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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Heraldry of Early Iranian Religion

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Writing has served to support both the economic and social structures underpinning religion and to express religious ideas, in most cases of its early use. This is particularly well documented in ancient Egypt and Mesoamerica, but less so in early Mesopotamia, notwithstanding the substantial architectural remains of what have been interpreted as temples, from ancient Mesopotamia. Evidence of religion is extremely illusive in the earliest texts from Iran, the so-called proto-Elamite texts, and the site most closely associated with the proto-Elamite texts, Susa, produced no architectural remains that can be recognized as religious buildings dating to this period. This might well be a feature of the archaeological practice of the lead excavator of Susa, Jacques de Morgan, rather than an actual reflection of the original situation at Susa.¹ Due to the dependency of proto-Elamite on proto-cuneiform, I will first discuss the evidence of religion in the proto-cuneiform texts, before surveying the proto-Elamite corpus. Due to the nature of early writing and its limited information on social and religious systems, I will also briefly discuss the glyptic evidence (in particular seals) for religion in both Late Uruk (Uruk V–III, *c.* 3500–3000 BCE) and the proto-Elamite period (*c.* 3100–2900 BCE).

INVENTION OF WRITING IN WESTERN ASIA

Writing in Western Asia was invented primarily in a response to a growing complexity in society and administration, and most early texts respond directly to the needs of an increasingly complex administration. The same has not been shown for the world's other pristine inventions of writing, where display of power and cult played a central role in the invention of writing (e.g., Baines 1989). Of course, the cult(s) of ancient Mesopotamia and Iran, at the time of the invention of writing, used symbols to broadcast their ideas and schemas, even though these are poorly understood and/or have not been identified; and of course the people of ancient Mesopotamia and Iran worshiped anthropomorphic deities, even though no certain images of these have been recovered in either Mesopotamia² or ancient Iran, and even though no depiction of humans have been recovered from the proto-Elamite period in ancient Iran (discussed later).

In a response to growing economic complexity in Southern Mesopotamia in the middle of the fourth millennium BCE, administrators began to encapsulate counters (called

tokens by specialists), that had existed for millennia, presumably to facilitate arithmetic operations, into clay envelopes to make the transactions permanent. These clay balls with counters (bullae with tokens) were usually impressed with the tokens kept inside, and seals on the outside. Shortly thereafter, administrators discarded the enclosed counters, producing flat clay tablets with impressions of the counters only, or representations of these with a stylus, and seal impressions. These objects, generally called numerical tablets, were in turn replaced by tablets with one or a few nonnumerical signs, the numero-ideographic tablets, which were then superseded by proper proto-cuneiform tablets with a complex structure and longer strings of nonnumerical signs coding complex information (Englund 1998a).³ Examples of all these text artifacts, except the developed proto-cuneiform texts of Level IVa–III,⁴ are found both in Southern Iraq and in Western Iran. By the time writing developed into a complex system, usually termed proto-cuneiform (Uruk IVa–III), scribes in Iran developed their own writing system, based on principles and signs loaned from Mesopotamia: most of the numerical signs and systems, as well as a number of core signs, in addition to the form, material, and tools of writing.⁵ This writing system is conventionally called proto-Elamite.

The corpus of proto-Elamite texts is large with more than 2,000 texts and fragments (primarily housed in the National Museum of Iran, Tehran, and the Louvre Museum, Paris), of which around 1,775 are published to date. The entire corpus has been transliterated in well-structured digital transliterations, using an unpublished sign list (Dahl n.d.) based loosely on Meriggi's 1974 sign list, forming a corpus of more than 10,000 lines of text. Contrary to the proto-cuneiform tablets, which are organized in what Peter Damerow called visual hierarchies (Damerow 2006), proto-Elamite tablets are written in a linear structure, with entries flowing across the line breaks, from right to left (top to bottom in the orientation of the tablets in modern publications). Totals are, when present, found on the reverse. The early texts have a simple structure, whereas later texts have a more complex structure; yet only a few texts have a multilevel structure with main entries and subentries comparable to the often more complex Late Uruk texts.⁶ The proto-Elamite signary is often described as having a large number of abstract sign forms, and it has been suggested that it contained a nested syllabary (Dahl 2019: 82–5).

LOANS AND BREAKS BETWEEN URUK AND SUSA

Given the proximity of Susa to Uruk, the fluctuations, even in historical periods, of where any border between Southern Mesopotamia and Khuzestan may have been (Potts 2021), the strong influence of Late Uruk culture on Susa, prior to Susa Acropolis Level 17 (but see Pittman 2013: 319–22), and the type and nature of the textual evidence, my starting point for this investigation is that the textual evidence for religion from Susa and Uruk in late fourth and early third millennia BCE is likely to be similar. However, the clear break between the two centers, following Susa Acropolis Level 17, and the introduction of new modes of artistic representation at Susa suggests that we may find evidence for religion in Susa not found in Uruk. Finally, the abrupt end to the use of writing at Susa, and in Iran as a whole, following Susa Acropolis Level 14, means that any identification of signs and symbols with divine beings remains very speculative. This is magnified by the fact that the signs of the proto-Elamite writing system were relatively abstract, making any identification based solely on graphical referent difficult.⁷

EVIDENCE OF RELIGION IN THE LATE URUK TEXTS

Lists of Offerings

Some Late Uruk texts⁸ may record offerings of foodstuff and textiles to, or in connection to, religious festivals.⁹ Englund (1998a: 143 fn. 329) suggested, with reference to Englund (2001, then forthcoming) that certain texts, for example, MSVO 1, 95 (IM 55578), recorded sacrificial offerings. In the concluding remarks of the published article, Englund (2001: 28) highlighted the similarities, both structural and relating to content, between such texts and much later documents detailing regular offerings, the so-called sa₂-du₁₁ texts.¹⁰ However, as pointed out by Englund (2001: 28), the recipient of the goods in these texts remains unknown, despite the inclusion of the sign combination often associated with the god Enlil, EN_a KID_a, in the text cited earlier (and Figure 15.1).¹¹

Lexical Lists

Although the lexical texts that make up a majority of the approximately 15 percent of proto-cuneiform texts that cannot be classified as administrative texts, and includes several compositions that survive into later periods, lexical lists enumerating divine names known from the slightly later Fara period (c. 2600–2500 BCE, see, e.g., the famous SF 1 [and SF 2–7, 23–24]), are unknown from the Late Uruk period (see Englund 1998a: fig. 24). The only possible lexical evidence for lists of divine names is the small fragment W 20713,1 preserving four entries of which two are entirely illegible apart from the initial numerical sign.¹² The two well-preserved entries of W 20713,1 list what appears, at first sight, to be two versions of the goddess Inanna (note, of course, that there is no hard evidence to read the sign combination AN MUŠ₃ as “Inanna, see also the next section). The fragment remains identified as a witness of an unidentified archaic lexical list. None of the two extant entries can be found in later god lists.

Names of Deities?

Given the many unanswered questions about the proto-cuneiform writing system, identifying names of deities in the proto-cuneiform texts remains difficult. The sign later used as a determinative for divine beings (then traditionally referred to as “dingir”) is attested in the Late Uruk texts (transliterated AN), and occasionally before one sign, at least, that later designated a deity (MUŠ₃, later used for the goddess Inanna), but since it is more frequently found in combinations that are harder to associate with the names of deities (such as in the lexical list “Archaic Metal,” for example [see <https://cdli.ucla.edu/Q000026>]), and in numerous unclear contexts, no clear conclusions as to its use can be reached. Together with “Inanna,” Enlil is the other god often claimed attested in late fourth early third millennia textual sources. However, given the uncertainty of the reading of signs claimed by Wang (2011: 41) and others (most notably Steinkeller 2010, but see Englund 2011) to represent Enlil in the Uruk IV and III periods, the unclear paleographical evolution of the sign used to write the second half of this name (see Englund 2011), the sign combination EN_a KID_a(?) is best reserved as a designation of the city Nippur (see also Englund 1998a: 74–6). It may be worth noticing that the presumed Uruk III period Enlil (EN_a KID_a) is never found written with the sign AN (“dingir”).¹³

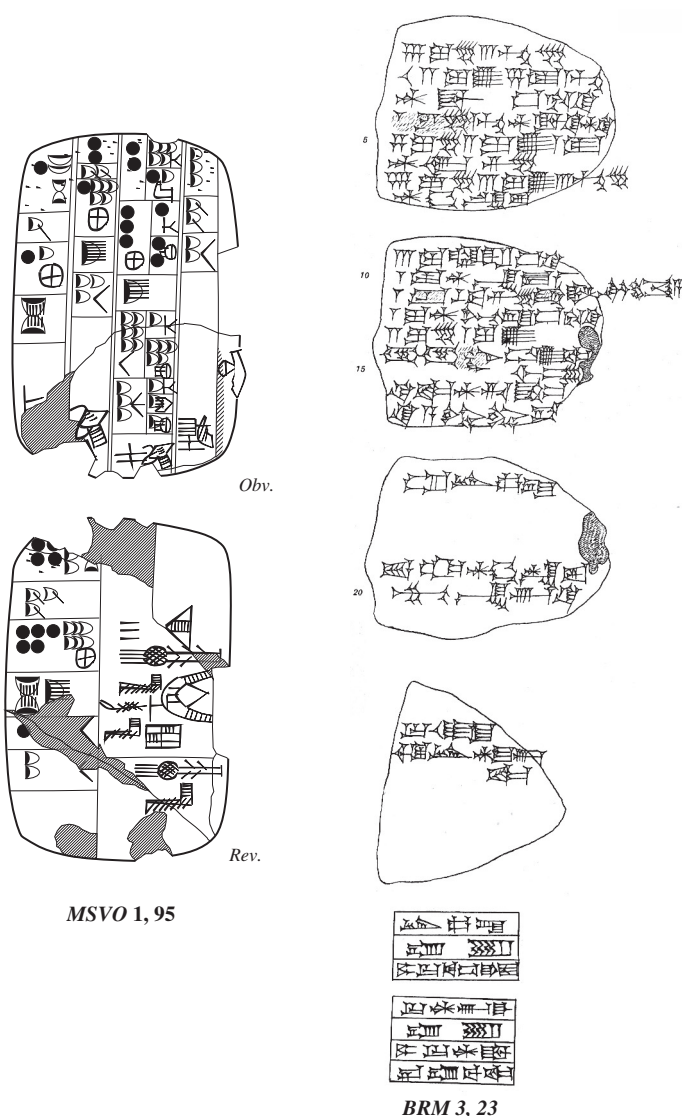


FIGURE 15.1 On the left, Late Uruk offering list (MSVO 1, 95 [IM 055578], copy R.K. Englund) and on the right Ur III period sa²-du¹¹ offering text (BRM 3, 23 [MLC 2312], copy by Keiser [publication in the public domain]).

EVIDENCE OF RELIGION IN THE PROTO-ELAMITE TEXTS

Signs for Deities?

Compared to the limited evidence of religion that can be gleaned from the proto-cuneiform texts from southern Mesopotamia, the situation in early Iran is even more unclear, and we are unable to identify even a sign for deity in proto-Elamite. Whereas the sign AN may be associated already in the proto-cuneiform texts with divine or heavenly beings or objects,

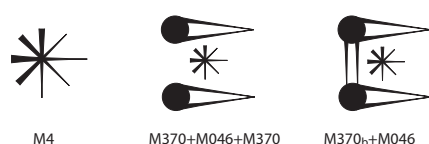


FIGURE 15.2 M46 in proto-Elamite texts.

although this is by no means certain, and relies primarily on inferences from later texts, no proto-Elamite sign can be shown to represent a god (note the hard-to-follow musings on NAB and AN in Finkel 2010: 22–3). The graphical cognate of proto-cuneiform AN in proto-Elamite, M46, can be shown, conclusively, to represent a category of workers (Dahl, Hawkins, and Kelley 2018: 27–8), and not a divine being, a heavenly body, or a household. Apart from a few unclear examples, M46 (Figure 15.2) is found exclusively in texts recording workers, and together with signs such as M388 (proto-Elamite equivalent of Late Uruk KUR₃), M72 (proto-Elamite equivalent of Late Uruk SAL), as well as inscribed in M370_b or between two M370 (both likely to represent proto-Elamite equivalents of Late Uruk TUR, for these comparisons see also Englund 2004, fig. 5.14). No other sign has been proposed as representing a divine being, and no obvious candidates can be identified, given the higher number of abstract signs in the proto-Elamite sign repertoire than in proto-cuneiform.

Lexical Lists?

Since the proto-Elamite corpus lacks the lexical lists that make up at least 15 percent of the proto-cuneiform corpus, except for two possible metro-mathematical texts,¹⁴ and one possible lexical list,¹⁵ no lists of gods have been found.

Offering Lists?

Although many proto-Elamite texts appear to record the distribution of foodstuff, none include a mixture of objects, or have a complex structure comparable to that of the Late Uruk texts, discussed earlier, as possible evidence for offering lists in proto-cuneiform or the later Mesopotamian sa₂-du₁₁ texts. In fact, all proto-Elamite records of foodstuff being distributed list only cereal products (including presumably bread and beer), most likely to named individuals or offices, and not to festivals or deities (see also Lamberg-Karlovsky 1986: 208–10). One such text is MDP 17, 81+347 (Sb 22273 + Sb 22502) (Figure 15.3) recording, perhaps, rations of relatively small amounts of refined or special cereal products to high-ranking staff. All of the recipients in this, and in similar texts,¹⁶ are recorded with titles that may be interpreted as supervisory or military titles due to their dual use as numerical and nonnumerical signs.¹⁷

HERALDRY OF EARLY IRANIAN WRITING

None of the so-called household signs, used often as headers indicating the destination or origin of the content of the subsequent texts, can be shown to represent divine beings or their households. It is of course possible that the most famous of these, M136, commonly named the “hairy triangle” (Englund 1998b: 326), represented divine rather

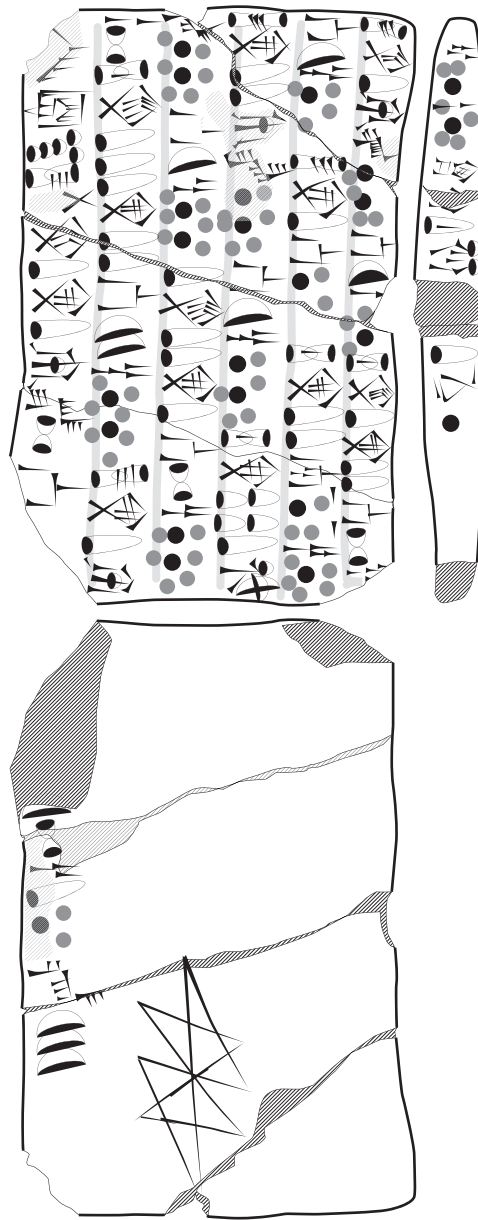


FIGURE 15.3 MDP 17, 81+347, proto-Elamite texts recording distribution of food-stuff.

than secular households. The appearance of that particular household sign in the glyptic art from the period lends only limited support to that suggestion. On the seal found impressed on Sb 2801 (MDP 16, 330, see also copy by K. Kelley 2018: 249, seal drawn by Eva Miller, and cdli.ucla.edu/P272825_1, see also Pittman 1992: 75–6), sometimes

referred to as the “Seal of the Ruler of Susa,” we find an alternating sequence of bull-men and lion-men holding up a common variant of M136_c. However, semantically, M136 functions similar to other household signs for which such a context cannot always be shown. Furthermore, M136 appears to be associated with elites rather than divine households, and the inscribed object in M136_c, the variant found on the seal from Sb 2801 [MDP 16 330], is most likely a depiction of a weapon. Similar inscribed objects in other variants of M136 appear to be power symbols similar to that (see also Dahl 2019: 80–2 and fig. 11).

Other proto-Elamite household signs appear to depict symbols referencing the production of the particular household. M157 is a case in point. As noted by Kelley (2018: 290), A symbol resembling M157 is found on a few seals and sealings (see, e.g., the broken seal MDP 16, 195 and Pittman et al. 1977: 63). On all these seals the shape resembling M157 appears to represent a sheepfold. This observation is particularly potent as M157 is one of the signs often associated with a cuneiform sign based purely on graphical similarity.¹⁸ Other household signs such as M383–5 and M393 depicting mountains(?), and likely identical to symbols on some proto-Elamite seals including some where it is depicted with animals acting like humans (MDP 16, 336), may, or may not, have represented divine households: unless remains of indisputably religious architecture with associated tablets with these or other signs, or artifacts with similar symbols are discovered, this remains idle speculation, and the suggestion by Lamberg-Karlovsky (1986: 210) that these signs represent actors at various levels in a tribal organization (tribe—kin) remains more plausible.¹⁹

Finally, it may be worth pointing out that none of the proto-Elamite household signs appear with symbols representing structures or buildings, as can be speculated for the equivalent Late Uruk period household signs that appear to incorporate or appear with graphic representations of built structures such as KID_a, or AB, perhaps representing a temple platform (Figure 15.4).

EVIDENCE OF RELIGION IN THE ART OF THE PERIOD

Although the lines between writing and art are less blurred in early Mesopotamia, compared to, for example, ancient Egypt, some signs in the writing system appear to resemble or be identical to symbols in the glyptic art of the period.²⁰ A particular set of these signs/symbols have attracted some interest, as they are precursors to signs that later can be used to write either the names of divine beings, cities, or in some cases, titles. In his discussion of these signs, Englund suggested that these signs should be interpreted less like signs in a writing system coding, phonetically, the names of deities, but rather representing households with associated totems, similar to the totem poles carved by the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest Coast, often placed in front of the entrance to the clan house (Englund 1998a: 102 and fig. 31). Englund, basing himself also on Matthews (1993), explored the relationship between these symbols and the early signs for various Mesopotamian cities, on seals, in lists, and in administrative texts (Englund 1998a: 92–94).

As already mentioned, the household signs in the proto-Elamite texts are unlikely to represent divine beings, with some (M136 and variants) being perhaps graphical depictions of a standard with inscribed signs representing various groupings, such as clans, tribes, or families.

Signs for owners:					
	M136 _c	M136+M365	M157	M157+M136	M384 _d
Emblem involved:					
	not attested independently	M365	M136		
Graphical referent:	“Hairy triangle” (possibly a standard?)		(possibly a sheepfold?)		(possibly a mountain?)
inscribed sign:	spear?	?	standard?		

Proto-Elamite signs representing owners or households

(all signs have been rotated 90° clockwise to demonstrate their original pictographic position).

Signs for temple households:			
	TUR _{3a}	ZATU 648	ZATU 649
Emblem involved:			
	NUN _a	URI _{3a}	(MUÇ _{3a} / INANNA ?)
Related signs:			
	NUN _c	NANNA _a	URI ₅
			
			LAGAR

Late Uruk signs representing probable temple households in texts from archaic Uruk (all signs have been rotated 90° clockwise to demonstrate their original pictographic position; From Englund 1998a figure 31).

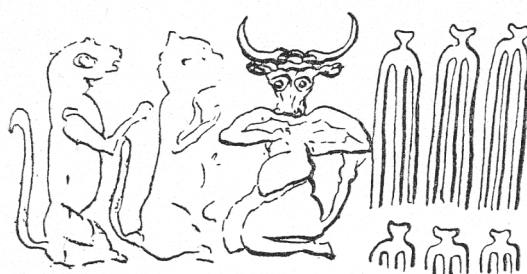
FIGURE 15.4 Proto-Elamite and Late Uruk household.

ANIMALS AS HUMANS IN THE PROTO-ELAMITE TEXTS

Some studies discuss the appearance of animals as agents in the art of the proto-Elamite period, replacing humans (Pittman 1992: 75; Álvarez-Mon 2020: 62–71). This is, in particular, evident in the seals of the period and to a lesser extent in the scarce examples of other art objects from the period (discussed later). However, few scholars have recognized the total exclusion of humans from the art of the proto-Elamite period (Dahl 2014, 2019: 67, 90–1), including from the writing system.²¹ Pittman dates some objects and seals with depictions of humans—either from Iran or provenienced to Iran—to the proto-Elamite period, for example, Pittman (2003: 46) (two statuettes of horned demons with no provenience) and Pittman (1992: 75) (suggesting that five proto-Elamite seals

have depictions of human figures); Álvarez-Mon records as the one, and likely, exception to the absence of humans from proto-Elamite seals, the seal rolled on Sb 6385, 6386, and 6387 (pl 29e in 2020: 68).²² Seals and artifacts can, in the opinion of the current author, only be securely dated to the proto-Elamite period if: (1) they have a secure archaeological provenience to layers and contexts with clear examples of other proto-Elamite material, in particular tablets; and if (2) they have cognate seal impressions on actual proto-Elamite tablets (not Late Uruk style tablets from Iran, see also Dahl, Petrie, and Potts 2013: 354, 371).

Three interpretative models deciphering proto-Elamite art have been proposed (Álvarez-Mon 2020: 67–9).²³ I have speculated (Dahl 2005: 94, 119, 2014) that certain animals represented certain offices (the practical-emblematic model, according to Álvarez-Mon 2020: 69). This seems clearest in the so-called Ruler of Susa's Seal (discussed earlier), where rows of lion-men and bull-men hold a symbol commonly associated with the ruler of Susa, and functioning as an owner sign in high-level texts.²⁴ Should that seal indeed



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FIGURE 15.5 Proto-Elamite seals with animals acting as agents (MDP 16, nos. 331, 265, and 336).

represent the ruler of Susa, we may speculate that the two animals represented either two different stakeholders in the rulership of Susa (two clans?), or different aspects of the rulership. Extending such suggestions to other seals, we may suggest that seals featuring animals and objects (foodstuff), such as MDP 16, pl. XII fig. 198 (see Dahl 2014), may represent offerings or gifts to or from the ruler. Similarly, the Kneeling Bull holding a Vessel (Hansen 1970; Pittman 2003: 43), should it be genuine, may represent a ruler making sacrifices, but this remains speculation. The content of the text sealed with those seals here interpreted as officials making sacrifices does not seem to record the same. This is not necessarily surprising as the link between seal iconography and the texts they were used to seal is only partial.²⁵

Many proto-Elamite seals allow for a closer, yet speculative, interpretation following such schema as suggested here. MDP 16, 331, for example, a black calcite(?) seal (see Pézard 1911: 113 and fig. 108) depicting a lioness, a quadruped(?) and a bull-man with what could be jars of foodstuff, might represent gifts from one group represented by the lioness and the quadruped (the family of the wife of the governor?) to another powerful entity, represented by the bull-man (note that Pézard 1911: 113 suggests that the bull-man is a deity). No texts have been found sealed with this seal. MDP 16, no. 336 depicting a row of lion-men(?) interspersed with “mountain” signs and another symbols,²⁶ impressed on MDP 6, 235, a text listing a total of twenty workers of the categories M32 and M321, and with a long complex subscript, might also suggest offerings or associations with households, divine or not (Figure 15.5). Finally, MDP 16, 265 depicts two animals (lionesses?) facing each other and separated by a row of what could be foodstuff, perhaps representing offerings or gifts. The seal is impressed on MDP 6, 240 a text listing small amounts of cereal products possibly to or from named individuals. Although these suggestions remain very speculative, they may provide a powerful avenue for future research into the heraldry of ancient Iranian religion.

NOTES

- 1 See Álvarez-Mon (2020: 34–5 and 59–60) for a discussion of the High Terrace at Susa and its decoration with clay cones (nails) reminiscent of religious buildings from early Mesopotamia.
- 2 See Suter (2014) for possible depictions of deities in early Mesopotamian art.
- 3 This brief account does not, of course, discuss the overlap that almost certainly happened between these different technologies, producing an archaeological record with objects from two stages found in the same archaeological levels. Scholars using this overlap of objects in the archaeological record to claim an altogether different course for the evolution of writing would be well served examining the speed of technological invention in relation to the chronological time span covered by single floor levels in excavations from the ancient Near East. Note also Glassner (2003) (review by Englund 2005) and more recently Ross (e.g., 2013) for attempts at finding the origins to writing in divination (Glassner) or art (Ross).
- 4 Almost all Uruk proto-cuneiform tablets are assigned stratigraphical levels based on internal evidence from the texts rather than actual find-spots, but see Englund (1998a: 38, fn. 71) for a group of texts possibly assigned to IVb based on find-spot.
- 5 Ample evidence exists that points to proto-Elamite being a derived system, including the oft-overlooked comment in Damerow and Englund’s German language study of the numerical systems of the Late Uruk texts (Damerow and Englund 1987: 136), relaying an observation from Friberg’s desktop publication the *Early Roots of Babylonian Mathematics* (Friberg

- 1978–79), that the subdivisions of the numerical sign N39_b in proto-Elamite represented, in Friberg's opinion, a "slight improvement" on the more archaic Late Uruk system; since the sign forms of the subdivisions of N39_b are near-identical in the two systems, this strongly suggests that proto-Elamite is a derived system of proto-cuneiform.
- 6 For example, MDP 17, 17 (Sb 22215); MDP 17, 112 (Sb 19517, see also Hawkins 2015); or RA 50, 202 7 (Sb 15449).
 - 7 Recent suggestions regurgitating century-old ideas that the odd writing system traditionally termed linear-Elamite (c. 2100 BCE) was descended from proto-Elamite are harmless at best, but appear to rely on an uncanny trio of spurious artifacts, methodologically unsound work, and ideologically driven claims of seniority or parity of Iranian writing systems vis-à-vis Mesopotamia; see, for example, Desset et al. (2022: 52–4 and fig. 11).
 - 8 For a positivistic interpretation of much of the same data considered here see Szarzynska (1993).
 - 9 Four tablets found in Uqair, in association with a structure identified as a chapel by its excavators, contain nothing that relates them in particular to the cult (Englund 1998a: 28–9, fn. 30, fig. 4). Given the uncertain find spots of all tablets from Uruk, mostly found in secondary deposits, no direct association can be made between tablets and cultic buildings.
 - 10 Originally a suggestion made by J. Friberg, see in particular the triangular tags from Ur III Umma, for example, OrSP 47–49, 344 (VAT 07073); BRM 3, 23 (MLC 2312); CUSAS 39, 6 (MS 2077).
 - 11 See already Englund (1998a: 74–6) warning against interpreting this sign string as the name of the god Enlil, but see Steinkeller (2010) for a positivistic account.
 - 12 The entries of almost all early lexical lists are preceded by a numerical sign indicating "one," including some of the God Lists from Fara, but not SF 1.
 - 13 See Wang (2011: 41, fn. 130) suggesting that determinatives may have been used in Uruk III in an inconsistent way.
 - 14 MDP 17, 328, and 362, discussed by Scheil (1935 [MDP 26]: vii–viii), Damerow and Englund (1989: 18–19, n. 51 and n. 53).
 - 15 MDP 26, 71 [NMI BK 03621], Kelley (2018: 408).
 - 16 MDP 17, 77+212+226; MDP 17, 76; MDP 17, 73; and so on.
 - 17 Variants of the "100 sign," N₂₃, from the indigenous proto-Elamite decimal system, interpreted as a title when used as a nonnumerical sign, and given the name M387 [and variants], akin to Semitic titles such as *rab mē*, captain of hundred, similar to the Roman title *centurion*.
 - 18 In the "comparative table" accompanying the sign lists to MDP 31 (Mecquenem 1949: pl. LXVIII–LXX), M157 is equated with cuneiform DUB (pl. LXIII, 1037); such comparisons between signs in two writing systems based purely on graphical similarity is frequent even in contemporary studies (Desset et al. 2022: fig. 7a and b) but remains unproductive—a better cognate for "scribe," if that is what the author of MDP 31 meant, would in fact have been the proto-cuneiform sign SANGA (ZATU 444); note in this regard also Kelley (2018: 290, fig. 7.11) using a graphotactical analysis to compare M157 and ZATU 737.
 - 19 In fact, the wall frescos found in an elite residence in area ABC of Anshan, see Álvarez-Mon (2020: 72 and pl. 31), and Dahl (2012: 9–10) supports this interpretation.
 - 20 Primarily cylinder seals, but see also the so-called Uruk Vase (Lindemeyer and Martin 1993: 80, pls. 19–25; Stromenger 2008), and cf., for example, Suter (2014) on the identity of the figures, and Englund (2011) for an identification of the stack of beveled rim bowls with an artistic rendering of the "EN" sign.

- 21 The two exceptions—M72 and perhaps M388, loans from Mesopotamian SAL and KUR_a—suggests that the loans happened prior to this change, and that they had lost their graphical referent by the time of the proto-Elamite writing system.
- 22 High-resolution images are available from <https://collections.louvre.fr/en/>, but note the author's comments on using single light-source images for the study of seals in Dahl (2014).
- 23 The occurrence of animals acting as agents in art from slightly later periods of Mesopotamian history, and the constant search for origins, has led scholars to see a potential link between the animals acting like humans in the art of the proto-Elamite period and, for example, the scenes on the panels of the lyres from the Royal Graves at Ur. See Cheng (2009: fig. 1)—note the even less plausible link between the evil demon Lamashtu and proto-Elamite art suggested by van Dijk (1982: 104–7), following Porada (1950: 223–6), based on the lion-like appearance of Lamashtu in Mesopotamian texts, the occurrence of the so-called boat motive (e.g., MDP 16, 333 and 334), and the frequent appearance of lions in proto-Elamite art, but see Wiggermann (2000: 218 and fn. 7) for a rejection of this link; but note however Pittman's description of the Guennol Lioness as a “demonic female feline” (Pittman 2003: 45).
- 24 As a header in MDP 17, 47 (Sb 22240); TCL 32, 98 (Sb 24485), and as an owner sign in, for example, MDP 6, 343 (Sb 15172); MDP 6, 360 (Sb 06393); MDP 26S, 4836 (Sb 15311), and so on.
- 25 Seals depicting sheep and goat seem to appear on texts dealing with the production from shepherds, but of course also on other types of texts, see Dahl (2005).
- 26 A cruciform, perhaps related to the sign M5 found as header for most sowing/harvest texts (see, e.g., TCL 32, 39).