Ἱστοριογεωγραφικά*, t. 5 (1995), p. 211, n. 82 [<<http://historico-geographica.blogspot.com/>>].
 - 12 Désormais cité comme ЦИАИ.
 - 13 Cf. J.-M. OLIVIER, *L'histoire agitée du trente-neuvième cahier du Paris, Supplément grec 670 et les « mouvements » des collections de manuscrits grecs en Bulgarie*, in *L'Antiquité classique*, t. 72 (2003), p. 240 [<http://www.persee.fr/doc/antiq_0770-2817_2003_num_72_1_2523>] et D. GETOV, *A Catalogue of the Greek Manuscripts at the Ecclesiastical Historical and Archival Institute of The Patriarchate of Bulgaria*, t. II, Turnhout, 2017, pp. 240-242.
 - 14 Cf. J.-M. OLIVIER, *L'histoire agitée...* (citée *supra*, n. 13), p. 240 et n. 27 ; D. GETOV, *A Catalogue...* (citée *supra*, n. 13), pp. 223-224. Le cod. ЦИАИ 907 provient peut-être lui-aussi de Kosinitsa si l'on en croit une note figurant au f. 62^v (voir J.-M. OLIVIER, *L'histoire agitée...* [citée *supra*, n. 13], p. 241).
 - 15 A. PAPAPOULOS-KÉRAMEUS, *Ἐκθεσις παλαιογραφικῶν καί φιλολογικῶν ἐρευνῶν ἐν Θράκῃ καί Μακεδονίᾳ*, in *Ὁ ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολογικὸς Σύλλογος. Αρχαιολογική Ἐπιτροπή. Παράρτημα τοῦ ΙΖ΄ τόμου, ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει*, 1886, pp. 3-64 (voir aux pp. 13-56 [<<https://archive.org/>>]).
 - 16 F. H. A. SCRIVENER, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament for the Use of Biblical Students*, fourth edition, edited by the Rev. E. MILLER, t. I, London, 1894 [<<https://archive.org/>> ; <<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/36548>>].
 - 17 H. VON SODEN, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*, t. I, 1, Berlin, 1902 (Zweite unveränderte Ausgabe : Göttingen, 1911) ; t. I, 3, Berlin, 1910 (Zweite unveränderte Ausgabe : Göttingen, 1911) ; t. II, Göttingen, 1913 [<<https://archive.org/>>].
 - 18 C. R. GREGORY, *Textkritik des Neuen Testaments*, t. I-III, Leipzig, 1900, 1902, 1909 [<<https://archive.org/>>].
 - 19 B. ATSALOS, *Τὰ χειρόγραφα τῆς Ιεράς Μονῆς τῆς Κοσνίνιτσας (Ἡ Εικοσιφοινίσσας) τοῦ Παγγαίου [Δήμος Δράμας, Ιστορικό Αρχείο, Σειρά δημοσιευμάτων, 1], Drama, 1990.*
 - 20 G. K. PAPAZOGLU, *Τὰ χειρόγραφα τῆς Εικοσιφοινίσσης (κατάλογοι καί καταγραφές) [Σύλλογος πρὸς διάδοσιν Ὡφελίμων Βιβλίων]*, Athina, 1991.
 - 21 De nombreuses identifications ont été proposées, souvent avec légèreté. Je ne tiens compte ici que des identifications que je considère comme certaines ou vraisemblables.
 - 22 Cf. A. GERBER, *Art. cit.*, p. 16.
 - 23 Cf. G. K. PAPAZOGLU, *Ἡ βιβλιοθήκη καί τὰ χειρόγραφα τῆς μονῆς τοῦ Τιμίου Προδρόμου Σερρών [Δημοκρίτειο Πανεπιστήμιο Θράκης. Θρακική βιβλιοθήκη, 2], Komotini*, 1993 ; B. KATSAROS, *Τὰ χειρόγραφα...* (citée *infra*, n. 26).
 - 24 Cf. B. A. ATSALOS, *Les manuscrits grecs...* (citée *supra*, n. 7), p. 69.
 - 25 Cf. GERMANOS <STRINOPOULOS>, *Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς παρὰ τὰς Σέρρας ἱεράς καί σταυροπηγιακῆς μονῆς Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου*, in *Ὁ Νέος Ποιμὴν*, t. 2 (1920), pp. 193-208, 338-353 ; t. 3 (1921), pp. 83-93, 325-334, 459-466, 717-726 [revera 728] ; t. 4 (1922), pp. 40-49 [http://pc-3.lib.uoi.gr:8080/jspui/> (à l'exception des pp. 459-466 du t. 3)].
 - 26 Voir B. KATSAROS, *Τὰ χειρόγραφα τῶν μονῶν Τιμίου Προδρόμου Σερρών καί Παναγίας Αχειροποιήτου τοῦ Παγγαίου (Κοσνίνιτσας). Ἡ ἱστορία τῶν ἀριθμῶν. Ὁ ἀνέκδοτος περιγραφικὸς κατάλογος τῶν ἐλληνικῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἀκαδημίας Ἐπιστημῶν τῆς Βουλγαρίας (Ἀρχεῖο Κέντρου Σλαβο-Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν « Ivan Dujčev » τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Σόφιας) καί ἡ συμβολή του στὴν προσπάθεια γιὰ τὴν ἀνασύνθεση τοῦ « σκορπισμένου ψηφιδωτοῦ » τῶν χειρογράφων τῶν δύο μονῶν [Δημοσία Κεντρικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη Σερρών. Σειρά ἐκδόσεων γιὰ τὴν πόλη καί τό νομό Σερρών, 4], Serrés, 1995.*
 - 27 Les folios indiqués pour les différents textes par Vladimír Sís sont exactement ceux où figurent les textes dans le *Codex Angus*.

28 Il convient ici d'expliquer pourquoi je ne vais pas plus loin dans l'identification. B. Katsaros dans son ouvrage *Tá χειρόγραφα...* (cité *supra*, n. 26) mentionne par deux fois (p. 123 : Broj. 115, Κπ. 98 et p. 237 : A/A 18) le manuscrit décrit par Vladimír Sís qu'il identifie à l'ancien *Μονὴ Κοσινίτης* 117. Celui-ci n'est connu que par la brève description publiée par Caspar René Gregory (cité *supra*, n. 18) d'après les indications de Kirsopp Lake qui avait vu le manuscrit en 1902 dans le monastère, t. III, p. 1271 (*l* 1246) : « 13, Jhdt, 27, 8 x 21, Perg. ? Bl, 2 Sp, 27-34 Z: *Evl.* ». La *Kurzgefasste Liste* (citée *supra*, n. 3) et sa version numérique reproduisent les informations de C. R. Gregory, mais indiquent qu'il s'agit d'un Praxapostolos, non d'un Évangéliste. Même si le contenu était bien un Évangéliste, il me paraît difficile d'identifier le manuscrit vu par Vladimír Sís au *Kosinitsa* 117. Les dimensions données par C. R. Gregory (278 x 210 mm) sont assez différentes de celles données par Vladimír Sís (265 x 200 mm), alors qu'en général on peut sur ce point accorder notre confiance à Vladimír Sís. On remarquera d'ailleurs que les dimensions données par Vladimír Sís sont celles du *Codex Angus*. Le nombre de lignes indiqué par C. R. Gregory (27-34) ne correspond pas à celui donné par Vladimír Sís (33) qui, suivant son habitude, donne le nombre maximum de lignes. Enfin, C. R. Gregory ne précise pas le nombre de folios, ce qui est un élément déterminant pour identifier un Lectionnaire car le format et le nombre de lignes sont des éléments assez banaux.

Concerning the origin of the *Codex Angus*

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Abstract: The paper about *Codex Angus* by Gerber (2017) traced its history from 1929 when it came into the possession of Adolf Deissmann. This paper explores its history prior to that, and proposes a later date for it.

Introduction

In an article published in *Buried History*, Gerber (2017) traces the recent history of the codex now held in Sydney: *The University of Sydney, Rare Books and Special Collections Library*, RB Add. Ms. 40 (*Codex Angus*). This New Testament Lectionary was deposited in 1936 at the Nicholson Museum of the University of Sydney by Samuel Angus (1881-1943).

After the publication of Gerber's article, The University of Sydney Library loaded a digital colour reproduction of this manuscript on to its website (<http://hdl.handle.net/2123/17789>). Gerber adopts an 11th century date for the manuscript. Although I know it only from the digital reproduction and cannot propose a precise dating, I would rather suggest a 13th century date.

The codex contains readings for the days of the week between Easter and Pentecost and Saturdays/Sundays of the other weeks (*l* 2378¹). It had been sold (or given) in 1935 to Samuel Angus by Adolf Deissmann (1866-1937) who had been his teacher (Markschies 2005a; Markschies 2005b; Gerber 2010). He, in turn, had received it as a gift, in September 1929, from the Bulgarian archpriest (protopresbyter or dean) and theologian, Stefan Stančev Zankov [Стефан Станчев Цанков] (1881-1965).

According to the information provided by Samuel Angus himself, this manuscript had for centuries been the property of the Bulgarian Church. Despite several requests, Gerber could not obtain any information on the history of this manuscript from the Ecclesiastical Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria, Sofia [Църковно-исторически и архивен институт при Българската Патриаршия] (Gerber 2017: 13, n. 5).

This short note is intended to provide information that could shed further light on the history of this manuscript prior to 1929.

The Notation

From the digital reproduction, it is possible to see on the lower inside cover, in red ink, the initials *M.K.* (Figure 1). This notation is well known (Atsalos 1992: 67). It was affixed to manuscripts taken away from the Monastery of



Figure 1: The inside cover of *Codex Angus* showing the initials *M.K.* Image: courtesy The University of Sydney Rare Books and Special Collections Library.

Kosinitsis (Μονὴ Κοσινίτης),² located near the city of Drama in north-eastern Greece, by the Czech Vladimír Sís, who was the commander of a detachment of Bulgarian troops, on 27 March 1917.³ Vladimír Sís (Figure 2) was an extraordinary character: a warlord, Hellenist, journalist, author of many books, politician, resistance fighter during the Nazi occupation and friend of the Masaryk family. He was born in Mařov u Tišnova on June 30, 1889, died on July 2, 1958 in the prison of Leopoldov where he had been interned after being arrested on 3 January 1949 and sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment for 'treason'. He was 'rehabilitated' on 11 April 1969.⁴



Figure 2: Photo of Vladimir Sís in about 1913 when he was a war correspondent for the *Národní listy* paper of Prague. A film entitled *Citizen Sís: From Maršov to Leopoldov via Bulgaria* and directed by *Gospodin Nedelchev* was released in 2019.
Image: Wikicommons.

Contrary to the belief of B. Katsaros (1995a: 211 n. 82), it is known that at least two manuscripts stolen from the Monastery of Kosinitsis arrived in the collections of the Ecclesiastical Historical and Archival Institute of the Patriarchate of Bulgaria, Sofia⁵, codices *Kosinitsa* 232, today ЦИАИ 949 (Olivier 2003: 240; Getov 2017: 240-242) and *uncatalogued Kosinitsa*, today ЦИАИ 906 (Olivier 2003: 240 n. 27; Getov 2017: 223-224).⁶

There was no complete catalogue of the manuscripts preserved in this monastery before the raid by the Bulgarian troops. The New Testament manuscripts had been reported by Athanasios Papadopoulos-Kérameus (1886: 13-56), Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener (1894), Hermann von Soden (1902-13) and Caspar René Gregory (1900-9). The information — first-hand or second-hand — provided by these authors was, more or less correctly, synthesized by Atsalos (1990) and Papazoglou (1991). If we neglect the eccentric identifications proposed here and there, the publications describe four Evangelitaria (Gospel Lectionaries) formerly preserved in the Monastery of Kosinitsis but not retrieved today (*l* 1246-*l* 1248, *l* 1257: *Kosinitsa* 117, 119, 12, 205). I did not find any of these manuscripts to have physical characteristics comparable

to those of *Codex Angus*, (122 folios of parchment, measuring about 264 x 200 mm, two columns about 80 mm wide, and between 27 and 33 lines long) [Gerber 2017: 16].

Was Vladimír Sís mistaken when writing *M.K.* on the lower inside cover? Indeed, on September 28 and 29, 1917, under the command of Vladimír Sís, the Bulgarian troops also looted the Monastery of Timios Prodromos of Serres (Μονή τοῦ Προδρόμου), removing all its manuscripts (Papazoglou 1993b; Katsaros 1995b). Initials, *Μ. Σβ. Ιβ.*, *Μ. Σβ. ΙΙ.*, *Μ. Σ. Ιβ.*, *Μ. Σ. ΙΙ.*, *Σβ. Ιβ.*, *Σ. ΙΙ.*, were written on these manuscripts usually in the hand of Vladimír Sís (Atsalos 1992: 69). These notations of origin were certainly not affixed on the days of the raids, so I wondered if the current *Codex Angus* could have come from the Monastery of Timios Prodromos. There is at least one manuscript probably coming from the Monastery of Timios Prodromos now held at the Centre for Slavo-Byzantine Studies Prof. Ivan Dujčev, in Sofia, the *Codex Научен център за славяно-византийски проучвания Иван Дуйчев към Софийския университет Св. Климент Охридски* 219 which bears (on its lower pastedown) the initials of both *M.K.* and *Μ. Σβ. ΙΙ.* I therefore examined whether the current *Codex Angus* could be one of the Gospel Lectionaries of the New Testament on parchment described by Christophoros Dimitriadis.⁷

Concluding Comments

In these circumstances, one may doubt whether the *Codex Angus* ever belonged to the Monastery of Kosinitsis, but I do not believe that. The indications of origin affixed by Vladimír Sís are generally trustworthy and, since the manuscripts of the Monastery of Kosinitsis had not been the subject of a complete inventory, it would not be surprising to encounter a manuscript not previously described. Moreover, Vladimír Sís himself provides evidence that he had the current *Codex Angus* in his hands. The Ivan Dujčev Centre in Sofia houses a Catalogue of manuscripts of the Academy (*Περγαμενι ρῆκοписи на Академия*) (Katsaros 1995b). That catalogue reads at page 386, under number 98 (115) [correcting 166 (115)], the description of a 14th century Gospel Book, made of 122 folios of parchment measuring 265 x 200 mm, written on 2 columns measuring 60 mm, bearing 33 lines of writing. Except for the column widths, the physical characteristics correspond to those of the *Codex Angus*. The content indicated by Vladimír Sís is exactly that of the Sydney manuscript and the folios indicated for the different texts by him are exactly those where the texts appear in *Codex Angus*. Of course the dates proposed by Gerber (11th century) and Vladimír Sís (14th century) do not match the actual date of *Codex Angus*. I have already said that *Codex Angus* is probably not from the 11th century and, having compared at length the descriptions of Vladimír Sís to the manuscripts of the Monastery of Kosinitsis and the Monastery of Timios Prodromos, I can attest that many of the dates proposed by Vladimír Sís are to be treated with caution.

It is my considered view, therefore, that *Codex Angus* — far from having belonged for centuries to the Bulgarian Church — passed through the hands of Vladimír Sís and came from the Monastery of Kosinitsis.⁸

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3 parts at Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht)
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Endnotes

- 1 Aland et al 1994: 369; also [http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/
liste](http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste).
- 2 For other names of this monastery, Μονὴ Κοσινίτισης,
Εικοσιφοινίσσης, Εικοσιφοίνισσας, Κοσινίτσας,
Κόζνιτσας etc. see Atsalos 1996.
- 3 On this episode, see for example, from the Greek point
of view, Papazoglou (1988: 3-30 pagination of the print
separately), anastatic reprint in Papazoglou (1993a, n^o Δ');
Papazoglou (2017).
- 4 *Rudé právo*, 12.04.1969 ([http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.
php](http://archiv.ucl.cas.cz/index.php)). Vladimír Sís deserves a biographical study. Waiting
for his biography, see *Ottův slovník naučný nové doby*,
vol. V, 2: *Rón-sl*, Praha, 1939 [Reprint: Praha, 2002]1254;
Československo biografie, vol. III: *S-Z (Archivní Část*

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Vladimír; *Český biografický slovník XX. století*: vol. III:
Q-Ž, Praha, 1999, 127-128.

- 5 Now cited as ЦИИИ.
- 6 The cod. ЦИИИ 907 may also come from Kosinitsa if we
believe a note in f. 62^v (Olivier 2003: 241).
- 7 See GERMANOS <STRINOPOULOS>, Κατάλογος
τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς παρὰ τὰς Σέρρας ἱερᾶς καὶ
σταυροπηγιακῆς μονῆς Ἰωάννου τοῦ Προδρόμου, *Ὁ Νέος
Ποιμὴν*, 2 (1920) 193-208, 338-353; 3 (1921) 83-93,
325-334, 459-466, 717-726 [revera 728]; 4 (1922) 40-49.
(<http://pc-3.lib.uoi.gr:8080/jspui/> except for vol 3 [1921]
459-466).
- 8 I must here explain why I won't go further in the
identification. Katsaros mentions twice (1995b: 123: Broj.
115, Κτ. 98 and 237: A/A 18) the manuscript described
by Vladimír Sís, which identifies as being the former
Μονὴ Κοσινίτισης 117. This is known only by the brief
description published by Gregory (1990-9) according to
Kirsopp Lake indications that he had seen the manuscript
in 1902 in the monastery, vol. III, 1271 (*I* 1246): «13,
Jhdt, 27, 8 x 21, Perg, ? Bl, 2 Sp, 27-34 Z: *Evl.*». The
Kurzgefasste Liste (Aland et al 1994) and its digital
version reproduce the information of Gregory, but indicate
that it is a Praxapostolos, not a Gospel Lectionary. Even
if the content was that of a Gospel Lectionary, I find it
difficult to identify the manuscript seen by Vladimír Sís in
Kosinitsa 117. The dimensions given by Gregory (278 x
210 mm) are quite different from those given by Vladimír
Sís (265 x 200 mm), whereas in general on this point we
can place our trust in Vladimír Sís. It should also be noted
that the dimensions given by Vladimír Sís are those of the
Codex Angus. The number of lines indicated by Gregory
(27-34) is not the same as that given by Vladimír Sís (33)
who, according to his custom, gives the maximum number
of lines. Finally, Gregory does not specify the number
of folios, which is a determining factor in identifying a
Lectionary because the format and number of lines are
fairly banal.

Systematisation in Ancient Mesopotamian Religion

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Abstract: Our Western religious context leads us to expect that ancient religions would tend to have a systematisation that incorporated all beliefs and practices. This expectation may be tested with Mesopotamian religion, which demonstrates many problems with this assumption. There was a weak systematisation with some procedures, leading to legitimation through a divine figure or an earlier stage of creation. However different legitimations were not connected. Extispicy, divination by means of inspecting the entrails of sacrificed animals, is a particular puzzle because different legitimations of the one procedure may not have been consistent. Myths may contradict the presuppositions of procedures. They may incorporate elements that have a purely literary role and do not reflect theological beliefs, or elements that have a theological role and do not reflect cosmological beliefs. Where there are systematic tendencies behind myths the driving force may be political, prompting the suggestion that lack of system is the normal state.

Note: This paper is published posthumously after editing by Dr Luis Siddall.

Introduction

The thesis of this essay is easier to state than to demonstrate. I believe that we have tended to read Ancient Near Eastern (ANE) myths in terms of expectations arising from modern experience with religious systems, which have systematic tendencies; that is a drive to incorporate all aspects within the one system. Whether we are influenced by monotheistic religions or by a philosophical system that tries to be ‘the theory of everything’, it seems natural to us that an attempt would be made to connect the various aspects of religion into a system. Against that background we have tried to read a system out of ANE myths. Whether our conjectured system has been for an individual culture or it was supposed to encompass the whole ANE is less important than the fact that we expected elements to interconnect. I am not claiming that the true character of ANE culture has not been recognized but that the implications of its character have not been thought through.¹

A consequence of my proposal is that, since it is not possible to find a connected religious system for any given culture, proposals for an ANE wide religious synthesis are even more dubious. Thus, the test case is whether attempts at systematisation can be shown in one particular culture. If there is no internal system in a particular culture, area wide systems are even less likely. My general explication will focus on Mesopotamia. Other cultures must be assessed on their own merits.

It follows that examples of systemisation, or lack thereof, will be my principal concern. Some might opine that no religion can ever be consistent, but I am not concerned about that argument here. What I am concerned about is the attempt to interconnect the different parts of the religion. One can see two tendencies in modern surveys of Mesopotamian religion. One is to attempt to weave aspects of various myths together to create what seems to us to be the system of thought holding the religion

together.² The weakness of this approach is that religion consists of deeds as well as thoughts. The lack of connection between procedures (rituals and the divination techniques) and literary texts (myths) is not highlighted. The other approach takes one or a few myths, usually including *Enūma eliš*, and makes it or them definitive.³ This not only ignores major parts of the religion, but also ignores the idiosyncratic aspects of the chosen myth(s).

I suggest that religious phenomena consisted of two levels. The basic level is of things that were done and procedures that were followed because they were believed to work. Small-scale attempts may have been made to justify that belief, but these attempts were not systematic and there was no attempt to make the justification for one system to cohere with the justification for another system. In this category are the various methods of divination and rituals of various sorts.

Another level is illustrated by the myths, though the essential motivation of many of these myths is lost to us. There seem to be clear cases of politically motivated myths but attempts to explain them all politically are not plausible. Some may have been diverting stories that served a function in the training of scribes. Postulates that these written forms represent a deeper and more widespread folk culture are no more than postulates. We simply have no way of knowing. Even if some represent popular culture, some may not have.

Since there was no drive for a consistent system, the details in myths could be driven by literary considerations. However, we have tended to read the myths as part of systematisation. Hence anything mentioned must have been determined by the needs of the theological system or are in the story because of the general beliefs of the time. Whether we take those things as theological or cultural data, they are being seen as dependable data. My suggestion is that a myth, being a story, may be making a point, but some elements of the story may reflect literary and

not theological or cultural necessity. I suggest we need to read myths as more akin to modern science fiction or fantasy literature. The crucial thing about a detail in such literature is that it is conceivable within the imagination of the reader. The modern reader of imaginary stories accepts speeds beyond the speed of light and doors into other worlds, while knowing they contradict reality.

How does one prove that this is a better model for considering the reality of ANE polytheistic religions? Nobody within the culture left for us a description of how they thought. The argument for my suggestion has the disadvantage that it must appeal to the lack of an overall system. Thus, it is an argument from silence and all such arguments are inherently weak. One part of the argument has to appeal to the lack of systematic attempts to root procedures in the performance of rituals and divination in an overall theological system.

Procedures

Most ritual texts are simply a description of procedures to be followed. As has been argued previously, the expectation of the ‘myth and ritual’ position that ritual should be connected to myth is not supported by the vast majority of cases (Weeks 2015). Yet there are examples where a procedure is given a mythic background. That background is sometimes an abbreviated creation account. On other occasions it is the Ea-Marduk (or Asalluḫi) connection (Geller 1985).⁴

The use of Ea to justify a procedure for healing does fit with his role as god of wisdom and magic and Asalluḫi/Marduk as his son. To that extent a system has been built. The various procedures prescribed by Ea, be they ritual, or be they ‘pharmaceutical’, are not justified in themselves. We could probably not expect that they would be. The word of the divine expert would be considered sufficient. It might be objected that texts, which connect a ritual to creation or to Ea, are attempts at systematic justification. I readily grant that, because my contention is not that Mesopotamians were incapable of systematisation. It is rather that we assume that the systematisation will be similar to ours, when there are appreciable differences. One of those crucial differences is the ‘vertical’ nature of systematisation in Mesopotamia, where the thing justified is taken back to an origin, a primordial physical origin or an authoritative origin such as Ea or another significant figure of old.

We would expect that ‘vertical’ systematisation would be accompanied by ‘horizontal’ systematisation. Since any authoritative human figure will be ultimately authenticated by means of connection to the divine, that horizontal systematisation must work by interconnecting the divine figures. Conceivably that could have been done since Ea is both the god who prescribes remedies for various maladies and a god involved in various creation accounts. Yet to my knowledge a connection, between the Ea of creation accounts and the Ea who provides ritual information, is not made explicit. Since systematisation is so natural to

us, we supply it implicitly as we study the religion. I am suggesting that the lack of Mesopotamian attempts to do so is a significant concept that we overlook.

Another way in which we would expect systematisation to work would be further ‘downstream’. The remedy prescribed by Ea, whether in its ritual aspect or its ‘pharmaceutical’ aspect, might interconnect with other remedies. To my knowledge this does not happen.⁵ Implicitly there might be similarities, but the overt exploration of those similarities is lacking. Thus, elements of a potential system may be there but they are not developed. Where a connection is made in a ritual to creation we see again the ‘vertical’ tendency. For example, the connected, non-branching, line leads from worm to Anu or from the complaint to Earth (Cunningham 1997: 106–107; and Lambert 2013: 399–400).

It may be objected that these features are to be expected in a situation where the absolute authority of the relevant divine figure is a crucial premise. I grant that. My point is that we should not read other aspects of the religious culture expecting them to have a systematic connection.

Divination is an even more perplexing phenomenon. Why does extispicy or astrology work? We may answer that the common belief was that the gods placed the signs there for humanity’s benefit. Some statements indicate that belief but the most explicit text traces the chain of authority from a divine authority to a human authority (Enmeduranki, king of Sippar) and then to those viewed as authorised by that early figure (Lambert 1967 and 1998). Once again, the vertical chain of authority is the significant feature. There are several interesting features of this story. The context is divine support of a particular king, probably Nebuchadnezzar I, by connecting him by descent to the earlier royal figure, who was the recipient of divine instruction. The original royal figure is also cited as the origin of the lines of practitioners of the mentioned divination techniques. We might expect a line of descent with royalty, but here divination has a parallel line from the one original figure. It seems certain, as indicated by the references to Elamite devastation and the raising up of a king to counter them, that the patron god of the contemporary king is Marduk and the legitimated king is Nebuchadnezzar but the original king is from Sippar and the gods enlightening him in divination technique are Šamaš and Adad. The choice of these gods is explicable in that Šamaš is god of Sippar and Šamaš and Adad are the gods regularly connected to extispicy. Unexplained is the fact that divination by oil on water takes precedence over extispicy, but that may reflect something of the times of either the original or the later royal figure. No need is felt to connect the legitimating god of the later king, namely Marduk, and the legitimating gods of the earlier king and the techniques he was taught, namely Šamaš and Adad. Thus, the vertical lines connecting the legitimaters and the legitimated do not need to relate to each other.

Extispicy forms a grey area because there are hints of a theological structure around it. Yet that structure is

enigmatic and not explicated. The fact that there is a prayer to the ‘gods of the night’ and also an involvement of Šamaš and Adad has led to speculation that there may be two somewhat different rituals. Of course, it may be that there were two different conceptions with no attempt to harmonise or combine them. The language speaks of the sign being the execution of a legal decision (Starr 1983: 58–59; and Goetze 1968: 25). In the Old Babylonian prayer of the divination priest it seems clear that the gods, who are called to be present, primarily Šamaš and Adad, come to the place of divination, there sit in judgement and make the decision (Goetze 1968: 26, ll. 36–39).⁶ Other gods are mentioned later in the prayer as seated with them (Goetze 1968: 27, ll. 60–65). Yet other texts seem to point to a decision made in the Underworld. Piotr Steinkeller (2005) argues for a decision made in the Underworld and brought up with Šamaš at dawn. That would point to a connected and systematic theological structure, but the role given to the Underworld gods in that conjectured scheme does not seem to fit the rest of what we know of Mesopotamian theology. What then is the role of Adad, given that he seems a relatively minor god in Mesopotamia?⁷ Does the morning wind of Adad bring the message from Šamaš to the sheep? I know of no text which says so. What role do the gods of the night play? The prayer of the diviner asks the stars to place reliable signs in the entrails of the sacrificed animal. If these star gods were seen as passing into the Underworld in their regular movement, perhaps they played a role in that assembly. Yet Old Babylonian prayers to the gods of the night give a very different impression (Dossin 1935; von Soden 1936; Oppenheim 1959; Horowitz and Wasserman 1996).⁸ There the major celestial gods, Šamaš, Šin, Adad and Ištar have gone off to sleep and will not be performing judicial functions. Hence the prayer for the placement of the significant signs in the sacrificed animal is directed to the star gods of night.

We may try to reconcile these different perspectives into a grand picture or suggest that different conceptions prevailed at different times (see Cryer 1994: 173–175; and Maul 2013). A simpler suggestion is that what was important was a connection to legitimating gods, and that different gods could play that role. That different gods were chosen at different times is possible but I suspect unprovable.

Even if some theological understanding of extispicy could be found, what of astrology and what of the huge collection of *Šumma ālu* and other omens?⁹ We will be swayed by our conceptions of fundamental human nature. Are humans intrinsically system builders? If so, the occasional instances of attempts to give theoretical foundations to procedures are explained. What has to be explained is the failure to carry them through. If we say we are not naturally system builders, then we moderns must be explained. The most likely explanations of blaming either Hebrew monotheism or Greek philosophy (or both) root our tendency back close to the period where

there seems to be a lack of system. Did some cultures systematise while others did not?

Such musings aside, I am suggesting that the data before us shows something unexpected: a failure to system build around the procedures of religious life. True, it was not totally absent, but it was far less attested than we might expect. If the suggested explanation comes from gaps in our sources, then what has to be explained is why we are so well supplied with evidence for procedures and so poorly provided with explanations and justifications of those procedures.

It might be suggested that there is nothing surprising in this set of circumstances. Since different city centres had different principal gods, it is not surprising that different circles of belief and practice existed.¹⁰ However the process was obviously not as simple as that. A concept of an assembly of great gods, each with particular roles, existed.¹¹ Techniques, such as specific forms of divination, spread through the whole land. The rise to prominence of Marduk can be correlated with political events, but most of these other widespread concepts and practices do not clearly correlate with known political events. It is plausible that what I am describing is connected to different regional centres.

However, there are unifying factors, which at this stage cannot be given political explanation. The crucial fact is that, whereas we would expect a tendency to systematise and to further connect, that there seems to be no deliberate intention to do so. They might have perceived more interconnection than they express, but the data before us is a relative lack of that, and we must take that data into account when we interpret the myths.

Myths

The argument in the case of myths has to take a different form that there are elements in the myths that fit no system that we can attribute to the time and therefore the best understanding of them is that they are literary embellishments of the story. That authors could do that to religious stories flows from the fact that there was no normative system of understanding. It is not my intention to consider every myth. My argument must be more illustrative than conclusive. The crucial test is not whether the elements are conceivable. An element that escapes the imaginative abilities of the readers is useless in any story. What is important is whether that element coheres with other things we know of their religious systems.

There are three incidents in the standard version of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* that serve as examples. The first is when Ninsun pleads with Šamaš for her son Gilgamesh, she recites his future destiny (Gilg. III: 102–106):¹²

ul itti(ki)-ka šamē(an)^e i-za-ʿaz ʿ-za
ul itti(ki) ^dšîn(30) ʿiz-za-zu ʿḥattaʿ²(nīg.gidru)
ul itti(ki) ^dea(idim) apsi(abzu) ʿi ʿ-me-eq
ul itti(ki) ^dir-ni-ni nišī(ùg)^{mes} šal-mat ʿqaqqadi(sag.
du) i ʿ-b[e-e]l



*Figure 1: The Gilgamesh Epic tablet IX.
From cdli.ucla.edu:
Courtesy Trustees of the
British Museum.*

*ul itti(ki) ^anin-giš-zi-da ina māt-lā-tāri(kur.nu. ʿgi.
aʿ) [uš-š]ab*

Will he not be present with you in the heavens?
Will he not share² the sceptre with Sîn?
Will he not be wise with Ea of the Apsu?
Will he not rule the black headed with Irnina?
Will he not live in the Land-of No-Return with
Ningišzida?

That Gilgameš was to play an Underworld role is well supported. However, his celestial role after death is not attested elsewhere to my knowledge.¹³ It does not fit what we otherwise know of Mesopotamian views of the afterlife. If this were Egypt, there would be no such problem, but even there the celestial and the chthonic are never reconciled (Jansen 1971: 406). What is this lack of reconciliation doing here? My question is not the role it plays in the plot, where we might conjecture that his posthumous celestial role, like his prominent role in the Underworld, is something of a compensation for him. My question rather concerns its coherence with usual Mesopotamian views. I suggest an element introduced for literary rather than religious reasons. An alternate explanation would be that some knowledge of Egyptian ideas has crept through. However, they are unrelated to existing Mesopotamian ideas and the lack of connection of celestial and chthonic afterlife in Egypt is an example of the situation I am attempting to highlight.

My second example occurs in Gilgameš' journey on the way to find Ūta-napišti. It has generally been assumed that the dark passage that Gilgameš goes through corresponds to something in the Babylonian understanding of cosmic geography (Horowitz 1998: 96–106). While we cannot expect that their image of the world was the same as our present one, we can ask whether what is present in the story accords with what seems to have been their understanding.

George (2003, I: 490–498) struggles with the problem of bringing together the details in the story and ancient conceptions of geography. Our expectation, which seems to be confirmed by the text, is that Gilgameš is travelling east.¹⁴ The text repeatedly says that he could not see what was behind him (Gilg. IX: 139–170). That seems to imply that something coming from behind him was a concern. Since he was traveling 'the path of the sun', the sun itself may have been that concern. This possibility seems strengthened by the fact that his emergence is stated to be 'before the sun' (Gilg. IX: 170).¹⁵ Our attention is also directed towards the sun by the fact that the mountain where he begins his journey has a connection to the sunrise (George 2003: 492–493).

The problem is that, if he is travelling towards the east he should meet the sun coming towards him and not behind him. There are further details that do not cohere. We might expect the 'path of the sun' to take him into the Underworld, but there is no suggestion of that here. Heimpel (1986: 141) rejects the explanation that, since Gilgameš travelled through darkness, he was going through a tunnel through which sun travelled at night. Conflicting with that explanation are statements elsewhere of the sun's role in the Underworld and the houses of various gods in the Underworld. Yet Heimpel has to conclude that he cannot make all the references to what the sun does at night come together. Wayne Horowitz (1998: 100) suggests that may be because Gilgameš has gone into the northern darkness where the sun does not shine. That does not fit with the fact that he was going east, or with the nature of the territory into which he emerged. Though there are fantastic elements of the world into which he emerged, such as gems growing on trees, there is the familiar Babylonian item of an alewife. Further on, it would seem, was Dilmun where Ūta-napišti dwelt. This further territory does not seem to fit an expectation that Gilgameš had reached the eastern edge of the world. There are various other possible solutions, such as suggesting that Gilgameš had actually

entered at the place of sunset and not sunrise. I suggest that the more obvious solution is that the story contains imaginative elements, which would not have bothered a Babylonian reader because he would not have expected that a story must correspond to the popular understanding of geographical reality. Accepting that we should not expect coherence of different pictures also relieves us of the problem of trying to make the different versions of the sun's evening activities be compatible.

My third example is the oft-discussed crux of Enkidu's problem with the foreshadowed marriage, which led to his confrontation with Gilgameš. The simple solution is that we have missed the joke that the text is developing at the expense of the country bumpkin, Enkidu. What Enkidu does not realise is that there were actually two weddings. One is between the goddess Išhara and Gilgameš. The other is the wedding of the mortal bride and groom. Whether this first wedding reflects actual practice at mortal weddings is a question. I know of no evidence it did.¹⁶ However we need not assume that there was such a normal practice. All we need to assume is that the literate population had enough knowledge of the fact that 'sacred marriages' once happened between a goddess and a king, to find it plausible that they were included by some means in a normal wedding ceremony. Knowledge that the original sacred marriage had fertility as its object would make it imaginable that it would be a suitable accompaniment of any wedding in the distant past.

We face the difficulty that part of the crucial text is missing in the late version of the epic. Hence, my explanation depends upon assuming that the text in the late version was similar to that in the Old Babylonian version (OB II: 159–163). Further such jokes depend upon ambiguity. The speech of the man hurrying to the wedding is so phrased that it can be interpreted two different ways. One way is how Enkidu obviously took it and how modern scholarship has interpreted it. That is that there was one female participant and two males. Yet the wording seems sufficiently vague to yield another meaning, if one understands the joke.

aš-ša-at ši-ma-tim i-ra-aḥ-ḥi'
šu-ú pa-na-nu-um-ma mu-tum wa-ar-ka-nu
i-na mi-il-ki ša ilim(dingir) qá-bi-ma
i-na bi-ti-iq a-bu-un-na-ti-šu ši-mas-súm
 He will have sexual relations with the ordained wife
 He first, the husband afterwards
 In the counsel of the god, it was pronounced
 At the cutting of his umbilical cord she was ordained for him.

It certainly can be read as Enkidu read it. Only with the knowledge of a different ceremony can the ambiguity be seen. Though the later version is also incomplete there is crucial information. In Gilg. II: 109 it states *ana Išhara mayyāl [...]*, 'For Išhara a bed...' (or the bed).

Even if the earlier text left original readers perplexed, we would expect that the subsequent mention of preparation for a 'sacred marriage' would have made them aware of what was actually to happen. Thus, the author has achieved a number of things. He has contrived a situation in which Gilgameš and Enkidu can meet in a trial of strength. He has enlivened the tale with a joke at the expense of the outsider Enkidu.¹⁷ The narrative, which earlier told of his unfamiliarity with bread, beer and clothes, prepares the reader for such ignorance. There may also be a deliberate contrast of his sexual athleticism with the prostitute and his prudery with respect to marriage. The assumption is made that the reader does not need the irrelevant detail of how Enkidu was eventually enlightened.

If the suggested explanation is granted, this is an excellent example of our mistaking a literary element for a reflection of practices of the time. I suggest it goes with our expectation that Gilgameš' journey through the dark reflects their geographical reality and that his post-mortem roles must correspond to their theological views. I suggest we are reading the text in terms of our expectations of a text and it does not fit. That does not mean that the text has no objective. The main message is very clear and it actually coheres with what we find in other stories. That message is that the human situation has unpleasant realities because of the decisions of the gods and we must make the best of it. Meaning and significance for kings is to be found in their building achievements. For ordinary people, it is to be found in the compensations of ordinary married and family life. Details used to make that into a story are not to be taken as though they are part of a modern systematic theology or a treatise on cosmology.

It may be objected that, despite my arguing there is no overall system, I have postulated an overarching understanding: our problems are due to the gods. I grant that we can read that out of a number of myths. The problem remains that taken by itself it is incompatible with the acts of religious practice that I have already mentioned: therapeutic and prophylactic ritual and divination. At this point it might make sense to compare the Mesopotamian situation to what we find in the Hebrew Bible where the system building tendencies of monotheism are at work. There legislation and ritual are enmeshed in the story. That is true both in the structural sense of the placement of legal and ritual elements within the story of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and in the thematic sense of presentation of these elements as what Israel owes to its saviour. Compare that with a literary theme just mentioned of the responsibility of the gods for humanity's misfortunes. It is not surprising that that literary theme is not employed to motivate religious ritual. It also agrees poorly with the divine benevolence shown in warning signs and therapeutic remedies.

Thus, I am not saying that there are no tendencies towards system. I am saying that those tendencies are partial and sometimes contradictory.

Enūma eliš has often been used as the key to Mesopotamian theology. That ignores the idiosyncratic parts of the story and in particular the role of Tiamat. Nevertheless, the story of itself has a fair amount of coherence. We may suspect that that is because of its political motivation: giving legitimacy to Babylon as the controlling city and an equivalent position to Marduk and his temple. Yet once again there are features in the story which cannot be reconciled with even Babylonian practice. In declaring the temple Esagil to be a place of rest for the gods and the place at which the crucial divine assembly that determines the fates will be held, it is said that the celestial gods will come down to it and the Underworld gods will come up to it (V: 125–128). This implies that the other gods have no earthly residences. We know that other views were held about the residences of the gods and at the New Year Festival the gods travelled from their resident city to Babylon.

Of course, it can be argued that gods are conceptualised as residing somehow in different places and an approach to divine residence existed, which is not contradicted by this statement. Nevertheless, the clear import and intent of the statement is to give Marduk, and consequently his temple, a unique position. Marduk is the god who has a primary earthly residence. One suspects that the story at other local sanctuaries was not in agreement with that.

I have mentioned the cosmological problems provided by the *Epic of Gilgameš*. Problems of a similar sort arise in *Enūma eliš*. Marduk's dividing of Tiamat's body is often cited as evidence of a simple physical model of the universe, but is that actually correct? By etymology and by the apparent connection of one half of her body with heavenly water, we know that she was seen as connected to water, specifically as the 'sea'. It should stand to reason that her other half would also be watery. If we suggest that the watery bottom half is ground water, what then of the Apsu? It certainly was held to continue in existence because it was the site of Ea's dwelling.

I will have more to say about this problem, but allow me to make a suggestion, which I think will be borne out in the subsequent discussion. In the same way that we have expected the ancient myths to reflect a rational theology, when that was not their purpose, we have expected them to be trying to construct a consistent physical and geometric model of the world. That is because we have been shaped by Euclid and Newton and we unconsciously think everybody is like us. May I suggest that they could talk about individual parts of the world without being bothered with the interconnection of those parts?

Reading the text that way removes other things that strike us as logical inconsistencies. I have suggested, as is common opinion, that Tiamat is sea water. However, the Tigris and Euphrates come out of her eyes. Did they not know that river water was fresh and seawater salty? Of course, the same problem arises if the upper part of Tiamat is now the source of rain. I suspect they knew, but did not see it as significant.

We do not know how the body of the Tiamat 'monster' was conceptualised. After death her body was split in two so that one half became the heavens (IV: 137–138). After order had been given to the heavens, the organisation of earth was described. Mountains were placed on her breasts (V: 57), the Tigris and Euphrates flowed out of her eyes (V: 59) and her tail seems to function as what holds the various parts of the universe together and prevents their drifting apart (V: 59; see also Horowitz 1998: 120). The other cosmic need, that of separation, was provided by her crotch holding up the heavens (V: 61). It seems from V: 62 that this is to be seen as Marduk arranging the half of her body that formed the Earth.¹⁸ Part of this fits with a physical creature, which has breasts, eyes, tail and crotch. That water comes out of her eyes fits with the fact that this creature is also a watery mass. Can all the details be integrated into the one imagined physical picture of this creature? With some difficulty it might be accomplished. Further details make one wonder if that was the intent of the narrator.

My thesis is not that it is impossible to see consistency within a particular story. It is rather that shaping a consistent story was not an overriding motivation. That applies particularly when we compare one story or picture with another. Wayne Horowitz (1998: 113) has shown that many aspects of the cosmology of *Enūma eliš* can be inter-related. There is a number of cosmic regions named and it would seem that several names are used for the one region or that a name is given to part of a larger region, without specification of the precise part of the region. On that basis Ašrata is connected to Anu's domain, the heavens; Ešgalla is a name for Ea's Apsu and the remaining term, Ešarra, must refer to the gap between these two, which was assigned to Enlil. I leave the exact area somewhat vague because it seems uncertain if the reference is to the Earth's surface, or above it or both of these.

The complicating element is that Ešarra was also a temple name (George 1993: 145). Therefore, in any given context are we to see a cosmic region, or a temple or was the attempt being made to blur or combine the two possibilities? That question becomes acute when we turn to the description of how the gods built the temple Esagil for Marduk: VI 61–66:

*šá-ni-tu šattu(mu.an.na) ina ka-šá-di
šá é-sag-il mé-eḫ-ret apsi(abzu) ul-lu-u re-ši-šú
ib-nu-ú-ma ziq-qur-rat apsi(abzu) e-li-te
a-na ^da-nim ^den-lil ^dé-a u šá-a-šú
ina tar-ba-a-ti ma-ḫar-šú-nu ú-ši-ba-am-ma
šur-šiš é-šár-ra i-na-aṭ-ṭa-lu qar-na-a-šú*

When the second year came

They raised the head of Esagil, the equivalent of the Apsu.

They built the high temple tower of the Apsu

For Anu, Enlil, Ea and [?] they established a dwelling



Figure 2: Tablet no. III from the *Enūma eliš* myth.
 Photo: From cdli.ucla.edu: Courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum

In magnificence it sat before them

Its horns looked towards the base of Ešarra (Or
 ‘They looked from the base of Ešarra to its horns’).

The conceptual framework behind the words and the translation are difficult. We are not helped by differences as to the reading of the cuneiform text. Any translation must be in accord with the intent of the text to exalt Marduk and to place him above other gods. In VI: 62 Marduk’s temple, Esagil, is declared the ‘equivalent’ or ‘counterpart’ (*mehertu*) of the Apsu. Immediately the question arises of whether the Apsu is here conceptualised as the cosmic realm or as the temple (Eabzu), which is the domain of Ea, or indeed, whether we are to make a distinction between those two notions. In VI: 71, after Apsu had been killed, Ea established his dwelling upon Apsu. That seems to imply a separation between the temple/dwelling of Ea and the cosmic domain, Apsu. However, in I: 81 Marduk was born in Apsu. In IV: 142

the Apsu is called Ea’s dwelling. It seems that an effective equation is being made between the god’s dwelling place and the cosmic domain. To complicate matters the god’s dwelling place is also his temple.

In VI: 62 Esagil is the equivalent of the Apsu and the next line refers to the temple tower of the Apsu. Since the context is the building of Marduk’s temple, not Ea’s temple, we must assume that a step has been made from calling Esagil the ‘equivalent of the Apsu’ to calling it the Apsu. VI: 64 states that a dwelling has been made for, at least, the former great gods Anu, Enlil and Ea. If Marduk’s temple can be called the Apsu, then it is logical that the former dweller in the Apsu, Ea, will now find his abode in Marduk’s temple. Of course, the same will apply to other great gods. Marduk and his temple have taken over their former territory.¹⁹

There is a textual problem in VI: 64. Lambert (2013: 113) and Talon (2005: 24) place, after the naming of the three great gods, Anu, Enlil and Ea, a *šāsu* ‘him’, taken to be a reference to Marduk. Horowitz (1998: 123) has an unexplained and untranslated alternative.²⁰ The difference is important because the verb in VI: 65 is singular, whereas the verbs in the surrounding lines are plural referring to the divine workmen. Who could be the subject of the singular verb? If Marduk is mentioned in the previous line, then he is a possibility. It seems to me that that reading is against the logic of the text. The point is to exalt Marduk over the other gods. It is unlikely that he would appear as the last item in a list of formerly great gods now reduced to guests of Marduk.

Is there an alternate subject? Since the temple itself is the broader subject it follows that the temple might be the subject. However, it must be admitted that impersonal subjects are not common with (*w*)*ašābu* (for examples see CAD A/II: 403–404).

There are also variant readings in VI: 66 between *inaṭṭalū* and *inaṭṭalā*. W. von Soden (1941:4) prefers the latter and claims it makes the horns the subject of the verb translating, ‘nach den Fundamenten von Ešarra ‘schauen’ seine Hörner: his horns ‘look’ for the foundations of Ešarra’. Horowitz (1998: 123) transliterates *inaṭṭalū* but appears to think Marduk is the subject. His translation of the finite verb by an English gerund may indicate his struggle with the grammar: ‘Gazing towards to (sic) roots of Ešarra at its (Esagil’s) horns.’ Lambert (2013: 115) also transliterates *inaṭṭalū* and his struggle with the line force him to lean towards paraphrase: ‘surveying its horns, which were level with the base of Ešarra.’ He resolves the problem by saying that Marduk is the subject, pictured as looking up to the horns, placed on top of the temple, and seeing them as level with the base of Ešarra, which is the lower heavens (Lambert 2013: 479). The line is admittedly difficult but there are two problems with this translation: the verb is plural and the *-iš* adverbial ending on *šuršiš* does not favour a construct formation with Ešarra, which seems to lie behind Lambert’s rendering. I will suggest

below that an adverbial substitute for a prepositional phrase is more likely.

W. Moran (1959) had earlier applied himself to the problem of these lines. He adopted Von Soden's transliteration and translation of VI: 66.²¹ However he interpreted Ešarra as Enlil's temple in Nippur. Thus, the line states that the horns of Marduk's ziqqurat were level with the base of Ešarra at Nippur, meaning 'the summit of the ziqqurat plunges into Ešarra, which thus becomes an extension of Marduk's ziqqurat and by implication the Ešarra of Nippur, in its existence and inner reality, is transplanted like the Apsu of Eridu, to Babylon.'

What then is the meaning of Ešarra in this context? A prior question may be the location of Ešarra as cosmic domain. If Marduk, or somebody else, is at the base of the temple and looking up towards the temple summit, and seeing that summit as being in some relationship to the cosmic domain, Ešarra, then Ešarra is far above the level of the Earth's surface. That implication of the imagined picture would seem to influence Lambert's understanding of Ešarra as the lower heavens. I suggest that, aside from this interpretation of a difficult line, we have no basis for making the cosmic Ešarra anything but the whole space between the heavens and the Apsu (see Horowitz 1998: 113). That makes some of the suggested interpretations of VI: 66 problematic.

Whatever the problems, the advantage of Moran's approach was the attempt to put the passage in the context of the obvious intention of promoting Marduk at the expense of the previous great gods. The equation of Marduk's temple with the Apsu and, by implication, the relocation of Ea to Esagil are in accord with that intention. Let us take that a step further. Esagil must also take over the role of Enlil's temple. I suggest that is what VI: 66 is about. Ešarra in that context is Marduk's temple. If we may take the crucial verb as a masculine plural, its subject is the same as the subject of the plural verbs in the previous lines: the divine workforce. Making sense of that means taking the previous line, as suggested above, as about the temple itself. VI: 66 is the compliment, reverting to the gods standing in awe of the height of the majestic building,

In magnificence it sat before them From/at the foundation of Ešarra they were gazing at its horns.

I dare to suggest that we have been misled by trying to reconstruct the Babylonians' physical picture of the universe, because that is our natural picture, when they were more concerned with a theological picture, even if it was hard to conceptualise physically. Was it only the temples of Enlil and Ea that are absorbed into Esagil, along with the divine occupants? Could it be that the cosmic domains were also absorbed? What that meant for them I do not know, but it would fit with picturing the god as located in his temple and also in a specified region of the universe. Possibly they were using a conceptual model to solve a practical problem. If a god dwelt in a

part of the physical universe, how was it possible to have access to that god? The answer was through his temple. The implication is that the temple and the cosmic domain are the same. However, that fits no possible physical picture. We assume they must be striving for a physical picture because that is what we do. Then we find parts of the texts inexplicable. Yet I suspect that just as the text could imply that all gods beside Marduk were located in heaven or the Apsu, while their earthly temples continued to be inhabited, Esagil's incorporation of the temples of the great gods did not mean that the former temples ceased to have physical existence or cult. Parallel realities existed for the Babylonians.²²

Problematic Systematisations

It may be objected that I have ignored texts, which have a clear purpose of systematisation, even if the result may seem rather bizarre to us. A number of such texts have been treated by A. Livingstone (1986 and 1989).

This material is quite diverse but in that diversity is material that forces the addition of nuances to my thesis. It includes material, which places the question in Assyrian rather than Babylonian perspective, namely the *Marduk Ordeal* text (von Soden 1955; Livingstone 1989: 82–91; and Vanstiphout 2005; cf. Frymer-Kensky 1983). When we look at Babylonian versions of the gods in conflict, such as in the Ninurta stories (Annus 2002) and *Enūma eliš*, one of the interesting features is that the antagonists of the major gods fall into a broader category. The description 'Monsters' rather than gods would apply to many of them and those treated as gods are not major gods. I suspect this reflects the situation where different city-states had different major gods, and there was a reluctance to picture a major god as an enemy.²³ The same applies to the Assyrian royal inscriptions where there is avoidance of depicting the god of an enemy as the supporter of the enemy and thus an enemy of the Assyrians. However, there were some texts that show some explored a different route. On the most plausible interpretation, the *Marduk Ordeal* text sees not a real conflict between Aššur and Marduk, but a need to deal with Marduk as a criminal. Whereas other texts in this group take the form of cult commentary and 'explain' certain cult actions and features, the *Marduk Ordeal* expands slightly so as to make the wrong of Marduk clearer. We see in *Enūma eliš* the placing of Marduk over the previous great gods. In the *Marduk Ordeal* we have the placing of Aššur over Marduk. In a certain sense this is systematisation, but it is significant that it is in response to political necessities.

That raises the question of the ancient systematization in which the great gods were organized into a pantheon with Anu and Enlil in leadership positions. The intriguing item in this picture is the role of Nippur as Enlil's city. Uruk, Anu's city, had a long and obvious prominent position, not so Nippur. Canberra, as Australia's capital, was chosen in order to avoid the controversy and jealousy that would have resulted from giving the priority to an already exist-

ing major city. Was Nippur chosen for a similar reason but with the consequence that the overwhelming prominence of Uruk meant that its god could not be simply made subservient to Enlil?²⁴

In earlier texts there are clear indications of the precedence of various combinations of the great three, Enlil, Anu and Ea, over the other great gods. However, we have no extant account of the reason for this. Marduk's supremacy and Aššur's supremacy are explicated in stories. Does the change reflect the age of imperialism, when hegemony could not be assumed but must be won? Even if that were so, the significant thing was that the gods, who were now subordinated, whether Enlil, Anu and Ea to Marduk, or Marduk to Aššur, were not destroyed. They were subservient, but active.

Some enigmatic texts go further. The defeated gods, including formerly great ones, were sent to the Underworld. Is this a progression to reflect a move assertive imperialism? One might compare the contrast between making a defeated royal family into vassals and killing defeated royals. Yet the crucial thing is that the 'killing' was purely literary. The cults of these gods survived and even flourished. One might compare the earlier situation where the myths blamed the gods for human woes but ritual procedures thankfully invoked the techniques they bestowed.

It needs to be made clear that in depicting these texts as a step further I am not postulating a chronological progression. The 'advance' is conceptual. They do this by utilising the notion of superseded gods, 'the dead gods', who were relegated to the Underworld. Once again major gods are brought into association. In *Enūma eliš*, Marduk succeeds the older generation of great gods by being superior to them. In a cult commentary (K 3476) in this group of texts, Marduk and Nabû are depicted as destroying the older great gods and assigning them to the Underworld (Livingstone 1986: 120–125, 142–145; and 1989: 92–95). Thus, what could be done to primordial beings, which were seen as so primordial that they were scarcely divine, is here being done to those who were once the great gods. We might suggest that *Enūma eliš* is a 'polite' version of the triumph of Marduk over the former great gods. Those former ruling gods are placed in a subservient position but not destroyed. In these other texts the triumph of Marduk is depicted more violently. If the generation of Anu and Enlil has been usurped by the later god, Marduk, it is logical that divine figures prior to the Anu-Enlil layer must also go. Hence, we find Emešarra amongst the victims (Livingstone 1989: 101).²⁵

Certainly there is something systematic in the way that the victory of Babylon and hence Marduk had impacted upon religious speculation, just as there is in the counter position from Assyria. However, the significant thing is that this was driven by politics. When the political winds shifted the religious scene changed. Later Assyrian kings endorsed Marduk and Anu returned as the major god of

Uruk, when Babylon lost political power (Beaulieu 1992: 54–57). It looks as though systemisation in Mesopotamian religion was not a natural part of religious thinking, but rather was driven by political considerations.

Other works take the speculation in a different direction. Early theogonies tend to derive the gods from earlier primordial material, which was not itself divine. These later works equate gods or parts of gods with other aspects of the world (Livingstone 1986: 71–112). Certainly, this is system, but it is not the personalising systematics that would relate the lives and connections of the gods to each other or to religious procedures. It is more an abstract and depersonalising systematics.

Thus, I would affirm that the situation was undoubtedly complex. There were drives to connect things and to establish in some respects interconnections between gods or parts of religious life. Nevertheless I contend that my generalisation is valid. Circles of belief and practice were left with little, if any, attempt to connect them.

Noel K. Weeks

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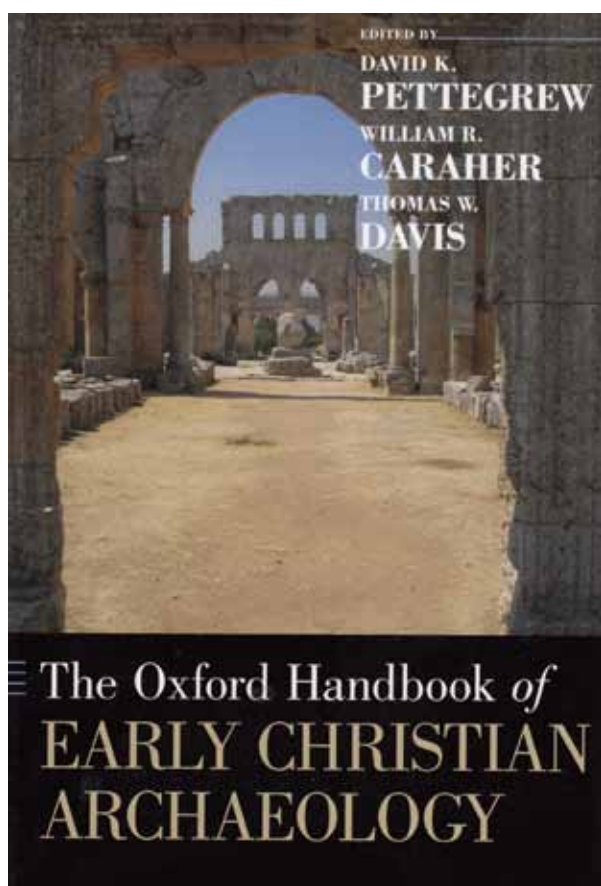
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Endnotes

- 1 Note the contrast of Greece and Mesopotamia in Veldhuis 1998: 83.
- 2 A good example is Bottéro 1992, but he has to admit that the various versions cannot be reconciled. Schneider 2011 is similar, but tends to use postulates of developmental change to integrate the various conceptions.
- 3 For example, *Enūma eliš* is combined with the *Epic of Gilgameš* in Læssøe 1971: 497–525.
- 4 Other gods can play the role of divine informants (Cunningham 1997: 24 and 31).
- 5 Every generalization in this complex area has potential exceptions. Different techniques of divination may have been used to confirm each other. For interrelations of astrology and extispicy see Reiner 1985: 591. For extispicy as a check on other messages or signs at Mari see Durand 1988.
- 6 A structurally similar call to gods to judge occurs in invocations against witchcraft (Abusch 1987: x). One wonders if similar understandings of divine activity underlie various procedures. What seems lacking is the conscious explication of these tendencies. Abusch assumes the material was originally coherent and explains apparent lack of coherence as due to a complex history of combination and development of the rituals. Was this another area where procedures with different conceptual

- frameworks were brought together without a felt need to systematize?
- 7 Attestations of Šamaš and Adad collected by Lambert (2007) point to a tendency to use them together in judicial and oath contexts. Given that the decision in extispicy is couched in judicial terms, this is a possible explanation of the appearance of these gods in connection with omens thus conceptualized. However it drives the question one stage further back. Šamaš' judicial connections are well known. It still leaves Adad unexplained. Steinkeller (2005: 43–45) suggests that Adad functions as the wind that carries various things including human souls, dreams and messages. He may also be seen as the wind that fans into flame the divine luminaries. Though the logic is not, to our knowledge, spelt out, there is a possible parallel with the conceptualization of dreams. The dream god Zaḳīqu was seen as part of the entourage of Šamaš and the god's name itself had a meaning of 'breeze' (Oppenheim 1956: 232–236). Perhaps there were similarities in the conceptions of the transmission of omen decisions and the transmission of dreams, see Koch-Westenholz 2002: 144. Daniel Schwemer (2001: 222–225 and 2007: 149–150) has added that Adad became a god of divination due to his celestial nature and the fact that his manifestations in storms and lightening are themselves ominous signs.
 - 8 Since gods could be conceived of as having a stellar form, various gods could be included e.g. Mayer 2005.
 - 9 Just as with extispicy there is evidence of general statements giving credit to the gods (Koch-Westenholz, 1995: 48 and 77). The great astrological series *Enūma Anu Enlil* is ascribed to Ea (along with other omen series and ritual texts) in a literary catalogue, K 2248, ll. 1–5 (Lambert 1962: 64). However, it is also ascribed to Šamaš in the text about Emeduranki (Lambert 1967 and 1998).
 - 10 For differences between rites of release through incantations conceived as a legal acquittal and involving Utu, as contrasted with release through washing and involving Enki, Nanše and Ningirim see Cunningham 1997: 50–55, 161.
 - 11 The god lists present an interesting picture. There was the attempt to collect large numbers of gods together, but they are primarily organised in households. The initial order of the lists reflects the common understanding that there is a hierarchy among the gods. What tends to be lacking is the attempt to link one god family to another (Litke 1998).
 - 12 I have accepted George's (2003 I, 580) restorations, but even without them enough of the text is preserved to make my point. The presence of the verb *izuzzu* in ll. 102 and 103 creates difficulties for translation. Yet it seems clear that both are giving Gilgameš a celestial location.
 - 13 See George 2003, II: 814. There is a possible parallel of gods usually resident in the Underworld, who appear in a heavenly context, in the presence of Dumuzi and Gizzida at Anu's court in the Adapa story. Yet this just adds another anomaly. Does the violation of the expected in this detail somehow combine with the unexpected failure of the wisdom of Ea? If so, is the intent to show that Ea is not always the helper of mortals and thus to confirm the negative portrayal of gods in literary texts? For other attempts to interpret this story see Izre'el 1998 and 2001; Jacobsen 1930; Komorócky 1964: 31–37; Kienast 1973; Bing 1984 and 1986; Foster 1974; Buccellati 1973; Burrows 1928. For other evidence of a heavenly role for Dumuzi see Foxvog 1993; Krebernik 2003: 153–156. Even if a heavenly form of Dumuzi and/or Gilgameš is to be expected because all gods have an astral form or gods have multiple places of origin, and therefore of conceptualization, there seems to be a lack of attempts to interconnect the various forms.
 - 14 The state of the text does not help. The crucial textual evidence is a broken sign yielding the meaning 'sunrise', Gilg. IX: 39 *a-š[e-e^dšamši(utu)^š]*. However Gilg. I: 40 confirms that his journey was to the east. For confirmation from other versions of the epic see George 2003, I: 495–496.
 - 15 George (2003, I: 495, n. 177), stresses that the preposition *lām*, 'before,' in this context is an adverb of time and not place, an opinion that is confirmed by the examples in CAD.
 - 16 I thank Dr Louise Pryke for confirming my impression. For a survey of the evidence of 'Sacred Marriage' see Cooper 1993.
 - 17 For the problems of discerning humour in ancient Mesopotamian texts see Foster 1974b.
 - 18 Labat (1959: 208) claimed that the poem did not refer to the creation of the earth. It would seem that he was partly influenced by trying to reconcile this version with another Mesopotamian account, where Marduk creates the Earth by piling dirt on a raft (see *The Founding of Eridu*, ll. 17–18, in Lambert 2013: 372). I suggest that attempts to harmonize different stories are futile.
 - 19 For a history of Eridu and Nippur and their replacement by Babylon see George 1997; and Seri 2012: 14 and 17.
 - 20 It seems from her translation that Dalley (1989) also had a different text.
 - 21 Note that he has a significantly different reading of VI: 64: *ana Marduk Enlil Ea bītašu ukinnū šubta*. The differences in understanding that arise from that are not my concern here.
 - 22 Numerous examples of virtual equations of cities, temples and cosmic regions appear in other texts, particularly in the lists that combine topography and theology: see George 1992: 252–253, 296–297, 301. An unsolved puzzle is the exact nuance of *miḫirtu/meḫertu* in the contexts where Marduk's temple is declared to be the *miḫirtu* of the temple/cosmic region of a great god. In commercial contexts the word has the sense of an equivalent value (CAD M/II: 51). If we translate 'equivalent', then the sense seems to be that it duplicates the other region/structure. Yet one suspects that in some contexts more is intended.
 - 23 This is a general characteristic of ANE polytheistic states. The modern popular accounts, which depict inter-state conflict in the ANE as a conflict of gods, just because Homer's *Iliad* does, are a nuisance.
 - 24 For a compilation of relevant data pertaining to Nippur and Enlil see Sallaberger 1997; and Selz 1992.
 - 25 For an exploration into the murky world of the earliest figures see Wiggermann 1992.

Reviews



David K. Pettegrew, William R. Caraher and Thomas W. Davis eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Archaeology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, ISBN9780199369041, pp 707+xv, illus., maps, plans, USD 154.00.

Reviewed by Christopher J. Davey

This handbook represents a watershed in the study of the archaeology of the first seven centuries of Christianity. A previous book by W.H.C. Frend, *The Archaeology of Early Christianity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1996) devoted less than ten pages to this period. *The Handbook* reviews the history of archaeological research into Christianity, discusses methodological developments and surveys the current knowledge of early Christian archaeology. This volume aims to provide 'up-to-date syntheses and new interpretations of evidence from more than two centuries of archaeological investigations' (p. 2).

The book contains thirty-four contributions arranged in a form of three-dimensional matrix: one axis dealing with *Sacred space and mortuary contexts*, such as catacombs, churches, monasteries, *martyria*, baptistries and baths: the second axis considers *Art and Artefacts*, including

wall paintings, icons, mosaics, pottery, lamps, statues and amulets: while the third is devoted to regions stretching from Ireland and the Iberian peninsula in the west to Iran in the east and from Britain in the north to north Africa and Egypt. The spread of Christianity to China and India is recognised but no archaeology is described, and Ethiopia is not considered. Numismatics, which commanded a section in C.M. Kaufmann, *Handbuch der christlichen Archäologie*, (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1922), does not have its own chapter and is instead discussed in the chapters of the relevant region.

The contributing scholars hold university positions in Europe and the United States, except for one Israeli, one American Seminarian and one archaeological scientist attached to an American overseas archaeological school. Only three hold chairs that are concerned with Christian history or archaeology, demonstrating that this is not generally considered an important aspect of archaeology, in the English-speaking academic world at least. We are assured that the contributors are either field archaeologists or familiar with field techniques and archaeological methods and evidence (p. 9). Traditional church historians are not represented amongst the authors.

The first chapter deals with the history of inquiry, methods and current status, and addresses most issues that early Christian archaeology brings to mind,

Our goal here is to provide a more focused overview of a field that developed quite differently in largely Protestant English-speaking countries than it did in Catholic and Orthodox continental Europe. Originally serving to reinforce or critique the narrative accounts of New Testament Studies and ecclesiastical history, the field has increasingly become independent of text-based approaches as archaeological investigations have become more sophisticated and varied (p. 3).

The study of the early church has generally focussed on the writings of church officials and theologians. This volume by contrast will assist those the studying the lives of non-elite early Christians. It is argued that a distinctly Christian material culture is evident by the third century when there were also some buildings that appear to be devoted the Christian liturgical practice (p. 14). Although not the focus of this volume, pagan culture, politics, socio-economics may be equally relevant to the study of early Christian practice because of the context they provide. We are assured that 'archaeologists of early Christianity have only begun to explore the potential of understanding the development of Christian culture amid this dense web' of cultural relations (p. 22).

A review of all thirty-four chapters is not realistic, so I will focus on a sample of three. Charles Stewart's entry on *Churches* begins with synagogues as the archetypal religious meeting place; temples by comparison are considered to be places only entered by priests and serve as backdrops for non-Christian religious rituals. The early

structures for Christian meetings are discussed and the appropriateness of the basilica form for Christian gatherings is explained. These churches served Christians' daily needs and accommodated decoration, rituals and liturgy encoding didactic and narrative content. Many such buildings had unadorned facades and were entered through unprepossessing doorways. Stewart discusses the socio-economic role of churches and the techniques used for recording the architecture and decoration of Medieval churches. He does not consider the theological and liturgical principles behind early church design, building orientation, urban profiles or water management practices. Typologies of church design, such as proposed by S. Balderstone, *Early Church Architectural Forms: A Theologically Contextual Typology for the Eastern Churches of the 4th-6th Centuries* (Melbourne: Australian Institute of Archaeology, 2007), are not discussed.

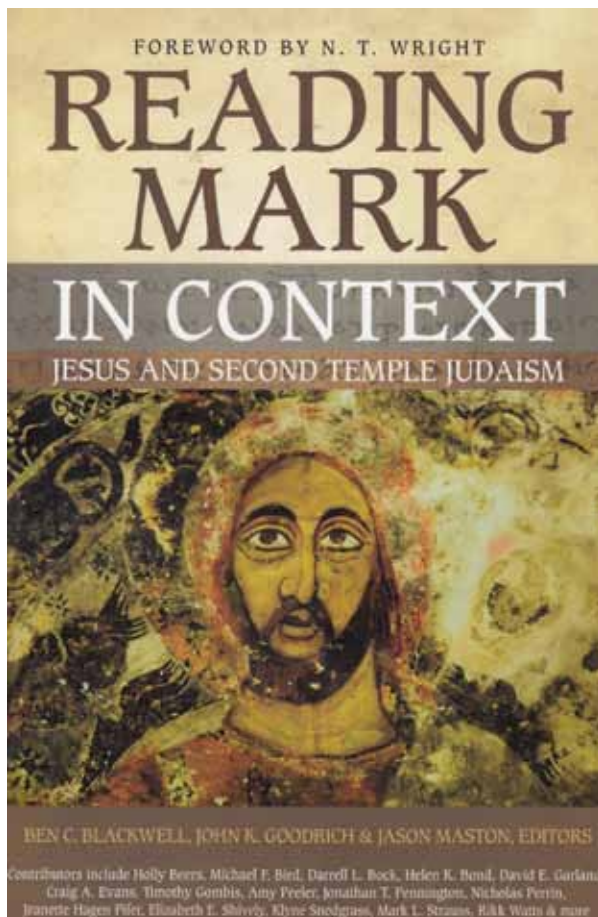
The chapter on *Lamps* by Maria Parani is broad and deals with objects made from clay, metal and glass used to light both private and public places. 'Lamps ... were ubiquitous and often employed in intimate and private circumstances ... and they lent themselves to adornment with images that were expressive of personal beliefs and concerns' (p. 313). Christian clay lamp content is categorised and the characteristics of some regional production workshops mentioned. Metal lamps by comparison are not so common and come mainly from Italy after the third century; they are given significantly more space than clay lamps. The discussion about usage is general and notes that 'there have been no contextual studies of the distribution of lamps with Christian symbolism within excavated houses' (p. 327). There is clearly a need for more research on this subject.

Joan Taylor, Professor of Christian Origins and Second Temple Judaism, King's College London, contributed the chapter on *Christian Archaeology in Palestine*. She notes that in the past there was a focus on traditional holy places officially under the care of church authorities, but that now there is significantly more archaeological data coming from non-ecclesiastical archaeological sources. She discusses the third century Megiddo/Legio church supporting the proposal that the mosaic indicates that the room was used for gender segregated Eucharist meals. Her discussion of the archaeology of the Constantinian church building program, which followed the visit of his mother to Palestine, leads to the suggestion that the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem may retain more of its original superstructure than generally thought. Taylor lists later churches discovered elsewhere in Palestine, and in her discussion of material culture notes a change in pottery wares after the arrival of Christianity.

The chapters are all well documented giving readers a good basis from which to pursue further research. There is an adequate number of illustrations and a useful index. As may be deduced from my comments the volume does not present neatly packaged chapters, instead it portrays archaeological evidence as it now is.

Those studying early Christianity in almost any region or in relation to any material culture will find this handbook a good place to start. Time will tell if the expectation that 'the ever-growing sophistication of scientific approaches, and especially dating techniques, will both widen the gap between text-based and material approaches to the study of ancient religion and encourage new opportunities to bring scholars of different backgrounds and disciplines into productive conversation' (p. 3).

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Ben C Blackwell, John K Goodrich, Jason Maston eds, *Reading Mark in Context: Jesus and Second Temple Judaism*, Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2018; ISBN 978-0-310-534457, pp 286, Paperback, A\$29.99.

Reviewed by Christopher J Davey

This is one volume in a developing series of commentaries on New Testament books focusing on their original literary and philosophical environments. Curiously, the Introduction positions the mission of the book in the context of the ‘historical’ quest for the historical Jesus (p. 28). This quest was based on the premise that the Gospels do not accurately represent Jesus and that it is necessary to peel away the untrustworthy layers, like peeling an onion, to get to the core, the true historical Jesus. The inevitable result of this process was a mono-dimensional figure of Jesus constructed in the image of the researcher.

In practice this book does not share that journey. Instead, it advocates that ‘To interpret the Gospels wisely, ... students must not *ignore* Second Temple Jewish literature but *engage* it with frequency, precision, and a willingness to acknowledge theological continuity *and* discontinuity.’ (p. 32) In other words it broadens the evidential field rather

than diminishing it. It has not been common for students to engage with Intertestamental literature. While I was at the University of Cambridge only one person sat the Intertestamental literature exam, which as a matter of interest was combined with Biblical Archaeology. With the growth of Dead Sea Scroll research that situation is changing, however ‘there exist virtually no nontechnical resources for beginning and intermediate students to assist them in seeing firsthand how Jesus is similar to and yet different from his Jewish contemporaries.’ (p. 32) This book aims to start filling that void.

After discussing the purpose of the book, the Introduction provides a brief overview of Intertestamental history and literature mentioning the Septuagint, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Philo, Josephus and Dead Sea Scrolls, and the genres they contain including history, tales, rewritten scripture, apocalypse, poetry and wisdom literature.

The remainder of book ‘examines select passages in Second Temple Jewish literature in order to illuminate the context of Jesus’s actions and the nuances of his teaching’ (p. 32) in thirty essays written by thirty scholars covering the entire Gospel of Mark. Each essay has an introduction, an analysis of one germane section of Intertestamental literature, an exegesis of a section of Mark and resources for further study. Of the thirty scholars, eight completed doctoral studies at the University of Durham and three at the University of St Andrews. N.T. Wright, who wrote the Foreword, was the Bishop of Durham from 2003 to 2010 and then became Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St Mary’s College in the University of St Andrews. The contributors now work in New Testament teaching positions in the United Kingdom, USA, Denmark, Norway, Canada and Australia. Three have positions at the Houston Baptist University.

The issue of continuity and discontinuity is broached in the opening statement of Mark’s gospel where John the Baptist is described to be fulfilling the expectation of the prophet Isaiah to be a voice in the desert calling for the preparation of the way of the Lord (Mark 1:3). This is discussed in the first chapter, which draws on the Rule of the Community, Dead Sea scroll IQS, as well as Old Testament parallel references, to contrast and compare the different expectations. The idea of a second exodus has often presupposed an involvement of all Israel, but the Rule of the Community does not have such an assumption. It treats the expectation as a ‘spiritual metaphor’ where the ‘men of the community’ would form a righteous wilderness society that would be ready for the return of the Lord (p. 43) because of their obedience to the Torah, calendar observance and ritual purity. Mark also overlooks physical Israel and describes a community founded on its ‘response to the Spirit-empowered Jesus around whom Israel is reconstituted’. (p. 46)

This nuanced discussion continues in the following chapters: Mark’s use of the title ‘Son of Man’ is compared with

Daniel and the Parables of Enoch; Josephus' description of the Pharisees is contrasted to that found in Mark; the genre of apocalyptic in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs leads to the view that 'Mark is a subgenre of Greco-Roman biography that uses themes of the Jewish apocalypse to portray Jesus's ministry as a cosmic conflict' (p. 62); the anti-gentile perspective of the Book of Jubilees is thought to be contradictory to Mark; while the Damascus Document, with its description of the Teacher of Righteousness, is counterpoint; the description of Elijah in Sirach illustrates popular belief about him and gives additional meaning to the Transfiguration; faith and belief are discussed in the light of the nationalistic hope in Tobit; Jesus' egalitarian idea of community is contrasted with the hierarchy of Qumran as defined by the Rule of the Community; the question about divorce (Mark 10:2) is explained in the context of contemporary debates found in Mishnah Gittin; Jesus' attitude to wealth may be judged less extreme than that advocated by the Eschatological Admonition (1 Enoch 108); Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was clearly subversive when compared to the entry of Simon Maccabaeus described in 1 Maccabees; Jesus' cleansing of the temple resonates with the judgement envisaged in the Psalms of Solomon, but Jesus' messianic role goes far beyond that envisaged by the psalmist; the Animal Apocalypse of Enoch provides context for the parable of the wicked tenant farmers; the apocalyptic world view and symbolism in the Parables of Enoch parallels the language used by Jesus in the Olivet Discourse; the Mishnah Pesahim's description of the Passover enables Jesus' changes to be identified; the Babylonian Talmud provides evidence that Jewish people may have prayed to God as 'father' although the Aramaic *abba* is less certain; and finally, the procedure of the crucifixion as described by Mark is plausible when considered in the light of the Dead Sea Scroll *11QTempte^a*, Philo and Josephus. The breadth of discussion and the different perspectives adopted by the writers is refreshing and their respect for the ancient authors adds gravitas and realism.

A review such as this cannot reasonably discuss the viewpoints presented throughout and to do so would be unfair to the contributors, who have had to be brief. In most instances, authors have listed more extensive treatment of the subject, often by themselves, as further reading. Mark's major themes are examined, and most Intertestamental books are alluded to at some point. There is not enough room in the book for the essays to discuss matters of authenticity and background details of the literature; those wanting to do so can study the references listed as secondary literature. The book has a glossary, the terms of which are in bold throughout the book, a passage index and a subject index.

The references inside the front cover by significant New Testament scholars offer effusive praise for the book because of its 'brilliant design', readability, conciseness and respect for the primary texts, amongst other qualities. Anyone who is willing to put aside an aversion to the

odd names of much Intertestamental literature that often invoke long dead Old Testament entities, will find this book fascinating. The discussion focusses on meaning and philosophy and not on authenticity, on hermeneutics rather than apologetics. For example, Chapter 28 about Jesus' trial draws attention to the character of Pilate as described by Philo of Alexandria as a means to understand the nature and outcome of the proceedings, not the validity of the account itself.

The premise of this book may be queried because some of the quoted extra-biblical literature was probably written later than Mark and was influenced by Christian traditions. Indeed, the Testament of Solomon, as we have it, (Chapter 6) clearly reflects Jesus' visit to the region of the Gerasenes (Mark 25:1-20) and the Mishnah (Chapter 7) was arranged in the third century AD. However, these books are assumed to convey long running Jewish traditions that were relevant to the earlier philosophical environment of Jesus' ministry.

In the Foreword, N.T. Wright states 'what matters is *to learn to think like a first-century Jew*' (p. 13, emphasis in the original). This does seem to be going too far. While it is helpful to *understand* the way first-century Jews thought because they were Jesus' audience, the fact is that comparatively few of them became Christian and the narrative in the Acts reveals that those who did, often did not immediately appreciate the universality of Jesus' teaching. It was non-Jews who read Mark's Gospel in its original Greek and who had not been persuaded by Jewish ideas, that became the greater portion of the early Christian community. Clearly the exploration of first-century Jewish philosophy helps define and comprehend the theology and rationality of Mark, and how Jesus interacted with the ideas and philosophies of his time. Jesus' way of dealing with contemporary issues may still help his followers frame Christian perspectives in the context of their own time. But experience unfortunately demonstrates that many Christians today have adopted the rigid legalism and nationalistic hope found in Jewish literature, and abandoned the freedom, compassion, and universality that the Gospels advocate. Much of the Jewish thought behind the New Testament needs to be abandoned, as indeed the authors of the New Testament, as described in this book, intended it to be.

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Buried History

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