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**“Dismemberment, Creation, and Ritual:
Images of Divine Violence in the Ancient Near East.”**

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Dismemberment, Creation, and Ritual: Images of Divine Violence in the Ancient Near East

Scott B. Noegel

The temples and palace reliefs of ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt abound in religious texts and depictions of sacred rituals and divine figures. This is what one expects to find on such monuments. Less expected, however, are numerous depictions of some of the most brutal mutilations known to human history. In Egypt, one can find temples “decorated” with piles of hands, heads, and even phalluses, or images of victims’ bodies severed beneath chariot wheels. In Mesopotamia, one encounters similar cases of maiming and finds images of people being flayed alive, having their lower lip cut off, or being impaled on stakes and disemboweled.

In every case, these brutal acts were carried out in accordance with what was believed and/or claimed to be divine will. The gods commanded these Gadarene aggressions, and the atrocities that followed were justified in their names. These acts of ritualized brutality represent some of the earliest recorded holy wars.¹

Besides their extreme violence, two things are shocking to the noninitiate about these images: their abundance and their decidedly religious context. Mangled bodies and severed limbs are juxtaposed seamlessly with religious iconography—portraits of rituals, priests, and gods. The violence of these images led nineteenth-century historians to characterize the Mesopotamians and Egyptians as primitive, warmongering peoples obsessed with battle² and to see them as providing “visual backdrops” for the “truth” of biblical stories.³

More recently, historians have offered more balanced portraits of these peoples by underscoring their numerous cultural achievements. They

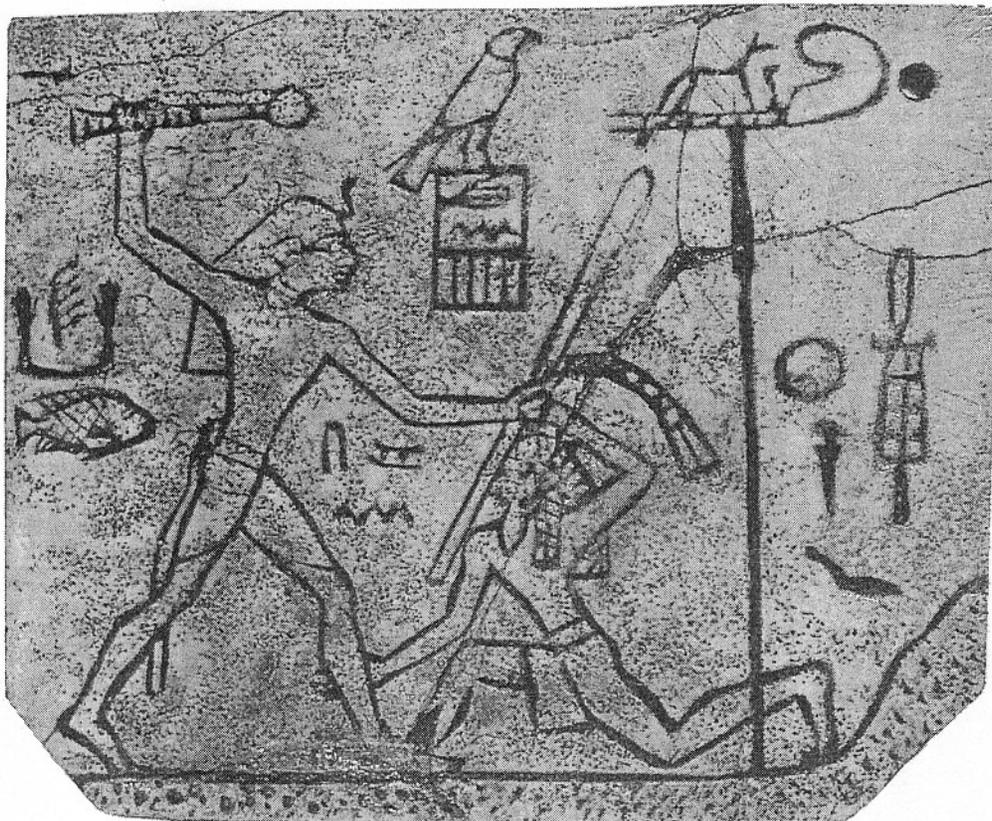


Figure 1.1. Label of Pharaoh Den smiting enemy. Abydos; ca. 2900 BCE; ivory; H. 4.5 cm.; London, The British Museum, EA 55586. © The Trustees of the British Museum

have stressed the importance of examining these monuments from the cultural views provided by the Mesopotamians and Egyptians themselves.⁴ While some have stressed the propagandistic nature of these images,⁵ others have focused on the aesthetic,⁶ magical,⁷ and symbolic purposes of certain compositional elements.⁸ Together these scholars have demonstrated that whether historical or not, the holy wars depicted on the monuments are constructed in accordance with aesthetic and cultural conventions. An excellent demonstration of this is the portrait of pharaoh smiting his enemies with a mace, an image that constitutes a “type scene”⁹ (e.g., Pharaoh Den in fig. 1.1). Established already in the pre-dynastic era, this artistic template was adopted by numerous pharaohs throughout Egypt’s long history from King Narmer,¹⁰ the legendary founder of Pharaonic Egypt (fig. 1.2), to the emperor Trajan. The use and re-use of this image by the pharaohs reinforced pharaoh’s role as conqueror of chaos.¹¹

The symbolic and propagandistic import of such images begs the question of whether other violent depictions of holy war may be communicating something more than just a historical event. It is in this light that the theories of Bruce Lincoln and Mary Douglas are especially enlightening.



Figure 1.2. Narmer Palette. Hierakonpolis; ca. 3100 BCE; greywacke; H. 64 cm., W. 42 cm.; Cairo, Egyptian Museum, JE 32169 (CG 14716)

Lincoln argues that warfare constitutes a form of ritual sacrifice.¹² Whether or not one agrees with his use of the term *sacrifice*, the definition of which he admittedly broadens, the argument that warfare is a form of ritual seems to me to be beyond question.

Douglas argues that one of the main functions of ritual is to recognize, correct, and control society's anomalies, and in so doing, restore cosmological order.¹³ Cosmological order is achieved, in part, by subjecting the individual, and thus also the human body, to forms of social control informed by cultural predispositions. Thus, controlling the body is also a way of controlling society at large. It is this perspective on warfare that I adopt in what follows: warfare as a ritual to restore cosmic order.

From this it follows that we might better understand the numerous images of divinely sanctioned violence by looking at them through the lens of ancient Near Eastern cosmological or "theological" systems. Doing so reveals a striking correlation between ancient Near Eastern depictions of divine violence and conceptions of divine order. And, because these conceptions of divine order were shaped by beliefs concerning the creation of

the cosmos, these violent representations employ mythological and ritual idioms associated with creation.

A number of scholars in other fields have shown how cosmological and theological systems inform the ways violence against others can be enacted in the name of a religion.¹⁴ The same can be said about ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, where mass acts of violence were grounded in preconceived systems of order imagined in terms of cultural stereotypes that distinguished sharply between “us” and “them.”¹⁵ Egypt sometimes referred to the warriors of Libya (its enemy to the west) as women, children, and animals. They called the nomadic shepherders of the desert unclean beasts. Sumerian scribes of southern Mesopotamia recall the raids of Gutians from the east by describing them as having the faces of monkeys. Captive enemies are sometimes described as walking on all fours. The enemy is invariably a stupid barbarian who is more animal than human.¹⁶

Mythmaking about the “other,” especially when constructed in theological terms, was more than a rhetorical trope of hatred—it was a means for establishing order and social control.¹⁷ To facilitate this control the leaders of the ancient Near East rallied support for their holy wars by conceptualizing their neighbors as barbarians or beasts. To justify aggression, the enemy was demonized. He was imagined as dwelling beyond the periphery of civilization, outside the world order—or in theological terms, beyond the border of all that is holy and good.¹⁸

DIVINELY SANCTIONED VIOLENCE IN MESOPOTAMIA

Geographic borders in Mesopotamia were conceptualized as cosmological borders.¹⁹ The tablet shown in fig. 1.3 is one of the earliest maps on record. It shows Babylon seated at the center of the cosmos with canals running through it. The circle around the map depicts the great chaotic and primeval ocean believed to surround the world.²⁰ It is in the ring of the great unknown where mythological beasts are said to dwell. Sometimes the ocean is depicted as a serpentine beast representing the forces of chaos. Elsewhere, it is depicted as a lionlike creature with wings.

At the center of Babylon stood the palace and the king. The geographic placement of the palace was also understood in cosmological terms, the entire structure mirroring the divine world with the state god at its center.²¹ The boundaries of Assyria were categorized as the four quarters of the world, in the center of which sat the king.²² The palace stood by metonymy for the state and the cosmos.²³

Guarding the threshold to the palace were gigantic *lamassu* figures. Part human, part eagle, part bull, they represented and embodied the liminal



Figure 1.3. Babylonian Map of the World, Sippar, ca. 700-500 BCE; H. 12.2 cm., W. 8.2 cm.; British Museum, BM 92687. © The Trustees of the British Museum

area they were created to protect.²⁴ As a crossed species they were able to cross the boundaries that separated the ordered world of humans and gods. Other mythological creatures served similar apotropaic functions. They guarded the king from chaotic forces that continually threatened the cosmos.

Much effort was put into depicting the king as one who maintains the cosmic order. The image in fig. 1.4 depicts the Assyrian king Assurnasirpal II (ca. 883–857 BCE) pollinating the female date palm with the male palm flower, an image that symbolized the wealth and abundance that the god Assur bestowed upon the Assyrian kingdom through his agent the king.²⁵ Since Assur was the god of the Assyrian nation, his connection to the sacred tree bore an implicit political meaning as well, one that underscored Assyrian hegemony over the entire world. It fittingly stood behind the king's throne.

One way for the Mesopotamian king to maintain cosmic order was through ritual. Holy war, as I have noted, constitutes a form of ritual, but

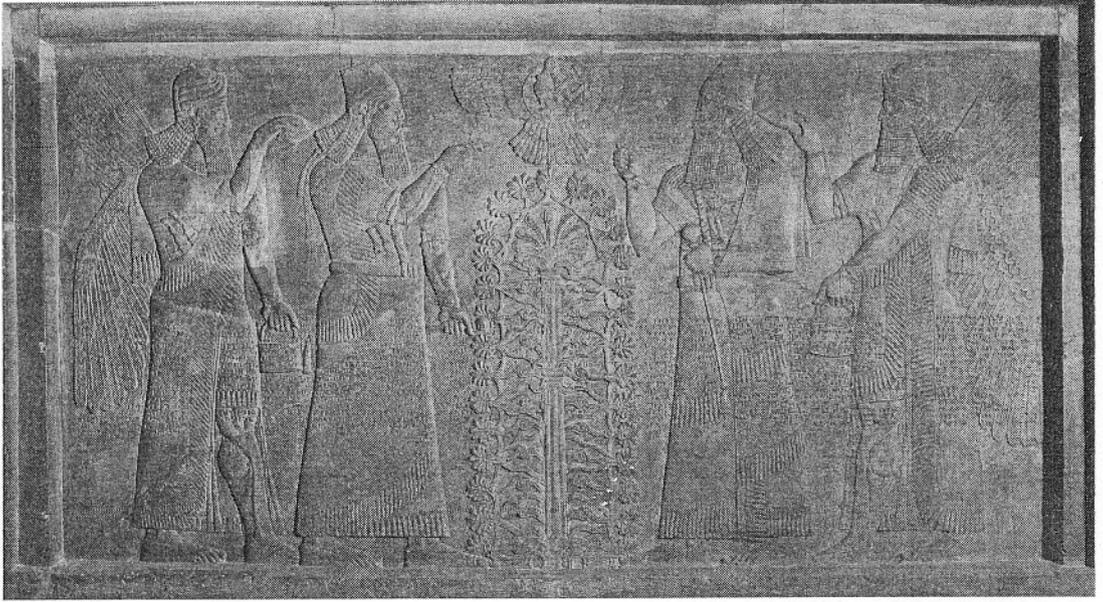


Figure 1.4. Assurnasirpal II (ca. 883–857 BCE) pollinating the date palm. Palace bas-relief from Kalhu (Nimrud). © The Trustees of the British Museum

there were others as well. One such ritual was the lion hunt, most thoroughly rendered on a series of reliefs from the palace of Assurbanipal (ca. 669–627 BCE) at Nineveh. The images of the hunt depict a great number of lions captured, caged, and let loose in a small fenced garden guarded by soldiers. Within the confines of the fence the king of beasts was stalked and ritually killed by Assurbanipal, the king of kings, with the help of professional hunters. Courtiers then carried the dead lions to the libation table where rituals were performed and wine was offered to Ishtar, the goddess of war. The rituals, like the lion hunt itself, connected the slaying of the lions with the military prowess of the king.²⁶ These images were not just descriptive; they served to accomplish ritually what they depicted—the king’s position as ruler of the universe.²⁷ By using the “bow of Ishtar” to put down the body of the lion, an animal that prowled the periphery of Assyrian lands, the king ritually put down the threatening outer world of chaos and showed himself to be the symbolic shepherd of his people.²⁸ Violence was ritually woven into the fabric of the cosmos.

In fact, extreme violence was how the cosmos began in Mesopotamia.²⁹ The most salient witness to this is the account of creation, *Enuma Elish*, a text known in various forms in both Babylon (south) and Assyria (north). In the Babylonian version, the god Marduk (who is replaced in the Assyrian version by the god Assur)³⁰ creates the cosmos from the dismembered body of the goddess of the sea, Tiamat.³¹

The story relates how Marduk suffocated Tiamat with wind and then shot arrows into her stomach. He then flung her corpse down, an act that

struck dread into her army. Described as a demonic horde, they fled in all directions. Marduk chased them down, smashed their weapons, and bound them by the arms with ropes to await later punishment. Having secured her army, Marduk then returned to Tiamat's corpse. He trampled it under his feet and smashed her skull with his mace. He sliced her veins and the north wind carried away her blood. When the older gods saw this, they tried to calm his rage by bringing him gifts, which apparently worked, at least for a short time. But later, Marduk returned to Tiamat's body and sliced it in half like a fish for drying. With one half of her body he made the heavens and with the other he established the underworld. Her head he threw on a pile. He stabbed her eyes, and out poured the Tigris and Euphrates. Marduk then proclaimed himself king of the gods and promptly established his throne over her once chaotic cadaver.³²

Enuma Elish was recited aloud annually before the important peoples of Mesopotamia on the fourth day of the New Year's festival,³³ an event that celebrated the victory of Marduk over Tiamat.³⁴ The New Year's celebration marked the time of the royal lion hunt, as discussed above—an event also dedicated to the goddess Ishtar. The festival thus served to legitimate the king as ruler over the cosmos.³⁵ It also was a time for governors, officials, and other high-ranking officers to renew their oaths of loyalty to the king and state. The event aimed to legitimate the reigning monarch, the national god, and the capital city.³⁶

Just as the gods kiss Marduk's feet in the creation story, the king's subjects kissed his feet during the New Year's festival.³⁷ The story of creation reminded everyone who heard it of the king's role as maintainer of the cosmos. Hence the king's epithet: "the perfect image" of Marduk or Assur.³⁸ Marduk and Assur's roles as slayers of chaos were naturally transferred to the king.³⁹

It is this view of creation, of violently imposing order on chaos, that is reflected in the numerous images adorning the Assyrian palace. The king's enemies, themselves embodying the chaotic elements on Assyria's geographic periphery, are dismembered, disemboweled, and humiliated like Tiamat. They are not just killed in battle; they are ritually taken apart in a way that mirrors Marduk's victory over chaos. In essence, the macabre images of beheading, dismemberment, and maiming reenact the very methods by which order was originally imposed in the cosmos.

Even when battles are recounted in texts the king is described in terms that connect him with the gods.⁴⁰ He draws near to battle with a divine aura of splendor surrounding him, an aura that puts everyone who sees him to flight. Two gods march at his sides bearing his shields and weapons, and his own weapons are likened to a cosmic flood.⁴¹ Sometimes the king is given the epithet "destructive weapon of the gods."⁴² One chronicle informs us that King Assurbanipal made four of his captured enemy kings

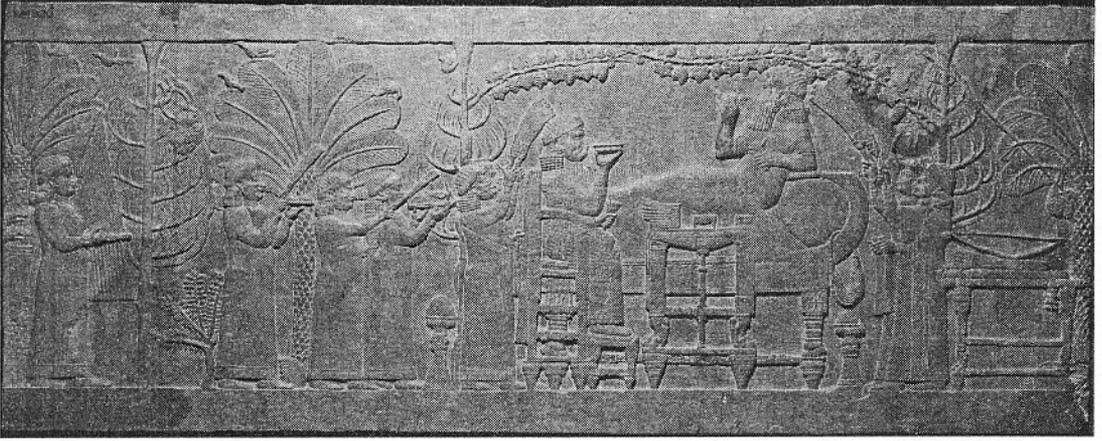


Figure 1.5. Assurbanipal (ca. 669–627 BCE) on his divan in the royal garden. Palace relief from Nineveh. © The Trustees of the British Museum

draw his chariot through the streets, reminiscent of the four winds that drew Marduk's chariot.⁴³

With this background in mind, it is interesting to consider the image in figure 1.5, which was placed in the palace amid some of the goriest battle scenes. In fact, to the left of this scene the head of the Elamite king Te-Umman hangs in a tree by a mouth ring (see detail of figure 1.5). The scene depicts King Assurbanipal reclining on a royal bed in the royal gar-



Detail of Figure 1.5. Head of Elamite king Te-Umman in tree

den. He is being fanned by courtiers while listening to the strumming of dulcimers and tending to his royal appetite for hors d'oeuvres and wine. Seated on the royal chair beside him is his wife, Libbali-sharrat.

On one level this scene depicts a confident and relaxed king, a symbol of order in a chaotic world. On another level, however, the scene evokes associations with Assur and Ishtar. This is suggested first by the location of the scene: a zoological and botanical garden. Such gardens were attached to palaces and temples and were intended to re-create divine paradise on earth. They naturally evoked the ceremonial and ideological aspects of kingship that identified the king as hunter and gardener of the gods.⁴⁴

Moreover, since the king was the "perfect image" of Assur, it is difficult to avoid connecting the king's wife with the goddess Ishtar. It is noteworthy that one important ritual in the Neo-Assyrian period involved a royal bed placed in a temple garden on which the god Marduk and the goddess Ishtar were believed to make love, thus ushering in from paradise the fertility of spring.⁴⁵ One historical account informs us that the sacred bed was plundered in a raid by King Assurbanipal and appropriated for the worship of Assur. Libbali-sharrat's chair is adorned at its base with a lion, the very totem of the goddess Ishtar.⁴⁶ The idyllic garden pose thus communicated two interconnected messages: the royal couple as harbingers of fertility, and the king as the font of order. The contrasting images of divinely sanctioned atrocities that surround the garden scene thus underscore the notion that in Mesopotamia political order *is* cosmic order.⁴⁷

All battles are cosmic battles.⁴⁸ All wars re-enact the first primeval moment when order was violently imposed on chaos. The ferocity with which war is depicted, if not also carried out, replicates the cosmological beliefs upon which Assyrian religion was founded. In line with Michel Foucault, we might say that these scenes of violence enscript cosmologically significant messages upon peoples' bodies in such a forceful fashion that the messages destroy them.⁴⁹

DIVINELY SANCTIONED VIOLENCE IN EGYPT

Cosmology similarly informs depictions of holy wars in ancient Egypt. Nevertheless, since Egyptian and Mesopotamian cosmologies differ, the ways in which these wars are depicted and described also differ.

The Nesitanebtashru papyrus in figure 1.6 depicts the cosmos as the Egyptians saw it. It shows the sky goddess Nut, held up over the earth god Geb, by the god of air Shu. Assisting in the lower left-hand corner is the god of magic Heka. The area around, and therefore beyond, the cosmic

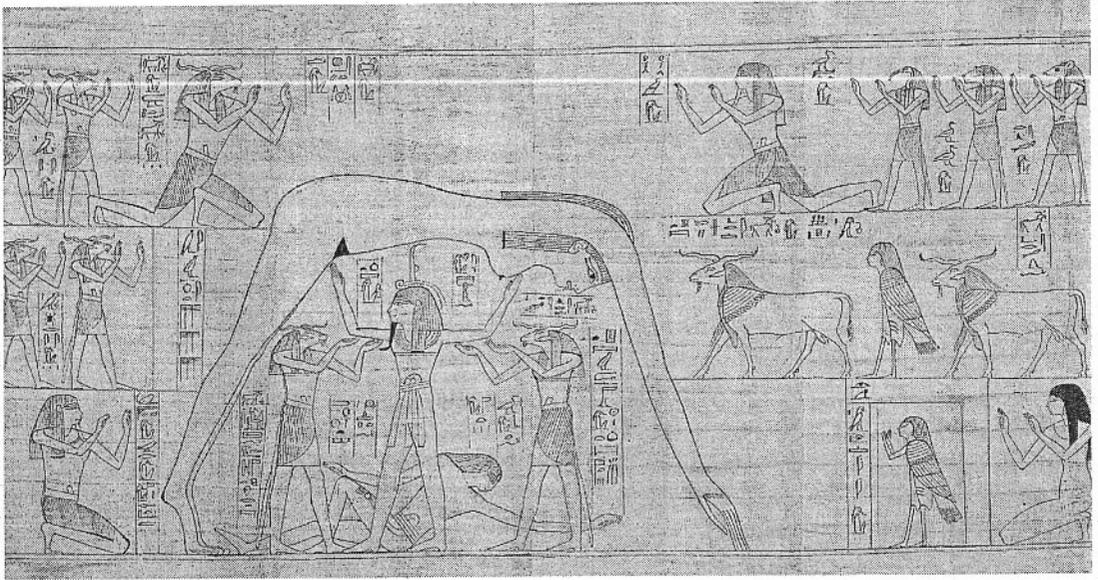


Figure 1.6. Book of Nesitanebtashru, daughter of Pinudjem I, high priest of Amun and king of Upper Egypt, ca. 1065–1045 BCE. Papyrus. © The Trustees of the British Museum

structure is described: “The upper side of the sky exists in uniform darkness, the limits of which . . . are unknown, these having been set in the waters, in lifelessness. There is no light . . . no brightness there.”

Much like the realm beyond the borders of Babylonian geographic knowledge, the outer world of the Egyptian universe was unknown, watery, and chaotic.⁵⁰

Order was achieved in the cosmos by way of the sun god Re and his circular journey through the heavens by day and the underworld by night. This journey was sometimes visualized as a trip through the body of the sky goddess Nut. Nut would devour the sun every night and give birth to him every morning. More often, however, the journey was depicted as a nautical one, with the sun god Re aboard his solar boat.⁵¹

Since Egyptians believed the pharaoh to be an embodiment of the sun god in the form of Horus, even his final tomb replicated the cosmos. Stars adorned the ceilings, and the floor, usually made of basalt, represented the fertile earth.⁵² Upon death, the pharaoh, in the form of Horus, would board the solar boat and begin his journey through the heavens.⁵³

The sun god’s watery journey was peaceful except for one moment during the night when the serpent of chaos, Apep, threatened to attack him. Assisting Re on his journey, however, were the temple priests whose incantations and rituals paralyzed Apep, allowing Re to repel him and return safely at the sunrise. According to these texts Apep is repelled “in his time” (*m 3t.f*), that is, according to a divinely ordained and cyclical schedule.⁵⁴ Just as it happened during the original creation, so also does it occur every night. The incantations identify the rebel Apep

as Re's enemy and describe his destruction as an act of repelling and crushing.⁵⁵

Chaos, or *isfet*, was also embodied by the god Seth. In a famous mythological text, Re battles Seth for possession of divine kingship in the form of Horus. Seth loses the battle and is similarly repulsed and crushed "in his time" (*m 3t.f*). This text provides an etiology for how Re became king at the beginning of creation.

Since the pharaoh was the embodiment of the sun god, he was described as re-enacting these powerful cosmic moments in the historical sphere. Thus, just as Re repelled Apep, the pharaoh is said to repel *isfet* from his borders by appearing as the god Atum himself, the form that Re takes at sunset.⁵⁶ Elsewhere Pharaoh is depicted as the divine presence in the form of a sphinx trampling all foreign lands.⁵⁷

After driving out *isfet*, "order" (*ma`at*) was firmly put in place and the land is said to be as it was "at the first time,"⁵⁸ that is, as at the beginning of creation. It is this cosmological system that is reflected in the wrestling and boxing matches that took place during sacred festivals in which the primeval battle between Horus and Seth was ritually re-enacted. It is also within this cosmological system that we must view Egyptian depictions of divinely inspired violence.

As did Mesopotamians, Egyptians also conceptualized their geographic borders in cosmological terms,⁵⁹ with their temple as the cosmic center.⁶⁰ Since Re set in the west, the area west of the Nile was associated with the dead, and so it became a location for countless royal burials. The lands to the north and south of Egypt were associated with *isfet*. For this reason, the Egyptians identified the forces of chaos with its enemies bordering its three vulnerable sides: Libyans to the west, Nubians to the south, and Asiatics to the north.

The image of Egypt smiting its major enemies (e.g., figs. 1.1–1.2) became a "type" image symbolizing pharaoh's Re-like victory over chaos. It was a victory in accordance with primeval and cyclical time. It was an image that invoked the victory of order over chaos, and thus, reminded viewers of the divine battles of Re against Apep and Seth. In essence, each successive king maintained *ma`at* by repelling *isfet*. Each successive king participated as the sun god incarnate in the cyclical nature of the cosmos. For this reason, foreign campaigns are described as "setting the fear of Horus" into the land, and as bringing light to a people living in darkness.

In addition to resorting to holy wars, the pharaoh also maintained *ma`at* in the cosmos by way of other rituals.⁶¹ One such ritual performed by the priests is known as "execration." It involves inscribing the names of enemy peoples and their potential acts of rebellion on small red pots or on human figurines. These figurines were then ritually destroyed. They could be buried, smashed, stabbed, pierced with nails and knives, boiled

in urine, or otherwise destroyed. Some were made of wax and melted in fire. Often they were buried in abandoned cemeteries for added insult.

Another ritual employed to quell chaos was the hippopotamus hunt—a violent ritual reminiscent of the Assyrian lion hunt.⁶² The hippopotamus was, and is today, the most dangerous animal in Africa. Hunting one down and killing it was a fitting symbol for crushing *isfet*. As such, this ritual re-enacted the cosmic defeat of Seth at the hands of Re.

It is highly unlikely that any of the brutal hunts or gruesome ritual wars depicted on these monuments ever happened exactly as presented, but that is not the point of such images. They are idealized portraits of how kings established order over humans and nature and cultivated a correct relationship with the divine. They project royal history through a cosmological lens and recount contemporary events in ancient idioms associated with creation.⁶³ The mutilated bodies that “decorate” the temples and palaces of the ancient Near East reflect not just the terrors of ancient holy wars, but also the distinctive cosmological beliefs with which they were justified.

NOTES

I thank Gay Robbins and David Frankfurter for their helpful comments on previous drafts of this essay.

1. I define *holy war* as an organized act of hostile force by one people against another that is given divine justification and sanction.

2. See, e.g., the comment of Erman (1971, 526–27). There are exceptions to this portrait, e.g., Wilkinson (1994 [1836], 405–406). For a survey of early attitudes toward the Assyrians see Porter (2003, 81–84). Some, e.g., Bersani and Dutoit (1985, 3), still consider them to be an “intensely nationalistic, imperialistic, and violent people.” Dalley (1995, 413–22) corrects this portrait.

3. E.g., Layard (1853, 631–32).

4. For “emic” approaches to Mesopotamian art see Winter (1997, 359–81) and Bahrani (2003). For an emic approach to Egyptian cultural memory see Assmann (2002).

5. See, e.g., Russell (1998, 655–715), and Reade (1999, 33). In the Neo-Assyrian period one finds such inscriptions for Assurnasirpal II, Sargon II, and Sennacherib (translations appear in Albenda 1998, 29). On the propagandistic use of administrative cylinder seals and their relation to palace reliefs see Winter (2000, 51–87). On integrating cosmology into the study of Assyrian ideology see Liverani (1979, 297–317). On a rethinking (read: neutralization) of the word *propaganda* in the Neo-Assyrian period, see Tadmor (1997, 325–38). Porter (2003, 81–97) argues that the palace reliefs of Assurnasirpal II offered a balanced image of intimidation and benevolence.

6. Hrouda (1965, 274–97); Winter (1995, 2569–80).

7. On the “magical” purposes of Assyrian art see Reade (1999, 27 and 38; 2005, 9); Porter (2000, 216); Barnett (1970, 31–32).

8. Bahrani (2003).

9. On literary and artistic *topoi* in such scenes see Westenholz (2000, 99–125).

10. The Narmer palette was an apotropaic item. See O’Connor (2002, 5–25).

11. See Hall (1986). The borrowing of “type scenes” is especially pronounced in battle accounts where at least five different pharaohs are depicted as killing a Libyan king before the eyes of his wife and two sons. In each case the wife is named Khutyotes and the two boys are Usa and Uni. Noted by Schulman (1995, 293). For a discussion of Egyptian monumental art as suggesting continuity of rule see Jansen-Winkel (2000, 1–20). On the stereotypical nature of Assyrian art see Bersani and Dutoit (1985, 7).

12. Lincoln (1991, 203–5). As with other rituals, warfare elevates the social status of the individual, in this case, the king among his peers in other lands.

13. Douglas (1966) and (1970).

14. See the works of Stacey (1998, 11–28), Kieval (1994–1995, 52–72), Frankfurter (2004, 511–33), and Strickland (2003).

15. See Liverani (1979, 301).

16. On this aspect of Mesopotamian ideology see Mazzoleni (1975).

17. As such it was also a means of helping warriors transcend the shock of killing other “men” by dehumanizing them.

18. For the development of this concept in Mesopotamia see Pongrazt-Leisten (2001, 195–231). Making one’s enemy a monster is a common characteristic of wartime ideology; Lincoln (1991, 141–45).

19. Horowitz (1998).

20. On the cosmological conception of Assyria’s geographic borders see Villard (1999, 73–81).

21. Cosmological and ideological conceptions inform the layout of Babylon’s streets and its monuments; Mieroop (2003, 257–75).

22. Note the related Assyrian expression “king of the world” (*šar kiššati*) and its dual meaning as “king of hostility”; Garelli (1979, 319–28).

23. The palace was a metonym for the state with the king as its symbolic center; Winter (1983, 15–31; 1993, 27–55).

24. These liminal figures have many protective aspects; Kolbe (1981), Madhloom (1970, 94–117), and Wiggermann (1992, 2002). On the cross-gender of these figures see Dalley (2002, 117–21).

25. Porter (1993, 129–39); Lambert (2002, 321–35). Parpola (1993, 161–208) interprets the tree as representing both the king and the totality of gods encompassed in the form of the state god, Assur. Others challenge this view: Cooper (2000, 430–44), Porter (2003, xii–xiii, 21–29), and Lambert (2002).

26. The image of the lion was invoked in bloody ritual dances following battles. The throne room of the Assyrian king Assurnasirpal II depicts the ritual dancing of two men garbed in lion costumes and two others waving the heads of their enemies. See Collon (2004, 96–102, especially 101).

27. The composition and motifs employed in creating these reliefs contrast the military superiority of the king and the helplessness and submissiveness of his enemies; Albenda (1998, 12–13, 26); Watanabe (1998, 439–50).

28. The establishment of order suggested by the lion hunt scenes is conveyed by way of their compositional structure, which "gives a sense of balance and harmony"; Albenda (1998, 22). On the "bow of Ishtar" see Reade (2005, 23).

29. See Dalley (2002, 119) with regard to the dismemberment of primordial gods as a means of creating new life in a pre-sexual world. The analogy she draws is to a plant that one can separate from its stock and make to sprout new roots.

30. For the role that Marduk played in the Neo-Assyrian period see Porter (1997, 253–60).

31. Convenient translation found in Foster (1997, 398–99).

32. Tiamat's re-purposed limbs and the placement of her bow in the heavens should be examined in the light of what Frankfurter has called "negative relics," i.e., trophies of war that transform "the body of the vanquished into a clarified and assimilable form of subordination" (2004, 526).

33. The connection between Assur and Marduk was encouraged during and after the reign of Sennacherib (ca. 704–681 BCE); Black and Green (1992, 38); Porter (1997, 253–60). For the rising importance of Marduk in the Neo-Assyrian period see Sommerfeld (1982, 193–95).

34. Lambert (1963, 189–90).

35. See E. Weissert (1997, 339–58). On the New Year's festival as a cultic drama see Jacobsen (1975, 65–97).

36. On this aspect of the Babylonian festival see Bidmead (2002). A discussion of the relationship between the festival and the creation epic appears on pp. 63–70. On the festival in Assyria see Driel (1969, 162–67).

37. Kissing the feet as an expression of loyalty also appears in Neo-Assyrian letters addressed to the king.

38. See Parpola (1993, xvii). On this title in the context of Assyrian conceptions of "image" see Bahrani (2003, 143).

39. Cf., an ancient description of a relief that no longer survives that depicted the Assyrian king Sennacherib assisting the gods in their battle against chaos (Reade 1979, 332). On Sennacherib's throne room see Russell (1998).

40. On the connection of solar mythology with the king in early Mesopotamia see Polonsky (1999, 89–103).

41. Marduk also is referred to as "the flood." See Oshima (2003, 109–11). The likening of the god and king to a flood and other "weapons" substantiates the observation of Lincoln (1991, 145) that "the warrior must dehumanize himself before he can become an instrument of slaughter."

42. E.g., the "Standard Inscription" of Assurnasirpal; Grayson (1991, 276).

43. See Tadmor (1999, 55–62, especially, 60).

44. On the sexual, ideological, and ceremonious aspects of royal and divine gardens see Andre (1947–1952, 485–94); Oppenheim (1965, 328–33); Fauth (1979, 1–5); Wiseman (1983, 135–44; 1984, 37–43); Deller (1987, 229–38); Glassner (1991, 9–17); and Novák (2002, 443–60). On Ishtar's dehumanization of the "lion-like" Teumman see Reade (2005, 21).

45. For the purpose of this bed see Porter (2002, 523–35).

46. The animal in question may be a hyena; Kilmer (1999, 53–61).

47. The equating of cosmic and political order appears in an oracle from the god Assur to king Esarhaddon: "I will put Assyria in order, I will put the kin[gd]om of heaven in order" (Parpola 1997, 18).

48. Liverani (1979, 307) remarks: "The imperialistic expansion of the central kingdom is therefore the prevailing of cosmos over the surrounding chaos, it is an enterprise that brings order and civilization."

49. Foucault (1977).

50. See Brunner (1954–1955, 141–45); Hornung (1956, 28–32).

51. On differing depictions of the journey that a deceased pharaoh takes see Goebis (2003, 238–53).

52. Allen (1994, 5–28).

53. Hornung (1990, 155–56).

54. For solar and "Osirian" temporal aspects of Egyptian funerary belief see Assmann (1975, 35–48).

55. See Morenz (1960, 77).

56. For the present use of the primordial past in Egypt see Assmann (2002). Compare Assmann's discussion of the demonization of Seth and his association with foreigners (389–408).

57. It is depicted on the throne arm of Thutmose IV (Robins 1997, 136).

58. Morenz 1960, 168.

59. On cosmological conceptions of Egypt's geographic borders see Galán (1999, 21–28).

60. See, e.g., Finnestad (1985, 8–64).

61. On rituals for the goddess *ma`at* ("Order"), see Teeter (1997).

62. Pharaohs also undertook the ritual hunt of wild bulls in the marshlands, a land similarly associated with chaos and creation.

63. One could cite many analogies. For discussions on the construction of such *vitae parallelae* see Smith (1978, 240–64) and Smith (1990).