

News & Notes

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On the cover: Enlil ziggurat and its surrounding buildings at Nippur (photo by Kourosh Mohammadkhani); see page 20 for a Nippur update



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



With the Beijing Olympic Winter Games and the Super Bowl still fresh in our memories, this issue of *News & Notes* is dedicated to sports in the ancient Middle East and in the world of Homer. In both cases, the evidence points to sports as an elite activity, a favorite pastime for the wealthy and powerful. Hunting, famously, and as explained by Kiersten Neumann in her contribution, was the sport of kings. It allowed the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal to show off as the Master of Animals. It was a highly *machista* way of proving his manhood and symbolizing his domination of the world at large, and he didn't hesitate to show it off on the stunning reliefs we know so well from the British Museum and the OI's own galleries.

All too often nowadays, we associate sports with hooligans, violence and aggression, and fans who take their loyalties a bit too far and get carried away. But this existed in antiquity too, as laid out by Jonah Radding in his article "Homer and Sports-Spectator Violence in the Archaic Greek World." If war is sometimes called a continuation of politics by different means, sports can also be a continuation of or a placeholder for war. In international soccer games between two countries, for instance, memories of past wars can come to life again, sometimes painfully so. In one of the Hittites' cultic festivals, participants performed a ritual battle between the Hittites and men from another area, the first equipped with bronze weapons, the latter with weapons made of reed. This mock battle may have been a ritual going back to a historical event, and it probably was quite a spectacle.

Inevitably, sports in antiquity also brings to mind the Roman expression *panem et circenses* "bread and games." Elites of any period were (and still are) all too aware of the amusement value of spectacles. Keeping the masses fed and entertained is a tried-and-true way to channel their underbelly emotions. That is also the original meaning of the word *sports* or Spanish *deportes*: both derive from Latin *disportare* "to carry away" and therefore refer to an amusement that lets you get carried away and forget your daily troubles.

This issue of *News & Notes* contains two other articles and closes with the familiar Volunteer Spotlight. Brian Muhs and Foy Scalf write about a collection of papyri and ostraca held at the OI that document the "massive funerary industry" of Hellenistic Egypt. It is based on the recent book *The Archive of Thotsutmis, Son of Panouphis* (OIP 146, Oriental Institute Press, 2021; as always freely downloadable at <https://oi.uchicago.edu/research/publications/oip/oip-146-archive-thotsutmis-son-panouphis>), which they wrote together with Jacqueline Jay (UChicago PhD 2008), now professor at Eastern Kentucky University. The other article is a report by Abbas Alizadeh about the OI's most recent excavations and activities at Nippur and their challenges. The spotlight, finally, is on Jean Nye, OI volunteer since 2010.

With many thanks to the editors of *News & Notes*, I hope you will let yourself be "carried away" by this—another beautiful issue!

THEO VAN DEN HOUT
Director



CONTENT IS KING

THE LION-HUNT RELIEFS OF ASSYRIA

by Kiersten Neumann

Bringing to life the interior spaces of Assyrian royal palaces were monumental stone orthostats, carved in low relief and painted with bold colors, that once lined the lower section of walls. This type of palace decoration was but one of the many forms of architectural ornamentation that came to define the building programs of rulers of the Neo-Assyrian period (934–612 BCE) carried out at the capital cities in the Assyrian heartland located in present-day northern Iraq. This tradition began in the Northwest Palace of King Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BCE) at Kalhu (modern Nimrud) and continued at Dur-Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad) and Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik). Subject matter for the sculptured gypsum (alabaster) panels ranged from formal scenes suggestive of ceremonial practices of the royal court—for example, the pouring of libations by the king and the procession of court officials and visitors bringing gifts to the king—to mythological scenes with divine and semidivine beings, most notably *apkallu* (sages) and *lamassu* (guardian lions and bulls), and narrative scenes depicting military campaigns, deportation, and the hunt. The last is the focus of this article—the practice of the royal lion hunt as told

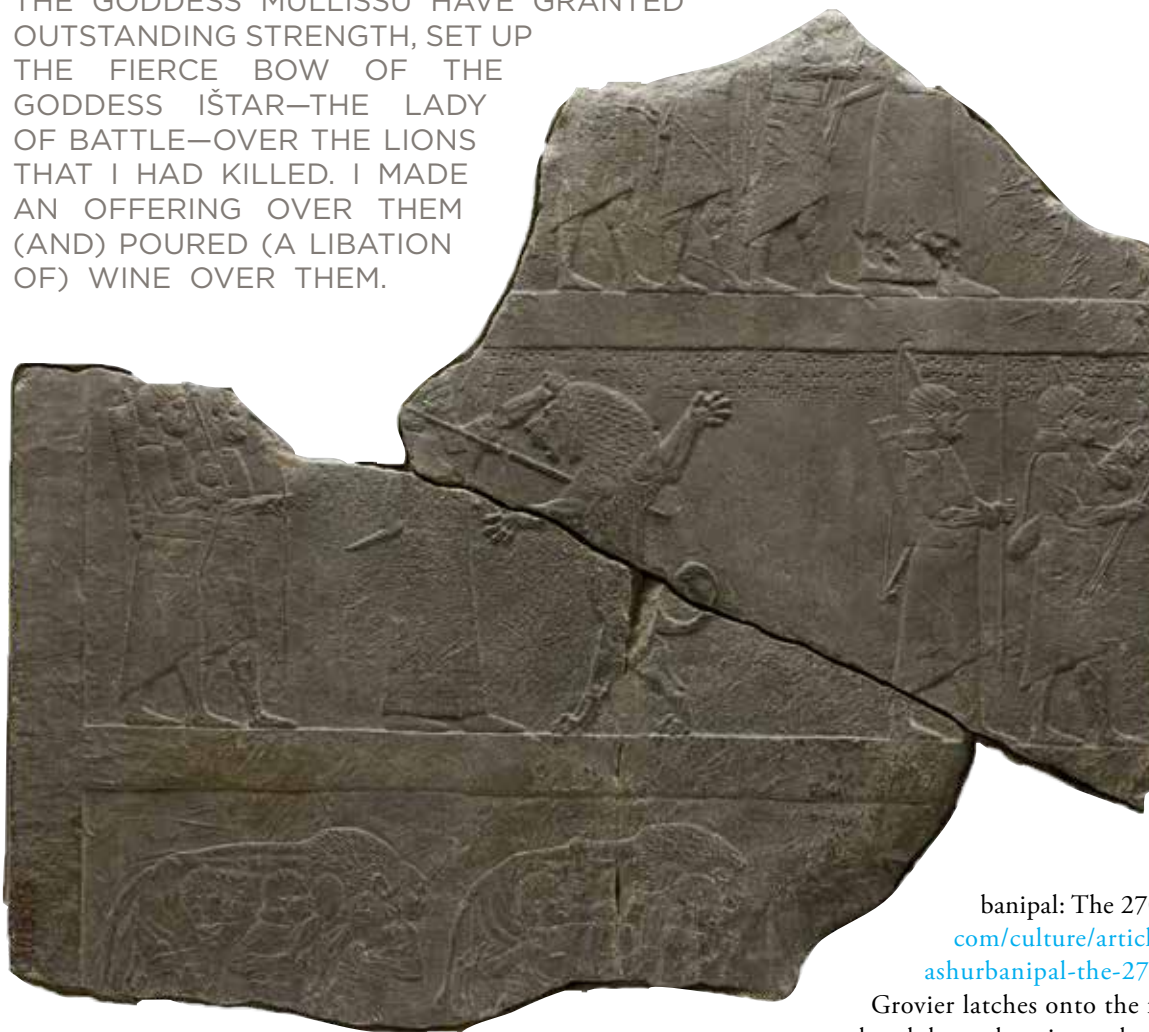
by and beautifully captured in the carved wall panels of Assyrian palaces.

The best-known reliefs featuring hunts—of lions, as well as gazelles and wild horses—were excavated in a series of rooms and corridors in the North Palace of King Ashurbanipal (669–631 BCE) at Nineveh (figs. 1–2; for a virtual British Museum tour, see [g.co/arts/ghQEEY9F2PfsbGSX9](https://www.britishmuseum.org/arts/ghQEEY9F2PfsbGSX9)). Yet, also of note are scenes of the hunt—of lions and bulls—from the throne room of the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II at Kalhu (fig. 3). In a series of panels from the upper story of Room S of the North Palace (figs. 1–2), we see the hunt represented as a sequence of events across three registers. It begins in the top register with the release of the lion from a cage and his initial confrontation with the king, who is dressed in royal attire and is shooting arrows, followed by the pursuit—aided by a horseman who distracts the lion—and eventual stabbing of the lion by the king in the middle register. A cuneiform inscription written in the Akkadian language in the middle register, styled in a fashion much the same as text blocks in comic books, reads as follows (RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 57):

I, ASHURBANIPAL, KING OF THE WORLD, KING OF ASSYRIA, WHILE (CARRYING OUT) MY PRINCELY SPORT, SEIZED A LION THAT WAS BORN IN THE STEPPE (LIT. “OF ITS PLAIN”) BY ITS TAIL AND, THROUGH THE COMMAND OF THE GODS NINURTA (AND) NERGAL, THE GODS WHO SUPPORT ME, SHATTERED ITS SKULL WITH THE MACE THAT WAS IN MY HAND.

The hunt sequence terminates in the bottom register with the king pouring a sacrificial libation over the deceased bodies of lions while, to the left, a pair of musicians play harps and royal attendants carry the bodies of additional lions, all staged within a ritualized context. Inscribed above the offering table and burner is a text that situates the act of the hunt within the realm of Assyrian kingly duties; the king, as divinely sanctioned ruler, was tasked with maintaining the security, strength, and prosperity of the land of Aššur (RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 58):

I, ASHURBANIPAL, KING OF THE WORLD, KING OF ASSYRIA, TO WHOM (THE GOD) AŠŠUR (AND) THE GODDESS MULLISU HAVE GRANTED OUTSTANDING STRENGTH, SET UP THE FIERCE BOW OF THE GODDESS IŠTAR—THE LADY OF BATTLE—OVER THE LIONS THAT I HAD KILLED. I MADE AN OFFERING OVER THEM (AND) Poured (A LIBATION OF) WINE OVER THEM.



OPPOSITE: Figure 1. Carved relief panels forming part of a sequence showing Ashurbanipal hunting lions. Gypsum, fallen into Room S, North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 645–640 BCE. BM 124886–124887. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

BELOW: Figure 2. Fragment of a carved relief panel, originally installed to the left of the panels in figure 1. Gypsum, fallen into Room S, North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 645–640 BCE. AO 19903. © 2012 RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux.

It is undeniable that many words have been written about the lion hunt as presented in the North Palace relief panels, from academic publications to exhibition catalogues and the wider arts-and-culture mainstream media, if you will. Just this past May, for example, BBC's Culture page published a piece by American poet, historian, and art critic Kelly Grovier, entitled “The Lion Hunt of Ashur-

banipal: The 2700-Year-Old ‘Fake News’” ([bbc.com/culture/article/20210325-the-lion-hunt-of-ashurbanipal-the-2700-year-old-fake-news](https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20210325-the-lion-hunt-of-ashurbanipal-the-2700-year-old-fake-news)). Here,

Grovier latches onto the fake-news whirlwind sweeping the globe to lure in readers for a verbose account of the well-established connection between lion-hunt reliefs and the

power and might of the Assyrian king, first claiming that the choreographed release of the lions from cages warrants labeling the reliefs “an archaic form of fake news” before proceeding to a fanciful analysis of the earring donned by the king. In association with the sensational exhibition, *I am Ashurbanipal: King of the World, King of Assyria*, of the preceding year, the British Museum published a blog post by curator Gareth Brereton, titled “Lion Hunting: The Sport of Kings,” in which he “lifts the lid on the ancient sport of royal lion hunting” (blog.britishmuseum.org/lion-hunting-the-sport-of-kings-2/).



Brereton covers many common topics of rumination elicited by Ashurbanipal's lion-hunt reliefs: the divinely appointed warrior king's preservation of order despite threats from the chaotic wild, the propagandistic messaging of staged spectacle, the marriage of sport and ritualized practice, the visceral depiction of slaughter and death, and the mixed emotions and empathy elicited by the verisimilar depiction of the suffering of these majestic creatures. The last ultimately breaks down the otherwise robust divide between a heroic man and a fierce lion, the us-versus-them of humans and animals, blurring our understanding of the protagonist. Examples in addition to the panels from the North Palace shown in figures 1–2 reinforce this last topic, vividly portraying the exquisite agony and impending death of the lion (fig. 4) in marked contrast to the confrontational and impassive human figures repeated throughout the sequence. Yet, in considering these various topics with an eye toward the Assyrian world, we also must simultaneously ask ourselves what coloration our modern bias and perspective are bringing to this reading, this viewing, this experience. And this, too, is a hot topic of discussion when it comes to the lion-hunt scenes. Here, I would suggest thinking about how we view them as finite works of art, as prints published on a white page or as fragmented panels installed in a contemporary gallery removed from their original architectural

and spatial context, depleted of their once-vibrant polychromatic surfaces. And so, rather than move into a focused reading of the mesmerizing craftsmanship and detailed content of these royal episodes, I would like to widen the lens and consider the reliefs from a larger experiential and historical context, to consider the opportunities and affordances this new media—carved stone orthostats—offered for representing this particular practice of the Assyrian royal court during Ashurbanipal's reign.

The pairing of ruler and lion, in particular as a hunt or combat motif, is longstanding in the visual media of Mesopotamia, dating as far back as the fourth millennium BCE. The earliest known representation, the so-called Lion-Hunt stele from the city of Uruk (modern Warka) in present-day southern Iraq, includes a scene, carved in relief on the basalt monument, of two priest-kings attacking lions, one with a spear and the other with a bow and arrow (fig. 5). The same motif—the king slaying a rearing lion with his sword held in one hand and the lion's head in the other—is engraved on the so-called “royal seal” of the Neo-Assyrian period. This seal type included both stamp and cylinder seals, yet the former was more common, was surely made of gold, and was commonly referred to as *unqu*; in a letter to Ashurbanipal, the sender states, “When I saw the gold seal of the king, my lord, I came to life” (SAA 18: 146, r. 3). Despite what



its popular label suggests, seals of this type were used not only by the Assyrian king but also by officials of his court who, when impressing the seal, were acting on behalf of the king, their impressions referencing kingship and authority. Unfortunately, however, material evidence of the royal seal is limited to sealings—lumps of clay used to secure doors, containers, and writing boards on which seals were impressed or rolled—and impressed cuneiform tablets (fig. 6); no original seal has been recovered to date. The earliest such sealings date to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, and they continue to be attested through the end of the empire in the seventh century BCE. Some such examples were recovered by the OI excavations at Dur-Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad), the capital city of King Sargon II (721–704 BCE) (fig. 7).

Dating to the same time as the earliest royal-seal type are the lion-hunt reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II introduced above. This sequence is limited to one panel—the top register showing the slaying of the lion (fig. 3), the bottom the sacrificial libation; this is preceded by a panel showing the slaying and libation of a bull. The next king for whose reign extensive relief panels have been preserved is Sargon II. While hunt scenes are included in the repertoire of the carved orthostats from his new palace at Dur-Sharrukin—for example, the royal hunting expedition in which Sargon is shown riding in a chariot (fig. 8)—the king is

not shown actively hunting lions. The reliefs of his successors, Sennacherib (705–681 BCE) and Esarhaddon (681–669 BCE), as far as we know, similarly did not incorporate this topic. Yet, interestingly, the royal inscriptions of all three of these kings make use of a trope that compares them to a lion: in a section describing a military campaign, Sargon’s royal inscriptions state, “I became enraged (wild) like a lion and prepared to conquer those lands” (*labbiš annadirma ana kašād mātāti šātina aštakan pāniya*; RINAP 2: Sargon II 7). These texts were inscribed on the relief panels of these kings’ palaces.

As the above material examples demonstrate, the theme of the king conquering the lion, and everything that that symbolized, was principally restricted to a single climactic moment

OPPOSITE: Figure 3. Carved relief panel showing a lion hunt. Gypsum, Throne Room, Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II, Kalhu, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 875–860 BCE. BM 124579. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

ABOVE: Figure 4. Carved relief panel showing a lion hunt. Gypsum, Room C, North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 645–640 BCE. BM 124864. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

of encounter—the king slaying the lion—up until the time of Ashurbanipal's reign. And then, in the latter's North Palace, designers and stone carvers took advantage of the extended tableau created by the installation of stone orthostats around the circumference of rooms and corridors in order to bring into view the full scope of this practice—from the capture of the lions in the wild to their captivity in game parks and gardens, their pursuit during staged hunts that included a host of armed guards and spectators, and their death at the hands of the king. Emphasized throughout is, of course, the climactic moment of the king slaying the lion, not only as an element embedded within longer sequences of action but also interestingly in one instance in a self-referential monument—either a stele or building—that was decorated with this climactic motif (fig. 9).

A similarly visionary use of the extended canvas offered by Assyrian carved orthostats is a series of panels from Court VI of the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh that show the manufacture and transport of human-headed winged bulls (*lamassu* or colossi) from the quarry at Balatai to Nineveh for the gates of the palace. The sequence begins with the carving of a massive gypsum block in the quarry and continues with its transport by way of ropes, sledge, river, and many supervisors and

laborers, as well as the king himself, to the palace. The inclusion of this sequence in the reliefs of Sennacherib speaks to this king's desire to represent the stability and prosperity that he brought to the empire, which allowed him to carry out large-scale building programs at its center and to control and expand its periphery. The carved orthostats as monumental canvas afforded the perfect medium by which to communicate this message to both local and foreign visitors to his palace.

Ashurbanipal's choice to repeatedly broadcast the lion-hunt sequences in his palace similarly speaks to the ideological messaging of his reign. Facing an environment rife with court intrigue and disloyalty following the assassination of his father and predecessor, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal looked to both bolster and visually advocate for the loyalty of those responsible for protecting him against internal and external threats. The lion-hunt sequences show in the best light the armed guards, shield-bearers, and charioteers—a powerful entourage—tasked with protecting the life of the king while simultaneously announcing to all those who walked through the palace the brutal might and strength of the king himself, as divinely sanctioned ruler and vanquisher of the ferocious lions of the wild and everything that they represented.



LEFT TO RIGHT:
Figure 5. Lion-Hunt stele. Basalt, Uruk, Late Uruk period, ca. 3200 BCE. IM 23477. Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Photo by Dr. Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin.

Figure 6. Sealing impressed with the Assyrian royal-seal type. Clay, Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian period, 715 BCE. SM.2276. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 7. Sealings impressed with the royal-seal type, displayed in the OI Museum. Clay, Royal Palace and Palace F, Dur-Sharrukin, Neo-Assyrian period, 717–705 BCE. OIM A17524, A11733 (on display).



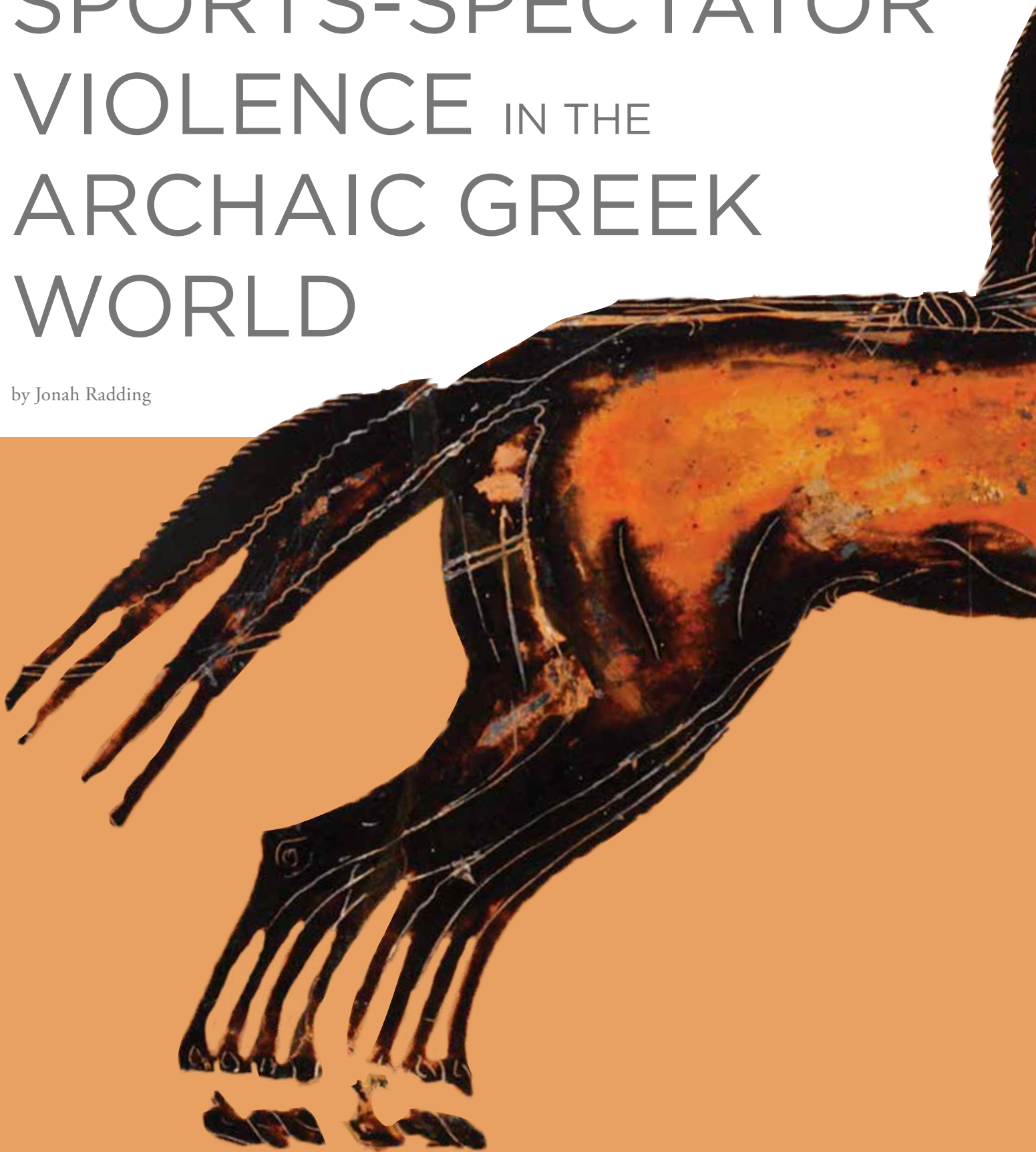


TOP: Figure 8. Carved relief panels showing, in the bottom register, a royal hunting expedition, displayed in the OI Museum. Gypsum, Room 7, Royal Palace, Dur-Sharrukin, Neo-Assyrian period (717-705 BCE). OIM A11254, A11256, A11255 (on display).

BOTTOM: Figure 9. Carved relief panel forming part of a sequence showing Ashurbanipal hunting lions, including a wooded hill with spectators and a monument displaying a lion-hunt scene. Gypsum, Room C, North Palace of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh, Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 645-640 BCE. BM 124862. © The Trustees of the British Museum.

HOMER AND SPORTS-SPECTATOR VIOLENCE IN THE ARCHAIC GREEK WORLD

by Jonah Radding





SPECTATORS watching the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were inundated, as per usual, with images and affirmations of the positive values that athletic competition both embodies and instills. While that sentiment may contain a grain of truth, there is, of course, another side to the story: as George Orwell (1945) once observed, “sport is an un-failing cause of ill-will.” Orwell’s comment was inspired by the behaviors he witnessed at a “friendly” international football (soccer) tournament between Russian champions Dynamo Moscow and a selection of British teams shortly after the end of World War II. And his criticism will ring true for anyone who has spent significant time at (for example) football stadiums in the twenty-first century. Indeed, over the past twenty years, a large body of research has been dedicated to the phenomenon of “sports-spectator violence,” evidence itself of the widespread nature of this phenomenon.

Anecdotes of sports-crowd behavior in the ancient world are rare, especially outside the Mediterranean basin, but what little we have suggests that poor conduct by sports spectators is not simply a modern phenomenon: writers from the late first and second centuries CE (Cassius Dio and Philostratus) suggest that murder and riots were regular occurrences at the hippodrome of Alexandria; Augustine famously noted a friend’s transformation into a fanatic gripped by “insanity” (*insania*; Confessions VI.13); and in 532 CE, “circus factions” in Constantinople started a riot that reportedly led to thousands of deaths in a single day. One might surmise that ancient incidents of sports-spectator violence were not isolated to the Mediterranean in the Roman and Byzantine eras, but eyewitness accounts are, in general, hard to come by. An episode from Homer, however, suggests that the bad behavior of sports fans was already notorious in archaic Greece, and—even more intriguingly—that it was strikingly similar to modern instances of the phenomenon in both its roots and its manifestations.

AJAX AND IDOMENEUS AT THE FUNERAL GAMES

In Book 23 of the *Iliad*, Achilles, still mourning the death of his friend Patroclus, hosts funeral games in his honor. The first and longest (in terms of narrative) of the competitions is the chariot race. Even before the race begins, Homer reports that the spectators—the Achaean army, in essence—are gathered at the starting point of the race, and that the chariots will pass out of sight as they round the distant curve of the race track. We even learn that Achilles has posted his friend Phoenix at the far curve “to watch the race and report accurately on it.” In other words, the emphasis of the narration is not simply on the contest itself, but also on the audience’s experience of it.

The race is, as one might expect from Homer, not short of drama. Thanks to some inside information, we know that Diomedes is the presumptive favorite. But as the chariots enter the stretch run, an otherwise obscure figure named Eumelus holds the lead, if only barely. Diomedes begins to close the gap, but the god Apollo intervenes and knocks the whip from his hands. Athena, in retaliation, breaks the yoke on Eumelus’s chariot, sending it careening out of control. Eumelus survives with—somewhat incredibly—only minor injuries, but his chances at victory are eliminated: Diomedes will bring home the prize. In the meantime, two other racers—Menelaus and Antilochus—nearly collide on the race track, due to the latter’s reckless driving.

At this point, Homer shifts our focus to the stands. As the horses come out of the final turn, a certain Idomeneus, stationed at a higher vantage point than the rest of the Achaeans, makes the call:

I think I see new horses out in front,
and it looks like another charioteer! The mares from before 460
must have been held up on the flat, the ones who were ahead!

...

Get up and have a look! I can’t make him out
perfectly, but the man in the lead seems to be 470
an Aitolian, leader of the Argives: the son
of horse-taming Tydeus, powerful Diomedes!

(*Iliad* 23.459–472)

Similar to a play-by-play announcer, Idomeneus delivers a benign but accurate report, limiting his commentary to what he himself can see and inviting the audience to confirm the facts with their own eyes. The response by Ajax (son of Oileus, i.e., the “lesser” Ajax), however, presents a striking divergence in tone:

Idomeneus! Why the hasty blather? The high-stepping
horses are speeding across the great plain just as before. 475
You’re by no means the youngest amongst the Argives,
nor do the eyes in your head see so sharply.
Still, you’re always blathering some drivel; you shouldn’t be
such a chatterbox, since others here are better [than you].

(*Iliad* 23.474–479)

Ajax denigrates Idomeneus, insulting his age, eyesight, and garrulity. All of this is said on the basis of his conviction that Eumelus is still in the lead (*Iliad* 23.480–481), something that we (the external audience) already know to be false. Ajax’s reaction thus seems especially inappropriate. Moreover, Homer provides no editorial explanation for this behavior, leaving us to wonder at the source of his anger.

Idomeneus, perhaps understandably, does not appreciate Ajax’s unchecked aggression, and he responds in kind (*Iliad* 23.483–487):

Ajax, you’re good at quarrels but ill-tempered and utterly
beneath the Argives’ standards, for your brain is dense.
Let’s wager a tripod or a cauldron right here and now 485
on which horses are in the lead, and take Agamemnon,
son of Atreus, as our arbiter, so you can learn by paying.

Idomeneus essentially escalates the confrontation with Ajax. Whereas Ajax had accused him of being loose with his speech, Idomeneus suggests that Ajax regularly, or perhaps always, engages in negative and destructive discourse. While Ajax notes that some of the Argives present are “better” than Idomeneus, Idomeneus suggests that Ajax is inferior to all of them. Finally, Idomeneus tries to literally raise the stakes by proposing a bet, an activity not necessarily known for alleviating tension. All in all, Idomeneus’s remarks seem certain to aggravate the situation.

WHY THE HASTY
BLATHER? THE HIGH-
STEPPING HORSES ARE
SPEEDING ACROSS THE
GREAT PLAIN JUST AS
BEFORE ... STILL, YOU’RE
ALWAYS BLATHERING
SOME DRIVEL; YOU
SHOULDN’T BE SUCH
A CHATTERBOX, SINCE
OTHERS HERE ARE
BETTER [THAN YOU].

ILIAD 23.474–479



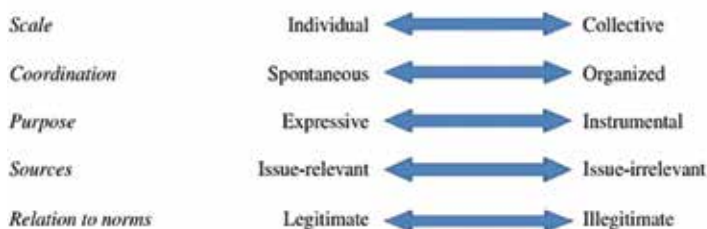
Sure enough, Ajax becomes even angrier at this point: according to Homer, he rushes “to counter with harsh words, and the dispute would have become even greater” (*Iliad* 23.489–490) were it not for Achilles’s timely intervention. Achilles, here in the guise of a stern security guard, points out that the two men’s behavior is unbecoming and orders them to “sit down and watch the horses.” Ajax and Idomeneus are suitably chastened and presumably return to their seats, since we hear no more of the conflict at this point. Homer then turns his attention to the end of the race, and we learn that, just as Idomeneus predicted, Diomedes is the first to reach the finish line.

The episode is both an entertaining aside and one that fits into broader frameworks of conflict and conflict resolution that resound throughout the *Iliad*. But it is also an element of realism in the poem, an incident that must surely have reflected the world of Homer’s audience, and—intriguingly—one that demonstrates many of the hallmarks of violence and aggression in modern sports cultures. In what follows, I begin by analyzing the behavior of Ajax and Idomeneus from the standpoint of modern sociological theories, from which we can see that the dispute falls very much into familiar categories of conflict among spectators. From there I turn to ancient commentators, for whom the scene is easily reminiscent of their own lived experiences, and elaborate further on the points that they raise. Ultimately, we shall see that Homer’s depiction of a dispute in the stands seems at home both in the world of archaic Greece and in our own, which in turn suggests that the behavior of spectators at sporting events may have changed very little over the past three millennia.

AGGRESSION IN THE STANDS: MODERN FRAMEWORKS FOR VIEWING THE DISPUTE BETWEEN AJAX AND IDOMENEUS

Aggression and violence at and around sporting events is now recognized as a quasi-universal phenomenon. Although its manifestations and root causes are variegated, it may be broadly defined as “acts of verbal or physical aggression (threatened or actual), perpetrated by ... fans at, or away from, the sports arena that may result in injury to person or damage to property” (Young 2012, 42, and Spaaij 2014, 147). Ajax’s attack on Idomeneus is clearly an act of verbal aggression perpetrated at the arena, and the rapid escalation that follows strongly suggests that it could have resulted in more destructive outcomes.

The specific elements of Ajax’s attack, in particular, fit parameters that are familiar to modern social scientists. Within the realm of scholarship on spectator violence and aggression, numerous elements have been observed that can be developed along a series of continua. The following chart (Spaaij 2014, fig. 1) summarizes concisely the range of possibilities and helps us to conceptualize the dynamics of the confrontation between Ajax and Idomeneus:



In most of the categories, the dispute, and especially Ajax’s behavior, can be placed on the left side of the continuum. Both Ajax and Idomeneus are individual agents rather than collective actors (as is the case with many contemporary hooligan groups). The initial attack appears to be spontaneous, rather than planned, and so too is Idomeneus’s response. The divide between “expressive” and “instrumental” behavior, however, is trickier: as defined by Dunning (1983, 131), the distinction is between violence or aggression that is “engaged in as an emotionally satisfying and pleasurable ‘end in itself’” (i.e., expressive) and that which is “rationally chosen as a means for securing the achievement of a given goal” (i.e., instrumental). In this light, Ajax’s behavior can be seen as instrumental, his goal being to silence Idomeneus, but given Idomeneus’s comment that Ajax is “good at quarrels,” this may also simply be something the latter enjoys. Ajax’s behavior may thus be both instrumental and expressive, as is often the case with real-world perpetrators of violence and aggression at sporting events.

The final two categories are again straightforward. Based on our Homeric evidence, which provides no implication of prior bad blood between Ajax and Idomeneus, the conflict appears to be “issue irrelevant,” which is to say that its source lies “inside the sports arena” itself. The final category (“legitimate” vs. “illegitimate” acts of aggression or violence) concerns whether the disputants violate social or cultural norms. In this case, Achilles definitively suggests that both Ajax’s and Idomeneus’s aggressive stances are unacceptable and that they themselves know this: “even you two would be annoyed if someone else were acting this way” (*Iliad* 23.494). In other words, as with most incidents of sports-spectator violence, their behavior is recognizably bad.

Other, more generic elements correspond to what experts in the field know about incidents of sports violence. Like the majority of agents of aggression at contemporary arenas, Ajax is a young male. Given the demographics of Homer’s Achaean army (and indeed of many a sports arena), it is hardly notable that the aggressor at the funeral games is male. It is somewhat more notable, however, that Homer specifically sets Ajax, the younger man, as the aggressor in his conflict. Finally, the combative nature of the race fits with studies that have shown that aggression in the arena tends to lead to an increase in violence in the stands and outside of stadiums. Even though Ajax and Idomeneus do not actually see the contentious on-track duels between Eumelus and Diomedes or (later) between Menelaus and Antilochus, from the standpoint of the external audience, these events take place immediately before we hear of the fight in the stands. In a sense, then, Homer simulates the experience of real spectators, whose tensions often explode after the occurrence of violent episodes.

Only one major aspect of modern sports-spectator violence is lacking: any apparent attachment between the disputants and the competitors in the chariot race. Experts have shown repeatedly that a strong “identification” with a specific team greatly increases the chances that an individual will engage in or approve of deviant behavior in and around the sports arena. But Homer gives us no indication whatsoever whether either Ajax or Idomeneus has a strong rooting interest in Eumelus or Diomedes. We might hypothesize that Ajax, a Locrian, might feel some affinity for Eumelus, a Thesalian, on the basis of geographical vicinity, and that Idomeneus’s

report that Eumelus is no longer in the lead thus irks Ajax. But the text neither supports nor undermines this supposition in any way, and the connection is tenuous. As we shall see, however, the Homeric scholiasts suggest another motive that may have been a catalyst for Ajax's affront.

AJAX, IDOMENEUS, AND ANCIENT EVIDENCE OF UNRULY FANS

While modern scholars have at times seemed baffled by Homer's inclusion of a fight between spectators, what struck ancient scholiasts (commentators) was the similarity between Ajax and Idomeneus and the behavior of fans in their own time. At *Iliad* 23.476, where Ajax makes a pointed comment about Idomeneus's age ("you're by no means the youngest of the Argives"), an ancient commentator simply notes that this type of "abuse" was typical of spectators at the time. When Achilles first rises to intervene, the scholiasts suggest that he is playing the part of an *agōnothetēs* (the person who presides over or judges a competition) who "ensures proper behavior." And in response to Achilles's demand that Ajax and Idomeneus sit down and watch the end of the race, one scholiast draws a comparison to "older and even-tempered spectators who want nothing to be anticipated ahead of time." To ancient commentators, then, the contours of the conflict (and its resolution) are utterly familiar, and Ajax's aggression is not totally without motive, even if it is excessive.

Moreover, this final point about "spectators who want nothing to be anticipated" is relevant to the root cause of the conflict. Idomeneus, drawing on his superior vantage point, does rather spoil the outcome of the race for the rest of the Achaeans. While Ajax is neither older nor even-tempered, he certainly reacts to the same type of behavior described by the scholiast. Moreover, although Ajax does not specifically complain that Idomeneus has ruined the end of the race, the very first point of his address is Idomeneus's "hasty blather." Here too we can see how, for the ancient Greeks at least, the behaviors that Homer describes are utterly familiar.

ON GAMBLING, VIOLENCE, AND TIMELY INTERVENTIONS

As outlined above, after Ajax's insults, Idomeneus suggests that the two of them settle matters with a wager. At this point, Achilles demands that they put an end to their quarrel, but not before Homer suggests that the confrontation was on the verge of becoming physical. Here too, Homer appears to draw on connections between gambling and violence that must have been familiar to the ancient Greeks.

Numerous studies over the past two decades have attempted to quantify the correlation between gambling (or at least gamblers) and violent or aggressive behavior. The question of whether gambling actually leads to or provokes violence, however, has been more difficult to prove, at least on an empirical level. But thanks to some ingenious approaches, recent studies have succeeded in producing solid evidence that competitive gambling—when two people wager against each other on a given proposition—leads to greater feelings of antipathy, and in particular to an increased propensity for aggression. In one study, for example, when competitive gamblers were given "the opportunity to determine the amount of hot sauce to be

given to their opponent," losers were far more likely than winners to "force" their opponents to ingest an uncomfortable amount of hot sauce (Wee and Pang 2018, 147). In other words, the very scenario that Idomeneus suggests is one that has been shown to inflame interpersonal conflicts.

There is little reason to believe that the psychological effects of competitive gambling were dramatically different in the ancient Greek world, though we lack direct evidence on the matter. In fact, this lack can easily be explained by the dearth of evidence regarding gambling in general, as there are very few in-depth discussions of it in classical sources, and essentially none at all in archaic sources. What we can say for certain is that gambling was a common leisure activity and the Greeks were acutely aware of the problematic nature of the pastime. For example, in Aristophanes's *Ecclesiazousai*, gambling is something that will disappear from Praxagora's reformed and ideal city, along with lawsuits and thieving. From Xenophon, we learn that Socrates lumps gamblers into the same category as those "doing anything worthless or harmful" (*Memorabilia* 1.2.57). A few decades later, Aristotle classifies gamblers among the "greedy" and "miserly," along with burglars and thieves (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1122a). In short, the notion of gambling as an unedifying occupation seems well established by the classical era.

Clearly, Homer did not have access to the latest empirical studies on gambling and violence. But because the link between gambling and violence is an easily observed phenomenon, and one that occurs transculturally and transhistorically, it is reasonable to assume that it was an issue in ancient Greece, particularly given gambling's negative reputation in our few ancient sources. As such, in suggesting that a competitive bet would set Idomeneus and Ajax on a path to physical confrontation, we can hypothesize that Homer is drawing on lived experiences of the archaic Greek era—experiences that also happen to mirror dynamics that are regularly documented in the modern world.

HOMER AND SPECTATOR VIOLENCE IN THE ARCHAIC GREEK WORLD

As we have seen, the behavior of Ajax and Idomeneus corresponds with both contemporary scholars' and ancient scholiasts' observations of violence and aggression in the stands at sporting events. The scholiasts were writing long after Homer himself—primarily in the Roman era—so their observations do not, of course, prove that the problem of spectator violence existed in archaic Greece. So here again we are faced with the issue that Homer is the only archaic author (or source) to treat the subject in any form whatsoever.

Nevertheless, we can trace evidence of restive spectators at least back to the classical era. A fifth-century BCE inscription from Delphi, home of the Pythian games, specifically bans wine "in the proximity of the race course," with a considerable fine levied as punishment (five drachmas, or approximately five days' pay for a skilled laborer). This ban is analogous to modern prohibitions of alcohol in and around football stadiums in various parts of the world, and as





with contemporary bans, it seems safe to assume that the restrictions in Delphi were intended to curb disorderly behavior. Moreover, the Delphian decree includes a stipulation that half of the fine be given as a reward to the person who informed on the misconduct, suggesting that reducing this behavior was a priority.

Another inscription at Delphi reveals a contract to construct fencing near or around the stadium. No further details are given, but the purpose of building fencing near a stadium can only be to manage crowds. The inscription dates only to the third century BCE, but since it is a list of works that would need to be done regularly to prepare for the Pythian games (every four years), the practice of fencing the stadium very likely predates the inscription; indeed, the vague

description of the work in question seems to confirm this, as it implies that the procedure was common enough that no further explanation was needed. Above all, there is every reason to believe that problems with crowd control and behavior were not unique to Delphi but were in fact the norm at the great athletic contests in the Greek world in the classical era.

All of this does not provide positive confirmation that spectator violence was an issue in Homer's time, but it is certainly suggestive. What we can say for certain is, first, that the scholiasts readily identify the typologies of Ajax's and Idomeneus's behavior as typical of spectators at athletic events, and second, that spectator violence had become enough of a problem by the classical and Hellenistic periods that strong institutional measures were taken to curtail that behavior. All of this makes it reasonable to conclude that Homer is drawing on contemporary examples of sports-spectator violence and aggression in creating his depiction of Ajax's and Idomeneus's bad behavior. What is perhaps most striking, however, is how closely his fans' behavior mirrors what legions of social scientists and casual observers see at sporting events around the world today.

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Panathenaic prize amphora depicting horse chariot race, ca. 480-490 BCE (courtesy of the Getty Museum).

MAKING A LIVING OFF THE DEAD

BODY BROKERS IN PTOLEMAIC EGYPT

by Brian P. Muhs and Foy D. Scalf



“I have not damaged the embalming” (P. Hawara 4 a = TM 41383 and P. Hawara 4 b = TM 41384). These are the words of a hypothetical oath that would have been made by an ancient Egyptian body broker named Achomneuis on March 11, 220 BCE, before the god Tesenuphis. Achomneuis had a contract to bury the husband of a woman in the village of Hawara in the Fayum. He was required to take an oath that he would fulfill his duties for the safe handling of the body as well as its transportation and interment in the necropolis. For these tasks he would have been paid, and in turn he would have used a portion of his proceeds to pay the necessary fees to the local authorities to legally transport and bury the dead. In Ptolemaic Egypt (332–30 BCE) there was big money to be made by the living off the dead. A massive funerary industry helped fuel sectors of the state economy through associated fees and taxes. These body brokers were priests known as “seal-bearers of the god,” “embalmers,” or “water pourers.” The activities of these priests can be partially reconstructed from the archives they left behind documenting their business dealings. The contract for Achomneuis, as well as his client’s quitclaim attesting to his successful fulfillment of the husband’s burial, are still preserved as part of a large collection of texts known as the Hawara Embalmer’s Archive. Papyrus documents from several families of these embalmers are held in the OI (*Oriental Institute Hawara Papyri*) and are displayed as prominent examples of Demotic texts in the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian gallery (fig. 1).

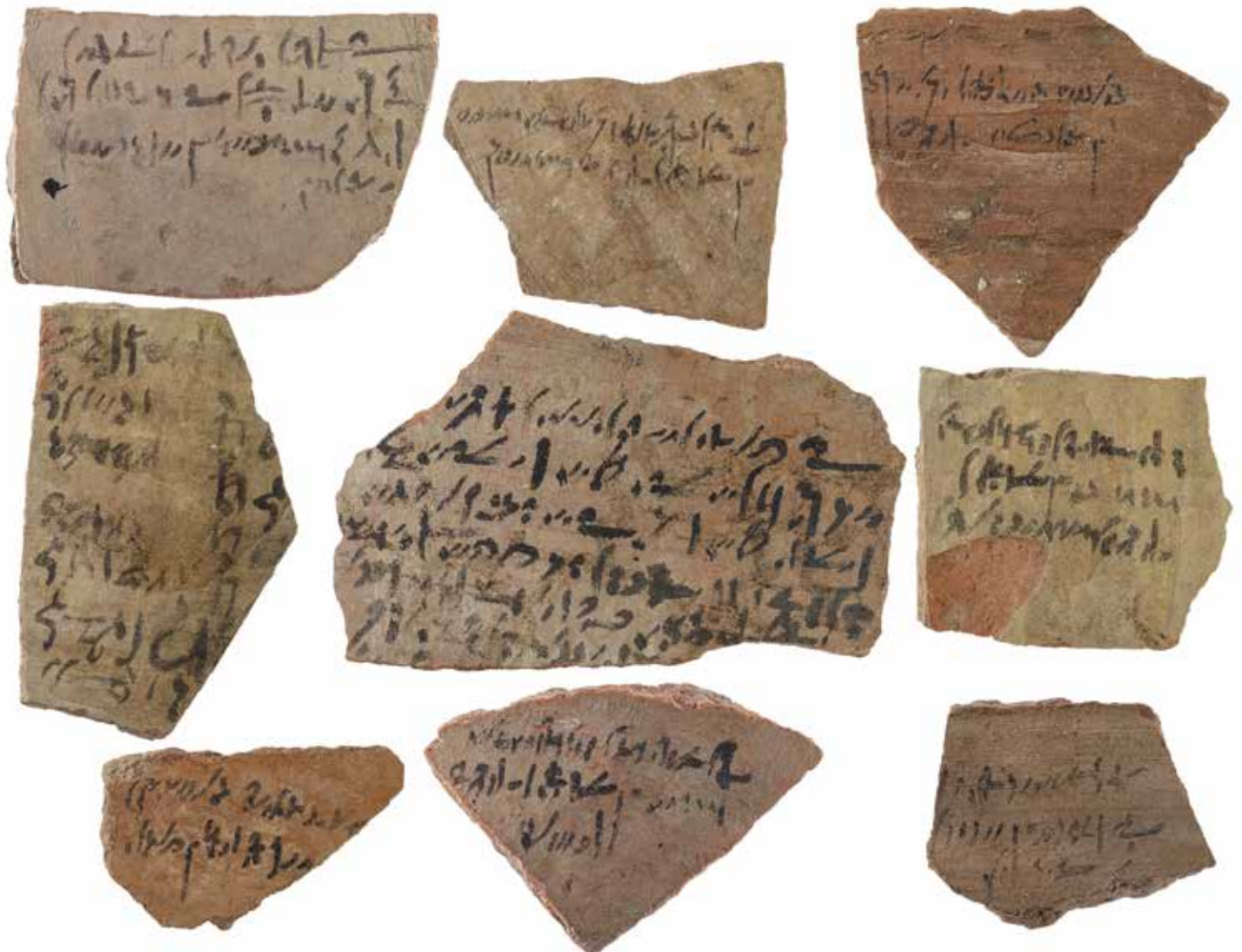
LIVING AMONG THE DEAD

While Achomneuis lived and worked in Hawara, he had fellow contemporaries in the same profession throughout Egypt. Much farther to the south in the city of Thebes, a man named Thotsutmis, son of Panouphis, lived during the early Ptolemaic Period, between 261 and 225 BCE. Like Achomneuis, Thotsutmis was a type of ancient Egyptian body broker or mortuary priest called in Egyptian a “water pourer,” named as such because one of his duties was to offer libations as part of the cult of the dead. Traditionally the eldest son of the deceased was supposed to arrange for the burial and make the offerings at the tomb, but many families found it more convenient to pay a stipend to a “water pourer” to carry out these tasks instead. A “water pourer” could spend every day in the cemetery walking among the tombs and serving dozens of deceased individuals, thereby earning a comfortable living. Mortuary priests and “water pourers” like Thotsutmis frequently treated the cemeteries where they worked as their offices, storing their personal documents there for safekeeping. Receipts written in Demotic and Greek on fragments of broken pottery associated with the business archive of Thotsutmis were discovered by Ambrose Lansing in excavations conducted on behalf of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1915–1916. These receipts came into the possession of University of Chicago Egyptologist William F. Edgerton and are today housed in the OI Museum (fig. 2).

Because these business records were stored in cemeteries out in the arid desert areas away from the cultivation zone, many more personal documents of mortuary priests have survived than those of other Egyptians who lived in cities, towns, and villages amid the green fields along the Nile, which flooded every year. Indeed, so many archives belonging to mortuary priests have survived that it is possible to follow several families of mortuary priests at Thebes through multiple generations, from just before Alexander conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, until the great Theban revolt that began in 205 BCE, when Egyptian rebels tried to cast off the yoke of Ptolemaic rule. The Ptolemies invested heavily in a state administrative apparatus designed to capture revenue from various social sectors, including economic transactions and agricultural holdings, as well as industries organized through the Egyptian temples. As a mortuary priest, Thotsutmis paid the great temple of Amun on the east bank of the Nile both for plots of land in the cemeteries to build tombs, and for the right to bury deceased individuals in those tombs. Most of the receipts preserved in his archive are associated with his work in the necropolis such as payments for the burial tax and burial plots. Although the Ptolemaic administration had a vested financial interest in these activities, nonetheless, Thotsutmis's profession as a mortuary priest was quintessentially Egyptian, having been practiced for centuries in the cemeteries on the west bank of the Nile.

OPPOSITE: Figure 1. The beginning (right side) of a papyrus from the Hawara archive inscribed with a Demotic text documenting the transfer of property from Achomneuis to his son Petosire, including rights to his business dealings in the necropolis. Part of Achomneuis's titles "seal-bearer of the god and embalmer" can be seen in the oversized loop sign in the first line toward the left (OIM E25262, photo by Thomas Van Eynde).

BELOW: Figure 2. Broken pottery fragments, called *ostraca*, inscribed with Demotic texts noting payments of fees and taxes for Thotsutmis, his family members, and associates (photos by Austin Kramer).





LEFT: Figure 3. Using layered images in Adobe Photoshop to produce highly accurate drawings of traces of ink on the surface (image by Foy Scalf).

OPPOSITE: Figure 4. A hypothetical reconstruction of the family of Thotsutmis based on surviving archives.

THE GIRLS NEXT DOOR

As revealed by finds of inscribed papyri and potsherds like the Thotsutmis archive, families kept extensive documentation of their necropolis businesses and related holdings. In fact, we know quite a lot about Thotsutmis and his family from related papyri archives that had belonged to his descendants; these documents supplement the OI potsherd archive, helping to flesh out the details of their lives and work. While many people in Thebes at this time could have the name Thotsutmis, we were able to correlate the OI's archive with the associated papyri because of Thotsutmis's relatives. Both archives provide the same name for his father, Panouphis, and both archives document associated business transactions with his brother Psenenteris and their children. Therefore, we can be reasonably certain that the Thotsutmis, son of Panouphis, and his brother Psenenteris, son of Panouphis, are the same individuals mentioned in both sets of records.

The preserved papyrus archives of these mortuary priests mostly consisted of contracts written in Demotic, sometimes with registration notes in Greek. Every time a piece of property was transferred from one owner to another, the previous owner wrote a Demotic contract and gave it to the new owner, along with every previous contract written concerning the property. Contracts were thus written for sales, inheritances, and even marriages, and they concerned the houses where the mortuary priests lived, as well as the tombs from which they derived their incomes. From these archives, we know that the mortuary industry in the Theban region was dominated by a small number of interrelated families who used their family and business networks to amass and control wealth.

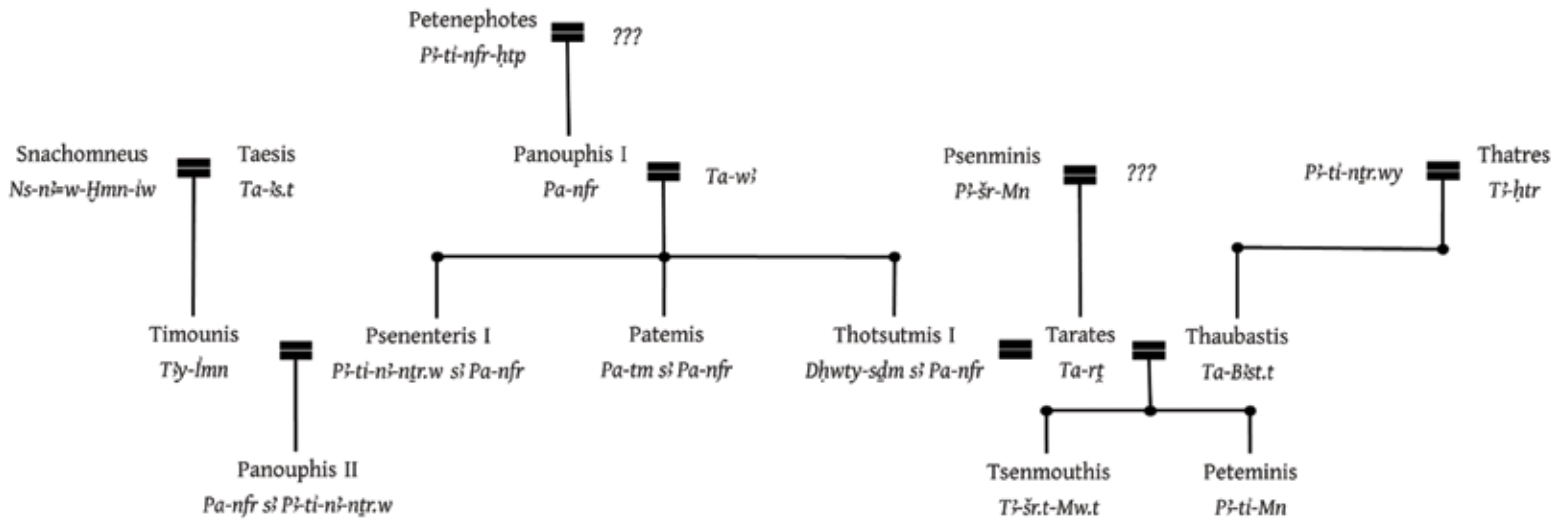
It is clear from the documentary records that the leading families of Theban mortuary priests lived together in the same neighborhood, and their sons frequently married the daughters of their next-door neighbors. These marriages were designed, at least in part, to keep their properties from being dispersed through inheritance to outsiders. Through these strategies, a single extended family could amass enormous wealth and use those capital assets to perpetuate their influence and generate further profits through investments, generation after generation. Where does Thotsutmis and his family fit into this complex social hierarchy?

AN OUTSIDER FAMILY?

To begin answering this question, we had to read, catalog, and analyze the texts from the archive of Thotsutmis. Technological tools such as Adobe Photoshop allowed us to digitally “lift” the ink off the messy backgrounds and damaged surfaces of the ostraca by layering a series of images taken with different filters and settings (fig. 3). Blending and shifting between the images brought out details that cannot be seen in a single photograph or with the naked eye, providing an unparalleled foundation to apply a digital stippling technique that produces high-quality and extremely accurate drawings. Through a close examination of the texts and organizing the textual information with the help of databases such as the OI's EMu digital repository and OCHRE, we were able to piece together a microhistory of Thotsutmis and his family.

In some ways, the family of Thotsutmis, son of Panouphis, resembles other families of Theban mortuary priests as attested by the papyri and ostraca that have survived. Like the leading families in the body-broking business, it was a family affair for Thotsutmis (fig. 4). We know that his father Panouphis, his brothers Psenenteris and Patemis, and his nephew Panouphis were all “water pourer” priests. A now-scattered archive of ostraca purchased by American travelers to Egypt in 1848 documents primarily the activities of the father, Panouphis, in the early third century BCE, when Egypt had just come under Ptolemaic rule. In the early years of the reign of Ptolemy II, Panouphis was already paying the burial tax, for which he was issued receipts on ostraca, as he tried to establish himself in the competitive world of burying bodies.

The archive of Thotsutmis in the OI picks up where the archive of his father Panouphis left off. His receipts confirm him and his brother Psenenteris as “water pourers” who are still paying their body-broking fees. Yet another archive, this one belonging to Thotsutmis's nephew, who was named Panouphis after his grandfather, contained three papyri with contracts written in Demotic that bear witness to how they attempted to keep their accumulated capital in the family through legal inheritance. These documents are key to understanding the family's fate in trying to set up their business for the long-term future.



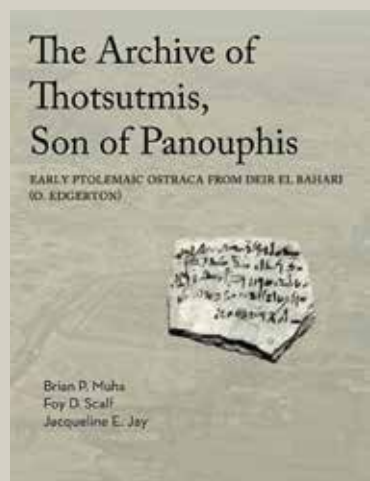
When Thotsutmis took over the family mortuary business from his father Panouphis, there was a major network of interrelated families controlling the majority of the necropolis enterprise on the west bank of Thebes. These families have left extensive documentation in the form of archival documents covering over a century, including those belonging to Teos and Thabis (327–311 BCE); Panouphis and Senatumis (230–218 BCE); Pechutes, son of Pchorchonsis (334–191 BCE); Psenminis, son of Bel (317–217 BCE); and Teineni, daughter of Teos (324–274 BCE). All these individuals belonged to a few families closely connected by intermarriages. It is difficult to tell whether our picture of these families' dominance is reflective of reality, or if our vision is skewed by the patchy and inconsistent survival of evidence. Based on what does exist, the family of Thotsutmis seems to be on the outside of the inner circle. Despite having extensive information for all these families, we do not yet have any evidence for members of the family of Thotsutmis marrying into the more dominant families' networks. Despite being "well-to-do people, who seem to possess a fair amount of property" (as Richard Jasnow described the people of the Hawara archive), there are indications that Thotsutmis and his family were on the fringe, trying to establish a foothold for their business ventures. In addition to a lack of intermarriage between the families, the tax receipts of Thotsutmis were not found together with the tax receipts of other families.

The fate of what wealth Thotsutmis, his brothers, his wives, and his children were able to build is a testament to the power of the larger rival family of "water pourers." From surviving Demotic contracts written on papyri now in the British Museum, we can reconstruct the following sequence of events. Thotsutmis had two brothers, Psenenteris and Patemis. Each of them held rights to perform mortuary service at various tombs in the necropolis, for which they were paid. Patemis may have died without heirs because his property was divided between his elder brother Psenenteris and his other brother Thotsutmis. The share belonging to Psenenteris was passed along to his son Panouphis (nephew of Thotsutmis), presumably because his father Psenenteris had died. Panouphis documented this inheritance in a set of papyrus contracts with his uncle Thotsutmis. The shares belonging to Thotsutmis for this property were eventually transferred to his second wife Thaubastis, and she ultimately released

these claims to her nephew-in-law Panouphis, thereby leaving all this property in the hands of the younger generation. At this point, the trail of documentation breaks off and we do not know what happened with the property inherited by Panouphis, as we only have the papyri from his archive documenting these transfers and nothing later.

However, we do have a later document from a woman named Tsenmouthis, who was the daughter of Thotsutmis and Thaubastis. The document is a contract made by Tsenmouthis to cede all rights to a series of tombs to another man. That man's name is Panas, and he was a member of one of the dominant families of priests that is the focus of our surviving evidence. On the same day that he is acquiring the rights to tombs from Tsenmouthis, he is part of another contract acquiring further rights from yet another man. A very ambitious family indeed! When Tsenmouthis turns over the rights to these tombs to Panas, it is the last we hear of the family of Thotsutmis (at least so far!). Ultimately, it seems that their business interests and property were absorbed by the more powerful necropolis corporation, leaving the archive of ostraca in the OI that mentions their names as one of the few testaments to their attempt at making it as body brokers in Ptolemaic Egypt.

Learn more about the archive of Thotsutmis in OIP 146: bit.ly/OIP146





NIPPUR IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

by Abbas Alizadeh

The Oriental Institute's twenty-first season of excavations at Nippur began, after several delays, on November 23, 2021, and lasted until December 14. In 2019 we had obtained a permit to explore Tell Drehem and Dlehim, two important nearby satellites of Nippur. Drehem is the local name for the Sumerian city of Puzriš-Dagān, which was a distribution center during the Ur III period (2112–2004 BCE). The site was an important center charged with the management and distribution of livestock and precious metals, as well as footwear production. All animals from donations, tribute, and booty were sent and registered in Puzriš-Dagān. They were then sent to herds in the land and to the branches in Nippur and Ur, as well as to other cities.

This site is flat except for a square prominence in its southern part. When we visited the site in 2019, traces of buildings were visible on the surface. But the site has been used as pasture by large herds of camels, and those traces have been completely eroded. We intended to devote all our effort in the twenty-first season to Puzriš-Dagān. After we mapped the site and laid out a 10 × 10 m square, we began removing the topsoil and soon reached a baked-brick pavement.



But around 11 a.m., the local representative approached me with a message from Baghdad that because our work would attract looters, we could not continue our work unless a police station was established at the site, much the same as at Nippur and some other major sites in Iraq. The apprehension of the Iraqi officials was justified, as thousands of tablets had been looted in the past from this Sumerian distribution center. We have discussed the plan for the presence of the local police force at the site for the next season.

We returned to Nippur to continue our work from the previous season, when we had partially uncovered a major Parthian building. The walls of this rectangular building are over a meter wide, suggesting that the building had an upper story, and the large amount of crushed mudbricks and matting on the floors in this building supports this idea. The building consists of a large, elongated hall and square rooms. The hall was furnished with a low mudbrick bench along its southern wall. Right in front of this bench, we found a large vat. Considering that this hall and other rooms in the building lack features and debris that are normally associated with living spaces, we thought that this building perhaps served as a local pub. The vat was too fragile to remove. At the end of the season, we preserved it by covering it with baked bricks that are scattered across the surface of Nippur.

One of our major concerns at Nippur was how to avoid catching the COVID-19 virus. Almost no one in Afek (the nearby town), our workers, or the policemen and guards at the site wore a mask. The same was the case in major cities and even in Baghdad. Remarkably, during the season we neither saw nor heard of any of our workers, policemen, or local guards falling prey to the virus. I do not know about the other cities in Iraq, but it seemed that after the initial wave, which did kill some, Afek's population developed strong immunity against the virus.

We all had been fully vaccinated, of course, but we still could test positive. This was also a major concern and source of anxiety. We had to be tested forty-eight hours before our flight. A positive result meant that we had to postpone our departure and stay in a hotel for at least ten days and get tested again, all resulting in substantial financial loss. Fortunately, we all tested negative and departed as scheduled.



OPPOSITE TOP: Aerial photo of Puzriš-Dagan, 2021 (photo by Kourosh Mohammadkhani).

OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Camel herds at Puzriš-Dagan, 2021 (photo by Abbas Alizadeh).

ABOVE: 2021 season staff, local workers, and house guard (photo by Kourosh Mohammadkhani).

RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM: Parthian-period "pub"; preservation of the vat; Parthian-period "pub" and its modern patrons; Ur III baked brick pavement at Drehem (photos by Abbas Alizadeh).

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Night at the OI Museum

Saturday, April 23, 3–9pm

Featuring a pizza party and screening of the film *Night at the Museum* starting at 6pm!

Explore the OI after hours! You and your family are invited to an afternoon of discovery and entertainment at the OI. Explore the collections with scavenger hunts, connect with the ancient world through arts and crafts, and take in a story or two in our galleries. As the museum closes we will host a pizza party and family-friendly screening in Breasted Hall, before embarking on a nighttime tour for a peek at what goes on when the doors are locked!

Free for members; \$7 for nonmembers

To register, visit: bit.ly/NightatOI

Persepolis after Lindon Smith: The Modernist Afterlife of the Ruins

Tuesday, April 26, 5pm | online on Zoom

Talinn Grigor | NELC PhD student

Join Talinn Grigor as she traces the art history of the ruins of Persepolis following its excavation by Ernst Herzfeld and artistic renderings by Joseph Lindon Smith in the 1930s, including Reza Shah's 1930s urban reform in Tehran and Mohammad Reza Shah's 1971 celebration of the "2,500-Year Anniversary of the Founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great." This lecture is in connection with the OI Museum special exhibition, *Joseph Lindon Smith: The Persepolis Paintings*, on display through August 28: <https://oi100.uchicago.edu/jls>.

To register, visit: <https://oim-grigor.eventbrite.com>

May Members' Lecture

Wednesday, May 4, 7pm | live in Breasted Hall and streaming on OI YouTube

Marian Feldman | Johns Hopkins University

Join us as we welcome Marian Feldman for a lecture that explores Akkadian art, which is heralded as an innovative breakthrough in large part due to its naturalistic renderings. Our own fascination with spatial illusionism, born of centuries of perspectivism and the standard of Italian Renaissance artistic production, celebrates these Akkadian artworks without examining their original motivating factors, nor carefully analyzing their formal characteristics. In fact, spatial illusionism is rarely evident, and the emphasis instead can be seen to be on the corporeal existence of physical things on their own, which Feldman will connect to new, totalizing powers claimed by the Akkadian kings in their territorial unification of the southern Mesopotamian city-states.

To register for in-person attendance, visit: bit.ly/OIMayLecture

We are excited about our return to in-person events at the OI! This April we will hold a family members' night at the museum, and the spring will also see a Young Professionals' behind-the-scenes tour and a Breasted Society Salon. Keep an eye out this summer for a members' appreciation day!

Ancient Game Day

Saturday, May 21, 12:30–2:30pm

Join us outside the OI for Ancient Game Day! Play ancient games and learn fun facts about your favorite pastimes and their complex history. Join us in the galleries, where experts will lead tours highlighting different artifacts from our collections. You can also create a rendition of an ancient game to take home with you or even make up your own game in our classroom.

Free

OI Rug Sale

May 20–22

The OI rug sale returns! Stop by the tent during UChicago Alumni Weekend to shop a selection of imported and handmade rugs.

June Members' Lecture

Wednesday, June 1, 7pm | live in Breasted Hall and streaming on OI YouTube

Peter Der Manuelian | Harvard University

The OI welcomes back alumnus Peter Der Manuelian for our final lecture of the academic year! In this illustrated talk, Der Manuelian, Harvard University's Giza Project director, will summarize some of the great discoveries, archaeological significance, and fascinating personalities behind the expeditions to the tombs and temples surrounding the famous Giza Pyramids. He will present new technologies for bringing old digs back to life for international collaborative research and teaching.

To register for in-person attendance, visit: bit.ly/OIJuneLecture



Marian Feldman (left)
Peter Der Manuelian (above)

COURSES

Queens and Princesses in the Ancient World (8 weeks)

Tuesdays, 5–7pm, May 3–June 21 | live and recorded

Tasha Vorderstrasse | PhD, University and Continuing Education Program coordinator

This class looks at the lives of queens and princesses across the ancient world in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Nubia, and Anatolia. Through an examination of the lives of these queens and princesses, we can better understand their position within the historical context in which they lived. The class will also look at what actual evidence we have for these queens and princesses and how it allows us to reconstruct their positions and their lives. In the final week, we will look at arguably the most famous of all ancient queens, Cleopatra VII. In addition to examining and comparing the lives of different queens and princesses across geographical regions and time periods, the class will explore the way they have been studied in the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries and how that impacts the way we view them today.

\$392 (nonmembers), \$314 (members), \$157 (volunteers/docents /OI travel participants), \$98 (UChicago, Lab, Charter students, faculty, and staff)

Register at: bit.ly/QueensPrincesses

BELOW: Edmonia Lewis, *The Death of Cleopatra*, Smithsonian American Art Museum 1994.17. Gift of the Historical Society of Forest Park, Illinois.

BELOW RIGHT: Princess Bintanath, daughter of Ramses II, at Abu Simbel (P. 2414 / N. 1477).



Community Archaeology (4 weeks)

Thursdays, 5–7pm, May 19–June 9 | live and recorded

Tasha Vorderstrasse | University and Continuing Education Program coordinator

There is an increasing feeling in archaeological practice that archaeology cannot be done without the active participation of the local community in which it happens. The exact way community archaeology happens varies from one project to another, but the idea is for local communities to be involved in what is happening during the archaeological exploration, including but not limited to helping to determine the research priorities of archaeological projects, helping with the interpretation of archaeological sites, participating in archaeological projects, and collaborating with signage and museums at archaeological sites. This class will examine various case studies to better understand the way community archaeology is practiced in Africa and the Middle East.

\$196 (nonmembers), \$157 (members), \$78 (volunteers/docents /OI travel participants), \$49 (UChicago, Lab, Charter students, faculty, and staff)

Register at: bit.ly/commarchaeology

Central Asia before the Achaemenids (6 weeks)

Thursdays, 5–7pm, June 16–July 21 | live and recorded

Teagan Walter | NELC PhD student

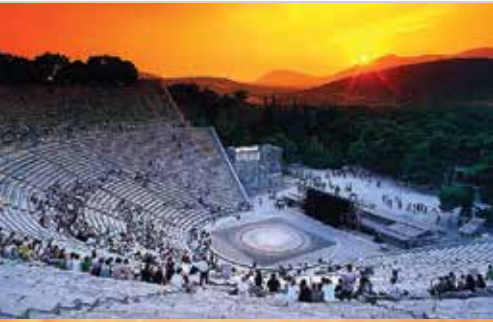
When Central Asia enters the written record, it is already a diverse region with a rich past. In this six-week course, we will explore the archaeology of this dynamic region to learn about this past, from the earliest human settlements to the Iron Age. We will see cities rise and fall as nomads create their own political systems. We will examine how these different groups interacted to shape this region and set the stage for its later history.

\$295 (nonmembers), \$236 (members), \$118 (volunteers/docents /OI travel participants), \$74 (UChicago, Lab, Charter students, faculty, and staff)

Register at: bit.ly/archasia



TRAVEL WITH THE OI



From Hittite Fortresses to Minoan Palaces

Greece and Turkey

June 10-26, 2022

Led by Theo van den Hout and Seth Estrin

Join us on an incredible journey through legendary landscapes and epic history as the OI combines two academic disciplines to navigate the intersections where East meets West. Experience the *Iliad* from the Hittite perspective as OI professor Theo van den Hout leads a march westward from Hattusa to Troy. In Turkey, we drive up the sky-blue coast of the Aegean to the scented bazaars of Istanbul. In Crete, we are met by art history professor Seth Estrin for an adventure through the stunning beauty of the Minoan world. As the sun sets on our travels, we head up the rugged mainland of Greece to Mycenae and raise a glass in the shadow of the Parthenon.

This tour currently has limited availability. If you are interested in booking a spot, please email oi-membership@uchicago.edu

For brochure and pricing, please visit bit.ly/OITurkeyGreece



In the Wake of the Phoenicians

Tunisia, Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain

October 8-18, 2022

Led by David Schloen

Celebrate new OI fieldwork with a spectacular journey across the Mediterranean. OI professor and archaeologist David Schloen will guide you through Tunisia, Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain. This tour focuses on the impact the Phoenicians and the cultures of the ancient Near East had in the western Mediterranean. The tour will explore the expansion of the Phoenicians across the region and will end with a private tour of the OI's Phoenician dig, which is set to open later this year.

If you are interested in booking a spot on this tour, please contact Arrangements Abroad at 800-221-1944 or 212-514-8921. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to oi-membership@uchicago.edu.

For the tour brochure and pricing, please visit bit.ly/OIPhoenicians



ORIENTAL INSTITUTE PIONEERS

We are pleased to offer this and future articles in a continuous series intended to honor the contributions of archaeologists to Iranian art and archaeology.

OF ARCHAEOLOGY IN IRAN

PINHAS DELOUGAZ

by Abbas Alizadeh

Pinhas Delougaz was born in 1901 in Ukraine and was educated at home until the age of twelve, when in 1913 he was sent to school in Palestine. After the outbreak of World War I, he decided to remain in Palestine to attend Gymnasium Herzlia in Tel Aviv. It was from 1913 to 1922, the period of transition from Turkish rule to the British Mandate in Palestine, that Delougaz became interested in the ancient Middle East, learned Arabic, and was an important member of the group of scholars who developed Hebrew as a modern language that is now spoken in Israel.

In 1922 Delougaz went to Paris to study mathematics and physics at the Sorbonne, where he developed his interest in architecture and art. In 1928–29 he participated in the Harvard–Baghdad School Expedition to Nuzi, Iraq. Following this expedition, in 1930, he joined Edward Chiera, director of the new Oriental Institute Iraq Expedition at Khorsabad. At the end of the season, Chiera assigned to Delougaz the difficult task of transporting the gigantic blocks of an Assyrian winged bull and reliefs from Khorsabad to the OI.

In 1930, a year after James Henry Breasted had appointed Henri Frankfort as the field director of the groundbreaking OI Diyala Expedition, Breasted met with Delougaz in Jerusalem and invited him to join the expedition and direct excavations at Khafajah, which Delougaz did until 1936. After World War II, in 1947, he obtained a general concession from the Iranian government to conduct archaeological investigations in lowland Susiana, southwestern Iran. But for reasons unknown, he was prevented from carrying out his fieldwork there. Thorkild Jacobsen, the director of the OI, then decided to send Donald E. McCown to Iran; McCown surveyed the southern and southeastern parts of the region and chose Tall-e Geser for excavations. Delougaz's opportunity to work in Iran came in 1961, after Robert McAdams reported the importance to the region of Chogha Mish, which he had located and surveyed in 1960–61. Delougaz revived his plans from the 1940s and returned to Susiana with Helene J. Kantor as co-director in 1961.

Delougaz was also the curator of the OI Museum from 1944 to 1967, after which he moved to the West Coast to become director of the Museum of Cultural History and Collection of Ethnic Art at the University of California at Los Angeles. Delougaz, however, continued his collaboration with the OI Iranian Prehistoric Project at Chogha Mish. On March 29, 1975, Delougaz climbed into the expedition's Land Rover to drive to another trench on the terrace of Chogha Mish. The car stopped midway, and when Helene Kantor sent a worker to find out the cause of the sudden stop, the worker found Delougaz dead, peacefully leaning on the steering wheel; the cause was a massive heart attack. Delougaz's body was transferred to Jerusalem and buried there, as he had wished.



TOP: Delougaz in his lab at the Oriental Institute, 1967.

BOTTOM: Delougaz paying workers at Chogha Mish, southwestern Iran, 1973.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

JEAN NYE

interviewed by Shirlee Hoffman

Jean Nye's initial Volunteer Spotlight interview appeared in the summer 2016 issue of *News & Notes*. At this time, we're asking Jean, as a veteran volunteer, to reflect on her experiences at the OI since then, especially during the now almost two-year-long pandemic. We begin by briefly summarizing what we learned about Jean in her previous interview (issue #230: oi.uchicago.edu/research/news-notes-quarterly-newsletter).

Jean became a volunteer in 2010 after retiring from a career first as teacher of elementary school music and special education and then as a children and family minister serving two Lutheran congregations. She had considered becoming a docent at other Chicago museums but decided to inquire about volunteering at the OI after she began exploring the OI's collections. In her photo, Jean is wearing a scarf that she bought at the famous Khan el-Khalili Suq in Cairo, during the autumn 2018 OI trip to Egypt.

In 2016, you were primarily giving tours and serving as the Tuesday docent captain. What have you been doing at the OI since 2016, especially during the pandemic when docents have been unable to give tours, and how have you maintained your connection to the OI?

What a strange couple of years we've been living through! When the pandemic so abruptly forced us to stay at home, I missed the OI terribly. It didn't feel like Tuesday without going there, having coffee in the volunteer office, and interacting with tour groups. So, I enrolled in an online course offered by the OI on the city of Megiddo. It was taught by doctoral candidate (now PhD) Joseph Cross and focused on how the objects in the Megiddo Gallery told the complex story of life in that ancient city. I continued to enroll in courses, on topics that varied from "Nubian Queens" to "Understanding the Past: Looking at Museums" to the "Archaeology of Bactria" to "Red Sea and Indian Ocean Trade in the Roman and Late Antique Periods." I learned a great deal from all of them, and got new ideas to incorporate into my tours.

Missing normal conversation and interaction with people was a more difficult issue, but Sue Geshwender, our volunteer manager, helped by continuing the monthly Volunteer Days. During these sessions on Zoom, we got to see each other's faces,

exchange greetings, get caught up on OI news from Sue, and then immerse ourselves in fascinating topics through lectures by faculty members, including time to ask questions. I am so grateful to the OI scholars who so generously shared their time and expertise with us.

Sue also continued our docent book club during the pandemic. Every couple of months we got together to discuss a book chosen by a faculty member or a volunteer with a focus on the ancient Near East or the work of the OI. The subjects were wide-ranging and often stretched our understanding into new areas of scholarship and research. Some of the most memorable recent books for me were *Kindred: Neanderthal Life, Love, Death, and Art* by Rebecca Wragg Sykes, *Veritas: A Harvard Professor, a Con Man, and the Gospel of Jesus' Wife* by Ariel Sabar, and *Belzoni: The Giant Archaeologists Love to Hate* by Ivor Noël Hume. These

book discussions also included a faculty member with particular interest in the topic to share their perspective.

They took me further back into prehistory, and further forward to explore related topics from more recent eras. They were another means by which I kept my sanity during the pandemic!

You chose to volunteer at the OI because you were "drawn in by the beauty of the objects and the stories those objects have to tell." Please tell us about some of the objects you have found most notable and how they have shaped your understanding of the ancient Near East.

I continue to be most moved by objects that reflect the daily life of real people in the ancient world. I love the child's tunic in the Egyptian gallery, for example. The rip at the neckline makes it easy to imagine a youngster in a hurry to get dressed in order to go outside to play or to help with daily chores. Objects that highlight the roles of women also fascinate me. In the Mesopotamian Gallery, I am drawn to examples of early poetry and hymns in the writing cases, reminding me that Enheduanna, daughter of King Sargon I, was the first known woman author to be published. In the Egyptian gallery I gravitate toward the mummy case of Meresamun, who was a "chantress in the inner chamber" of the temple. Most of all, I love the pottery throughout the OI collections, but especially in the Nubian gallery. I love the variety of shapes, forms, and designs they exhibit, which give pottery a central role in helping to date other objects found in proximity to it. I love it most of all because from the earliest times, people created these objects to be beautiful as well as functional. People have always needed beauty in their lives!



So much of the continuing education at the OI has moved online, available through Zoom and then on the OI's YouTube channel. What have you found to be the pros and cons of that shift?

This move toward increased use of technology has been thrust upon us all, for better or for worse. This has not been easy for me. My computer skills are basic, to say the least. But even though I far prefer in-person involvement, technology has helped to maintain my connection to the OI and to the people there. It has also expanded my knowledge base through the great variety of lectures and courses available online. In meetings where discussion is key, however, such as the volunteer book group, the Zoom format is awkward and sometimes frustrating. As we emerge from the pandemic, it is clear that much of what is good from technology will be maintained. It will be good to have the choice of attending lectures in person or online.

If you've been in the galleries recently, you have seen the newly arranged displays in the cases and in-depth labels. How do you think having all this information available will impact the role of the docents?

Since the OI opened up I have visited several times, and have enjoyed seeing the many thoughtful changes in the galleries. Jean Evans recently gave a very helpful Volunteer Day presentation on changes to the Mesopotamian Gallery. I am excited about the physical upgrades in lighting, traffic flow, and placement of the objects. I am even more excited about the way these changes will make it easier for docents to tell stories about life in ancient times. One particular example is the new and expanded information on the practices of gift giving in Mesopotamian temples. I will need training and practice in how to incorporate these changes into my tour.

I also appreciate very much several fairly new additions to the galleries, especially the cases highlighting objects from the early Islamic period, and the moving contemporary artwork of Michael Rachowitz. These large works, made almost entirely of "throwaway" items, draw attention to the numerous important objects in Iraq that are lost forever due to war and looting. I am proud of the many ways the OI is providing leadership both in its scholarship and in its museum practices, to meet the challenges of our complicated world.

What are your expectations of your own volunteering at the OI after the pandemic recedes and touring resumes?

I am still in "wait and see" mode. The OI is an important part of my life, so I know it will be important in my future. I want to continue interacting with visitors, particularly with children. If that means continuing to lead tours or be a volunteer captain, that would make me very happy. But I am also open to new possibilities: perhaps in educational outreach programs within the community, perhaps in ways that I can't even imagine at this point. I'm ready for whatever lies ahead.

Finally, given your additional years of experience since your last interview, what would you say now to someone who is thinking of volunteering at the OI?

I would encourage anyone with an interest in the ancient world to plunge right in! The OI offers opportunities for many different kinds of involvement from being a docent, to assisting faculty members in their research, to working in The Suq. What I have found at the OI is so much more than I originally imagined. In addition to being a place for learning and exploration of the ancient Near East, I have found a community of friends and colleagues. After the social deprivations of the pandemic, I am eager to participate again with this remarkable group of people, and I look forward to meeting the new volunteers who will join us.

This year, over **100 donors** came together to support the OI's Cultural Heritage Initiative and raised **over \$150,000** in just 24 hours.



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