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CULTURAL TRANSLATION AND THE ICONOGRAPHY OF THE MASTER AND MISTRESS OF THE ANIMALS

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The image of a figure holding two wild animals, often called the "Mistress/Master of Animals", has appeared across many ancient periods and regions, on artifacts from proto-literate Mesopotamia in the Near East to the Aegean Iron Age.

This motif has a demonstrable chain of cultural custody that is closely tied to concepts of both divinity and royalty. Rather than following a linear progression of diffusion with consistent interpretation, the Master/Mistress motif is culturally translated by adopting populations to suit the understandings within those populations.

Though some concepts such as healing remained constant from culture to culture, the symbol was reinterpreted or modified based on the role it played in adopting populations' cultural schemas. This resulted in the two seemingly separate motifs of the "Master" and

“Mistress”. This translation demonstrates the close relationship these early cultures had to one another in spite of their perceived distinctness.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Some of the earliest depictions of Artemis, the Greek goddess of the hunt, is in an arrangement often called the “Mistress of Animals” (Nilsson 1923). However, this motif predates the classical Greeks by thousands of years and can be found across many cultures in the Near East and the Aegean. Similar imagery has also been found on Canaanite artifacts from ca.1400 BCE, (Day 1992), on Aegean seals as early as the 21st century BCE (Crowley 2010), on terracottas from the Indus Valley of the mid-third millennium BCE, and even on some of the very earliest seals from the proto-literate Near East, dating to about 5000 BCE.

It was not until the late 1800s that the female image was dubbed *Potnia Therōn* (*Πότνια Θηρῶν*) by Franz Studniczka (1890), who appropriated this name from an epithet of Artemis in Homer's Iliad (Book 21, line 470). This was perhaps the first time that the term “Mistress of Animals” was linked to *Potnia Therōn* and, by association, the archaic symbol to the Hellenic goddess.

The Master and Mistress of Animals motif has a demonstrable history of cultural transference in the Near East and Aegean. The story of this arrangement illustrates not only the interconnectedness among the early populations in those regions, but also the consistency and continuity of human cognition and desires.

Many of the social and psychological processes that were at work as the motif was passed among those ancient populations are still very much in effect today, just as ideas are transferred among groups in modern populations.

1.1 Description of Iconographic Arrangement

Before embarking on an analysis of Mistress / Master of Animals motif, it is necessary to establish the scope of the investigation. The title *Potnia Therōn* has been attached to almost any female that can be associated with animals. The connection between animals and some of the folkloric characters on whom the title has been bestowed is sometimes questionable at best. The appropriateness of the modern title often rests on a tenuous association based on the folkloric ability to control animals, or even a a single story involving an animal, as is the case in Matossian's discussion of Baba Yaga (1973). Such arguments are usually political in nature and completely divorced from the iconographic arrangement.

Throughout history the Master / Mistress arrangement has always had a central humanoid figure with animals grasped in both hands or at either side, in a composition that demonstrates some degree of bilateral symmetry (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: *François Vase*, Detail
Chiusi, Circa 570 BCE
Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 4209

Figure 1.2: *François Vase*, Detail
Chiusi, Circa 570 BCE
Florence, Museo Archeologico Etrusco 4209

Since this study involves cultural transference and interpretations of iconography, the composition inevitably undergoes modifications. Styles change not only among cultures; they also evolve over time within individual cultures. Because of this the main figure in some examples might not be grasping the animals in a closed grip (Figure 1.3), or the composition might not be perfectly symmetrical (Figure 1.2). Special attention must be paid to these alterations because they can be indicative of cultural changes.

Though variations do occur, they never stray far from the aforementioned canon. For instance, Figures 1.1 and 1.2 are both from the *François Vase*, and are known depictions of Artemis even though the animals she is holding differ. Examples such as those in Figures 1.1 – 1.3 have been included in this study if an argument could be made that they were directly influenced by, or related to, the basic form of *Potnia Therōn*.

Figure 1.3: Boeotian amphora, *Potnia Therōn*, detail
Thebes, 680 – 670 BCE
National Archaeological Museum, NM 220, AT 119

Whereas many prior researchers have presented almost any depiction of a person interacting with animals as a "Master" or "Mistress" image, the term is reserved by museums exclusively to describe those motifs that specifically conform to the aforementioned criterion. Perhaps most importantly, a great many unrelated cultures have scenes depicting animals and people together, but in spite of humanity's well documented penchant for symmetry, Mistress of Animals compositions only seem to appear in cultures that are known to have had contact or trade networks with one another. This, along with the complexity of the imagery, greatly decreases the likelihood of completely independent innovation.

1.2 Terminology

In the hard sciences the legitimacy of a conclusion can most clearly be established when it is supported by several sources. I would argue that due to the nature of human perception this is even more relevant to the social sciences. For this reason, I will be taking an interdisciplinary approach to this topic. This will involve applying concepts normally found in cultural anthropology, sociology, and psychology to a subject that is very thoroughly rooted in archaeology. Unfortunately, some of these disciplines use terms that are not defined consistently across disciplines. Similarly, some concepts may be familiar in one field but much less so in the others. For this reason, I have found it necessary to define several terms for the purpose of this study.

1.2.1 Iconography

In current parlance, the term “iconography” is often assumed to be related to divinity, since most persons today encounter the word in the realm of religion. Iconography is derived from the Greek words *εἰκών* ("image") and *γράφειν* ("to write"). It is used in this paper in its historical and academic context simply to refer to the study of the composition, identification of parts, and possible significances of an image or artifact. No insinuation of divinity should be construed from its use, and any suggestion of possible religious concepts will be stated directly rather than implied.

1.2.2 Diffusion

For the purposes of this paper the term “diffusion” is used to describe the movement of ideas, beliefs, and material culture among peoples. In what follows, I have given attention to both the possibility of diffusion and the mechanism of transference. This is not to suggest that all similarities imply diffusion. Special vigilance was also paid to the historical context, cultural particulars, and situational variables in order to avoid labeling parallel innovations as diffusion.

Diffusion should not be taken as indicative of a unidirectional path or an unerring linear progression. As ideas and practices spread and adapt to new cultures, it becomes highly likely that these new phenomena will at some point come into contact with different cultural interpretations of the original concept. It is natural that these new interpretations would then also be compared, adapted, adopted, or dismissed depending on the sensibilities and needs of the culture encountering them. In the process these new concepts themselves would become an additional point of transference if they can find cultural purchase in the population.

1.2.3 Translation

It is sometimes easy to forget that all populations are composed of individuals, each providing the possibility of altering the significance of a symbol or concept through the scope of their own perception. This is especially true when someone is trying to integrate foreign concepts into their own understanding. The new idea must not only be reconciled with the personal perception of the individual, but also with the cultural context of the population as a whole.

We have a tendency to want to seek meaning from what we encounter in the world around us. It is much easier to integrate new ideas and aesthetics if they easily relate to existing concepts and preferences. So new information is adjusted to meet personal perceptions, or fit within cultural norms, while being integrated into personal schemas. This can cause the personal meaning or interpretation of a symbol or idea to be slightly different, or even quite distinct, from those of the original concept. These personal concepts can become cultural ideas if the belief or symbol is presented by a member of the population with sufficient social status, authority, or persuasiveness necessary to legitimize the interpretation. The chances of integration increase if the social environment is predisposed to be receptive to the concept. This alteration of form or meaning while being incorporated into an understanding is called translation.

This often accounts for the alterations in both the meaning and morphology of a symbol during adoption. It should be noted that these translations are usually a slight tailoring of significances rather than wholesale reinterpretations. Over time, however, these variances can compound into a seemingly distinct concept or symbol.

1.3 Master or Mistress?

In many of the earliest examples, such as the stone seal from Tepe Giyan in Iran (Figure 1.4), the sex of the engraved image of the humanoid figure cannot be established. In fact, many of these images are so lacking in distinguishing details that one might question whether the figure was even intended to represent humans a human at all (Oates 1978). In the absence of defining anatomical traits or cultural costuming, it often falls to the researcher to bestow an identity upon the image.

Figure 1.4: Tepe Giyan Stone Seal
Iran, 5000 – 4000 BCE
British Museum – BM 128660 (AN00109870_001_l)

In doing so, even the most objective researchers must draw on personal understandings and experience regarding the nature of society for their interpretations. These understandings are strongly influenced by cultural norms and other concepts that may be familiar to the researcher but were unknown in the culture studied. Variations in gender roles, cultural costuming, and social norms have led highly skilled archaeologists and other academic professionals to misidentify the gender of burials due to the accouterments of the deceased (Rubinson 2008).

Most scholarly papers have focused on the "Master of the Animals" or the "Mistress of the Animals" exclusively. Some images have been either included or excluded by gender, such as the clearly male image on the *Lorestān* bronze pin in Figure 1.5, but others were not so easily categorized. This results in the classification of 'Master' or 'Mistress' becoming subjective and/or arbitrary at times.

Figure 1.5: *Lorestān* Bronze Pin
Iran, 1000 – 600 BCE
Los Angeles County Museum of Art – M.76.97.135

The examples in Figure 1.6 and 1.7 are also *Lorestān* bronze pins. Their motifs, like prior example, have consistently been described as the "Master of Animals". Do the horns make them male? Though both images feature horns, the example in Figure 1.7 clearly features prominent breasts, and what may be interpreted as a vulva. If 1.7 is female, does this suggest that 1.6 is well? Though it demonstrates many of the same features and layout, it lacks the distinctive female characteristics the other seems to possess.

Figure 1.6:
Lorestān Bronze Pins
Iran, 1000 – 600 BCE
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
M.76.97.183

Figure 1.7
Lorestān Bronze Pins
Iran, 1000 – 600 BCE
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
M.76.97.187

The problem is even more complicated when the image displays traits that are indicators of both genders in contemporary culture, as in Figure 1.8. For many modern viewers this image may be confusing, but the *Lorestān* population that created it could undoubtedly discern the sex of the image, as well as its cultural importance.

Figure 1.8: *Lorestān* Bronze Pin
Iran, 1000 – 600 BCE
Los Angeles County Museum of Art – M.76.97.142

The problem is that we do not have a cultural context for the imagery, and so we must rely on our own knowledge, expectations, and culture to fill in the missing information. This directly affects whether we categorize the image as a "Master" or a "Mistress". Yet, in spite of the disagreement over the gender of the image, the iconographic similarities between the images remain apparent.

There is no reason to assume that these early cultures did not engage in the same processes when interpreting images from other cultures. When viewing images, they too were likely to interpret them based on their own histories, both personal and cultural. A single personal interpretation at the point of contact could become a whole new cultural interpretation. Even assuming some communication between two cultures, and an individual in one culture being able to directly query someone from the other culture, issues of language, cultural norms, and religion could influence interpretation of what was said at the point of possible adoption. Because of these issues with classification, both modern and historical, it becomes absolutely necessary to examine all forms of the iconographic compositions regardless of their classification as "Master" or "Mistress". It would be myopic to attempt an analysis of either one to the exclusion of the other.

CHAPTER 2

MASTER OF THE SERPENTS

Figure 2.1:
Master of Snakes Seal
Tepe Giyan, 5000 – 4000 BCE
British Museum – 128660

Figure 2.2:
Master of Snakes Seal
Tepe Giyan, 5000 – 4000 BCE
British Museum – 128659

Figure 2.3:
Master of Snakes Seal
Tepe Giyan, 5000 – 4000 BCE
British Museum – 128664

Human figures begin appearing on seal imagery about 5000 BCE (Figures 2.1 – 2.3). Those early figures were always accompanied by serpents, and neither the serpent nor the figure would be depicted separately for at least half a millennium. This suggests that both the humanoid figure and the snake had already developed a cultural significance by this point. These seals constitute some of the earliest examples of the Master/Mistress motif. This version of the motif is often described as the "Master of Serpents".

Figure 2.4:
Drawing of Sealing
Susa, 5000 BCE
Shush Museum
(Harper 1992)

Figure 2.5:
Clay Sealing
Susa 1, 4000 BCE
South Acropole – SB 2050
(Harper 1992)

Figure 2.6:
Clay Bulla
Susa, 3800 – 3100 BCE
Louvre - SB1932

Figure 2.7:
Clay Bulla
Chogha Mish, 4000 BCE
Plate 158 (Carter 2001)

Clay sealings on bullae show that the Master of Serpents motif was in use in Susa by the time of its first appearance on seals from Tepe Giyan (Figure 2.4) and would be used similarly for the next two millennia (Figure 2.5 and 2.6). During this time clay bullae with Master of the Serpent seals begin to appear also at Chogha Mish.

The use of the Master of Serpents motif in sealings, and the number of seals themselves, suggests that the motif had some administrative purpose, in addition to possible religious or cultural significances, and may have represented some form of political or socioeconomic authority. Preliterate Mesopotamia offers us no written accounts of religious or cultural beliefs for this period outside the material culture itself. We do not know if the figure represents a shaman (Costello 2011), a monster, or demon as described by Henri Frankfort (1955), or was merely a crude way to depict a human.

There have been suggestions that the snake may have actually been a symbol of healing (Van Buren 1935). This concept is echoed by later writers who theorize that the Master of Serpents may have been the predecessor to the staff of Asclepius in classical Greek iconography (McDonald 1994 and Nayernouri 2010). It is known that for the Sumerians the serpent was not a feared symbol of evil; instead, it represented the snake god of healing Ningizzida (Van Buren 1934). The context and consistency suggest that the Master of Snakes might have also been religious in nature.

This may be a very early example of priest kings merging political authority with concepts of healing and life. Attributing divine aspects or healing powers to rulers has occurred in a great many cultures, for instance the King's Touch in 16th century Europe (Toynbee 1950). Such an association often reinforces the legitimacy of ruling elites, and was not unknown in the Near East.

2.1 Cultural Impact of Early Trade Routes

Figure 2.8: Stone Stamp Seal
Tell Ahmar, 4500 – 3500 BCE
British Museum – 135249

One of the most remarkable examples of the Master motif can be found on a steatite seal from Tel Ahmar (Figure 2.8). What makes this artifact unique is that it is the earliest known example of the motif to feature the human figure without snakes. In their stead, the figure is grasping two goats or rams with curved horns. This suggests both a change in the cultural significance of the motif, and that the meaning bestowed on the animals may have varied by region and/or culture.

Horned animals of this type were curiously rare during the early 4th millennium BCE at Tell Ahmar and equally unknown in most of the region that would become Mesopotamia. However, the curved-horn animals are abundantly depicted in the pottery of the same period from Tepe Hissar in Iran (Schmidt 1937).

Figure 2.9: Sites of Early Seals on Map of Trade Routes Proposed by Majidzadeh
1- Tel Ahmar **2** - Tepe Giyan **3** - Chogha Mish **4** - Susa **5** - Tepe Hissar

Though the aforementioned Tepe Hissar and Tel Ahmar are seemingly distant from each other, they were known to be a part of a trade route that had become well established by the Early Dynastic period (Majidzadeh 1982). The earliest Master of Serpents seals were carved from soapstone (steatite) or a related mineral in the chlorite family. Though a common material, its sources are regionally limited (Beale 1973). The closest source of steatite or chlorite is just north of Tepe Giyan (see Figure 2.9, no. #2) (Kohl 1974, David 2002). This would take the populations of Susa and Chogha Mish directly into the trade route proposed by Yousef Majidzadeh at the point it crosses Tepe Giyan. This trade route goes directly through Tepe Hissar (modern Damghan) on the way east. The same route passes close to Tell Ahmar on its way west into Anatolia.

Yousef Majidzadeh was able to establish that the trade routes had become well used by the end of the 4th millennium BCE or the beginning of the 3rd. There is evidence that the trade along this route may have been active as early as the end of the 5th millennium BCE (Pitskhelauri 2012).

This trade activity coincides with the creation of the Tel Ahmar seal and provides us with a possible explanation for its unorthodox imagery. Both the Master of the Serpents and the horned animals were foreign symbols to Tel Ahmar and may well have been encountered through trade or by travelers along this route. The images on the seal could have been combined while being integrated into a cultural context for the population at Tel Ahmar.

In addition to the overall composition, , the Tel Ahmar example also incorporates the asterisks from the earlier Master of Serpents seals (Figures 2.8, 2.2 and 2.3), these are an important symbol that is often associated with the Master and Mistress iconography and indicates that the image is very likely divine in nature. This marking often appears with the Master/Mistress motif over the centuries and across many cultures. Its significance will become clearer below.

This would not be the last time trade influenced the fate of this icon. The route purposed by Majidzadeh would eventually become the Great Khorasan Road (Abdi 1999). It would greatly expand the range of the Near Eastern peoples and prompt several alterations the Master of the Animals motif as competing ideas were traded along with the trade goods transiting the Great Khorasan Road.

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CHAPTER 3

THE URUK EXPANSION: 4000 to 3000 BCE

Around 4000 BCE a significant period of exploration and migration of the Near Eastern populations began that would eventually be defined as the Uruk Expansion (Algaze et al. 1989). By 3500 BCE Middle Eastern trade routes had reached as far north as Transcaucasia (Pitskhelauri 2012), west as Egypt (Joffe 2000), and as far east as Badakhshan (Herrmann 1968).

3.1 Predynastic Egypt

It is in Predynastic Egypt that the symbol gets its first major cultural overhaul. Trade with Mesopotamia is evidenced by the appearance of the motif on two separate artifacts form this region. The more famous of these is in a wall painting from Hierakonpolis, Tomb 100, also called the Painted Tomb (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Hierakonpolis Tomb 100 (Painted Tomb)
Hk loc. 33, Detail
Naqada IIC, circa 3500 - 3200 BCE
Cairo Egyptian Museum

As in Mesopotamia the mural is associated with social elites: in this case it was the tomb of either a magistrate or a proto-pharaoh. Unfortunately, the image is indistinct, and the figure appears to be grasping cows with unusually long tails.

The other example provides us with a much clearer picture. The Gebel el-Arak Dagger is a masterpiece for its time. This flint knife has an elaborately carved handle made from hippopotamus ivory and features a detailed early example of the Master of Animals motif amid a hunting scene on one side (Figure 3.2); the other side depicts a battle in several registers (Figure 3.3). The handle was sold to the Louvre by an Egyptian antiquities dealer in Cairo who claimed that it came from Gebel el-Arak, in Upper Egypt. However, the dealer also unknowingly had the flint blade in his possession; he sold it to the Louvre as part of a collection said to be from the site of Abydos (Delange 2009).

Figure 3.2: Hippo Ivory Dagger Handle
Abydos or Gebel el-Arak, circa 3300 - 3200 BCE
Louvre - E11517

Figure 3.3: Hippo Ivory Dagger Handle
Abydos or Gebel el-Arak, circa 3300 - 3200 BCE
Louvre - E11517

The motif is very clear in this example: not only can we tell that the central figure is male, but his attire is very clearly Middle Eastern rather that Egyptian (Pittman 1996). This strongly suggests that the motif is a direct Mesopotamian import rather than simply independent innovation, in spite of the distance between the two cultures.

However, this image is not fully Middle Eastern. On this specimen the snakes and the horned rams have been replaced by a pair of rampant lions. The Master motif's inclusion on an artifact with such otherwise distinctly Egyptian imagery and the additional appearance of the Master motif in Tomb 100 around the same period suggests that the image likely embodied a cultural significance for the Predynastic Egyptians to adopt it for use on such luxury goods. But there was something about the Master of Snakes that caused them to change the format.

It could well be that the snake had a different role in Predynastic Egypt than it did for the Mesopotamian populations, and so was replaced with lions. Later Egyptians would associate the snake with Apep, god of lies, darkness, and chaos (Kippenberg 1986). He was the enemy of Ma'at, goddess of justice and social order. The concept of ma'at was a key aspect of pharaonic ideology and represented unchanging social order (Bard 2015). Alexander Joffe argues that this "concern for the containment of unrule" caused the social elites to translate the image into something more relatable to their own ideology, so they replaced the snakes with lions and the symbol came to represent power over chaos (Joffe 2000).

But why lions? Though these examples predate dynastic Egypt, they also foreshadow the future theology of the region. It is interesting to note that later Egyptians would have a lion-headed goddess named Sekhmet who, like Ningizzida, was thought to hold power over healing and disease (Norrie 2016). It may be that we are seeing one of the earliest expressions of that belief through the Master of Animals motif. It is a pattern that will be repeated in many cultures that adopt the composition.

3.2 Sumer

As technology evolved and culture became more stratified in the Near East, the cylinder seal was invented as a new tool of administration. Cylinder seals are cylindrical stones drilled longitudinally; on the circumference they bear images carved in relief. The owner would insert a stick and roll the seal onto a soft material such as wax or wet clay, leaving the imprint of a continuous scene such as a procession. The seal in Figure 3.4 is made from marble and was found at Tepe Gawra in Iran. In addition to being the one of the first examples of the Master of Animals motif on a cylinder seal, it is the earliest instance of a "contest scene" on a seal. A contest scene is a type of seal image depicting battles or contests between humans and animals that would later become one of the most popular motifs on Middle Eastern seals.

Figure 3.4:
Marble Cylinder Seal
Tepe Gawra, 3500 - 2900 BCE
University of Penn, 31-52-54

Figure 3.5:
Calcite Cylinder Seal
Abu Habba, circa 2700 BCE
British Museum – 89538

These early scenes were important because they routinely depicted a version of the Master motif called the “Nude Hero”. In this version of the composition the central figure is a bearded male with six locks of hair, and nude save for a belt. The Nude Hero would come to be directly connected to concepts of kingship in Ur several centuries later. Though this seems an immense expanse of time between the two symbols, the calcite seal in Figure 3.5 is from Abu Habba in Iran and shows that the composition was still in use, relativity unaltered, at around 2700 BCE. By that time the Nude Hero had acquired not only his trademark beard but also his friend, the “Bull Man”.

The variegated animals he is grasping in Figure 3.4 are difficult to make out, but the similarity suggests the possibility that the animal may have been some form of large feline such as the ones on the calcite seal. If this is the case then it recalls the Master motif on the handle of the Gebel el-Arak dagger, and could be further indication of cultural transference between the two regions.

As with the lions on the Gebel el-Arak dagger, the addition of the of the bulls on the calcite seal also correspond with future regional divinity. Although the seal in Figure 3.5 is a later specimen, we do have earlier examples of bulls in Master of Animals motifs. The two ritual cups below are from Uruk (Figure 3.6) and Tell Agrab (Figure 3.6), two sites in Iran separated by over two hundred miles.

Figure 3.6: Stone Cup
Uruk (Warka), 3300 - 3000 BCE
British Museum - 118465

Figure 3.7: Gypsum Cup
Tell Agrab, 3100 - 2900 BCE
Oriental Institute of Chicago - (D. 015848_A17948)

Both vessels date from the period between the marble and calcite seals. They display very similar imagery to that of the seals except here they are three-dimensional artifacts. Each cup features a bearded male with curled locks and a belt, holding mirrored animals in his grasp. In the example from Uruk (Figure 3.6) the figure is almost embracing the shoulders of a bull while his Doppelgänger grabs the bull's tail in a mirrored scene on the reverse of the cup. On the Tell Agrab vessel lions attack the bull while the lone bearded figure grabs two of the great cats (Figure 3.7).

The figures on the cups resemble the central figure on a seal from Tell Asmar (Figure 3.8). In it a bearded man with flowing locks of hair is seen grasping snakes in the classic Master of Serpents motif. This unique seal seems to show an intermediate synchronization of the earlier motif with the later Nude Hero. Over the next millennia similar characters without snakes would continue to make appearances on cylinder seals in almost the exact same poses, suggesting that we may be seeing a translation of a significant cultural myth.

Figure 3.8: Seal Impression
Tell Asmar, 2750 - 2600 BCE
Oriental Institute Chicago - As. 34 91 (Frankfort 1955) (Stolen)

Such a merging of iconography suggests that the concepts behind the images may have also begun to blend together in the minds of the populations. It could be that rather than dying out, the Master of Snakes iconography was transformed into later Master of Animals motifs such as the Nude Hero. The use of this motif and its variants over such a long period of time indicates that it likely represented a significant cultural concept. This belief must have been well known enough to be recognizable in spite of an alteration of context between the two-dimensional seals and the three-dimensional ritual vessels.

The importance of bulls and lions is attested to by to their widespread appearance on early seals and sealings. On a clay tablet from Susa, an area in Iran that was once a neighboring country of Sumer, bulls and lions appear again in the Master motif (Figure 3.9). This time they are in a slightly different format. One half of the seal depicts a anthropomorphic bull subduing two lions, and the other shows a anthropomorphic lion is grasping two bulls. The composition is almost heraldic and their appearance together on the same cylinder seal suggests that the lion and bull may have been emblems of distinct kingdoms or individuals rather than amorphous concepts.

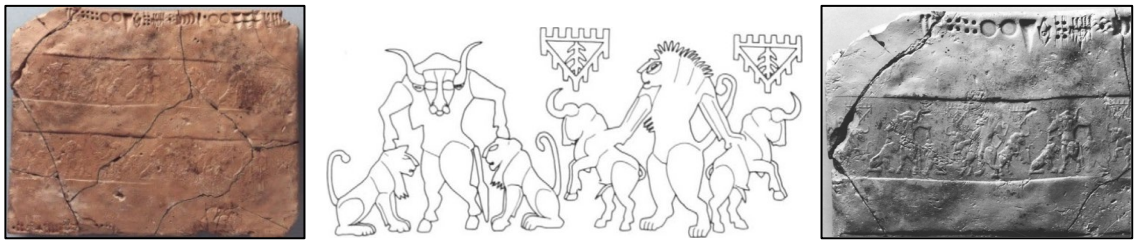

Figure 3.9: Clay Tablet – Drawing - Detail
Susa, 3100 – 2850 BCE
Louvre - SB2801

Though very different from Master images we have examined previously, the tablet above in Figure 3.9 demonstrates that there was already strong cultural significance attached to both the bull and the lion by the end of the 3rd millennium BCE. It also provides us with the earliest example of the Nude Hero's counterpart, the "Bull Man", who would be featured on cylinder seals for the next several centuries almost exactly as he is depicted on the Susa tablet. This replication indicates that the Bull Man must have already been part of an existing myth or other cultural belief at this time.

A more primitive version of the Bull Man can be seen on a seal from Khafajah (Figure 3.10). This may be the first instance of his being paired with a "Nude Hero" prototype. The right side of the seal depicts a bearded figure grasping the snakelike tails of two lions over which he stands. This figure has many similarities to the earlier ritual vessels and later Nude Hero iconography. He is bearded with six locks of hair and is depicted in the Master of Animals composition. The figure in the center is a Bull Man in a very similar pose as on the Susa tablet, but here he is in profile and armed with a dagger in his fight against the lions. Asterisk-like symbols similar to those seen on the preliterate seals also appear on the seal next to crescent moons; these would later become a symbol of kingship.

Figure 3.10: Seal Impression
Khafajah, 2750 - 2600 BCE
Kh. IV 388 - (oip72_0246l) (Frankfort 1955) (stolen)

The asterisk is a cuneiform character called a *dingir*, and it is the symbol of divinity in Sumer (Whiting 1977). The *dingir* is placed before the name of a god in cuneiform writing such as on the tablet of divine names in Figure 3.11. It also used to designate images as deities, as is the case with the water god Enki pictured on the seal in Figure 3.12.

Figure 3.11: Lexical List of God Names
Sumer, 2400 - 2200 BCE
Schøyen Collection - MS 2272_f

Figure 3.12: Hematite Seal
Mesopotamian, 1720 - 1650 BCE
Morgan Library - (seal_0979)

The similar symbols that appeared on the preliterate seals in Figures 2.2, 2.3 and 2.8 may be early examples of the cuneiform symbol that would come to represent the essence of divinity in Mesopotamia. This symbol has extensive use on Near Eastern seals in following millennia, and would continue to appear the Master of Animals motif both here and in other cultures.

One of the most striking things about the Master of Animals motif is that it is always associated with elites. The cylinder seals themselves were implements of authority. The Gebel el-Arak Dagger was a luxury item well out of reach of the average person. And the ritual vessels were not the sort of drinking cups that would be used by a carpenter.

Nor is it of small significance that the image appeared in the tomb of a proto-pharaoh. Predynastic Egyptian elites of this period often utilized several Mesopotamian symbols in an attempt to legitimize their own power (Wilkinson 2000). Much like the interchange of symbols between Middle Eastern populations, this iconographic transference was likely made possible by trade. Both Abydos and Hierakonpolis were on major trade routes (Bard 2015) that would have provided access to both raw materials and new ideas. The Nude Hero with his distinctive curled locks and belt would continue to be depicted on the most regal of goods, but this time the written word and better archaeological context gives us more insight into his story.

CHAPTER 4

EARLY ORIGINS

4.1 The Nude Hero

In the 1920s Leonard Woolley discovered the first traces of the Royal Cemetery of Ur and made the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania home to one of the most stunning examples of the Master of Animals motif. The Lyre of the King (Figure 4.1) dates to about 2600 BCE. It features a gilded bull's head with a flowing beard carved from lapis lazuli.

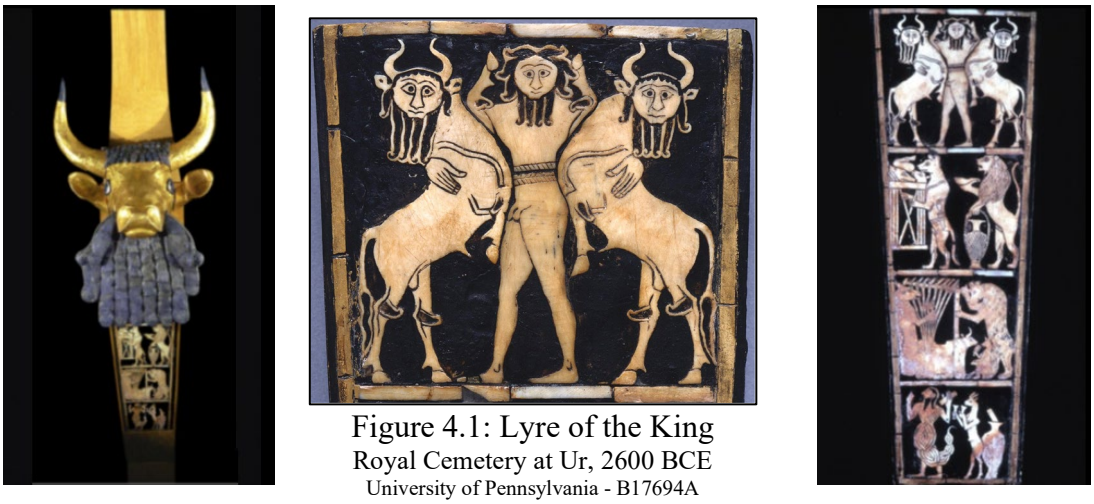

Figure 4.1: Lyre of the King
Royal Cemetery at Ur, 2600 BCE
University of Pennsylvania - B17694A

Underneath the lapis beard four shell-inlaid registers decorate the front of the instrument's sound box. The image in the top register is a bearded male with three locks of hair on either side of his face who is wearing only a belt and is embracing two human-faced bulls. The figure in this panel is called the Nude Hero. He closely resembles the figures on the early ritual vessels (Figure 3.6 and 3.7), and dates to just after the prototype

Nude Hero seals (Figures 3.8 and 3.10). This imagery will be repeated on a great many cylinder seals of this millennium and will often be seen in contest scenes (Costello 2010), similar to the ones seen in the seals in Figures 3.4 and 3.5.

The Master of Animals often appears to embrace the animals with which he is pictured (compare the Lyre of the King). In many scenes the animals are being attacked by lions, much like the carving on the Tell Agrab cup (Figure 3.7). If the images of the Master of Animals grappling lions were intended to reinforce the belief that the ruling parties could quell chaos or fend off an attack, then perhaps the motifs depicting him embracing bulls could represent a protective benevolence akin to later concepts such as that of the "good shepherd".

The Sumerians believed that the bull represented Nanna, the god of the moon. Early texts describe him as the Lapis Bull (Ornan 2001), which is parallel to the imagery on the Lyre of the King. In addition to being the "decider of fate" and associated with healing rituals, he was a protector of livestock (Hall 1986). Images of Nanna on the Lyre would be prominent due to his position as the patron god and guardian of Ur (Klein 2001), but Nanna was closely associated with kingship as a whole (Ferrara 1972).

It has been suggested that the Nude Hero is none other than the warrior king Gilgamesh (Ward 1982). There may be some validity to that claim inasmuch as Nanna had ties to both Gilgamesh and the Nude Hero. Gilgamesh was a Sumerian king of Uruk who was thought to have lived 2800 to 2500 BCE (Dalley 2000). This puts him just before the image of the Nude Hero on the Lyre of the King (Figure 4.1) but several centuries after both the ritual vessels (Figures 3.6 and 3.7) and the early cylinder seals (Figures 3.8 and 3.10). Thus, it is very likely that the Nude Hero was not originally Gilgamesh, but an earlier

symbol that he appropriated to reinforce his political power. In mythology Gilgamesh was the grandson of Utu, the Sumerian sun god, and was the great grandson of Nanna. The association with divinity would also have helped legitimize Gilgamesh's authority, and it seems to have been a common practice among later rulers.

Individuals identified as kings on cylinder seals would often be pictured facing a crescent, the symbol of Nanna (Figures 4.2 - 4.4). This depiction always seems to have designated kingship on Near Eastern seals. Though this relationship is repeated across many seals, this seems to have escaped the notice of modern scholars. The seals in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 also depict an asterisk like *dingir*, as on the earlier seal from Khafajah (Figure 3.10). In the first two seals gods are meeting with kings. In the seal in Figure 4.2 the seated figure is a divine king, noted by the presence of both the crescent and the *dingir*. This concept of divine kingship so common that it sometimes made the translation of the names of Sumerian kings difficult because it was hard to distinguish them from gods and because the dinger was originally taken as a phonetic symbol that was part of the name itself (Whiting 1977).

Figure 4.2: Hematite Seal
Babylonian, 1900 – 1600 BCE
Spurlock Museum - 1900.53.0061A_1024

Figure 4.3: Seal Imprint
Tel Asmar, 2000 - 1750 BCE
Oriential Institute Chicago - A8546 (Frankfort 1955)

Figure 4.4:
Seal of Ur-Nammu
Babylon - 2100 BCE
British Museum – 89126

4.2 Early Dynastic Harappa

By ca. 2600 BCE important trade routes crossed the Near East and went through Susa on their way in Mohenjo-daro on the Indus River in modern-day Pakistan. The people of Susa had continued their use of the Master of Serpents motif long after it was abandoned elsewhere. Among the trade goods was a particular type of vessel carved from chlorite that began to appear all over the Middle East by the third millennium BCE (Kohl 1974). These vessels are often carved in what is called the "Intercultural Style" because they depict imagery from several cultures and regions on the same artifact. They were apparently tied to a trade in medical botanicals from the Indo-Iranian plateau (Perrot and Madjidzadeh 2005).

Several of these vessels bear the Master of the Serpents motif (Figure 4.5), and quite a few also depicted other Master of Animals motifs such as the example of the Bull Man form the Temple of Sin, the Akkadian name for Nanna (Figure 4.6). It will be recalled that both images were already well established in Susa by this period, though the Master of Serpents enjoyed continued use there long after it was replaced by other Master motifs elsewhere (Figures 2.4 - 2.6, and Figure 3.8).

Figure 4.5: Chlorite Vase
Tepe Giyan, 2600 - 2334 BCE
Louvre - AO31918

Figure 4.6: Chlorite Vase
Khafajah, Iraq, 2900 - 2350 BCE
Oriental Institute of Chicago - C754 & C755

Many of these chlorite vessels were created at Tepe Yahya in Iran, and this site also yielded evidence of the exchange of both raw materials and finished goods traded with Susa in Iran and Mari in Syria (Kohl 1975). This trade with Susa would account for the sudden increase in the range of the Master of Serpents motif, and the appearance of new additions to the arrangement such as that of the Bull Man. A steatite relief from Mari depicting the Nude Hero gives us evidence that aspects of the motif had reached Syria by this time (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7: Steatite Relief
Mari, Syria, 2645 - 2460 BCE
National Museum of Damascus - 08-02-08-15

The trade routes had become much more extensive and not limited to the polities in the Near East. They actually connected Mesopotamia to the Iranian Plateau and the Indus (Parpola, Parpola, & Brunswig 1977). Scholars have argued that this trade, especially with and via Tepe Yahya, directly resulted in the development of Harrapan culture (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1972).

The Harappan culture sprang up along the Indus river in Pakistan and is considered the oldest civilization of south Asia. Many of the goods produced there show evidence of cultural exchange with Mesopotamia, and the tiles in Figures 4.8 – 4.10 show that the motif had also spread to the to the Indus Valley by ca. 2600. Of particular interest is the seal in Figure 4.8, which depicts six divots along the crest of the head of the central figure. The number and placement of these divots is reminiscent of the six locks of hair often pictured in the Mesopotamian Nude Hero motifs.

Figure 4.8:
Stone Seal
Mohenjo-daro,
2600 – 2334 BCE
Harappa Museum - DK 11794

Figure 4.9:
Cast of Seal M308
Mohenjo-daro,
2600 – 2334 BCE
Smithsonian - A482808

Figure 4.10: Terracotta Seal
Mohenjo-daro, 2600 – 2334 BCE
Harappa Museum - H95-2486, Lot 4651

Figure 4.11:
Signet Ring of Tiryns
Tiryntha, 1500 BCE
Athens Archeological Museum - 6208

Like the Egyptian dagger, the terracotta seal in Figure 4.10 is both evidence of cultural translation and a foreshadowing future divinity. For the first time the figure appears as Mistress, rather than Master, of Animals. It is suggested that this may be the earliest depiction of what would become the Hindu goddess Durga (Chakravarty 1971). This is bolstered by Durga's association with lions and tigers, the only animals depicted with the Mistress motif in this culture. The divinity of the image is confirmed by the six-spoked wheel pictured above the Mistress motif that is suggestive of the *dingir*. It is identical to the version of the *dingir* that will later appear along with the crescent on the gold signet ring of Tiryns (in southern Greece), dating to the 15th century BCE (Figure 4.11). The proto-Durga is not alone on this tile, as its reverse features another image thought to be the earliest depiction of Shiva (Hiltebeitel 1978).

Shitala is an aspect of Durga and is still revered across Pakistan and northern India in the areas crisscrossed by the trade routes with Mesopotamia. Like her counterparts in Mesopotamia and Egypt, Shitala is a deity associated with healing and disease (Ferrari 2015).

CHAPTER 5

INTERCULTURAL STYLE AND THE NEAR EAST

The Master motif retained its importance long after the veneration of Nanna ceased. The Bull Man disappears from the images, and the Nude Hero starts to be replaced with images of kings. As before, the *dingir* and the crescent are added to the images to signal to viewers that they are looking at a divine king (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). In some seals the rulers went so far as to place themselves in poses traditionally reserved for Nanna, such as the image of the king on the backs of two cows in Figure 5.3 (Rochberg 2010).

Figure 5.1: Stone Seal and Imprint
Assyrian, 1400 - 1300 BCE
Metropolitan Museum of Art - ss43_102_37

Figure 5.2: Chert Cylinder Seal
Assyrian, 1300 - 1200 BCE
Morgan Library - Seal 600

Figure 5.3: Shell Cylinder Seal
Ur, 1500 - 1100 BCE
University of Penn - Ur 1928-9 (98623_1600)

Figure 5.4: Agate Cylinder Seal with Detail
Iran, 1550 - 1300 BCE
British Museum - 89745

Fantastic creatures such as griffins begin to appear on seals around 1500 BCE. But perhaps the most startling development was the appearance of the Mistress of Animals for the first time in the Middle East (Figure 5.4). Prior to this the only known Mistress imagery appeared in the Indus Valley almost a thousand years earlier (Figure 4.11).

But this was no simple homecoming. By this time the Sumerian Empire had collapsed, the rise and fall of the Akkadian Empire had supplanted the Sumerian dialect with its own Semitic language, and the Babylonian Empire had become history. Although the region was the birthplace of the motif, the Assyrians of this time were a culturally different population from the one that that had originally created the Master of Snakes and later Nude Hero motifs. What is occuring is a continuation of the cultural translation that had taken place in outlying regions. By now enough change had occurred within the regional culture to obscure the common origin of the motifs, and to allow for the acceptance of newer interpretations.

The *Lorestān* Province in western Iran would come to serve as the crucible in which foreign Master and Mistress motifs were alloyed into new designs, and the region would become the largest producer of artifacts bearing these images. Because of its location it enjoyed early trade with Mesopotamia and Susa as far back as the 4th to 3rd millennium BCE (Begemann et al. 2008). But it was not until after the *Lorestān* Iron Age, beginning about 1300 BCE, that craftsmen start producing a style of artifacts that scholars now refer to as the "*Lorestān* Bronzes" (Fleming et al. 2005).

Among the hundreds of examples of the Master and Mistress motif on these intricate bronzes are pins such as those seen earlier in Figures 1.5 – 1.8, horse bits (Figure 5.5), and finials (Figure 5.6). Unfortunately, most of the examples in museums were looted before the 1930s, so exact provenances and dates cannot be discerned. However, the majority of the museums date the pieces from ca. 1000 to 800 BCE. These bronzes remain relevant to the investigation of the motif because they demonstrate the range of influences on the motifs during this period and may help to explain some of the blending of styles found later in the "Orientalizing" period of the Aegean Iron Age.

Figure 5.5: *Lorestān* Horse Bit
Iran, 1000 – 600 BCE
Los Angeles County Museum of Art - M.76.97.106

Figure 5.6: *Lorestān* Finial
Iran, 1000 – 600 BCE
Los Angeles County Museum of Art - M.76.97.57

The most important piece from this era is a Neo-Assyrian plaque quaintly referred to as the "Hell Plaque" (Figure 5.7). This relief is significant because it not only includes a version of the motif that combines the Master of Serpents with lion imagery, but also provides direct evidence that both versions of the motif being associated with healing.

Figure 5.7: The Hell Plaque
Mesopotamia, 934 - 612 BCE
Louvre - AO 22205

This plaque is believed to have been hung above the beds of the sick to effect a cure. The top register represents the holy symbols of various Assyrian deities. Included among them are the *dingir*-like sun disk representing Shamash, and the crescent moon of Sin (formerly Nanna). The figure at the bottom is said to represent an evil demon of disease named Lamashtu. She was the daughter of Anu and her name in Sumerian was spelled with a *dingir*. This suggests that we are seeing a demonization of an earlier deity, and her Assyrian name may actually be an irregular form of lamassu, a protective deity often set to guard gates (Kühne 2010). Whatever the case may be, Lamashtu were often used on healing amulets during this period.

CHAPTER 6

ORIENTALIZING AND THE AEGEAN

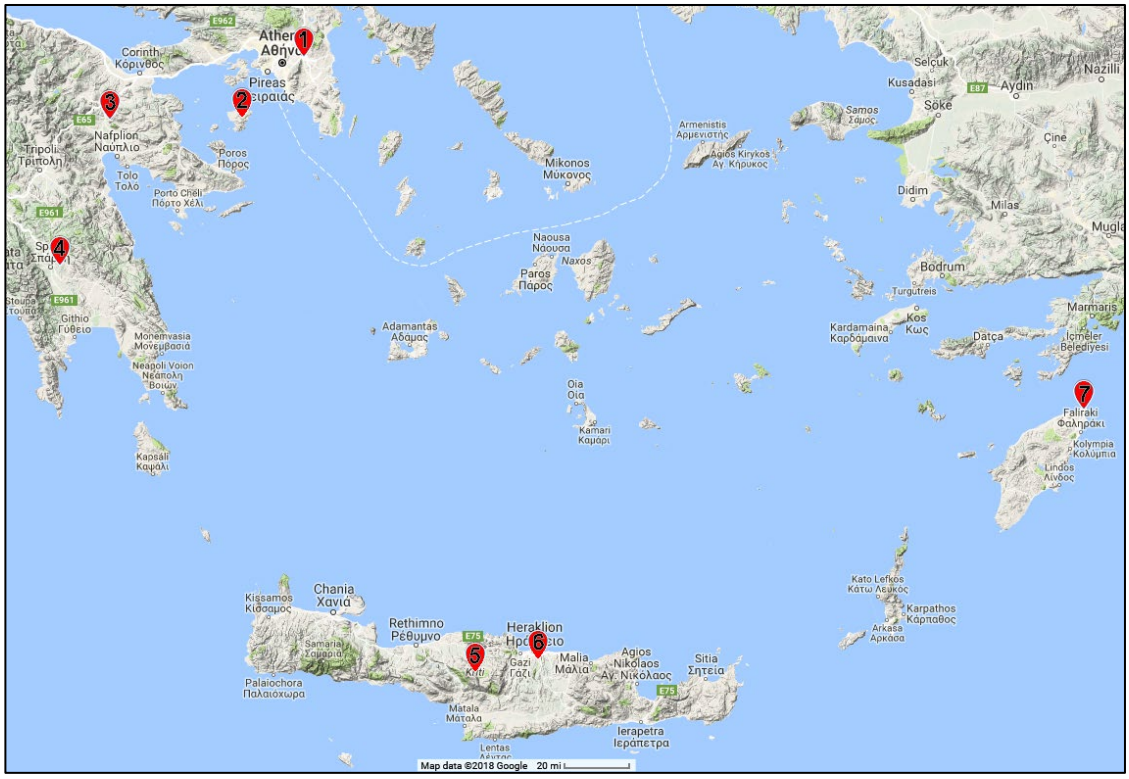

Figure 6.1: Locations of the Master/Mistress Motif in the Aegean

1 - Arkades **2** - Aegina **3** - Mycenae **4** - Sparta
5 - Crete **6** - Knossos **7** - Rhodes

These dynamics of translation and transference continued westward as the motif began to appear in the Aegean (Figure 6.1).

The earliest Aegean example of this motif occurs on a gold pendant from the Aegina Treasure hoard (Figure 6.2. It has been suggested that the central figure's attire shows strong Egyptian or Phoenician influences (Higgins 1957). However, there is a striking similarity between this so-called Aegina pendant and a jasper seal from Crete (Figure 6.3). Like the gold pendant, the seal features a topless figure holding birds, but the pronounced breasts on this figure make clear that it is female. It is very possible that the pectorals on the pendant may have actually been intended to have been female breasts.

Figure 6.2: Pendant, Sheet Gold
Aegina, 1850 - 1550 BCE
British Museum - 1892,0520.8

Figure 6.3: Jasper Seal
Crete, 1600 - 1450 BCE
British Museum - 1923,0401.4

This possibility of the figure being female is not as far-fetched as it may seem. Though the gold pendant was found in the island of Aegina, it was part of a famous burial hoard that is often argued to have been Cretan, or at least created by Cretan artists. Bronze Age Minoan art was dominated by females, both divine and mortal, and there are few examples of indisputable male deities from Minoan Crete.

The four snakelike curved lines on either side of the pendant's central figure are identical to the hornlike headdress worn by the females depicted the seals from Tomb 515 from Mycenae, which was just across the Saronic Gulf from Aegina (Figures 6.4 and 6.5). These seals are very similar to a specimen from Knossos on Crete (Figure 6.6). The figures in three seals are topless in Minoan style, and they all have the same headdress with the labrys double axe, a common symbol featured in the Cretan palaces.

Figure 6.4: Agate Seal and Imprint
Mycenae, Necropolis - Tomb 515, 1450 - 1300 BC
Archäologisches Museum - (CMS-I-145)

Figure 6.5: Agate Seal and Imprint
Mycenae, Necropolis - Tomb 515, 1450 - 1300 BC
Archäologisches Museum - (CMS-I-144)

Figure 6.6: Agate Seal and Imprint
Knossos, Sanatorium Gräber, 1450 - 1300 BC
Archäologisches Museum - (CMS-II,3-063)

But it is very possible that that one of the most famous Minoan symbols, the horned headdress, was acquired elsewhere. The Mycenaean and Minoan seals are from the same period, 1450 - 1300 BCE. The Aegina pendant predates those seals by at least a century, 1850 - 1550 BCE, but the jasper seal may have made within the period of the pendant, 1600 – 1640 BCE. Thus, the gold pendant predates the later horned seals, and the earliest seal attributed to Crete depicting the Mistress motif is pictured without horns but with the same animals as the Aegina pendant.

The assertion of Cretan craftsmanship seems to be another problem in tracing the symbol. The provenance of the jasper seal is unknown, but it was classified as Minoan due to the quality of the work even though the Mistress motif would not appear in Minoa until the Snake Goddess (ca.1600 BCE), and the motif would not be pictured with birds until almost a thousand years later. This was because it has become commonplace to attribute fine work to the Minoans, which is assumed and not always based on archaeological evidence (Muhly 2015). It is natural to want to compare artifacts of unknown provenance to those with secure archaeological context. However, simply categorizing artifacts based on assertions about the quality of craftsmanship to the exclusion of the context of the site is not only academically risky; it may have compromised our overall picture of the region and led to faulty conclusions about the evolution of motifs.

The seals in Figures 6.4 - 6.6 are from known burials. All three seals date to the same period, but the engravings from Mycenae are much more carefully and intricately carved than the specimen from Crete, which almost has the appearance of a copy from memory. Even the labrys, one of the primary symbols of Minoan civilization, is far more detailed on the Mycenaean specimens. This would suggest that the earliest examples of

these elements in the Aegean came from Mycenae, not Crete. Yet a presupposition of Minoan craftsmanship or style is applied to them based on the quality of the work and the preconception of the origin of the image.

It was very rare for the motif to be pictured with birds at all, and the Aegina pendant and jasper seal are examples of a form of the Mistress/Master motif that does not appear outside the Aegean. As in other regions, the cultural adaption of the motif foreshadows future divinity. Those two examples will be without parallel until after 1000 BCE, when temples to the goddess Artemis Orthia appear in the Aegean in the same region as the Bird Mistress imagery. She was a goddess of fertility and animals who was worshipped in southern Greece (Lawler 1942).

The votive imagery of Artemis Orthia often placed her in the Mistress motif with birds, and the composition later became associated with the Greek moon goddess (Figure 6.7). Many of these early motifs also depicted Artemis Orthia with symbols of healing such as the tree of life (Figure 6.9).

Figure 6.7: Ivory Pin
Sparta, Sanctuary of Artemis Orthia - 660 BCE
National Archaeological Museum, Athens - A15502

Figure 6.8: Silver Pendant
Rhodes, 700 - 600 BCE
Metropolitan Museum of Art – 1999.221

Figure 6.9: Urn
Arkades – Grave L - 700 BCE
Levi 1969, 22 pl. 12

The seventh century BCE was a time of intense exploration and trade between the Aegean and the Syro-Palestinian coast; as Greek merchants interacted with the older cultures of the eastern Mediterranean, they were exposed to religious iconography that began to creep into Greek art, and thus the century has been characterized as one of "Orientalizing". Pendants such as the one in Figure 6.8 represent the one of the most prolific forms of the Mistress of Animals motif in the Aegean. These pendants have been found in both gold and silver in several different locales. Variations exist but the majority retain the style and iconography of the Kamiros pendant. The hairstyle and clothing are consistent with that of the Ivory pin and Urn, but this is the first time the motif is pictured with wings. These compositions show strong influence from the Near East. They are very similar to the detail in the earlier seal from Iran (Figure 5.4), as the figures in both motifs are winged and holding large cats in the same manner. Many of the Aegean pendants also include the addition of asterisk patterns not unlike the *dingir* (Figure 5.12), and these symbols are carried over to other depictions of the motif during the period (Figure 6.10).

Figure 6.10: Ceramic Cup
Crete, 700 - 600 BC
Metropolitan Museum of Art – 1999_80 a, b

Figure 6.11: Ceramic Cup
Kamiros, 700 - 600 BC
British Museum- 1860,0404.2

Variations of the motif continued to evolve into new combinations during the Orientalizing period, suggesting that there may have been synchronization of other deities with the Mistress motif at this time (Figure 6.11). The motif began to be depicted more frequently with many different animals, including both birds and large cats, as seen on the Boeotian amphora in Figure 1.3 and on the ceramic cup in Figure 6.10. The checkered dress and overall composition strongly suggests that they influenced the iconography of the *François Vase* (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The Master/Mistress of Animals is often viewed as an image that appears mysteriously and inconsistently through history, but as I have shown in the analysis above, there are clear patterns in the evolution of the image that can be recovered from the surviving iconographic evidence over a very wide region of the Old World. This motif has a lineage that can be traced well back into prehistory, and for which a demonstrable chain of cultural custody can be established. It is a motif associated with healing, divinity, and social power that continually was subject to stylistic evolution and reinterpretation based on beliefs and understandings of each adopting culture.

When I began this project, I thought I was researching a symbol that influenced a single Greek ideal of divinity. In actuality it was an archaic symbol that impacted countless cultures, each reinterpreting it based on the needs of the people at that time. Diffusion and translation become more a web of contacts and influences than a direct line of transmission, with each connection point creating new associations and ideas while retaining some aspects of prior concepts. The Master/Mistress motif shows itself to be not an occasional cultural manifestation, but a symbol that was constantly evolving with the cultures it encountered.

I have not used the term “derived” once in this paper. This is because rather than simple appropriative mimicry, populations picked up ideas from one another and incorporated them into their own cultural schemas. Ningizzada, Nanna, Sekhmet, Durga, and Artemis are all distinct aspects of the populations that venerated them, but within those deities can be found much older ideas. One of the most important concepts that can be gleamed from the study of

the Master/Mistress motif is that no matter how very different people and ideas may seem, it does not mean that they were are not once echoes from the same source.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Jeremy Dubhrós was born into a rural environment where conjure was still a part of society. His intimate understanding of conjure work translated into a strong interest in folklore. Moving to the city at a young age caused a dramatic culture shock that left him curious about the nature of perception and intrigued with the origin of cultural ideas and understandings. Jeremy's background and knowledge of the impermanence of culture gives him a unique perspective from the edges of society.

Jeremy's path to UTA was not typical. His interest in change, how things are made, and the even the nature of ideas themselves sent him on a meandering path through various nonstandard occupations. He has been both a redsmith and blacksmith. He is a lapidary who has taught gem cutting for over a decade, and holds certifications by the Gemological Institute of America. And his silverwork has won awards from the South Central Federation of Gemological Societies for a process of making reticulated silver that is both stampable and malleable enough to overlay other metals.

His knowledge of folklore and cultural practice earned him a position at the largest and oldest spiritual shop in Texas. There he has had the pleasure of working with both individuals and religious leaders from many diverse cultures for more than fifteen years. This one-on-one contact with such varied people has generated in him a much greater appreciation and understanding of the ideas espoused by the populations they represent, and of how culture itself is constructed.