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Preface

Christopher R. Binetti

After a long hiatus of about four years, the New Jersey Journal of Politics had returned for its Issue 2. In that time, much has changed in the world. Many of the institutions, globally and in the United States, that had once supported liberalism in all of its forms have turned away from it. Progressivism has metastasized in America. Anti-Semitism is rampant. Bigotry is winning and tolerance is losing.

However, the New Jersey Journal of Politics is unafraid. Our editors and contributors share a common vision of a liberal world in which differing views can coexist, if not happily, then at least comfortably. At a time at which some institutions of our State of New Jersey seems to ignore the intricacies and needs of much of the population, the State Library has been noting but gracious to us. We once again thank the New Jersey State Library for all that it does for the Journal. We would be nothing without it.

At a time in which Italophobia and Anti-Semitism are everywhere in our State, it is important to have a Journal that is proudly pro-Italian American and even prouder to be pro-Jewish. That said, we welcome all sorts of scholarship and opinions, a novelty in an age in which liberalism in thought and deed has been replaced by illiberal forms of progressivism and knee-jerk conservatism.

As always, we stand up for New Jerseyan political scientists, whether they study New Jersey or other polities. We hope that you love Issue 2.

Discussion

Christopher R. Binetti

The first article in this issue is Thomas Lansburg's visionary work, "Murky Mirrors: the Role of Enlightenment Era Theater in Constructing Contradictory Images of Judeo-Islamic Oriental Others", which looks at Orientalism as a worldview of "Westerners", not in the 19th or 20th-century, as would usually be the practice, but in the Enlightenment, predominantly, but not exclusively in the 18th-century. Lansburg find that while "Westerners" were consistent in "Orientalizing" Jewish and Muslim cultures, this was all that was consistent with their messages and themes. Ultimately, though, despite the lack of consistency in the Enlightenment's treatment of Jewish and Muslim others, deep-seated Anti-Semitism and Anti-Islamic sentiments were consistently the basis of the approach. Lansburg goes beyond the Enlightenment, as well, looking at the origins of Anti-Semitism and Anti-Islamic sentiments in "Christendom", as well as more modern results of "Western" "Orientalism".

The second article, "More than the Grim Reaper: A Perspective on Mitch McConnell's Role in the Nullification of the Obama Presidency" by Justin J. Wert argues that McConnell was dedicated to nullifying Obama's historic presidency and that he was motivated by anti-civil rights ideology. This is a distinctly different take on Mitch McConnell and Wert is to be commended for "going out on a limb" with such a radical take. Wert also views Obama's victories as useless in promoting civil rights, despite their ground-breaking nature. He views Obama's presidency, largely through McConnell's role as "the Grim Reaper" as being largely ineffectual, especially in terms

of civil rights. He does not see the political processes and institutions that helped elect and re-elect the nation's first black President as in any way progress in the fight for civil rights, for African Americans or anyone else. This new approach shows the Journal's ability to incorporate different ideological approaches into one issue.

Our third article, "Dirt Gets under the Fingernails: Assyria and Republican Political Theory Rooted in Historical Methods", Christopher R. Binetti argues that the ancient, legendarily-despotic regime of Assyria actually is a case-study in theoretical republicanism. In other words, Assyria became an evil regime over time; it did not start out that way. This is actually a case-study and a warning to us, because good regimes can, often too easily, become evil ones, in times of crises. America's great illiberalism crisis seems to bear out this author's thesis.

John Michael Mayrick Saimbert's "Examining the New Jersey First Law: Should It Stay or Go?" is an absolutely-fascinating take on the New Jersey First Law, which has the support of the Editor-in-Chief of this Journal. Saimbert argues that the Law should be repealed or allowed to go away. He does not simply attack it, but has detailed and nuanced reasons for opposing it. Despite being in disagreement with Saimbert, the Editor-in-Chief believes that Saimbert has done something truly original and important here. It is essential to have political scientists critique specific legislation at the state level. Saimbert's work is breathtakingly trailblazing in this regard. Also, no one can argue with his argument that the exceptions to the Law's residency requirements, the whole point of the legislation, defeats its purpose. In a time in which the media in New Jersey does not question the State Legislature, it is a good thing that someone is willing to analyze and scrutinize this legislation.

“Examining How Transitioning CTE Policies in K-12 May Stimulate Economic Growth for Underrepresented Communities” by Latoya Wilson also looks at New Jersey’s policies. However, she, generally speaking, approves of the State’s attempts to help underrepresented communities’ ability to get good jobs by making Career and Technical Education available in poor and minority districts. Wilson gives a careful and thorough analysis of how New Jersey has tried to use Career and Technical Education programs to help minorities and the poor (and also women) and how these programs can continue to be improved. Wilson’s article is an excellent example of how the Journal emphasizes specific analyses of New Jersey’s state politics, laws and policies, whether the review is negative or, as with this article, a mostly positive one.

Our last article is Christopher R. Binetti’s “The King of Isin Lied-The Sumerian King List as a Political Document and What It Says About Now” is a novel take on a historical document known as “the Sumerian King List”. He argues that this is a political document and needs to be looked at as such. This article brings together different approaches to scrutinize a foundational document in the study of Western ancient history. Ultimately, he argues that political documents back then and today can be treated fairly similarly.

In sum, our six articles all taken questions of the “other” and the State. While Wilson argues that the State can help integrate the “other” and benefit the least-advantaged groups in society, Wert believes that the State, at the national level, is too easily turned against the “other”. Ehlke does not like the “othering” of Pennsylvanians by New Jersey, while Lansburg sees the Enlightenment as, in part, the political exercise of “othering”, even in popular culture like the theater. Binetti in his own two articles sees the republic’s collapse as inherently “othering”, while the political document known as the “Sumerian King List” is inherently the State “othering” some people and including others.

In short, the State, at the state or federal level, is extremely powerful when it comes to inclusion or “othering” the “other”. However, we should be careful not to allow “inclusion” to be used for “othering” unpopular groups, such as Italians and Jews.

Murky Mirrors, the Role of Enlightenment Era Theater in Constructing Contradictory Images of Judeo-Islamic Oriental Others

Thomas Lansburg

Introduction

In a 1990 essay in the *Atlantic Monthly*, “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” the Princeton Islamist scholar Bernard Lewis [1916-2018] described a “clash of civilizations” that had estranged the Muslim World from the Christian West. In a 1993 article in *Foreign Affairs*, and in a 1996 monograph, the Harvard Government professor Samuel P. Huntington [1927-2008] borrowed Lewis’s “clash of civilizations” model to assess the character of post-Cold War global alignments. Huntington posited that cultural/religious identities would prove the defining characteristic of the world newly disordered when the Soviet Union imploded and the prickly international balance of superpower bipolarity collapsed. The dependence of industrial economies upon oil controlled by Muslim states, the festering bitterness among Muslims over the Palestinian question, and growing resentment among observant Muslims about the perniciousness of Western cultural influences, made Islamic alienation from the West the potentially most exigent of Huntington’s clashing civilizations. When 9/11¹ occurred and the Saudi Islamist radical Osama ben Laden’s [1957-2011] *al-Qaida* assumed responsibility for the attacks, the George W. [“Dubya”] Bush [b. 1946] administration responded by proclaiming a “war on terrorism” and invaded first Afghanistan where the ruling Taliban had afforded a sanctuary for *al-Qaida* and subsequently Saddam Hussein’s [1937-200] Iraq which the Bush

¹ Perhaps the most egregious single act of religiously inspired, fanatical violence perpetrated by Americans against other Americans occurred on **September 11**, 1857 when Mormons massacred 137 adults and children from an Arkansas émigré wagon train. Although considerable debate still swirls around this incident, the Mormon leader Brigham Young [1801-77], who had already defied Federal authority in the Utah Territory, seems likely to have offered at least tacit approval of this horrific act. The Mormons spared children under ten, placing them with Mormon families, until Federal troops seized them and returned them to relatives in the East.

administration falsely linked to the anti-US “terrorism.”. While considerable controversy surrounds these enterprises, and especially the effort to implement “regime change” in Iraq, no one doubts that Bush’s actions have escalated Muslim estrangement from the US geometrically. Muslims hear an American president trumpeting his fundamentalist Christianity, listen to confrontational administration rhetoric that echoes the damning caricatures of Islam and Muslims Western Christendom marshaled during the Medieval Crusades [beginning 1095] to recruit “warriors of god” and to rationalize horrid atrocities committed to extirpate “infidels,” and they remember the oil under Iraqi sands waiting for them to exploit. They heard and recoiled from the words of yet another Western Christian leader seeking to establish his nation’s hegemony over a region whose resources he coveted but whose inhabitants and faith he disparaged.

The following will explore another time when the Ottoman Sultan had only begun to succumb to the bacillus of Western imperialism that made the Grand Turk “the sick man of Europe” early in the 19th-century, an era when Qing China’s Kiangxi emperor [1654-1722] served Europeans as a model of enlightened absolutism [not despotism], a time when Reason reigned over political partisanship as the favored lodestar of Western intellectuals, a time when burgeoning knowledge seemed destined not to unlock the genie of planetary annihilation, but to resolve most of the problems of subsistence, disease, even of socio-economic inequity that had plagued mankind throughout time—the European Enlightenment.

During that era the controversialist French literary figure known as Voltaire [François Marie Arouet, 1694-1778], and the Prussian playwright Gotthold Ephraim Lessing [1729-81], wrote

works that sought to refashion popular Western understanding of Islam and of Judaism, faiths linked then by Europeans in ways that would stun most Americans who tend to believe Jews and Muslims have traveled history fully as estranged as today's Muslims tend to feel from the United States of George W. Bush. These writers, amongst the most erudite of their day, undertook their labors with somewhat different goals, and spurred by quite different personal attitudes toward both Muslims and Jews. Telling their story will suggest something about their time, while perhaps sounding a cautionary note about our own.

The Enlightenment

The European Enlightenment spanned the “century of light” [1680-1790] that dawned with the English alchemist and polymath Sir Isaac Newton [1643-1727], whose *Opticks* [1704] provided the movement's defining metaphor, and concluded with the German philosopher Immanuel Kant [1724-1804] who challenged mankind to “dare to know” [*sapere aude*] in his essay “What is Enlightenment?” [1784] which encapsulated the aims of a century long quest to illuminate the range of human potential—the movement's totemic worship of Progress—and to expose the malign forces that frustrated mankind's efforts to achieve intellectual autonomy and personal freedom. The movement's cosmopolite character attracted reform minded, philosophically disposed men and women from throughout Europe and the Americas, who collectively constituted a transnational, encyclopedically engaged “Republic of Letters” devoted both to abstract philosophical praxis and to applying their Reason to realize practical advancement in every aspect of human endeavor. A simple sampling of their diverse achievements included generating the Lockean and Rousseauan contractual “ideological origins” of the American and

French Revolutions that transformed the Atlantic Civilization during the 18th-century, innovative techniques introduced or championed by the Englishmen Jethro Tull [1674-1741], Charles Townshend [1674-1738], and Arthur Young [1741-1820], and French Physiocrats, that enhanced agricultural productivity, inventions by the Britons John Harrison [1693-1776], James Watt [1736-1819], James Hargreaves [1720-78], and Richard Arkwright [1732-92] that solved the problem of measuring longitude and harnessed the labor saving power of steam and propelled the first Industrial Revolution, liberal and/or utilitarian constitutional, legal and penal advocacy by the French and Italian jurists the Baron Montesquieu [1689-1755] and Cesare Beccaria [1738-94] and the British social reformer Jeremy Bentham [1748-1832], the English physician Edward Jenner [1749-1823] subduing smallpox by introducing vaccination [Christendom learned about the effective but more dangerous Ottoman variolation/inoculation method around 1717 from letters written by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu { 1689-1762} the wife of Britain's ambassador to Turkey] and the Viennese doctor Franz Mesmer [1734-1815] pioneering work to relieve psychological distress, the Scotsman Adam Smith's [1723-90] treatise on capitalism, *The Wealth of Nations* [1776], and the signal British American Benjamin Franklin [1706-90] whose empirical investigations of electricity yielded the lightning rods that helped to secure cities against divinely inspired fires.

Nothing better exemplified the *philosophes'* assault upon perceived evils than their concerted opposition to religious intolerance, especially the fanaticism and superstition that impelled the bloody persecutions perpetrated by bodies like the Inquisition [Holy Office] of the Catholic Church. The movement's most celebrated figure, the French literary lion Voltaire, excoriated fanaticism when he exhorted his contemporaries to "*l'ecraser l'infame*"—to "crush the infamy."

Voltaire's article on "Fanaticism" in his *Philosophical Dictionary* [1764] defined fanaticism as "the effect of a false conscience, which makes religion subservient to the caprices of the imagination, and the excesses of the passions." *Philosophes* discerned the provenance of fanaticism in religious charlatans who attracted acolytes through conjuring masquerading as thaumaturgy, or by exploiting either the passions or the fears of prospective followers, in sectarian claims to theological infallibility, or in corrupt clerics who stubbornly defended discredited orthodoxies to preserve their authority over credulous congregants.

The changed cosmological perspective occasioned by the 16th-century Copernican Revolution and the general skepticism spawned by the 17th-century Baconian and Cartesian Scientific Revolution and its Newtonian physics, led thoughtful souls to seek a more rational understanding of the divine than that offered by Rome or Christendom's reformed churches. In 1705, the radical English freethinker John Toland [1670-1722] coined the term pantheism to describe his understanding of the nondenominational God of Nature who had created the universe. Toland's "physico-theology" appealed to Deists who accepted the existence of a detached Creator, to Unitarians who honored Nature's one god but rejected Christian Trinitarianism, and even to atheists whose materialism denied the agency of any divinity in shaping the physical universe, but whose few certainties derived from natural science. However, whether one embraced a Platonic sense of Reason as the pathway to a divine First Cause, the incipient natural theology, or simply hailed Reason as the means of penetrating Nature's secrets, the reasoned quest for empirically provable Truths distanced most *philosophes* from Rome's once universal Church.

Historical Roots of Anti-Jewish and Anti-Muslim Sentiments in Western Christendom

Historically, Christian Europeans had reviled Judaism and Islam, Jews and Muslims, as heretical faiths and alien Others who merited the brutal discrimination and violence Christians commonly visited upon these other two “Peoples of the Book” whenever opportunities to do so presented themselves. Anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim fanaticism had many sources. Christians detested Jews for repudiating their Messiah, and hated them for complicity in His death. Jewish separateness, an impulse that derived from the demands of observing Talmudic laws, and more often a judicial fact that eventuated from Medieval Christian laws restricting the locales where Jews might reside or the occupations they might pursue, exacerbated the commonly xenophobic response of both educated and unlettered Christians to Jews. Somatic differences that physically marked Jews as different also alienated Christians from Jews and represented the provenance of the notion of Jews as a distinctive, dangerous racial “Other.” Canards like the blood libel about Jews murdering Christian children to garner blood to use in ritual offerings, or stereotypes about Jewish venality occasioned by the usury they pursued when restrictive Christian vocational laws pushed them into that trade, morphed into accusations of sexual license as a natural concomitant of coveting lucre so fiercely. Collectively, these and other markers of cultural difference, and the Jews’ inexpiable culpability in Christ’s Passion, stigmatized Jews as pariahs no less dangerous to associate with than lepers, and explain why individual Christians and their princes discriminated against their Jewish neighbors, why Christian princes so often expelled their Jewish subjects, often after bleeding them white financially, and why Jews suffered so many bloody ejaculations of Christian violence—the pogroms that so sullied medieval and subsequent Christian European history.

Western Christendom's hostility to Islam also had both sacred and secular sources.

Theologically, anti-Muslim rage began with Islam's Prophet, Mohammed [570-632], who claimed to have marked the end of Prophecy, and who demeaned Jesus even as he acknowledged Him by mocking Christian Trinitarianism as unabashedly as had the 3rd and 4th-century Christian heretic Arius [256-336] whose insistence upon Jesus' subordination to God led to the Nicene Creed of 325 that made the Trinity Christian orthodoxy, and excelling even Arius' effrontery by characterizing Jesus as nothing more than another of God's certain, but mortal prophets—not the foremost example of theophany. The polygamy authorized in this world for Muslim males in Islam's holy book the *Qur'an*, and the perverse paradise of multiple virgins promised to fallen believers through eternity, lurid stories about Mohammed's personal lubricity, the fact that Islam expanded so promptly and prodigiously by overwhelming Christian and pagan communities alike with the sword, and allegations Muslims forcibly converted conquered peoples, combined to craft a common Christian perception of Mohammed as a blood thirsty, salacious, tyrannical charlatan who had spun spells to seduce his naturally truculent, lascivious and larcenous Arab brethren into becoming the vehicle for the Prophet's ambition. Medieval Christian writers generally claimed that nothing beyond material phenomena, like gorging his carnal lusts or indulging a nearly equal appetite for cruelty, conquest, and temporal sway, actuated Mohammed's proselytizing. In contrast to Christian teaching about Jesus, who embodied the divine *Nomos*, the essentially uncritical criticism of Islam between 700-1100 usually insisted that neither noumena nor any genuine spirituality, and not even rationality apart from the low cunning required to captain a credulous host captivated by promises of booty and bloodshed, concerned Islam's prophet.

The Muslim menace finally breached Western Christendom early in the 8th-century CE when North African Moors conquered most of Iberia, creating the caliphate of al-Andalusia. Spanish Christian princes would not finally finish the *Reconquista* to wrest Iberia back from Islam until January, 1492 when the Moorish stronghold of Granada in southeastern Spain yielded to Ferdinand of Aragon [1452-1516] and Isabella of Castile [1451-1504].

The foregoing encapsulated negative Medieval Western Christian stereotypes about Jews and Muslims. These views evolved before Western Europe became significantly engaged with the Muslim world. Muslim Spain did not venture beyond the Pyrenees after the Franks under Charles Martel [686-741] crushed a Moorish invasion by Emir Abd el-Rahman [?-732] into France near Tours [Poitiers] in 732 [the Moors suffered an earlier, less thoroughgoing defeat near Toulouse in 721]. Only after the Christian Crusades to recover the Holy Land from Islam commenced late in the 11th-century did Western Europe finally begin to engage the Muslim world as something more than a carping caricature.

Finally confronting Islam militarily near the place of its birth had some curious consequences. Christian knights learned to respect the chivalry and valor of their “infidel” foes. Christians acclaimed the great Seljuk Turkish Sultan Saladin [Salah ad-Din, 1137 or 1138-93] for his charity to people of all faiths, for ruling benevolently over both Muslims and non-Muslims, and the compassion he extended his enemies, including affording medical assistance to the English king Richard *Coeur de Lion* [Richard I, 1157-99], Saladin’s celebrated adversary during the Third Crusade [1189-92]. Lessing followed François-Louis-Claude Marin’s adulatory *History*

of *Saladin* [1758] when he made Saladin a pivotal character in his *Nathan the Wise* [1779] whom he depicted as a model of the “enlightened despotism” applauded by *philosophes* like Marin and Voltaire. Saladin also appeared in Sir Walter Scott’s [1771-1832] 1825 novel *The Talisman* as a wily but exceedingly honorable scholar and soldier and a devout Muslim. Christians also grudgingly lauded the political and military prowess of the Ottoman Turkish Sultans Mehmet II [“the Conqueror,” 1432-81], who captured Constantinople in 1453 to finally destroy the Byzantine Empire, and Suleiman I [“the Magnificent,” 1494-1566] who carried Ottoman power to its zenith, grudgingly because these sultans caused Western Christendom to shudder during the 15th and 16th-centuries much as Napoleon, Hitler, or Joseph Stalin later both frightened and attracted many Europeans.² Ottoman power remained sufficiently potent to reach the gates of Vienna in 1683, and the long eclipse of the Ottomans that began with the 1699 Austro-Ottoman Treaty of Karlowitz required over a century and a half before Russia’s Czar Nicholas I could reasonably label the Sultan Europe’s “sick man” in 1853.

² The half-brother of King Philip II of Spain [1527-98], Don John of Austria [1547-78], led a combined Spanish-Genoese fleet that crushed an Ottoman fleet near Lepanto, Italy in 1571 during the reign of Sultan Selim II [1524-74]. Since the Sultan’s forces had taken Cyprus earlier that year, Western Christendom rejoiced God had delivered it from destruction, because an Ottoman victory at Lepanto could have signaled new Ottoman onslaughts within Italy itself [an Ottoman invasion of the Italian boot planned for 1481 was only canceled because Mehmet II’s sudden demise occasioned a succession struggle amongst his heirs]. Earlier in the century the Protestant reformer Martin Luther [1483-1546] had said in his *Table Talk*: “Antichrist is the Pope and the Turk together....The spirit or soul of Antichrist is the Pope; his flesh and body is the Turk....The Turks are the people of the wrath of God.” Now, however, Philip II, the “Defender of the Faith” of the Catholic Church, the European Catholic most committed to extirpating Protestant heresy, had committed his resources to checkmating the Turk and saving Western Christendom from further thralldom under Islamic princes. This enemy of my enemy truly merits greater acclaim historically for what he helped to thwart but, unfortunately, Protestant Europe tends only to recall Philip’s indefatigable efforts to suppress Protestantism in the Netherlands and the Grand Armada he assembled in 1588 to crush Dutch and English heretics that divine winds and English Seadogs destroyed in the Channel, the North Sea and along the Irish coast. Finally, to underscore just how seriously Western Christendom felt itself threatened by the Ottomans even after Lepanto, in 1627 Pope Urban VIII [1568-1644] reaffirmed a 1527 bull issued by Clement VII [1478-1534] that threatened to excommunicate any Christian who trafficked goods of war with the infidel Turk.

Warfare spawned conquest and commerce. Fortunately for the West that commerce included ideas. The ultimately failed effort to retain Jerusalem for Christendom awakened scholarly interest in the Islamic world beyond the isolated monasteries where it had been largely confined before the Crusades. Interacting with the Muslim world allowed the West to recover ancient Greek and Roman texts, to learn the innovative math the Arabs had borrowed from the Indians, to encounter and embrace Arab navigational and scientific advances, and to become well-acquainted with the nuances of Islam. Arab philosophers like Abd Nasr al-Farabi [870-950] Avicenna [Ibn Sina, 980-1037], and Averroes [Ibn Rushd, 1126-98], who found a place in the Italian painter Raphael Santi's [1483-1520] tribute to philosophers, "The School of Athens," [1509-10] became widely studied and admired in the West. Averroes, and the Jewish philosopher [and court physician to Saladin] Moses Maimonides [1135/38-1204], won special prominence among Western Scholastics because their scholarship deeply influenced Saint Thomas Aquinas' [1225-74] academic project to reconcile Aristotelian and Christian thought.

Although Christian scholars could not reconcile their theological differences with Islam, objective writers conceded the religious toleration Muslim states extended to the "People of the Scriptures" [*ahl al-kitab*] and other non-pagans like Zoroastrians. Compelled conversions applied more consistently to Christian states' dealings with their non-Christian subjects. The experience of Jews and Muslims in post-*Reconquista* Spain epitomized this basic difference between Christian and Muslim states. Only Jews and Muslims who converted to Catholicism, the *Marranos* and *Moriscos*, were permitted to remain unmolested in Spain. Many of these Jewish and Muslim *conversos* anticipated Christians during the Reformation and continued to

practice their true faith secretly [*e.g.* recusant Catholics in Elizabethan England]. This made them fodder for the Inquisition. The dissimulation [*al-taqiyyah*] practiced by crypto-Muslim Moriscos also eerily mirrored the casuistry practiced by Jesuits or recusant Catholics in Protestant states—a means of equivocating while shielding oneself from speaking a conscious falsehood.

The Muslims and Jews Inherited by Voltaire and Lessing

When Voltaire wrote *Zaire* [1732], an *Othello* influenced play about a doomed love between a Muslim potentate and a Christian slave wherein sexual jealousy appears as a cognate of religious fanaticism, and *Mahomet, or Fanaticism* [1741] to cast Islam's Prophet as a charlatan responsible for fomenting the self-serving religious fanaticism he so despised, and when Lessing wrote his play *Die Juden* [1749] to pillory the hypocrisy and bigotry that underlay anti-Jewish Christian prejudice, or *Nathan the Wise* [1779] to advocate the interfaith toleration and mutual regard best exemplified in Lessing's day by his close friend the German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn [1729-86, eulogized by the French *philosophe* and revolutionary Mirabeau {1749-91} as the "German Socrates"], several of their compatriots within the "Republic of Letters" had undertaken considerable research and published tomes to advance assessments of Muslims and Jews from the realm of sectarian strife to that of sound scholarship.

The boards for which Voltaire and Lessing wrote still supported sinister Jews like the archly Machiavellian Barabas in Christopher Marlowe's [1564-93] *The Jew of Malta* [1589] or the vengeful usurer Shylock of William Shakespeare's [1564-1616] *The Merchant of Venice*

[1596], because Jews had risen to prominence in several parts of Western Christendom, and continued to be perceived as both a dangerously exotic “Other,” ever able to pollute Christian communities culturally and socially, and as an increasingly menacing force economically.

The Oxford divine and proto-Orientalist Humphrey Prideaux’s [1648-1724] *The Old and New Testaments Connected in the History of the Jews and Neighboring Nations* [1714-5-17] demeaned the Jews as a petty, unwarrantedly proud people, murderously cruel when empowered, craven when subdued, although Prideaux did acknowledge the Jews’ role in moving religion from pagan polytheism to monolatry and finally to the monotheism epitomized for Prideaux by Reformed Christianity. Or, the Frankfurter Johann Andrea Eisenmenger’s [1654-1704] *Jewry Revealed* [1700] reprised ancient anti-Jewish accusations. Works like those of Prideaux and Eisenmenger afforded Enlightenment era writers and their readers, or theater going audiences, ample fodder to find humor in Shylock’s lament that “sufferance is the badge of my people,” or to say “Amen” to falsehoods swallowed as fact that underwrite what we now call anti-Semitism.

Mohammed and Islam, which Europeans frequently mistakenly called Mohammadism, remained contentious subjects, largely because of intellectual jousting over Mohammed’s true character and its corresponding impact upon the faith he founded. Prideaux wrote a scathing biography, *The Life of Mahomet: The True Nature of Imposture* [1697], that retailed stories about the prophet’s charlantry, characterized “ambition and lust” as Mohammed’s “two predominant passions,” dismissed Islam as a pathetic imitation of Christianity, and concluded that God had caused Islam to exist to scourge Christianity as His divine judgment upon Christendom for its declension, moral failings exemplified by the bickering that effected the schism between Rome

and Constantinople in 1054, and the more deeply felt, self-inflicted wounds of the wars of the Reformation [c. 1522-1648], calamities God permitted to chasten the once ecumenical Catholic Church for becoming a morass of individual and institutional corruption. Prideaux's work provided a template for critics of the Islamic world that devolved to reductionist estimates of Islam predicated upon references to Mohammed's alleged crimes or failings. Negativity like Prideaux's became the basis for the modern, Eurocentric Orientalist trope that posited dyads, civilized v. uncivilized, rational v. irrational, Occident v. Orient to differentiate between either a backward or declining Islamic East and a dynamic, progressive West, and which insisted upon the ontological and epistemological superiority of Western Christendom over anything that then existed or had ever existed in the Islamic East. Fundamentally, hostile Western writers of the Orientalist mode deconstructed Islam as the moral negative of Christianity, inherently inferior because of its heretical founding and its specious dogma. The fact that Orientalism emerged not as an East-West dialogue, but as a self-serving intellectual rationale in the West, almost entirely ignored in the Ottoman realm at which it was initially directed, should suggest the character of the scholarship. The path-breaking constitutional scholar Montesquieu, for example, whose *Persian Letters* [1721] and *Spirit of the Laws* [1748] considered cultural, economic, and environmental factors largely ignored in prior political studies, and who genuinely strove to emulate the sensitivity to cultural relativism urged upon Europeans in the 16th-century by the pioneering French essayist Michel de Montaigne [1533-92] when he compared pagan anthropophagy in the Americas to the Catholic Eucharist in his seminal 1580 essay "Of Cannibals," failed to appreciate how blinkered he remained because of his Eurocentrism. He offered a mixed but predominantly negative verdict about Islam and the Prophet, shuttering at the horrors of the *seraglio* and the political intrigue of the women's quarters which he claimed

underlay the Ottomans' damnable despotism, lamenting the Prophet's *hadith* [Mohammed's collected sayings outside the revealed Word of the *Qur'an*] and Quranic teachings that made fatalists and detached speculators of Muslims who learnt less to engage the world than to "turn their backs on all that belongs to this world," while praising the toleration for non-Muslims that obtained within Muslim lands. The "Other-Worldly" thrust of Jesus's message of salvation, most famously amplified in Saint Augustine of Hippo's [354-430] *City of God* [426] had become less exigent in Montesquieu's increasingly secular Western Civilization where achieving material Progress validated worshipping at the altar of Her priestesses Science and Technology, and deprecating perceived material backwardness while lionizing the material achievers who took to heart the "public benefits of private vice" the English writer Bernard de Mandeville [1670-1733] touted in his satiric *Fable of the Bees* [1714], and that Adam Smith famously attributed to the agency of a "hidden hand" that would operate within the capitalist marketplace to assure the commonweal benefited from the activities of entrepreneurs busily pursuing their self-interested economic agendas. Montesquieu also railed against Oriental despotism to implicitly pillory despots closer to home as part of his program to revivify aristocratic authority over royal prerogative, to restore Honor as the defining characteristic of the State.

When Britain justified imposing the Raj upon India's Muslim Mogul rulers and its Hindu princes after suppressing the Indian Rebellion/Sepoy Mutiny in 1858 by touting the benefits Indians would derive from British law and the order and efficiency of British civil administration [Britain's East India Company had controlled much of India since defeating its French rivals at the 1757 Battle of Plassey], or when France invaded and conquered Muslim Algeria during the

1830s and proclaimed its sacred duty to undertake a “*mission civilatrice*,” the motives that underlay Orientalism did not require microscopic scrutiny.

However, the dimming star of Ottoman political influence, which coincided with the receding presence of Muslims within Europe proper as Christians incrementally reclaimed territory formerly lost to the Turks in Central Europe and the Balkans, meant that Islam troubled Europeans far less during the Enlightenment than did the Anglo-French struggle for hegemony within Europe and beyond within world markets. The piracy of the Muslim Algerines, the corsairs of North Africa’s Barbary Coast, did enflame Christians given the thousands of Christians taken and enslaved by the Algerines, or held until the pirates could extort ransoms. The Spanish soldier turned novelist Miguel Cervantes [1547-1616] had experienced that fate before he conjured his melancholy don [Quixote]. Algerine depredations persisted into the 19th-century in reality and during the Enlightenment they found their way into several fictions, including Daniel Defoe’s [1660-1731] *Robinson Crusoe* [1719] and Voltaire’s satiric novel *Candide* [1759]. In Voltaire’s account a cupiditous Jew serves as an accomplice in the slaving enterprises by cheating the title character when he uses gems to purchase the freedom of two of his friends from slavery on a Turkish galley. Jews had commonly found honored positions throughout the Muslim world, something that aggravated anti-Jewish feelings within Europe, so linking Jews to slavery and the sexual exploitation of Christian women, in or out of Muslim *seraglios*, did not require a very credulous audience.

The aforementioned modern, philosophically disposed scholarship about Islam included works to present Islamic literature to the West like the French Orientalist Antoine Galland’s [1646-1715]

translation of the *Thousand and One Nights* [1704]. The Englishman Simon Oakley's *History of the Saracens* [1708] endeavored to present the Muslim holy wars [*jihads*] of the 7th-century that projected Islam beyond Arabia from the Muslim viewpoint. The aristocratic French amateur Orientalist Count Henri de Boulainvilliers' [1658-1722], *The Life of Mahomet* [1728], aimed to rehabilitate Mohammed's image as a debauched, fraudulent miracle worker by painting Mohammed as an enlightened forerunner of the Age of Reason whom the Count portrayed as "an enlightened and wise lawgiver," and Boulainvilliers' *History of the Arabs* [1731] made Mohammed's people and first converts something more than the unlettered, barbarous, and lascivious desert banditti of popular conception. The Scottish philosopher David Hume [1711-76] lauded the "integrity, gravity, and bravery of the Turk" in his *Essays*, and the era's foremost British historian, Edward Gibbon [1737-94], extolled Muslim monotheism, tolerance, and Islam's civilizing impact in his magisterial *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* [6 v., 1776-88]. However, Gibbon also echoed the Mohammed bashers by maintaining that Islam's positive achievements cannot ignore the fact that the faith's founder initially won Arab support "with the bait of loot & sex."

The late Palestinian scholar Edward Said [1935-2003] traversed the foregoing often treacherously rugged intellectual terrain of metaphors, paradigms, stereotypes, or topos, and tickets of polemical purpose and Eurocentric biases about Mohammad and Islam to map the Orientalist trope he indicted in his 1975 monograph *Orientalism*. The aforementioned Bernard Lewis has navigated the same mental landscape for half a century to craft a quite opposed cultural cartography that ultimately looks within the Islamic world to answer the question posed by Lewis' 2001 monograph *What Went Wrong?* The remainder of this paper will focus directly

upon Voltaire and Lessing both to illustrate why partisanship, even in the service of benevolent purposes, has so commonly compromised, and often vitiated pretensions to objective scholarship about either Islam and the Muslim world or Judaism and the fractured, often fragile worlds occupied by Diasporan Jews at least until the state of Israel's birth in 1948, and to suggest why the inveteracy of negativity or patronizing paternalism in Western attitudes about both Islam and Judaism and those faiths' adherents makes Said's unmistakable biases signposts this nation and the West more broadly need to acknowledge lest the present "war on terrorism" mushroom into Armageddon.

Voltaire and Lessing

Voltaire

No single figure better personifies the range of ambitions, the actual achievements, and the inability to fully realize the expressed ideals of the Enlightenment than Voltaire. His treatment of Islam and Judaism, in particular, demonstrated this lifelong paladin against the forces of fanaticism and superstition did not succumb to the "hobgoblin of a foolish consistency," and affords a useful, cautionary tale about the difficulty of evading the pitfalls of unintended paradoxes or contradictions when battling prejudice without jettisoning the baggage of personal prejudice.

No other Enlightenment figure excelled the range and the quality of Voltaire's productive output. In essays, histories, novels, plays, and poetry he created a body of works that won him unrivaled celebrity, fortune, and the admiration and/or friendship of enlightened temporal rulers like

Austria's Joseph II [1741-90] whose 1782 *Toleranzpatent* afforded Austrian Jews civil protections, Prussia's Frederick the Great [1712-86] whose patronage attracted wealthy and capable Jews to Berlin and led lesser Jews to believe they could pursue better lives under Prussia after Frederick acquired their Polish homeland], or Russia's Catherine the Great [1729-96], and even a papal benediction and two gold medals from Pope Benedict XIV [1675-1758], to whom Voltaire dedicated his play *Mahomet* [a work assailed by French Jansenists who correctly perceived the play's implicit anti-Catholicism]. Sceptered monarchs could embrace Voltaire because unlike Jean-Jacques Rousseau [1712-78] who became an honored progenitor of the 1789 French Revolution for having encouraged men everywhere to cast off the shackles that bound them, Voltaire favored a more moderate reformism undertaken from above to barricades and street fighting that impeded one's ability to savor the boons of an orderly state like salons or sojourning with princes. The pope could acclaim Voltaire because the putative enemy of the Church famously savaged the anonymous authors of the atheistic "Treatise of the Three Impostors" [1719, now deemed the work of the Huguenot journalist, historian and Freemason Jean Rousset de Missy [1686-1752] in his "Letter to the Author of the Three Impostors" [1768] where Voltaire dismissed the "Impostors" author as "insipid" and averred "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. Let the wise man announce him and kings fear him." He continued to envision "those happy days, When philosophy, enlightening humanity, Must lead them in peace to the feet of a common master; Frightful fanaticism will tremble to appear there: There will be less dogma and more virtue."

The "impostors," whose pillorying Voltaire had felt compelled to answer, were Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, the last of whom Voltaire attacked in his play *Mahomet*. The "Impostors"

author had claimed his targets had cashed the currency of ignorance to spread their falsehoods. Moses was drawn as “an absolute Despot” and a “trickster & an impostor”; Jesus attracted “imbeciles” who yielded credulously to magic cast as miracles, “the shipwreck of the ignorant, & the refuge of the adroitly ambitious”; while the illiterate Mohammed mimed Jesus’ ersatz miracle making first to seduce and ultimately to master “an infatuated multitude” who became the cats-paws of his ambition. Apart from the blasphemous depiction of Jesus, Voltaire’s general views about Judaism, and specifically about Mahomet, might have struck his readers as drawn from the “Impostors” text.

In *Mahomet*, the prophet appears as an avatar of evil. So driven by carnality that he pursues an almost incestuous union with an adopted daughter, becomes enflamed by jealousy when this maiden becomes romantically infatuated by another of his adoptive children, even though Mohammed knows the boy is the maiden’s biological brother, and he manipulates the youth’s fanatical loyalty to enlist him to assassinate a rival leader in Mecca who has resisted that city’s yielding to Islam and Mohammed. Mohammed knows the intended target of this assassination is the biological father of his two adopted children. The youth attainted by zealotry is intended to revive memories of François Ravaillac [1578-1614], the Catholic fanatic who assassinated France’s Henry IV [1553-1610] in 1614, the king who had granted Huguenots religious toleration and civil protections through the Edict of Nantes in 1598.

Portraying Mohammed as a thoroughgoing blackguard clearly appealed to much of Voltaire’s audience, and afforded the playwright a convenient cover from accusations that while he skewered Islam’s Prophet he had actually targeted Rome. However, the historian in Voltaire

certainly must have blushed at a romance that grossly distorted the character of the Meccans' decision to submit to Islam. Deliberate didacticism triumphed over historicity for dramatic and polemical purposes, even as it had tended to in the earlier "history" of the French bishop, historian and apologist for divine right kingship, Jacques Bossuet [1627-1704]. Relying upon caricature over history also meant that though exceedingly popular, *Mahomet* departed from the effort the French dramatist Jean Racine [1639-99] had invested in his play *Bajazet* [1672] to illustrate identities between Islam and Christianity, rather than harping upon how the faiths diverged theologically and otherwise.

The "monster of hypocrisy," as "Mahomet's" political rival and the father of his adopted children characterizes "Mahomet" in the play, who describes himself to the audience as finding solace solely from sating his sexual appetites, what "Mahomet" calls the "god of my ambition," ultimately does NOT adequately represent Voltaire's sense of Islam, even though it only somewhat distorts how he assessed the historical Mohammed. In his *Essay on the Manners & Spirit of Nations* [1756] Voltaire again cursed the charlatan "prophetic impostor" while asserting Mohammed had established a sociable and tolerant religion, absent the meddling, self-serving established priesthood that betrayed Jesus. He further insisted, against Montesquieu, that despotism did not reign in Ottoman Turkey or in Qing China, an argument no less difficult to defend than some of his history in *Mahomet*, but indispensable polemically to a reformer who wished to see reform implemented from above by enlightened agents of order. In his *Century of Louis XIV* [1751] Voltaire claimed Muslims followed Christians in remaining "as eager to carry their opinions as their commerce to the extremes of the globe." Islam, he allowed, proselytized successfully because it did not follow Jews in abhorring other peoples, in acting mercilessly and

ungenerously when triumphant, or behaving like “misanthropic slaves” when defeated. Even his attitude toward the servile Hebrews requires some thought. Although the sudden bankruptcy of a Jewish merchant with the Islam connected name of Medina cost Voltaire thousands because of a defaulted bill of exchange, Voltaire did not damn the merchant. While he clearly disparaged the fanaticism he associated with Old Testament prophets, he admired Jews for adhering so steadfastly to their ancient laws, some of the social cement he had in mind when he spoke about the necessity to create a god if one had not existed. Voltaire found room in his *Henriade* [1723], his epic poetic tribute to Henry IV, the first architect of religious toleration in France, to spew his contempt upon Catholicism for persecuting Jews through the *auto-de-fe* of the Inquisition:

In Madrid, in Lisbon, [the Inquisitor] lights his fires
The solemn bonfires to which the unhappy Jews
Are sent every year in pomp, by the priests,
For not having left the law of their ancestors.

Confused? Then, consider the fact Voltaire followed the French naturalist the Comte de Buffon [1707-88] in considering humans simply an additional species of animals, albeit one blessed with the capacity to reason. So, like Buffon, Voltaire subscribed to the view some animals of like kinds grow more potent, more capable than other “breeds.” Voltaire conjoined Semitic Arabs and Jews as a race apart, a race conditioned by Nature to sexual license and intellectual and physical lassitude, hence competitively inferior to Europeans, and especially Northern Europeans whose vigor derived from adapting to dwelling in a colder climate. Darwin did not lurk here, but the Count [Arthur de] Gobineau’s [1816-82] racially driven human morphology did. While ascribing anti-Semitism or racism in a 21st-century sense to Voltaire seems anachronistic and,

frankly, nonsensical, the *philosophe* clearly did not fulfill the promise of his espoused philosophy of toleration. His measure remains diminished by the fact he frequently failed in matters of intercultural understanding to excel the common limitations of his age. He did, however, leave a body of work that has inspired others to oppose tyranny, to defend free expression, and to nurture toleration, to actually enlist in what the *philosophes* of the “Republic of Letters” often termed themselves—“the Party of Humanity.”

Lessing

In one of History’s curiosities Lessing actually toiled briefly at Berlin for Voltaire as a researcher and secretary while the latter enjoyed the hospitality of Frederick the Great. Like Voltaire, Lessing strove to crush the infamies he encountered, but Lessing often confronted the objects of his scorn less circumspectly than Voltaire had. Lessing, however, did not experience beatings by a nobleman’s lackeys, as Voltaire had in 1726 at the hands of the Chevalier Rohan’s [1683-1760] minions. Lessing also perceived humanity quite differently than did Voltaire. Lessing admired and shared the “best of all possible worlds” outlook of the Prussian polymath Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz [1646-1716] whose *Theodicy* [1710] sought to explain the presence of evil in the world. Voltaire used the character of Dr. Pangloss in his satiric novella *Candide* to viciously lampoon Leibniz as an addled apostle of optimism.

While Voltaire hoped enhancing the range of human knowledge, applying that knowledge to achieve advances in science and technology, and beginning to remove the causes of human misery and oppression because of accelerating material Progress would improve the human

condition, he did not esteem the generality of humanity as likely sources of the Progress he desired. Because the pessimism that darkened Voltaire's mood and added the savage sting to his satire did not afflict Lessing, Lessing produced work that offered men greater hope for the future of mankind than did most of Voltaire's *oeuvre*. The hope he offered exercised itself in his personal life when he became fast friends with the eminent Jewish scholar Moses Mendelssohn whose *Jerusalem: Or on Religious Power and Judaism* [1783] argued for something many of his contemporaries considered an oxymoron, a religious enlightenment. Voltaire certainly never claimed a Jew as his best friend, or even as one of them. But half a decade before Lessing ever met Mendelssohn he wrote his play *The Jews* [1749] to demonstrate the hypocrisy and inequity that allowed anti-Jewish sentiments and/or legislated or tacit disabilities operate to restrict or impede Jews. In the play a Jew traveling incognito in Germany becomes the guest of an anti-Jewish Christian aristocrat who leaps quite perfunctorily to believe Jews had undertaken a recent robbery. The traveler becomes friends with his host and demonstrates his host's bailiff had actually committed the offense. The traveler then reveals himself, leaving the abashed aristocrat to promise to behave more judiciously in the future by judging men on their merits rather than received prejudices, and to express his gratitude for the friendship of the most excellent Jew.

Nathan the Wise covered considerably more protean ground. The play unfolds in Jerusalem during the reign of the Seljuk Turkish Sultan Saladin during the late 12th-century. But though the period coincides with the failed enterprise of the Third Christian Crusade to wrest the Holy Land from the infidel Muslims, the story's Muslim and Jewish characters acquit themselves more nobly than all but one of the major Christian characters. In fact, the Christian Patriarch of occupied Jerusalem, a man protected by the toleration of the Muslim Sultan, serves as the villain

of the piece when he attempts to destroy one of the Sultan's valued Jewish subjects, the eponymous Jewish merchant, known to men of all faiths as "Nathan the Wise."

The play intertwines the lives of the Sultan and his sister, Nathan, his adopted daughter, and her Christian nurse, a Templar, the Patriarch, and a monk the Patriarch seeks to corrupt to serve his malign purposes. Before the final curtain Nathan serves religious toleration by resolving a riddle about the putative superiority of one faith over another; the dilemma of interfaith and interracial romance between officially estranged peoples emerges when the Templar and Nathan's daughter feel smitten after the Templar has saved the girl's life; the Templar must wrestle with his conscience over his sense of duty as a sworn knight of a martial Christian order and his deepening devotion to the Jewess; Saladin and his sister demonstrate their nobility derives even more from their character than their rank, and the Patriarch is foiled. Unlike Scott later in his novel of the same historical era, *Ivanhoe* [1819], that portrays the doomed, unreciprocated infatuation of a Templar for a Jewess, the authorities here do not impute the Templar's affection for Nathan's daughter to sorcery practiced by the Jewess to bewitch the Christian for whom she does profess her love. Lessing resolved this plot element, potentially the play's most volatile aspect, through a device the most inventive soap opera writer would envy. In this play designed to celebrate the potential for human understanding and good will across ethnic, racial, and religious lines, Lessing resolves the tale by uniting all of the play's major protagonists by blood or other bonds of affection. The Templar and the Jewess learn they are brother and sister, that they had a Christian mother, but that they were sired by the Sultan's brother who had vanished long ago after falling in love with and wedding a Christian. Nathan, never the blood parent of his "daughter," retains her love as the one father of her rearing, and the Templar effectively

becomes a son who does not replace, but who eases the pain of Nathan having lost his own children to Crusader violence decades earlier. The Sultan and his sister become uncle and aunt to the children of their beloved brother.

Lessing's play stunned audiences when it originally appeared. It outraged Rome where the Church consigned the play to its *Index Liborum Prohibitorum*. Even Protestants criticized the work. One reviewer missed the point entirely and decried the play as "a satire against the Christian religion." This purported "satire" spawned several satires including the "imaginatively" entitled "Nathan the Dumb" that retailed the kinds of anti-Jewish stereotypes Lessing had worked so sedulously to combat not just in *The Jews* and *Nathan the Wise*, but in his private and public lives outside his craft. However, despite the negativity it generated in some circles, *Nathan* commanded enthusiastic audiences in its day and continues to be performed. Audiences have responded to the play's optimism. A much later, crankier German playwright wrote of dangerous times "he who laughs has not heard the grim news" -1938, "To Posterity," Bertolt Brecht, 1898-1956]. Perhaps our own grim times, wherein sad tidings have become quotidian fare, would profit from fresh opportunities to experience the evening of optimism Lessing's play offers his audience.

The numbing fatality of persistent reports of doom and gloom often have the perverse consequence of so inuring souls to tragedy that they flee the responsibility of addressing the woes of their times. Demagogues often emerge in troubled times to huckster happy days. "Pack up your troubles," pretend your nation remains great when its historical moment has passed, say amen when a leader says if only you empower me to remove the enemies foreign and domestic

responsible for vitiating our national dream that dream will never die. As Rousseau asserted when he criticized *Mahomet* as likelier to foment than to stint fanaticism, and as others immediately recognized when they read *Candide*, pessimism or works animated by pessimism tend to extinguish rather than kindle positive energy. When that happens, people resigned to bad times too often enlist in movements calculated not to fulfill the dreams of the movement's members, but the ambitions of its leaders packaged as their followers' dreams. Voltaire and Lessing each sought to enlighten and to reform their worlds. Although Voltaire's greater celebrity, both in his time and ours, suggests that his captiousness has proven more enduringly captivating than Lessing's more hopeful discourse, we might ask: of what do our times needs more?

**More than the Grim Reaper: A Perspective on Mitch
McConnell's Role in the Nullification of the Obama
Presidency**
Justin J. Wert

Abstract:

As the United States enters the 2020s, the politics of racial equality in the United States Senate remains as unsettled and divisive as it was at the close of the Civil Rights movement in 1968. Mitch McConnell's leadership as the Republican Leader is a significant factor to the racial divide that is visible today. This paper examines McConnell's role as the Senate Republican Leader during the Obama and Trump administrations. In particular, his efforts to nullify Obama's legacy, as well as the political structures that made Obama's two presidential election victories possible, will impede the development of racial equality for the next generation. This paper suggests that as the leader of a stridently anti-civil rights Republican caucus, McConnell is imposing a 21st-century version of resistance that resembles the massive resistance of the 1950s and 1960s.

Why the "Grim Reaper" moniker?

In 2019, Leader McConnell sent out a tweet to declaring himself "the grim reaper" to make it clear to all that he has no intention of finding bipartisan cooperation with his Democratic colleagues:

Let me be clear: I will be the 'grim reaper' in the Senate when it comes to socialist schemes that would destroy jobs, private health insurance, and the free enterprise system (Leader McConnell Twitter, May 8, 2019).

McConnell's declaration that he intends to oppose all Democratic-sponsored legislation aptly describes the way he managed President Obama's legislative priorities and post presidential legacy. When historians look back at the first half of the 21st Century, there is no

doubt that the two most transformative political figures pertaining to racial justice and equality will be President Barack Obama and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). The importance of these two men on America's racial history can be explained through the context of racial progress and massive resistance. The strength of the political opposition to Obama's two successful elections to the presidency was a revival of the massive resistance that shaped the politics of the 1950s and 1960s. The literature is clear that the Southern Strategy had transformed the political tactics that constituted massive resistance both in and outside of the South from a blatantly obstructive and racist tactic to stop civil rights, to color-blind rhetoric that made White racial grievances more palatable to American society (Aistrup 1996, p. 5 and 12; Bass and DeVries 1976, p. 27; Black and Black 2002, p. 4)

McConnell's Role in the Racial Politics of the Obama Era

McConnell is less the architect of the current reiteration of massive resistance, but the Senate Republican Leader "at the right place, at the right time." McConnell would not be the leader that he is today if it were not for the two successful elections of Barack Obama to the presidency. He is a Southern senator whose power base is not solely rooted in the racism or the deep South and Sunbelt states, but derived from the racial resentment that was nationalized by the Republican members of Congress, and subsequently, the Tea Party. Although McConnell has served in the U. S. Senate for 35 years and has held the position as Republican Leader for 10 years, his role in dismantling civil rights protections have not been studied by the

academy. Several in-depth articles have been written by political journalists to discuss his opposition to the Obama Administration and the tactics that he used to defeat the Democrats' legislative priorities (Green 2011).

Three books have been published on McConnell. They include his memoirs, a pro-McConnell biography from a conservative journalist, John David Doyle published in 2009, the first year of his tenure as Republican Leader, and short biography that solely focuses on McConnell as a tactician. Their descriptions about his racial views portray him as an individual with more progressive than those held by the members of the Caucus that he leads (Doyle 2009; MacGillis 2014; McConnell 2016).

It is certain that future scholarship on McConnell will focus on the transformation of the federal judiciary into a stridently conservative representation of the Trump Administration. However, the scholarship must also examine how McConnell Senate leadership has set the conditions for a White minority-majority government through the dismantling the established norms, rules and procedures of the judicial and executive confirmation processes. And as a result, effectively removed political power, legislative and legal systems of redress so that even when non-White Americans become the majority, the White minority continues to maintain control of the government and judiciary. However, the threat that McConnell's actions pose to undermine the basic constitutional norms, along with a weakening judicial infrastructure that had generally protected civil rights for over 50 years, means that the public must have a better understanding of the role that he plays in the political battles that shape the current politics.

The Political Nullification of the Obama Presidency

Prior to Obama's 2009 Iowa Caucus victory, most Americans regardless of race, party affiliation, or political ideology, believed that Americans would elect a non-White president in their lifetimes (Kennedy 2011, p. 7). It is clear that once racial conservatives witnessed Obama's electoral success, there was a concerted effort that it would not happen again. Obama's two successful elections were an affront to American values a loss that could not be tolerated. Those who opposed Obama because of all that he symbolized, Journalists and political scientists generally characterized the Republican opposition as partisan extremism and did not link it directly to racism. Yet, the racialized rhetoric and images show that the Republicans largely articulated to their constituencies that Obama was a threat to White supremacy. In this context, McConnell's declaration that he would make Obama a "one-term" president by opposing his administration at every turn was a renewal of nullification.

Nullification often describes the segregationist actions during the Civil Rights era of the 1950s and 1960s to justify the refusal to enforce the Supreme Court's orders to integrate schools and end Jim Crow laws and practices (Bartley 1999, p. 126-127, Lowndes 2008, p. 40-41). This pattern of nullification was also apparent in the political environment during the Obama presidency. In many ways, the political extremism that appeared in the Obama-era mirrored the racial backlash in the 1950s and 1960s' opposition to desegregation. Ornstein and Mann describe how political nullification was apparent during the Obama Administration.

They explain how the Republican Party enacted a unified strategy “to oppose, obstruct, discredit, and nullify every one of Obama’s important initiatives” (Ornstein and Mann, 2012, p. 9).

The Republican Party’s plans to impose massive opposition to the Obama presidency began before his inauguration. The Republicans would not just demonstrate their opposition to Obama solely based on partisan ideology, but to convey to America that his presidency posed a direct threat to the American way of life. The pattern of nullification is supported by the Congressional Republican leaderships’ statements and actions towards Obama. In October 2010, the Speaker of the House, John Boehner (R-OH), stated that the GOP plan for Obama’s agenda was to “kill it, stop it, and slow it down” (Barr 2010). The Senate Republican Leader, Mitch McConnell, stated that as the incoming Majority Leader, “The single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president” (Green 2011). Some may argue that the goal of every opposition party is to contest the president’s agenda. However, the Republican response to the Obama presidency was to obstruct his agenda and block the President’s legislative initiatives.

Seemingly, the Congressional Republicans took advantage of the racial sentiments of their base. Obama’s social policies were commonly associated with overt racist messages. The messages that appeared during the Obama Administration were certainly more pronounced because of Obama’s racial heritage. However, it is not necessary to use racial overtones to express disapproval for policies. The racial images were demeaning to Obama. They portrayed him as an African savage, a thug, and a secret Muslim. Pictures depicted him and Mrs. Obama as apes and gorillas. She was also referred to as “Obama’s baby mama” or the

mother of his illegitimate children. Such images were used to undermine and weaken public support for his policies and legislative initiatives. They also served to remind Americans that if they supported and used these programs, they would be stigmatized and associated negatively with Blacks. Often, these images appeared when anti-Obama conservatives racialized his policies, even though the legislation was intended to help Americans of all races (Dyson 2016, p. 210; Feagin 2012, p. 205; Skocpol and Williamson 2011, p. 85).

One of the most flagrant racial insults directed at Obama came from the birther movement. Followers of this movement believe that Obama was not born in the United States and therefore, did not meet the citizenship requirements to legitimately qualify to be the President. The birthers insisted that his birth certificate was falsified. They developed a multitude of conspiracy theories that were circulated within anti-Obama constituencies, such as the Tea Party movement (Tessler and Sears 2010, p. 142). The most egregious peddler of the birther movement was Donald Trump, Obama's successor. For five years, Trump joined the efforts of the birther movement to discredit the legitimacy of the first African American president by publicly and persistently stating Obama was born in Kenya. Not until the final months of the 2016 presidential campaign did Trump give in to public pressure, admitting Obama was indeed a legitimate American president (Dionne 2016, p. 310; Montanaro 2016).

The persistence of the birther movement forced the first African American president to be the first president to produce his birth certificate. On April 27, 2011, Obama addressed the White House press corps and stated he was releasing his birth certificate. He stated the

topic had become a major distraction and impeded his efforts to pass his agenda in Congress to reduce the deficit and stimulate the economy (Obama 2011). Mary Rucker states that the birther movement was more than just a conspiracy theory. The denial of Obama's citizenship was part of a longstanding belief that Blacks can never be considered legitimate citizens of this country. She argued the White Americans who subscribed to the birther theory could not accept that a Black man could represent what they perceived as White values in a predominately White nation (Rucker 2013, p. 57).

The racism voiced during the Obama Administration significantly affected how conservative voters viewed his policy priorities that were completely unrelated to race. These voters were either unwilling or unable to separate Obama's race from policies intended to support all Americans. The actions of these conservative leaders and the electorate that supported birtherism and promoted the racialized images of Obama engaged in a long-standing practice using racial resentment to undermine social policies and the politicians who support those policies. Such actions demonstrate how the "spillover of racialization" was inserted into every political debate during the Obama administration, even when the policy was not related to race (Tessler and Sears 2010, p. 80).

Some of Obama's critics did not engage in birtherism, but they used racially coded language and statements that encouraged anti-Obama voters to question Obama's loyalty and fitness to serve the American public. Republicans such as Newt Gingrich and former New Hampshire governor John Sununu, were engaged in efforts to spread the misconception that the President of the United States was lying to the American public about his citizenship. Gingrich stated that Obama was the "most dangerous president in modern

American history.” Sununu also stated that he wished the President “would learn to act like an American.” Critics and supporters of Gingrich’s and Sununu’s comments heard them as dog whistle code words meant to grab the attention of the voters and the media. The insertion of racist code words could be interpreted as a reflection of Gingrich’s and Sununu’s internal racist views and values, but it is arguable that their actions to marginalize Obama may permit other politicians and activists to believe they can call Obama a criminal, declare that he lied about his birth certificate, and tell their constituencies the first African American president does not know how to behave as an American (Dyson 2016, p. 135).

In spite of Republican denials that their political differences were ideological, racism facilitated the Republican Party's ability to cultivate political support for the Republican Congressional caucus. Obama’s political influence was weakened within months of his inauguration by conservatives that both claimed the opposition to the administration was rooted in fiscally conservative principles and concerns related to deregulation. The economic problems that occurred in the first months of the Obama Administration were directly linked by the deregulation and tax cuts that Republicans supported under Clinton and George H. W. Bush administrations. However, the Tea Party and their allies created a political environment in which the Presidency was marginalized by the racist imagery and racialized rhetoric by Republican officeholders and activists in Washington and around the country (Rucker 2013, p. 75, 82).

McConnell’s Personal View of Racial Deniability

In spite of the racialized opposition to the Obama Administration, McConnell uses stories about his parents and his political heroes to convey that the positions that he takes are not racially motivated, and, provides him a level of deniability that demonstrates that he is not a racist. His personal history and the evolution of his views related to racial politics and policies during his tenure is complex. McConnell readily repeats antidotes from his biography that present a portrait of his life as a person who does not carry racial animosity or views. These descriptions provide him with a level of deniability to show that his positions on contemporary civil rights matters are mainstream. And that his behavior towards President Obama is guided by racism but partisan values.

However, his rise to power closely parallels the Republican Party's evolution to an ultra-racially conservative party in the post-civil rights era. A reading of his memoirs, *The Long Game* (2016), as well as an analysis of his past votes, give the impression that McConnell's views on race have evolved from an enthusiastic and principled supporter of civil rights to a staunch opponent of racial equality. While he confides that his great-grandfather was a Confederate, he describes his parents' support for progressive civil rights legislation as "far ahead of their time and years beyond their peers." And further, that the lessons that his parents shared with him as a young man has stayed with him throughout his life (McConnell, 2016, p. 30-31).

McConnell also expresses that his formative college years were shaped by racial progressive Kentucky heroes such as Supreme Court Justice Marshall Harlan, the sole dissenter of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) decision in which the Supreme Court enshrined the principle of separate but equal accommodations between Whites and Blacks into law, as well

as Senator John Sherman Cooper (R-KY) who supported progressive civil rights legislation such as school desegregation, voting rights, and equal accommodations in spite of the pro-segregationist opposition that dominated Kentucky politics at that time (McConnell 2016, 27, p. 33-39; McConnell 2019, p. 220).

His early political views indeed appear to demonstrate a significantly more progressive view of racial values that he articulates as the Senate leader. As a student at the University of Louisville, he wrote an op-ed in the student newspaper, *The Cardinal*, in favor of a liberal interpretation of the constitution to justify the expansion of civil rights to all Americans regardless of race. McConnell and his co-author, Bonnie Meyer, argued in favor of the 1963 bill to end segregation in public accommodations. Under the title, "*Strict View Not Just*," McConnell and Meyers stated:

Civil rights for all citizens was most assuredly an aim of the Founding Fathers, but the problem of civil rights is non-existent for people in bondage. Property rights have always been, and will, continue to be an integral part of our heritage, but this does not absolve the property holder of his obligation to help the basic rights of citizens. In order to realize the ideals of the Constitution, all segments of society must do their part to ensure the BASIC RIGHTS of ALL citizens, regardless of race, creed, or national Origin (McConnell and Meyer, 1963).

This declaration for equal rights for all is consistent with McConnell's life-long assertion that his admiration for the civil rights movement was inspired by witnessing Martin Luther King at the 1963 March on Washington and the bill signing ceremony for the 1964 Voting Rights Act (McConnell 2016, p. 31 and 38).

There is no reason to doubt that what McConnell wrote in 1963 were his authentic opinions about the need for expanded civil rights for African Americans. The Republican Party in Kentucky had a strong pro-civil rights contingency in the state and local government as well as in Congress. Kentucky Republicans John Sherman Cooper and Henry Hayburn both campaigned on pro-civil rights platforms. They both had the support of Black voters because of the anti-civil rights policies that shaped the southern contingency of Democratic Party politicians of that era. In addition, Cooper and fellow Republican Thurston Morton were instrumental in cultivating votes for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Act of 1965 (Farrington 2015, p. 311-312).

However, McConnell's tenure in the Senate, including as the Senate Republican leader, demonstrates that his racial views have evolved from his racially progressive views as a student in the early 1960s and have become as extreme as the Republican Party that he leads today. Instead of embracing principles of racial equality that his parents imparted on him during his youth, or to follow Cooper's example of leadership and advocate for progressive policies that further equality, McConnell has chosen a path of gradualism. He is a politician that has the ability to assess what policies and values conservative Americans will both accept and reject and legislate within the confines of those expectations.

McConnell's Immunity from Overtly Racist Controversies

McConnell's statement and political actions that are perceived as detrimental to non-Whites by liberal politicians and activists have not harmed his standing as the Senate Leader. In the pre-Trump era, the publicity surrounding racist comments and controversies ended

the careers of powerful politicians. For example, in 2003, the Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R MS) was forced to step down from his post when he praised Strom Thurmond's (R-SC) segregationist past when lauded his 1948 as the anti-civil rights, Dixiecrat revolt campaign:

When Storm Thurmond ran for president, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we would have had all these problems all of these years, either (Lowndes, 2008, p. 1).

McConnell has the ability to make racially insensitive comments that have otherwise the political careers of contemporary politicians. He did not face any threats to his leadership when he stated that his opposition to the concept of reparations by stating the Obama presidency was one reason to reject the need for reparations.

I don't think reparations for something that happened 150 years ago for whom none of us currently living is responsible (for) is a good idea. We tried to deal with our original sin of slavery by fighting a civil war, by passing landmark civil rights legislation. We elected an African-American president. I think we are always a work in progress in this country. But no one currently alive was responsible for that. And I don't think we should be trying to figure out how to compensate for that. First of all, it would be pretty hard to figure out who to compensate. We have had waves of immigrants as well who have come to the country and have experienced dramatic discrimination of one kind or another. So, no, I don't think that reparations are a good idea (McConnell, C-Span, June 18, 2019).

McConnell has demonstrated that he can straddle controversies related to the Confederate Flag without receiving any significant consequences to his career. In the days following the June 2015 mass shooting of a White supremacist who was in Charleston, South Carolina's Mother Emmanuel AME Church that claimed the lives nine African American church, parishioners, provided McConnell with an opening to denounce the Confederate flag. The media had discovered photos of the shooter, Dylan Roof, posing with the flag. The removal of the Confederate flag from the state capital's dome became an urgent matter. One of the victims, state representative Clementa Pickney's body was to lie in state under the capitol dome. After many attempts to remove the flag since it was permanently displayed since 1961, there was an urgency to remove it before Pickney's casket passed by the flag. Politicians in South Carolina and around the nation called for the removal from state houses and public spaces (Frazier, Powers, and Wentworth, 2016, p. 38-40). McConnell joined with those who supported the removal of the flag and released a one-paragraph statement,

"The Confederate Battle Flag means different things to different people, but the fact that it continues to be a painful reminder of racial oppression to many suggests to me at least that it's time to move beyond it, and that the time for a state to fly it has long since passed. There should be no confusion in anyone's mind that as a people we're united in our determination to put that part of our history behind us"

(McConnell, June 22, 2015).

Yet, when the press uncovered a photo of McConnell standing in front of the Confederate flag at a 1989 Sons of Confederate Veterans' event, his office minimizes the controversy by

arguing that liberals revive the photo to counter McConnell's statements to support removing the flag (Henderson, February 4, 2019). It appears that McConnell remains unscathed by racial controversies due to a cloak of deniability, which is strengthened by his refusal to acknowledge that he has had a complicated past on racial matters.

Playing the Long Game

McConnell's successful rise to power is largely due to his ability to navigate the transformation of the Republican Party from a broad coalition that contained social liberals with fiscally conservative values, small government and anti-communist ideology to a party that primarily coalesces on issues related to racial, religious, and social conservatism. In his role as the Senate Republican Leader, McConnell has played what he calls "the long game." In his memoirs, he explains that his disinterest in the presidency provides him the levers of power that are found in the institution of the Senate. His ability to wait decades for elections has given him time to prepare to use his power to impact policy (McConnell 2016, 5). It is clear that a confluence of events and political movements was instrumental in his path to the Republican leadership.

When McConnell entered the Senate in 1985, few may have been able to foresee that historically significant level of power that he would acquire as Republican Leader due to racial backlash that shaped the Obama and Trump presidencies. McConnell's evolution on race mirrors the evolution that the Republican Party has made since 1964. It appears that at the beginning of his Senate career, he was relatively moderate. His first vote against Reagan

in 1986 was to vote to override Reagan's veto of economic sanctions against South Africa's apartheid government (Kleiner, July 19, 2013; McConnell on the Issues, January 24, 2020).

Two years later, he argued that the Universal Voter Registration Act of 1988 (S. 2061) may have made voter registration easier for some voters. However, while using the city of Chicago as an example, he asserted that such a law would make it difficult for government officials to prevent and assess how many votes would be influenced by criminals who sell, coerce or cast fraudulent votes by ineligible individuals or those who did not exist (Cranston and McConnell, 1988, 43). And in 1997, during the debate to reauthorize affirmative action programs, he led the effort to remove race and gender-based "set-asides" in federal construction and transportation contracts. The Senate ultimately tabled this amendment and McConnell against the legislation (Dewar 1997; Journal of Blacks in Higher Education 1998). These examples demonstrate unlike his mentor, John Sherman Cooper, McConnell does not lead as a racial maverick but has become increasingly racially conservative as the Republican Party reflects the growing backlash to the multicultural growth of the nation.

The Ultimate Beneficiary of the Reagan Revolution

To be clear, McConnell's ability to implement a socially conservative agenda because he is "in the right place at the right time." McConnell's ability to "play the long game" has positioned him as the politician that has most benefited from the legacy of the Reagan Revolution. The place that McConnell has filled as the conservative leader in the Senate, is best explained by showing how the Republican Party adopted the political doctrine

of Reagan “A Time for Choosing” over the overt racism of the Southern Manifesto (Reagan 1964). If one considers this perspective, scholars see how the racially moderate college-age McConnell in 1963 has transformed to be the Senate Republican leader that is known in the Obama and Trump eras. This allows scholars to show that McConnell is the post-Reagan era politician who has most benefited from the Reagan Revolution.

He is not necessarily the architect of the current reiteration of massive resistance, but he has benefited from having a caucus that is more unified in its ideological conservatism than previous Republican caucuses. This is largely due to the way that the Republican Party has transformed massive resistance by embracing racial grievance by adopting colorblind conservatism by rebranding opposition to civil rights by adopting Ronald Reagan’s more palatable, colorblind “A Time for Choosing” speech of 1964. (Reagan 1964). “*A Time for Choosing*” was the culmination of Reagan’s tours of the South that coincided with political changes resulting from the Civil Rights Movement. From 1954 to 1962, Reagan served as the spokesman and goodwill ambassador for General Electric Company (GE); speaking in front of audiences of business executives and plant workers in Southern states, such as Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. His role with GE provided him the opportunity to develop populist rhetoric with citizens who were disenchanted with the federal government’s involvement in liberalizing racial policies (Ritter, 2009, p. 335). Reagan’s appeal to White conservative audiences did not rely on the overtly racist language George Wallace used in his speeches. He cultivated White resentment by tempering his speeches with more covert, socially palatable wording. Instead, he alluded to the changing racial orders that Southerners and non-Southerners (Williams 2019, p. 28).

The coded language of color-blindness describes the causes of the social problems of minority communities with phrases such as “community dysfunction” and “cultural deprivation.” Consequently, opponents of racial integration used the language of covert racism by using terms such as “neighborhood control,” “taxpayer’s rights,” and “forced busing” to prevent non-Whites from accessing the pathways to build a middle-class life. Oftentimes, these voters considered the overtly racist language of the South to be culturally unacceptable. As a result, the coded language was used by Northern Whites who were also opposed to the Civil Rights Movement and desegregation, but wanted to appear less racist and more principled in their political views (Theoharis 2010, p. 53; Williams 2019, p. 33).

The language that McConnell uses to describe President Obama and Congressional Democratic priorities using the past patterns of colorblind racism. Further study is needed by using content analysis to determine how closely his language mirrored the rhetoric of the Tea Party Republicans that associated the Obama presidency with words that are less than color blind, but more overtly racist and included words that were intended to degrade and disrespect the President as Black man that have previously symbolized White resentment. For example, instead of using President Obama, he used Professor Obama. Scholars should examine how the use of the word “professor” is coded language that is linked to the historical belief that Black men who challenge the belief and structure of White supremacy.

By the time that McConnell became the Republican Majority Leader in 2011, McConnell, the Republican Senate, and the Republican Party base argued that their anger towards Obama was based on their opposition to the Affordable Care Act. Yet, it is difficult to

make the argument that the opposition to the Obama presidency was not influenced by racism. How different are the Republican Party's actions toward Obama than the view that Supreme Court Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1856) that the Black man has no rights in which a White man is bound to respect?" (Simon 2006, p. 115). If so, is this not the time to consider why and how the United States Senate has returned to a state of massive resistance with race at the center of the animosity between the majority and minority parties?

It is certain that as a member of the opposition party, Obama would have had difficulty engaging in bi-partisan negotiations and initiatives. For example, Clinton faced significant partisan opposition in the House and Senate. However, he had the opportunity to pass conservative legislation when he collaborated with Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (Reed 2014). However, this was not the case with Obama. Both Speaker of the House, John Boehner and Paul Ryan, chose not to engage with the Obama White House due to the political pressure that was placed by them by the Tea Party constituencies. Further, McConnell outright refused to cooperate with Obama on judicial nominations and other domestic initiatives (Grunwald 2016; Newmyer 2014; Raju 2014).

After nearly a decade of McConnell's tenure as the Senate leader, it is time to examine the relevance of how the sentiment of Taney's quote explains the racial resentment during the Obama era and multicultural electoral political success that made his presidency possible. As scholars consider the decades-long effort of racial conservatives to minimize the efficacy of the civil rights successes of the post-civil rights era, it is not unreasonable to suggest that McConnell's political base viewed the election of a Black president as the ultimate affront to White supremacy. The legislative tactics that Mitch McConnell employed

to stop the Obama Administration demonstrated that he was the most capable Republican leader since 1965 to undermine racial progress. He frequently used the filibuster to prevent Obama from receiving an "up or down " vote by the full Senate. Research by political scientists have found that hyper partisanship has steadily increased in recent decades. However, the history of cloture votes during his tenure in office was significantly higher than his predecessors. The data from the occurrence of cloture motions from President Reagan though President Obama.

Massive Resistance as a Manifestation of the Cloture Motions

(United States Senate – Legislative Record)

Cloture Motions Filed Votes on Cloture Cloture Invoked

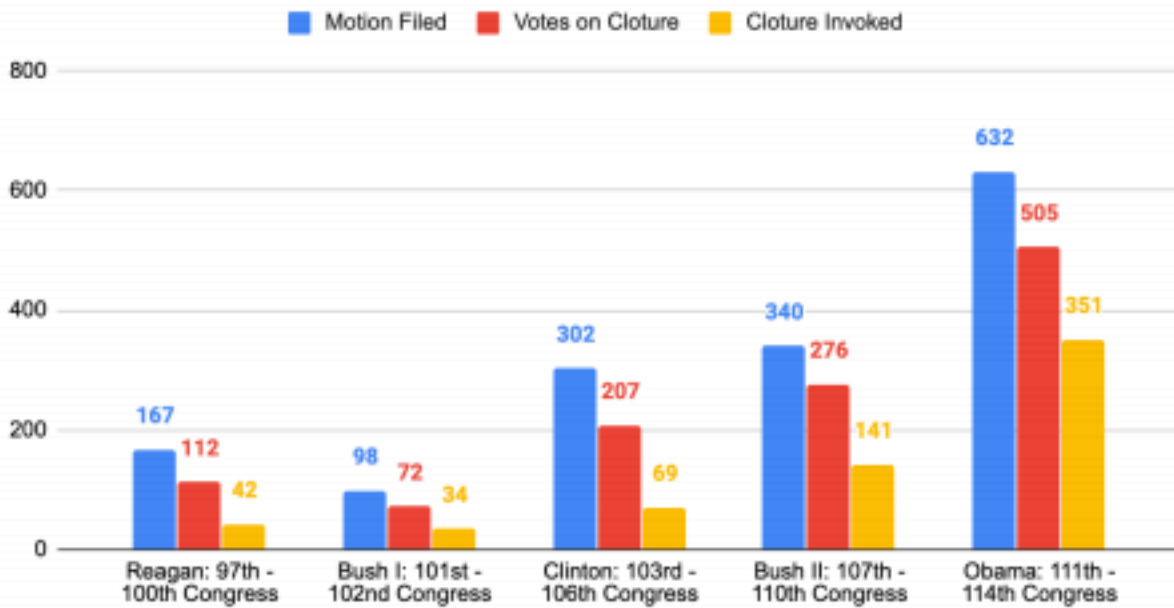
Reagan: 97th - 100th Congress 167 112 42 Bush I: 101st -102nd Congress 98 72 34 Clinton:

103rd - 106th Congress 302 207 69 Bush II: 107th -110th Congress 340 276 141

Obama: 111th - 114th Congress 632 505 351

Senate Cloture Votes from Reagan to Obama

United States Senate Reference (February 14, 2020)



Conclusion:

Although we are well into the 21st Century, the racial politics of the 2020s resembles the politics of the post-World War II era. The arguments regarding the rights of people of color to live freely and on an equal playing field as White Americans remain largely unresolved. Yes, Jim Crow segregation is gone. However, as the Republican Leader, Americans have witnessed a Republican Party in the Senate that not just refused to give the first African American president the right to have his nomination to the Supreme Court a confirmation process that was given to all previous presidents with Supreme Court vacancies but is using the same process to approve federal judicial nominees who refuse to state their opinion on whether or not the *Brown v. Board of Education (1954)* is settled law (Meckler and Barnes, 2019).

As McConnell's tenure as the majority leader progresses, it is apparent that the rights and protections that were granted to African Americans and other racial minorities

during Lyndon Johnson's Administration are facing the imminent danger of nullification. This erosion of protections is most acute when the nation is its most racially diverse. While Mitch McConnell is one in a long line of Senate racial conservatives, he has been able to accomplish what previous post-Civil Rights, anti-civil rights Senators have not been able to do. McConnell has led the Senate with the clear intention of facilitating efforts to weaken structures in Congress, the executive branch, and the judiciary that protect civil rights and political structure for non-White Americans.

The previous discussion regarding the occurrence of cloture votes from Presidents Reagan to Obama is helpful in showing how the opposition against Obama's legislative agenda was higher than his predecessors. However, this factor by itself can be easily dismissed as the byproduct of the increasingly hyper-partisanship environment. The next phase of my research will focus on two legislative areas to demonstrate how massive resistance has negatively impacted the principles of racial equality under McConnell's leadership since he became the Senate majority leader in 2011. First, the most significant factor will be his ability to transform the federal judiciary and the Supreme Court by blocking Obama nominations so that they could be filled under the Trump Administration. There is a need to explain how these appointments undermine the ability for non-White constituencies to sue public and private entities for violations related to civil rights, voter suppression, access to education, and police brutality. And second, my research will conclude with a discussion of the removal or regular order to prevent hearings and senate floor debates on legislation that passed the Democratically led House of Representatives with the intent of correcting the Supreme Court's decision in

Shelby County v. Holder (2013) to remove federal oversight of state laws that are intended to suppress the votes of Blacks and other non-White voters.

These two areas of focus are necessary as the academy explores the relationship between the electoral victories of Presidents Obama and Trump and Mitch McConnell's successful imposition of massive resistance in the Senate has fundamentally changed the trajectory of civil rights progress in the 21st century. The presence of Obama's presidency provided McConnell with the opportunity to implement the Southern political strategy of massive resistance to impose barriers to racial equality. In an era where both political scientists and political journalists use broad generalizations to discuss extreme partisanship, it is important for voters to have a more comprehensive understanding of the intent behind the obstruction. It is not obstruction for the sake of obstruction and power. It is an obstruction to ensure that racial conservatives maintain political power, even as the United States becomes a majority minority nation.

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Dirt Gets under the Fingernails: Assyria and Republican Political Theory

Rooted in Historical Methods

Christopher R. Binetti

Abstract

This article challenges pre-conceived notions about polities, ancient and modern. It argues that liberalism and republicanism, which are often viewed as modern norms, actually have ancient roots, and not just in Rome or Greece. However, just as in ancient times, we are experiencing threats to liberal and republican values throughout the Western world. This article is thus a case-study of how such values fall. It is both instructive and cautionary for modern Western people.

Introduction

Assyria is the epitome of an intense authoritarian regime. It slaughtered masses of civilians without compunction. It suppressed minority groups with impunity. It was run by an absolute monarch, supported by a narrow, unrestrained aristocracy. It perpetuated the Elamite genocide. However, this is the Neo-Assyrian Empire. This is not how it all began. The Old Assyrian state was a city-state. There were check and balances. It negotiated with other groups, particularly in Anatolia ; it was sensitive to different ideas. It did not engage in the atrocities of later periods, particularly among the conquered and Assyrian subjects themselves. This regime is more properly a republic.

Republicanism and Republics

A republic is a non-dominating regime, I mean that a republic is a regime that is characterized by a (relative) lack of domination by any one interest group or actor, mostly non-violent competition for power among various interest groups/factions, the ability of factions/interest groups/individual actors to continue to legitimately play the political game even after electoral or issue-area defeat and some measure of effectiveness. First, to address the obvious: I am claiming that bureaucratic republicanism is a distinct part of republics and republicanism. I am arguing that electoral institutions, while helpful, are not essential to the definition of a republic. This is not the orthodox view of the republic, which is essentially the formal-institutional model. I am arguing through the evidence of my cases that bureaucratic republics exist as a distinct but genuine type of republic.

Breaking this definition down, the first requirement of a regime to fit in the regime type of a republic is that one interest group or actor does not dominate the political life of that regime. Interest groups can vary greatly in composition and type but certainly can include ethnic, religious, and professional groups. They can also be a subset of these things. Domination does not necessarily equate predominance. Philip Pettit's notion of domination, so influential on this project implies force or the threat of force or coercion on others, not merely having a lot of one group in a regime or state. Domination is about the structural ways in which groups, individuals, and governments (regimes all together) hinder individuals and groups not able to the same thing in return. Whether this occurs in a one interest group predominant area, it is domination and thus disqualifying for a republic. Where it does not, the predominant demographic does not render the republic not a republic (Pettit, 1997, 66-69, 202-205).

The second requirement is mostly non-violent competition for power. Two things are united in this one requirement. Firstly, there is a competition for power, either through a

bureaucratic-meritocratic approach, elections, or both. In addition to competition, the republic also has mostly non-violent avenues for contesting groups and individuals to vie for power. Truthfully, most republics cannot be held to the standard of nonviolence in the political process at all, because this is not realistic. To say this hypothetically, a terrorist group in a country attacks a polling station and kills two people to make a political point but everything else runs smoothly. Unless that is a very small country, it should still count as a republic because the process is not compromised by a small amount of fringe violence. Just as with the distinction between predominance and domination, the proof is in the pudding per se. Does the political violence negatively affect the rights of people to participate in and shape the contours of competition for power? If not, you can still have a republic with some political violence. In the end, a standard of mostly non-violent competition is a realistic and theoretically sound basis for this second requirement (Pettit 1997, 276-278).

Let us assume a regime has gotten past the first hurdles to being a republic. There is no dominant force in politics and competition is mostly non-violent and vibrant. There is a potential pitfall here that my above definition takes into account. Losers in a political contest for power can oftentimes lose their ability to continue to play the political game; that is to keep contesting for power. As long as you play by the rules, essentially, you keep getting to play by those same rules. This replayability of the political game is thus an essential part of what makes the republic a special sort of political regime. However, the principles of contestation and repeatability are transferrable to republics. The empire-of-law and other principles in Pettit support this contention, I argue. (Pettit 1997, 174-182).

Lastly but no less importantly, a republic must be an effective regime. A failed state that does not oppress anyone, that has free and fair elections, and allows losers to keep playing the

political game does not count. Some effective governance must be going on. However, this is not as arbitrary of a criterion as one might think, since a failed or fragile state is rarely a secret or unobvious for most objective observers. If crime is rampant, the land is ungovernable, and the government and military are totally ineffective, then usually this is quite observable. Thus finally, a republic must be an effective regime to some extent. To reiterate, a republic is a regime that is characterized by a lack of domination by any one interest group or actor, mostly non-violent competition for power among various interest groups/factions, the ability of factions/interest groups/ individual actors to continue to legitimately play the political game even after electoral or issue-area defeat and some measure of effectiveness (Pettit 1997 238-240).

The basic model of republican formation is that an ill-formed or previously failed state-type political community comes under intense, mostly external pressure. To survive as a sovereign political community, the various factions of the community need to come together and create some sorts of institutions to effectively govern the political community in a state of extreme stress. There is a history of a failed or defeated regime or a very structurally problematic prior political community or regime. That history, or knowledge of that history, coupled with extreme pressure, creates universal fear of bad things happening. That universal fear makes the community come together to form or improve their political community and leads to political institutional design choice compromise. The political community consolidates into a polity with both effectiveness and divided political power as a way of avoiding dissolution, conquest, assimilation, and the takeover of any one domestic faction. This allows different factions to rule and be ruled in turn (Aristotle, *The Politics*, 1984, Carnes Lord edition, III., 4). The kind of regime that results from this history of compromises is a strong, pluralistic regime that gradually develops into a full republic with the four characteristics as noted above. Just because one group

is not in power today does not either mean that they will be oppressed by the regime or stop them from gaining power legitimately later on. (For three examples of this phenomenon, see Veenhof, “Kanes: an Assyrian Colony in Anatolia”, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 859-872, and Brentjes, Burchard. “The History of Elam and Achaemenid Persia: An Overview”, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 1001-1021).

The Case of Assyria

Assyria is a fascinating case study because it starts off at the beginning of history not as the despotic state for which it is famous (or infamous) but as a republic. It was predominantly a bureaucratic republic, in that its bureaucratic institutions and not formal representative institutions were the most essential to preserving the republic. However, there was also a robust City Assembly which represented a significant portion of the population, its aristocrats and merchants. Thus, there was some formal representation though the main organs of republicanism in the state were bureaucratic institutions.

It is important to state from the beginning of this chapter that there was no trace of democracy in Old Assyrian institutions. It was an oligarchy in a fairly clear form. However, the oligarchy appears to be more of the broad type than the narrow one (the broad type being more representative of the political community and more diverse in terms of both interests and life experiences and thus generally more conducive to republicanism than a narrow oligarchy). This broad oligarchy is in fact typical of many historical republics. Both merchants and aristocrats were included in the city and while the mercantile interest group was strong and at times even predominant, it was not dominant in republican terms. The monarch was the nominal sovereign

of Assur, the city that eventually spawned the larger country of Assyria. However, though the monarch was not symbolic or powerless as in modern constitutional monarchies, the monarch was not a dominant figure. The relevance of this case to the modern world of states is an initial concern of course. Do repressive regimes develop first an inevitably progress to less repressive forms or the optimistic logic of progress a historically flawed theory? How do economics and external pressures cause the sudden breakdown of relatively non-dominating regimes and lead to the redevelopment of republics into extremely oppressive regimes? How far can local republican institutions stretch without considered constitutional engineering? This case goes a long way to answering all of these questions for moderns. Let us start with the regime chicken-or-egg question.

The Old Assyrian Period

The earliest ruler of the Old Assyrian period for which verifiable information can be gathered is Ilu-shuma. He did not even bear the title of king but of vice-regent of the god Ashur. Still, he was a significant religious official as well as a political one precisely because of this relationship with the god Assur, for which the city and country were named. He created a system of tax privileges that encouraged local merchants, supported by backing from other sectors. That foreign trade was with the east, western Iran including the Zagros Mountains region, southern Mesopotamia, and especially Anatolia (modern-day Asian Turkey). He bragged about how he forced foreign persons and their wealth to come to Assur. In light of later practices of the Assyrians, this was once interpreted as a form of military conquest or series of raids or tribute. However, now it is believed to simply describe the great trade that flowed in and out of Assur (Lewy 1971, 708-709 and 756-757).

Ilu-shuma boasts specifically about establishing the freedom of the Akkadians, in this case, the people of southern Mesopotamia. This seems to mean the freedom to trade. In opening and maintaining these trade routes, Ilu-shuma had also secured freedom of the same kind for his people. A form of government-sponsored capitalism (something like proto-mercantilism) grew out of Ilu-shuma's actions. One might assume that the king was solely responsible for this great economic and political development (Lewy 1971, 756-758).

On the contrary, the limmu official or limmum in the Old Assyrian dialect of Akkadian, was in charge of regulating all of this activity, if not in Ilu-Shuma's time, certainly in his son Erishum I's time. The limmu official was selected every year by the City Assembly to oversee the "City Hall", a complex institution similar to a palace but which was autonomous from the office of the monarch. The limmu official was in charge of duties (proto-axes that involved barter rather than coin money), trade, and loans, as well as food reserves. However, the limmu official's term was limited and there was an unofficial rotation among the elite families of the city. To check his powers, there were other officials in the city. These senior officials seem to have had functions similar to ombudsmen and senior bureaucratic officials. In total, the picture of the City Hall is that the limmu official was the preeminent or even predominant official but not dominant, as there were other officials with autonomy and backing from the city assembly who could critique and to some extent counteract the limmu official (Lewy 1971, 742-743 and Dercksen 2004, 11-13, 52-54, 86-89). The limmu institution properly speaking is the mechanism where the year was named after the limmum official and in which the New Years' Festival was at least partly overseen by the limmum. This institution came into being in the time of Erishum, one royal generation after Ilu-shuma his father. The karum system developed in this time. The City Hall had a counterpart in the primary trading colony of Assur, called the karum of Kanesh,

or simply karum Kanesh. Karum Kanesh was a colony with Assyrian merchants and their families living in a foreign quarter separate from but related to the native Anatolian city of Kanesh. At karum Kanesh, the main office controlled the actions of the other lesser karums, whose organization seems to have been fairly complex for the early centuries of the Second Millennium BC. These karums were semi-autonomous centers of commerce, trade, and habitation, where Assyrians lived in dedicated quarters just outside the main habitable areas of native cities throughout many parts of Anatolia. Smaller trading posts would report to the karums and were not permanently inhabited by colonists. These colonists remained separate from the native population and also were granted extraterritoriality by their rulers; thus, they were colonists under Assyrian law, but without more than minimal Assyrian military assets on the ground and surrounded by non-Assyrian controlled, though friendly territory (Lewy 1971, 708-709,721-723; Dercksen 2004, 76-89 and 103-105).

The lesser karums collected dues from the local colonists and tradesmen and sent them to karum Kanesh, which in turn used most of the collected income, though it sends duties to the capital at Assur. Karum Kanesh was also the hub of communication for the Assyrian colonies in Anatolia and their main connection with the homeland, which were essentially still one city and its countryside. A group of politically loyal but still autonomous colonies, the colonists received reinforcements in terms of new colonists, supplies, and barter periodically. The karums relied on karum Kanesh which relied on Assur, but Assur relied on the karum network for its wealth, power and prestige as well. The landowning class of Assur was an important ally to the merchant class and vice versa. Yet this alliance had to deal with institutional fragmentation several distinct and autonomous bureaucracies, the transactional politics of the City Assembly, and the king (Lewy 1971, 723-728 and 758 and Dercksen 2004, 121-147).

The legal system was also very different than it later would become. A written code of laws as a single, well-edited document that was internally consistent did not develop until the Middle Assyrian period. However, written-down precedents, very analogous to modern-day case law in the United States and other common law countries, were often cobbled together into an informal collection. The law was thus knowable, at least by the elites who could read or hire someone to read for them, and based upon a logical principle in precedence. But it was not as concrete or rigid as the irrevocable law code. Debts were settled, property peaceably and lawfully confiscated, economic institutions regulated and policed and lawyers patrolled the boundaries between private and public spheres. Law and order without a constricting law code, a republics of laws, norms and institutions, created organically. This adaptability served the Old Assyrian state just as the very different Middle Assyrian state required a law code, which was more carved in stone (Dercksen, 48-51, 86-93, and 231-244).

This mixture of legal, economic, and political institutions served the purposes of republicanism because it fragmented power, set competing groups against one another but also allowed for cooperation and transactional politics and also allowed for economic and social as well as political freedom for a significant percentage of the population. The broad oligarchy allowed for more than just the narrowest group to be limmu officials or serve in the City Assembly, karum offices or other senior offices in the Assur City Hall. It was an effective regime where no one interest group or individual (particulars of the regime) dominated the entire regime. Those not selected limmu official or other offices, i.e. the losers of the game could still keep playing the political game. Also, the competition for power was mostly non-violent in the period of 20th century BC until the rise of Shamshi-Adad and through elections, merit, and

moving up through the trading and institutional bureaucracies. Thus, Assyria was a republic, primarily practicing the bureaucratic type of republicanism.

One important feature of any history of regimes is the chicken-or-egg problem. This can be phrased as what came first- the republic or the despotic regime? As we have just demonstrated, the chicken-or-egg problem is already answered at this point, because clearly the earliest polity in Assyria was a republican city state, Assur. The later despotic polity that developed was a geographically larger absolute monarchy. This shows that progress is neither collapse of the social and economic conditions that made the political pre-requisites of the Old Assyrian republic possible. With this collapse, the struggle for a stable regime started from scratch and unlike the first time, it did not result in a republic.

Here we see how both foreign affairs and economics led to the downfall of the republic of Assur. Economic prosperity often aids liberalism in all its historical forms and economic collapse or doldrums helps repressive forces. The collapse of the trade routes into Anatolia and the Old Assyrian karums devastated the Assyrian economy and its pre-existing political equilibrium, the republic, leading to change in the opposite direction, towards a dictatorship. Republican institutions never recovered because control of the economy passed into the hands of a very closed elite dominated by the monarchy rather than a more liberal and inclusive middle class. If not for military events in Anatolia, the economy would not have collapsed, which shows the importance of foreign affairs and military capability to defend oneself from economic and political collapse. Economic and political development thus goes hand in hand in many cases, even in the modern world.

The Middle Assyrian and Neo-Assyrian Regime

On the contrary, the Middle Assyrian period saw the consolidation of an authoritarian monarchical regime. The limmu officials could now be the kings themselves, which got rid of the checks and balances of the old Republican system. The limmu now was not in charge of a complex bureaucracy, but was from this point on a ceremonial official or a petty functionary. The City Assembly seems to have disappeared in these times as well. So, the colonial and capital institutions went away leaving the vestiges of the limmu official, which no longer checked royal

14Assyrians called Mitanni) and shipped them off to other domains of Assur, which now developed into a territorial kingdom for the first time appropriately referred to as Assyria, the mat Assur (or land of Assur in Akkadian). They were used a cheap labor, but above the level of slave. Their housing and feeding were paid for by the state. In the end, Hanigalbat was held but the state found both keeping their new cheap labor source alive expensive and that the newly conquered province was still prone to rebellion or at least welcoming to Hittite invaders. An expensive military governorate and the civil infrastructure required keeping it afloat, plus the deportations, were the only things keeping the restive province from falling out of control. When this repressive apparatus faltered a few centuries later, the long-held, hard-won ground went back to effective independence (Kuiper, 85). From Shalmaneser's imperial experiment in Mitanni/Hanilgabat there are two lessons. Winning over a population would have been easier to sustain socially, politically, and especially economically. Also, once Shalmaneser made his choice of blinding the 14,400, he had to become increasingly authoritarian to hold on to the angry province. His inexact cruelty snowballed into outright tyranny and its net benefit long-term to Assyria versus a more lenient policy is dubious at best. However, the lack of republican institutions to hold back the monarch allowed him to dominate both domestic audiences in the capital and everyone else. The lack of restraint had direct impacts on basic human protections.

After Shalmaneser, his immediate successor Tukulti-Ninurta I epitomized the Middle Assyrian ruler. Tukulti-Ninurta was the Middle Assyrian ruler who most directly led to the excesses of the later Neo-Assyrian rulers. He sacked Babylon, committing a sacrilegious act. However, Babylon was a foreign country unlike later, when it would be part of his realm. It is hard to think that this sack created the kind of outrage it later would. Tukulti-Ninurta continued a trend of taking power from the last meaningful check on royal authority, the priesthood of the god Assur. While Tukulti-Ninurta's attempts led to a successful change in favor of the royal prerogative over the religious institutions of Assur, he soon found out what the destruction of the last vestiges of the old republican balance of power system meant in terms of political stability (Nardo 1998, 33-34 and Kuiper, 85). The priesthood rose against him and his sons revolted, Then, he was surrounded in a city he had created for himself in order to be isolated from political pressures in Assur. Ultimately, he was put under siege and murdered during it. With absolute monarchy came absolute loss in the event of political defeat, something that had not occurred before Shamshi-Adad and the turmoil his dynasty caused during and after the occupation of Assur.

Later on, as the Middle Assyrian Kingdom crumbled and returned to controlling little more than the region around Assur and Nineveh, the gains of Shalmaneser and Tukulti-Ninurta were undone. The historical memory of the regime remained, telling great and somewhat embellished tales of Tukulti-Ninurta I and Shalmaneser I the great conquerors and leaving little record of the Old Assyrian past. The limmu official remained as an institution but in its pro forma, Middle Assyrian form and presented no check to the king, who could legally become the limmu official himself. The memories of the authoritarian regime helped inspire the Neo-

Assyrian monarchs to greater heights of cruelty and absolute monarchy, perhaps viewing the middle Assyrian tyranny as their only reasonable roadmap to the glories of the past.

A series of early Neo-Assyrian kings paved the way for Ashurnasirpal II. Fittingly, Ashurnasirpal's father was Tukulti-Ninurta II, named after a great conqueror of the Middle Assyrian period. Ashurnasirpal II conquered vast lands not even conquered in the Middle Assyrian era, either directly or through forcing subject status upon them. He did not consider these subject rulers to be lesser monarchs of a certain dignity, as many Late Bronze Age monarchs, even Middle Assyrian ones, often did. He neither viewed the subjects of his subject/vassal rulers as his own subjects (not uncommon for the pre-Hellenistic Ancient Near East) but neither did he view them as fundamentally distinct from enemy peoples not yet brought to subjection (more unusual for the times) (Kuiper 2011, 89-90 and Smith 1965, 9-17). Subjection or vassalage was viewed in the Late Bronze Age as a permanent thing, in which each successive ruler of the local dynasty is taken into vassalage by each successive ruler of the dynasty of the main state to which it is vassal. There were limitations in the relationship between Mitanni and Assur/Assyria when it was a vassal state of Mitanni's in the Late Bronze Age, for example. There were no mutual obligations in the Assyrian system, especially in the Neo-Assyrian period. It is simple exploitation of resources, including human resources. It is much closer to imperialism/colonialism of the modern type than the intricate vassal system of the Late Bronze Age (Smith 1965, 9-17). Ashurnasirpal portrayed conquered non-Assyrians as an undifferentiated block in his art. He essentialized, even racialized his enemies into one, mass group of peoples, so different from Assyrians, and inferior to them, that even after conquest, they were meant only to serve. This was to some extent new, in that Late Bronze Age empires, particularly the Hittites and Egyptians, often accorded great respect, dignity, and privileges to

ethnic non-majorities (the term minority having tricky modern connotations, especially in America). Conquest and subjection/vassalage had often been seen as different things; now they were seen as distinct stages of the same thing: domination. Assyria settled for subjection or vassalage rather than the full domination of outright conquest only because it could not get more. However, in the Late Bronze Age, direct rule was not really the goal (Smith 1965, 9-17).

As a result of Assyrian political ideology and structure, the territory and extent of the main state was much larger than earlier, Late Bronze Age regimes. It also viewed as its true subjects or citizens only Assyrians. Where Hittites viewed as legitimate political subjects in the domestic context all ethnicities and cultures within their realm and dealt with subject or vassal rulers as both foreign and domestic in different ways, Assyria viewed their non-Assyrian subjects as simply “other”.

Tiglath-Pileser III was so worried that Assyrian high officials were beginning to be a successful check on royal authority that he replaced provincial and most other high officials with eunuchs in order to ensure the lack of dynastic formation. He also reformed the military, decreasing the native Assyrian contingent and increasing the “foreign” that is conquered, non-Assyrian element of the army. Careful not to allow the power of the “lesser” peoples to percolate up from the ranks, he made sure that the cavalry, heavy infantry and charioteers, the prestigious and most important elements in open battle, were retained for the Assyrian political subjects (the citizen class if you will). Light infantry, such as skirmishers, slingers, and archers, could do the grunt work, but they would have neither power nor opportunity to rise through the military or political ranks. He could control the impoverished ones by small selective incentives, diminishing the power of the generals while not checking his power at all. Thus Tiglath-Pileser III prevented any oligarchical or popular check on his power (Charpin 1995, 823-824).

His reforms and their effects on the Assyrian regime continued even after the Adasid dynasty was overthrown by Sargon II. Sargon conquered Babylon (not for the first time) and the Kingdom of Israel (the northern kingdom) for the first time. He ordered deportations for the second but not for the first. The normal simple bipartite division in the Neo-Assyrian worldview of “us versus them” within the domestic sphere Assyrians verses non-Assyrians had developed up to and including Sargon’s reign a single well-enforced exception: Babylon (Leichty 1995, 949-953). While never considered equal to Assyrians, Babylonians had a second-class citizen sort of status, which perversely in this context was a good thing. They were political subjects of a second class, that is the Assyrian ruler had some regard for them, unlike the majority of his subjects to whom he felt no political responsibility. However, Sennacherib, son of Sargon, violated this last moral and ideological line by destroying Babylon in 689 BC. This was seen as a great sacrilege. In the Assyrians’ eyes, Sennacherib did something so awful, so egregious, and so sacrilegious, that even his Assyrian contemporaries and the next generation of Assyrians, including his own son and successor, Esarhaddon, were aghast. This is saying something based on the norms of Assyrian tyranny current in Sennacherib’s days. The massive, terrible thing was not that Sennacherib did anything substantively different than what Assyrian monarchs normally did: he sacked a city that was in revolt against him. The difference was normative. The problem was which city he sacked, because it was Babylon. (Kuiper 2011, 97-101)

This caused a scandal at the time and later. Assyrian religion was largely based off traditions similar to and often fostered by Babylonian religious traditions. The two peoples, Assyrian and Babylonian were considered similar but different and distinct peoples, brother peoples, though the Assyrians were always the older, stronger brother in their own minds. To destroy Babylon and scatter its people to the four corners of the earth was not ideologically or

emotionally the same thing for the Assyrian aristocracy, normally unmoved by the fearsome cruelty of their absolute monarchs. Babylon was a place many of them had been to and had enjoyed and they actually knew a fair number of the élites of that city. The destruction of the city, no matter how rebellious it had been, was still different. This seemed to have been a bigger deal at the time than when Tukulti-Ninurta I had sacked Babylon. First, Babylon was part of Sennacherib's dominions; they were to some extent his own people, unlike Babylon in Tukulti-Ninurta's time and also because the ties between the two cultures had only strengthened over time (Leichty 1995, 949-953).

Thus, unlike so many other cities, Babylon was rebuilt only eleven years after its destruction by Esarhaddon, who publicly denounced his father Sennacherib. The rumor was spread that Sennacherib had been murdered by Esarhaddon's brothers with no knowledge of the new king, largely for the destruction of Babylon. It was viewed as divine retribution for its destruction. However, Esarhaddon waged war against his brothers for the murder and historians generally view him innocent and uninvolved in the plot. Still, he made two arguments that did not jive with one another. First, his father was a controversial man who spurned the gods and was slain for the sacrilege he imposed on Babylon. A statue of a mythical creature fell on him. However, secondly, his murderers were killed because they had killed the legitimate and great king of Assyria. The tale was also spun that the gods who had been said previously to have judged Babylon unworthy of existence for seventy-seven years had changed their minds and the chief god of Babylon, Marduk, had flipped the tablet over, turning the sentence of seventy-seven years to eleven. In cuneiform, the sign for seventy-seven is the sign for eleven upside down and vice versa. This tale allowed to some extent Sennacherib's original judgment to be modified

without arguing that Sennacherib had lied about the gods, a worse sacrilege than destroying Babylon.

Esarhaddon had a logic problem with the various arguments he articulated. First, Sennacherib had fallen for his sin. Second, the murderers were to be killed for the unjustified killing of that sinner. Finally, the sinner who had been crushed to death by the figure of a mythical divine creature had been partially correct in his religious judgment are inconsistent with each other. However, Esarhaddon's arguments were inconsistent with each other. In the end, Esarhaddon's logic was as unrestrained as his power. He may have felt a duty to rebuild Babylon but he did not feel restrained by the sentiment so much as empowered to rebuild Babylon in his own image, which he largely did (Leichty 1995, 949-958).

Ashurbanipal was Esarhaddon's son and the last significant Neo-Assyrian ruler. He was not as lenient as his father and in some ways epitomized the depravities of the Neo-Assyrian Empire as Tukulti-ninurta I had exemplified the Middle Assyrian kingdom. He did not think of providing real autonomy to the vassal king of Babylon, his own brother Shamash-shum-ukin and often interfered in what was theoretically a lesser but autonomous kingdom. The post-Sennacheribian solution of two kings, the great king in Nineveh, the then-capital of Assyria and a lesser but still powerful one in Babylon failed because Ashurbanipal wanted no local check on his power in Babylon while Shamash-shum-ukin, who was the older brother of the great king, saw himself as the king's equal if not superior and had the backing of the local elites in Babylon. Ashurbanipal humiliated his brother and did not listen to the outcries for autonomy from all levels of Babylonian society, but he took no decisive aggressive action either. The result was a brutal bloodbath. Shamash-shum-ukin revolted in 652 BC. The king held on and won the day, defeating and slaying his brother in Babylon, but his lack of attention to the needs of

Babylonians led to a great amount of suffering, death, and economic loss in both the Assyrian heartland and in Babylonia. He did not sack Babylon but was far from kind. (Charpin 1995, 825-826).

If Ashurbanipal stayed his hand somewhat with Babylon, he did not do so elsewhere. Ashurbanipal deported many people as his ancestors had done before, but what made him uniquely problematic was that he believed conquest and deportations were not enough. The Middle Assyrians had diverged from the Hittites and others by believing the vast majority of the conquered to not automatically gain the protections of subjects. The early Neo-Assyrians extended that by viewing the conquered as little better than animals. Sennacherib had expanded this view to the Babylonians. Now, Ashurbanipal believed that the Elamites, whom had given his ancestors and himself such trouble were not good enough for deportations, dispersal as a people, or normal conquest. He moved into Susa, sacked it, enslaved what he wanted and slaughtered the rest. He kept moving deeper and deeper into Elam trying to do something no group had done in a methodical manner before. His goal was not the subjection or even enslavement of the Elamite people; it was the calculated, methodical destruction of an entire people. This was the first recorded intentional genocide (Brentjes 1995, 1013-1014 and Potts 1999, 259-309).

Geography betrayed the genocidal Ashurbanipal. The Zagros Mountains of southwestern Iran stopped his army cold. Though Elam appeared dead, the Elamite people survived. They would in fact be a minor factor in the war of revenge against Ashurbanipal's successors a generation later. Elamites continued on as a broken, but still proud people, eventually aligning with the newly-arrived and powerful Persians to forge the first great Persian state, Anshan (later Achaemenid Persia) together. The first genocide failed in the larger context but did bring short-term military

gains. The long-term results were not advantageous to Assyria but that is left to another article (Brentjes 1995, 1014-1017 and Potts 1999, 259-309).

Lessons from the Assyrian Case

In this case study, we learned that Assyria started off as a government-sponsored mercantilist regime with a fairly liberal (for the times) economy and a republican political system. It collapsed when its security and economic prosperity collapsed and became a command economy ruled by an absolute monarch. From the Middle Assyrian period to the Neo-Assyrian period, the rulers became more and more despotic and authoritarian. Even when the Assyrian sovereigns retreated from the ultimate expression of their tyranny, they did it in a way that not only retained their unrestrained power but enhanced it by rebuilding the glory of Babylon or did so because of an inability to complete the genocide they started. Both the destruction and rebuilding of Babylon were expensive and weakened the regime financially. Likewise, the Elamite genocide would come back to bite the regime. Republican leaders would have acted differently and so would a rational collectively-controlled regime.

However, the kings did what they pleased. They were not rational in the common-sense definition of that word. They did things that helped destroy the regime they sought to preserve. The antiquated view of the oriental despot that comes down to us through certain scholars is wrong because it does not take into account that regimes changed in the Ancient Near East in very real and substantive ways. However, the idea that there were often despots of a very tyrannical, decadent and all-powerful type and that the despotism was an often very vile type were not wrong,

An old bias was that the despotism was different from other types of regimes, which ebb and flow, grow and change, and even drastically transform. In this case of Assyria, the almost cartoonish villainy of Assyria's despots is shown to have been all too real; however, the despotic regime was not timeless. It had a historical beginning, in fact a time of transition from a prior regime. More importantly, the older regime, and the first attempt at an Assyrian state, was not despotic and looked very different from the more well-known Neo-Assyrian times. In fact, the Old Assyrian regime was a republic.

That republic had a domestic balance of power, check and balances system working upon the monarchic power. The monarch then checked the high officials, which were checked by the City Assembly. The colonial system of the karums, particularly karum Kanesh checked the home government. The government was a broad ruling oligarchy (broad at least for the times) with significant input from various political interest groups, particularly the merchants and landowners but also the priest class as well. No one particular (interest group or individual) dominated the regime or state. Losing out in the political game did not stop officials from winning out later and their political subjecthood was not threatened. The government was still effective and prosperous for many years and the political contestation was largely non-violent. This was a bureaucratic republic with certain formal-institutional undertones. Thus, we had a republican regime. As a result of that regime, the basic human protections of the people were relatively secure.

However, that regime collapsed due to external pressures and internal strife. It was not restored so much as transitioned into a state of despotism that got increasingly worse over time. There were no checks on monarchical authority at all by the Neo-Assyrian period. The consequences of this regime were real in terms of basic protections. The destruction of Babylon

is a very explicit example of the horrors that Assyrians could inflict even on a people they admitted to be largely their own people. The collapse of economic liberalism in Assyria did contribute to the destruction of a middle-class segment of society and this result did in fact impact the collapse of republicanism in Assyria and the rise of a despotic regime. Aristotle would point to his theory of the middle class being essential to the domestic balance of power. However, this result is not unexpected by my own republican model. The collapse of a middle class unleashed social and political forces from constraint and allows them to reshape both politics and society as they see fit. The middle class is an interest group just like any other and balances out the rich and poor in a socio-economically diverse society. Without that balancing factor, the underpinnings of the transactional politics necessary for republican checks and balances cease to exist. The middle class is not strictly speaking necessary for a republic, but some balancing factor is required and often it serves as such. Thus, the case of Assyria demonstrates that the Aristotelian argument about the middle class and my theory of republicanism requiring intergroup dialogue (transactional politics) and social, economic, and political checks and balances are not alternative hypotheses so much as his theory is already included within mine (Aristotle 1984, in its entirety).

Assyria thus demonstrated multiple important themes or lessons for the modern world. Firstly, the republic can originate before the non-republican form in the same regime. This has been discussed in detail above and shows that progress is not linear, inevitable, or without great sacrifice and struggle. Second the case demonstrates that the republican institutions that work for a city-state have a hard time when extended to encompass a regional or larger polity without strong constitutional engineering during said extension. The Assyrian army was not made available in any real numbers to protect the karums from the events in Anatolia and the

connections between colonists and Assur, while significant, did not really allow for the full projection of power of the city-state to the regions around the karums. Moreover, as pressure to expand into a regional polity grew in Assyria, the prospects of returning to a republican system evaporated in Assur since those institutions had already fallen and were not equipped to provide for a larger republic. Thirdly, not having these checks and balances led both to incredible increases in the population and size of the state, but also to the depravity of the regime and its particulars. While it remains to be shown that republics can work on a large-scale (until next chapter), the threat of large non-republics to its own people or peoples is quite ably demonstrated by the present case. Moreover, any regime can become despotic even after having a republic for hundreds of years. There is much application of this lesson to modern republics. As has been already explained above economic and foreign military pressures threaten even well-established republican regimes.

A republic needs to maintain itself through continuing to develop its political institutions to deal with changing conditions such as ethnic diversification and geographic and population growth. It also needs to maintain a robust, liberal economy and a strong military.

Republicanism is not a theory of limited government only, but it certainly is a theory of limited government in part. Assyria is the case of a limited government becoming the epitome of an unlimited government. Not only is the amount of control that government could exert on any person subject to its authority near absolute but it was quite willing to use it regularly. It did not merely have the capacity to dominate in a non-republican way, it actually did so on a regular basis. In addition to the extent of government, there were no limits of the institutions of the monarchy. There were thus no limits on government internally or externally.

However, the lack of republicanism also led to social consequences. At first, the Neo-Assyrian government worked hard to preserve their dialect of Akkadian, but when they could not preserve the primacy of the traditional language, they began to enforce a standardized version of Aramaic on the parts of the world they dominated. That Aramaic overtook Akkadian so fast was not the product primarily of natural immigration or incorporation of Aramaic speakers, but of the deportation of Aramaic speakers to the Assyrian and Babylonian heartlands (Dion 1995, 1293-1294 and Salvesen 1998, 140). The Assyrian government's socio-cultural policies led to the destruction of much of their own culture, but the Neo-Assyrians were reckless with their culture if it meant even short-term political gains. They simply turned towards enforcing strict discipline to the new standard Aramaic they developed. The Assyrians' attempts at a totalitarian-like social authoritarianism failed but it still harmed the cultural diversity of the ancient Near East in many ways. The lack of republican government thus had more than merely political or economic consequences for the peoples included physically in the empire but ignored as potential political subjects.

On the other hand, the republic of Assur was dominated not by a particular group or individual or even the state, but by economics, particularly foreign trade. Sheldon Wolin warns that a similar type of regime, in which large corporations dominate government and governance in the modern world, such as the United States, could produce inverse totalitarianism, which social and economic factors (for him primarily corporate) dominate the political aspects of our lives. However, the republic of Assur was diversified enough in its industries and trade interest groups that no one economic interest group could dominate the politics of the state. While economics was the primary drive of the state and its governmental machinery, no particular group dominated the political life of the state. Also, the social and economic lives of the common

people were protected by the machinery of the state's regulation and partial control of the machinery of economic production. The state could direct policy because the economic interest groups were not organized and disposed to a unified lobbying effort in state institutions. The regime could both ensure governmental-primacy of the state while also benefitting from an economic growth-centric politics. A fervor for economic development need not lead to economic interest groups, such as business groups, dominating the state or the regime that governs it. A capitalist republic need not be a contradiction in terms.

From the perspective of the mixed constitution, the Old Assyrian Republic shows a significant resemblance to the ideal. The monarchy is represented by the king, the aristocracy/oligarchy is represented by the limmu official position and other similar high bureaucratic offices while the many is represented by the City Assembly. The other bureaucratic positions also represent the popular element in the Republic, but this is not one of the three parts of the classic formula. Thus, Assur closely resembles the mixed constitution of Pettit, Machiavelli, and others, but it also shows how bureaucratic representation can supplement the classic mixed constitution.

There are many lessons for a modern state, a republic or one aspiring to be one. Maintenance of republican institutions is more important than the establishment and consolidation of them, economic and military matters are important in their maintenance, and any republic that does not evolve to meet its new challenges is in risk of losing its freedom. Extremely autocratic regimes are not natural but produced by historical forces and may in fact have evolved from relatively normative regimes. Extending one's own polity's borders, as Madison stated in Federalist No. 10 (Madison 2001: 42-48), can be extremely hazardous for a republic, especially if that republic is not prepared to change its institutions to meet the new

social, economic, and political realities of expansion. Just ask Rome. These lessons are for both well-consolidated republics like America and aspirational republics like the Ukraine and Afghanistan. Also, constant efforts at improving struggling polities such as Iraq and Afghanistan are necessary to improve. When the West fails to support these kinds of countries, we get the disaster in Afghanistan. Democracy or republicanism will not result from inertia. China will not become democratic just because of economic liberalization either. We need to foster the values and institutions of republicanism if we want thing to get better in this world.

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Examining The New Jersey First Law: Should It Stay or Go?

John Michael Mayrick Saimbert

Abstract

This paper discusses the New Jersey First Law that was enacted under former NJ Governor Chris Christie. The legislation became effective on September 1, 2011. A review of the key provisions relating to primary residency and exemptions will be discussed along with the rationale for the law. Pros and cons will be examined with a look at its impact on public state employees and state employers. Within the past year, there has been a push from employers and legislators for potential repeal of this legislation since the residency requirements pose challenges on both sides of the aisle. Bids to tackle its repeal have fell short but due to the number of exemptions being granted, the question is should this law stay or go?

Keywords: New Jersey First, primary residency, exemptions

Examining The New Jersey First Law: Should It Stay or Go?

The New Jersey First Law was enacted under former NJ Governor Chris Christie to be effective on September 1, 2011. Its implementation would have a multi-faceted impact on public state workers and employers in the Garden State. This law has sparked lots of debate and requests for repeal since its inception regarding requirements and exemptions. I will examine the key

components of this law. Then I will provide some perspective on this legislation after diving into the research and close with recommendations on its current existence.

New Jersey First Law Provisions

The NJ First Law was sponsored by Democratic State Senator Donald Norcross from Camden, Democratic Assembly Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman from Mercer and Democratic Senate President Stephen Sweeney in order to spur public employee opportunities for residents of the Garden State. Republican Gov. Chris Christie signed bill S1730 on May 19, 2011. However, numerous exceptions would apply. I will then examine the key provisions and its implications for employees and employers.

New Jersey Residency Requirement

Any new public employees hired on or after September 1, 2011, will be required to live in the state of New Jersey within a year from the effective date of hire. This group of employees encompasses teachers, police officers, state, local, and county employees (Friedman, 2011). A key aspect of this requirement is that you have to maintain primary residency in New Jersey. Primary residence, for the purposes of this state law means the residence must be in the state whereby an employee spends most of his/her nonworking time and which is the center of their domestic life and is the state designated as the legal address and residence for voting purposes. It cannot be secondary. For instance, that means if you are hired while you are a primary resident of Pennsylvania and you had a secondary residence in New Jersey, that would not suffice to meet the guidelines. Municipalities are not allowed under state law to require their firefighters, police and teachers to live in town, said William Dressel, executive director of the New Jersey League of Municipalities. But they are allowed to require their civilian workers to live in town — which has

caused some public fights (Fleischer, 2010). In addition, the residency requirement would be applicable to individuals working for state commissions, agencies, public colleges and universities. If you are a current public employee who moves out-of-state after the date of implementation, the residency requirement would now be applicable to you. Current or existing employees in this scenario should apply for an exemption prior to making an out-of-state move.

Exemptions

Several exemptions are applicable but only under specific circumstances. The three types are blanket, temporary, and permanent. Blanket exemptions are those applying to a specific agency. An example that I will expand upon is New Jersey Transit. A temporary exemption is for a specific period of employment time. Permanent exemptions apply all the time, even if an employee transfers to another public position. Currently, exemptions to the New Jersey First Act are handled by the Employee Residency Review Committee in Trenton. This committee is a five-member panel, comprised of three appointees by the Governor, an individual appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly, and an individual appointed by the President of the Senate. All these appointees serve at the pleasure of those making the appointments with a 5-year term limit. A simple majority vote of the five-member panel is needed to grant the exemption. First, any public employee who was currently working for New Jersey prior to September 1, 2011 is not required to move here. Those public employees will be exempt from the new requirements even if a change to job classification occurs so long as they remain an employee without a break in service of more than seven days. An employee could apply for an exemption if they could substantiate financial hardship or critical need before the one-year residency requirement period expires. Critical need to live out-of-state might come into play if a current employee transfers to a position with the same employer that is not designated as exempt from the residency requirement. Exemptions will be

granted in academia for visiting professors and employees requiring specialized experience in a professional, medical, technical, or administrative area. These exemptions make perfect sense. Otherwise, it could restrict the applicant pool in a manner that could prevent the state from finding qualified candidates with appropriate background and credentials. In higher education, a national search may be required when hiring for an administrative post such as a provost or dean. Plus, those hired on a per semester basis are typically exempt from the law. Public colleges and universities typically submit a list of positions which they feel should be exempt from the residency requirement with a rationale from their respective human resources departments or their board of trustees, which then gets forwarded on in a report to the State of New Jersey annually (<https://uhr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/userfiles/NJFirstActLetter.pdf>). This was done by my alma mater, Rutgers University at the time of implementation. The big consideration here is the ability of an institution to compete with out-of-state peer institutions.

Challenges with The Provision

This section will examine the challenges posed by the implementation of this law with respect to education, state agencies, and regional economy.

Request for Blanket Exemptions

A key state agency, NJ Transit, ran into hiring challenges with the residency requirement. In 2018, the residency rule was a culprit in NJ Transit's trouble hiring enough engineers to keep its trains running. In September of 2018, the state Employee Residency Review Committee voted with the support of lawmakers to approve a blanket exemption for all NJ Transit employees in "mission essential" jobs, including train engineers, bus drivers, conductors and rail maintenance

workers (Heyboer, 2019). This could lead to a growing number of state agencies requesting this type of exemption.

Prospective Educators in Border Counties

NJ may have difficulty attracting good education candidates for border counties in NJ from states like PA and NY. A border county is a county that is in close proximity to the borders of a neighboring state. There are close to 10 border counties in the Garden State. The impact will be felt in scenarios whereby recruitment is seeking a to fill a position with specific specializations required. Brooklawn Superintendent John Kellmayer said the bill would not have much of an effect on Camden County districts. But where it could make a difference would be a highly specialized kind of position, he explained. "Such as a high school physics teacher who can speak Spanish or a school nurse who can speak a foreign language common in a particular community," Kellmayer noted. (Dunn, 2014). If out of state candidates cannot be considered, then the applicant pool narrows and it could force a school district to overpay an in-state candidate due to low availability of qualified applicants.

Impact on Regional Economy

Legislators from outside states have expressed concerns regarding this legislation. Regional economy will be impacted in a negative light for border states such as NY and PA. "This bill sets a dangerous precedent by impeding the flow of human capital between New York and New Jersey," said NY Assemblyman Kenneth Zebrowski. Since plenty of New Yorkers who live only a few miles from a prospective New Jersey employer are denied employment based on where they call home; not on their qualifications for the job." Furthermore, Zebrowski feels the law will have a negative impact on the regional economy and will force surrounding states to pursue similar

public employment restrictions in order to level the playing field for their home residents. "Our letter makes it very clear; open the borders for employment or we will push our own residency requirement" (Traum, 2012). Zebrowski would go on to introduce a residency requirement bill because the NJ First Act was not repealed. Pennsylvania only has a residency requirement for Civil Service positions, not public employee positions. But those individuals can move to another state after getting hired. The downside is that workers who do this become ineligible for promotions or a change in positions. In reality, PA doesn't have a high percentage of out-of-state public employees compared to New Jersey.

Inside the Numbers

This area of the paper examines the number of employees requesting exemptions under the NJ First Act from inception up to the early spring of 2019, per the NJ Advance Media and NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

Summary on Public Employees Requesting Exemptions

The state Residency Review Committee examines public employee requests for exemptions to this law. Since inception, there have been more requests granted than denied. There have been a total of 2,870 requests: 2,310 requests granted and 560 requests denied. In aggregate, that means 80.5% of the requests have been granted while 19.5% of the requests were denied. For comparative purposes, 71% of the requests were granted in the first full year of this legislation compared to 90% getting approved up until the spring of 2019. The common reasons for requesting the exemptions included financial hardship, health reasons, or a letter from your supervisor indicating that your position was mission critical (Heyboer, 2019). Senate Minority Leader Tom

Kean, Jr. feels this law should be done away with. Requiring people to publicly explain the complex details of their divorces, financial difficulties, family problems and health diagnoses in a public meeting before a bureaucratic committee in order to plead for permission to move across a river is an “antiquated, almost barbaric” way to treat modern workers, Kean said (2019). Kean has been pushing to have this law repealed by introducing bill S508 in 2018 and the assembly proposed a companion bill (A3580), but it has not gained ample traction. The residency requirement, according to Kean, should only apply to the governor, state lawmakers, heads of state agencies, and judges. Based on these exemption numbers, one must ask if the law serves its intended purpose.

Conclusions Report Card

When one examines NJ First Law, the it does not seem to serve its intended purpose on some fronts. The number of exemptions for primary residency being granted far outweighs denials. Arbitrarily applying blanket exemptions to certain public agencies (like NJ Transit) is opening a pandora’s box for other agencies to argue the same rationale for an exemption. That, in essence, defeats the purpose of the residency requirement. In addition, NJ must examine the cost of living in relation to the compensation being given for a public position. It is unreasonable to expect someone to live here within a year on a position that cannot pay the bills. At the time of its implementation, only 8% of the NJ public employee workforce were out-of-state residents. Implementation of this new law has prompted other states to look into introducing similar legislation. Pennsylvania had considered implementing some residency rules before, but nothing has come to fruition yet. Rep. Darryl Metcalfe, chairman of the House State Government Committee felt that it is necessary for managerial and supervisory positions, whereby decisions are being made that affect Pennsylvanians. State Senator Kim Ward agreed (Andren, 2015). I think

the problem they are up against is the argument that workers may have difficulty finding affordable housing with high tax prospects in urban areas versus suburban setting. Proponents of state residency requirements will argue that workers are utilizing roads and other services; therefore, they should contribute to that specific state's tax base. But reciprocity agreements contribute to that loss of revenue, in the case of NJ and PA because PA has a flat tax rate while New Jersey does not. New Jersey made history by becoming the first state to institute a residency requirement for public workers, but the justifications for it fall short based on the number of exemptions being given. Overall, this law gets a final grade of B- as it forces individuals to go into very private financial and health issues. Plus, it takes away from the talent pool that employers can select from. While one can understand the rationale for this legislation, it is time for it to go as it is written.

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Examining How Transitioning CTE Policies in K-12 May Stimulate Economic Growth for Underrepresented Communities

Latoya Wilson

Introduction

This paper will examine how expansion of STEM-based Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs for underrepresented students should align with New Jersey's economic development strategies. Policy leaders and researchers must understand that closing the skills gap between underrepresented groups and their counterparts is critical in increasing competitiveness in growing cities. These initiatives must start at the K-12 level, since the youth are more influential in choosing these specialized careers that will innovate American economy. The Perkins V Grant is a Federal policy that strengthens the CTE curriculum by including specialized industries and expanding work-based learning opportunities in K-12 institutions. Such policies would include incorporating industry and higher education partnerships so that students can still prepare for careers, increase career network, and gain exposure to higher education.

This paper focuses on the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) industry because these careers typically require much higher levels of education and produce higher income. At the same time, researchers have shown that the gap between underrepresented students and their counterparts is prevalent in the industry, which can contribute to the gap in living situations and economic status. New Jersey has one of the highest cost of living and property taxes in the nation, therefore, closing the economic gap will ensure that diverse workforce have access to higher living

standards. The New Jersey Department of Education and government have utilized a combination of Federal, State, and private sector partnerships to fund expansion of CTE funding for predominantly Minority and low-income K-12 districts. Work-based Learning opportunities would include career mentor, internships, and student employment programs that are incorporated in CTE institutions. The question is whether New Jersey current and future CTE initiatives have attached these initiatives as part of their economic component of their Master Plans to market participation from essential stakeholders. Since New Jersey is increasing in diversity, equity must be addressed so that there is a diverse representation in the STEM industry and economic growth.

Evolution from Traditional Vocational to CTE Institutions

First, we are going to examine how vocational education has transitioned from the historical model to the most recent modernization of the curriculum based on the needs of the global economy. Especially when during a certain time period, vocational education was stigmatized due to lack of a strong academic component and enrollment of “problem students”. “In the late 1980s and into the 1990s, vocational programs were shown to frequently function as an inferior track that diverted mainly disadvantaged students away from academic programs and Higher Education” (Malkus, 2019). This practice may have played a role in widening the gap in skills and earning amongst different groups because many of these job training programs came from careers that produce limited opportunities. Therefore, graduates were placed in jobs that would pay less salaries, therefore, would more likely struggle to keep up with higher living costs. The old vocational education model did not provide enough confidence for students to potentially further their skills due to lack of exposure to higher education. On the other hand, their peers

were able to focus on academia that potentially increases their access to higher education. However, students enrolled in traditional High Schools were able to focus on the college track curriculum, but not enough hands-on opportunities in the work environment.

That rebranding began with Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act Amendments of 1990 occurred when a Legislation modified vocational institutions that align secondary and postsecondary curriculum (Malkus, 2019). In other words, Vocational schools wanted to fight the stigma by remodeling courses so that students and graduates are better prepared for the global economy. So far, many districts are receiving more success than others, but policy leaders, especially in New Jersey, are working to support struggling districts. “The transition from 20th century vocational education to 21st century CTE is far from complete” (Passarella, 2018). There are still a number of struggling districts that are offering career programs from outdated industries, while higher income districts provide stronger programs. Since higher performing CTE institutions have limited enrollment, many other CTE and even traditional high schools are forced to compete with them by advocating funding to develop specialized career programs for their students. “Perkins V, reauthorized in July 2018 by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, provides \$1.3 billion in federal funds for CTE programs for youth and adults” (Malkus, 2019). Due to advancement of Perkins, not only would underperforming districts have the opportunity of strengthening their programs, but local low-income traditional high schools would be able to obtain funding to offer some sort of CTE curriculum. This upgrading version of Perkins could potentially normalize K-12 to offer career preparation and work-based learning as part of graduation requirements for every student regardless of institution. One of the major requirements for CTE institutions is that schools must provide

employability and technical skills related to a specific career pathway that is in demand. The curriculum would include the following: "...development of grades 10-14, integration of career work preparation, use of strong assessment after two years, and implementation of technical or community college credential or certification" (Passarella, 2018). Students would have the opportunity to receive support in continuing their education with their local higher education institutions after graduating high school as part of the curriculum. Many career pathway programs may require a certification to receive an entry level position, therefore, may have an early start to earn decent salaries and increase net worth in the future. Once they have working experience, they can build on credits that they have already earned by continuing their education so that they can move up in their positions. K-12 institutions would have to partner with economic development professionals and industry leaders to meet CTE career pathway requirements and adapt to constant changes due to the nature of the global economy. The issue that we need to examine is how students handle career pathways and work-based learning opportunities in conjunction with their traditional academic curriculum. In addition, how vocational education students would be able to handle advancement in career pathway courses along with academic courses. CTE students showed some ambition because Stone (2004) found that CTE students enrolled in more rigorous academic coursework and in more high-level math classes than did comparable groups of general education students (Malkus, 2019). If this study is accurate, then CTE should increase the possibility for disadvantaged students to enroll in challenging courses that will prepare them for higher paying careers. Unfortunately, disadvantaged students may have less access to career networks, which impact their ability to start careers at an early age compared to their counterparts, therefore, their net worth would be less in the long run. "According to Turner and Lapan's (2002) study, career

exploration activities, such as engaging in self-exploration, exploring career-specific information, and engaging in career planning, help students to consider careers that they may otherwise perceive as being out of reach to them” (Stipanovic & Woo, 2017). Since CTE institutions provide a work-based learning component, they would be able to connect disadvantaged students to career mentors and networks. Most importantly, career planning may allow these students to explore STEM as a possible option and discover their underlying potential. Since, the paper focuses on the STEM industry, CTE institutions and other K-12 with career pathways would have to tap into STEM-based professionals and businesses that are willing to work with High School students. Because STEM requires advancement in skills and demanding responsibilities, building employer partnerships may present some challenges. The STEM industry has been known to produce a high level of income due to education requirements of specialized and complex skills, therefore, closing that skill gap is critical.

Steps that NJ State Government took to Close that Gap

The New Jersey Department of Education houses the Office of Career Readiness, which oversees career technical-based programs in both types of institutions. County Workforce Development Boards, Chambers of Commerce, and elected officials meet to discuss how to effectively implement career-readiness programs based on federal, state, and local programs. Building Capacity for Career Pathway and New Jersey’s County Vocational School District Partnership funds have been some of the past examples that strengthen collaborations between CTE-based courses, higher education, and employers. “Both initiatives are very distinctive, since Partnership grants focus on CTE institutions and Career Pathway focuses on Comprehensive

High Schools” (2018). The goal was to modify the structure of vocational and several funded traditional high schools to provide CTE programs for students. Career Pathway initiatives would transition Comprehensive High School (CHS) curriculum beyond the classroom environment by allowing students to gain “hands-on” career training and network. At the same time, Partnership grants provide a pathway for Career Technical Education (CTE) students to prepare for Higher Education. In terms of CTE, “County leaders appoint the vocational education boards and they are closely tied to their counties’ elected political leadership” (Smarick 2017). Since each county official monitors local industry growth and workforce development programs, they serve as a liaison between political leaders, employers, and school administrators to support the growing needs of CTE. As a result of the Partnership grant, CTE institutes have the opportunity to strengthen their academic courses by expanding their collaboration with local colleges by offering dual enrollment. In contrast, the Career Pathway grant is allowing CHS to offer career-based programs and expand dual college enrollment in addition to academic requirements. The fact that CTE can only accept a certain number of students, CHS would be able to provide similar benefits as their counterpart.

This task may be challenging because each type of institution will have to create innovative programs, while maintaining their current mission. Governor Phil Murphy has awarded the PTECH (Pathway in Technology Early College High School) grant to High Schools in several urban districts that enrolls predominately underserved students. “NJ P-TECH provides access and opportunity for underrepresented students in New Jersey’s comprehensive high schools to an education in an in-demand STEM career pathway program? (2018). The question is what is the percentage of underserved students who were accepted to this program and what type of support they have to successfully complete

these programs. “P-TECH includes urban, rural and suburban schools and encompasses a range of STEM fields, including IT, advanced manufacturing, healthcare and finance” (2020).

Awarded districts would typically choose a specialization that they would offer to students.

“Awarded schools in cities, such as Burlington City, New Brunswick, and Paterson, will allow students to graduate with a high school diploma, Associate degrees in competitive STEM fields and participate in workplace experiences, within six years” (2018). Many of these predominantly minority districts experience issues with higher poverty rates, therefore, will benefit from these programs. These programs require eighth graders to apply for these programs and only a limited number of students get accepted to this program. The next cycle of recipients received this grant, therefore, will increase the percentage of underserved students to be introduced to STEM.

Why should Policy Leaders focus on STEM in CTE Institutions to Target Underrepresented Groups?

We need to examine why such underrepresentation occurs, which can play a role in the inequality of wealth and opportunities. “To increase participation of women and minorities in STEM education, researchers should examine the factors that affect their career decision-making and development before entering college” (Mau & Li, 2017). K-12 experience provides the foundation that allows students to recognize their academic strength, self-efficacy, and interest as early as elementary school. School administrators, teachers, and staff may impact decisions that students would make after High School graduation. Therefore, a system must be in place so that students can obtain qualified support from these key players. State legislation should require... counselors to work closely with school teachers and administrators in developing comprehensive

policies that encourage STEM career aspirations for traditionally underserved populations” (Mau & Li, 2017). School districts would have to depend heavily on unbiased and qualified key players so that students can increase their confidence level to enroll and potentially choose careers in this industry.

Since many underrepresented schools lack a strong model, this issue may contribute to the gap in higher level math and science courses, as well as, STEM careers. Research shows the enrollment of Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans is limited in mathematics and science courses in K–12 (Museus et al., 2011). In other words, underrepresented students are less likely to successfully complete higher level and AP Science and Math courses that prepare them for STEM careers. Each district would have to develop an analysis report of trends that impact enrollment of underrepresented students in AP Math and Science courses. Consequently, there is an overrepresentation of disadvantaged students required to start in lower level or remedial courses, which can further impact their long-term success. Those students are in danger of choosing easier courses that may align to careers that pay less salaries or even forgo postsecondary education.

“Researchers have found that racial and ethnic minority and socioeconomically disadvantaged students persist at lower rates in STEM fields than do their Caucasian and more affluent counterparts” (Stipanovic & Woo, 2017). In other words, disadvantaged students would more likely struggle to pass or give up on completing STEM courses due to its challenging nature. These students’ ability to become resilient in these courses is based on the type of encouragement and programs that are provided by key educational players.

However, if districts receive funding to develop a strong CTE curriculum with work based learning opportunities, this initiative will increase standards and expectations for these students. Principals, teachers, counselors, and supporting staff should receive culture and economic sensitivity training so that they can learn how to work with this population. Most importantly, increase economic, racial, and cultural representation of staff that can relate to these students.

Such representation may be able increase confidence level for students to challenge themselves with STEM curriculum and potential careers. Based on urban high school exit survey data, CTE POS students may be more likely to continue their education in the same program area, potentially reaping the benefits of beginning that preparation in high school (Passarella, 2018). When underrepresented students have an opportunity in successfully completing their STEM career pathway, they may prefer to build on that training to gain promotions or transition into similar opportunities. We should, also, examine representation between genders in terms of career pathway curriculum that led to certain career decisions.

Female enrollment is greatest in Education and Training, comprising 75.5% of this pathway's enrollment, followed by the Human Services (73.8% of enrollment), and Health Science (73.9% of enrollment) pathways. The Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (91.3%), Manufacturing (86.3%), and Architecture and Construction (85.1%) pathways enroll the largest percentage of males (Passarella, 2018).

This data shows that women would more likely prepare for service-based lower-paying jobs, whereas men would take on challenging STEM-based or higher paying industries. The NJ

assembly has introduced and passed a bill that will introduce women and young Minorities to STEM. Currently, the bill is being introduced to the State Senate and will hopefully get passed so that Governor Murphy can sign into law. Predominately Minority and low-income districts would require extra funding to utilize a strong CTE curriculum to rebuild so they can compete with their higher performing counterparts. Partnerships with industry leaders is critical in providing necessary resources, expertise, and career preparation for students. South Carolina's apprenticeship program is an example that "...provides financial incentives by using tax credits to entice public-private partnership" (Passarella, 2018). Therefore, New Jersey Legislation would have to include providing incentives so that CTE professionals and employers can expand their support to low-income and underrepresented districts. Promoting these concepts as part of the economic development master plan may increase such partnerships, since employers will financially benefit from growth by gaining access to a talented workforce.

Why Should NJ Policy Leaders consider CTE a Model for Economic Growth for Minority Communities?

We should examine why CTE is extremely important to prepare the next generation of talents in higher paying careers, especially STEM. Starting with younger groups possesses a long-term plan, since these youth will potentially make decisions during the next 30 years. Technology constantly innovates workplaces because employers are requiring workers to depend on online and innovative resources to enhance job performances. Medical professionals not only use computers to document reports, but biomedicine has been increasingly introduced to improve

and modernize medical treatment. Governor Murphy and other elected officials are taking steps so that New Jersey can practice 100 % clean energy by 2050. These transformations and State proposals have provided CTE institutions the opportunity to train the future workforce that will increase placement in these innovative opportunities. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act, included “Providing individuals with opportunities throughout their lifetimes to develop the knowledge and skills needed to keep the United States competitive” (2006).

The 21st century economy has pushed employers to upgrade the skills and job requirements of employees, therefore, impacts the quality of CTE curriculum. Therefore, policy leaders must work with local government and school districts to ensure that curriculum aligns with the needs of employers by building partnerships. In New Jersey, county commissioners and WIB are typically in charge of developing and managing policies in CTE institutions. “According to the 2004 National Assessment of Vocational Education, employment growth in occupations requiring a vocational associate degree is projected to be more than double overall employment growth through 2008” (2006). Sixteen years later, that trend will continue to trend as technology continues to advance and other employers may eventually require skills that are higher than associate degrees. Careers, such as higher-level healthcare, engineering, and other specialized professionals would always require at least a bachelors and higher degree. New courses in areas such as biotechnology, DNA forensics, robotics, turf management, engineering and aquaculture help expose students to career opportunities that did not even exist for previous generations (2004). State and county-wide Master plans have explained how STEM aligns with economic growth in the state, but must take into an account that preparation must start with the

middle and high school students. These opportunities will allow students to not only gain experience, but a perspective on how to make decisions that will contribute to economic growth. Here are some of the clues in the type of talent necessary to choose careers in the innovative, STEM industry. "...examining alternative energy sources, learning how to maintain vegetation in varied climates, growing cell tissue cultures and working with stem cells, maintaining water quality, designing computer programs and building robots" (2006). Underrepresented groups are less likely to work in STEM careers that would require them to participate in decision-making processes.

Conditions in energy sources, vegetation, stem cells tend to negatively impact underrepresented groups, therefore, to increase access to training and network will increase diversity in research and operation. Employers' contribution plays a role because they provide resources, expertise, and guidance on curriculum that will prepare students to qualify for entry level positions and eventually grow in the industry. "By working directly with business and industry, and offering students to complete secondary and postsecondary level in STEM high demand areas, CTE programs provide a benefit to students and their future employers" (2006). In other words, employer - CTE partnerships will allow them to develop certain proposals of offering a certain percentage of work-based opportunities with a goal of hiring these future talents after graduation.

Today, CTE is a major part of the solution to myriad national economic and workforce problems, such as high school dropout rates, a weakened economy, global competitiveness and massive layoffs (CTE 2016). If curriculum is effective, students would build enough networks to

obtain positions after graduation and adapt to the competitive nature of the global market. Therefore, students would waste less time on the “college experience” and more time on necessary courses that will help them move up positions and increase their contribution to the economy. Most importantly, would retain skilled workers to stay in New Jersey because they can afford higher cost of living and build opportunities for the next generation, which will attract talented transplants and revenue. The biopharmaceutical industry draws from a broad range of STEM degree fields that span all levels, from lab technicians to medical scientists and chemists, to mathematicians, statisticians, and industrial engineers (PhRMA, 2014). Some of the biggest issues plaguing minority communities are higher mortality rate, susceptibility to chronic illness, and gap in medical treatment. An increasingly diverse medical researcher, from different cultural and economic backgrounds would be able to utilize their skills to contribute to groundbreaking research that will improve quality of life for NJ residents. “U.S. biopharmaceutical sector supports a total of nearly 3.4 million jobs across the economy, and contributes \$789 billion in economic output when direct and indirect effects are considered” (PhRMA, 2014). Healthcare industry is a multi-million- or billion-dollar industry that will increase economic status for professionals who either come from low-income backgrounds or struggle to enter the field. “The Average wages for STEM fields are almost double overall averages—with the average annual wages for a STEM job at \$82,278 versus \$45,790 in 2012” (PhRMA, 2014). My calculation is that salaries in these careers have increased during the last 8 years that adjust with higher cost of living and constant modernization of this field.

“Fortune 1000 executives, nearly all (95 percent) are concerned that the U.S. is in danger of losing its global leadership position because of a shortage of STEM talent” (PhRMA, 2014).

Employers have expressed difficulties in recruiting talent in these positions, which may force them to seek human capital overseas. When there is such a significant percentage of underrepresented CTE districts, lack of preparation in K-12 will negatively impact availability of talent in leadership positions. Other countries may be outperforming the US when it comes to CTE and technological innovation. “According to the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST), the U.S. will need to produce one million additional STEM graduates over the next decade to maintain its position as the world’s leader in science and technology innovation” (PhRMA, 2014). Expanding Perkins’ grant and CTE curriculum can be a great start, however, funding must spread to other struggling districts to attempt to reach this goal. Career in architecture and engineering that can increase representation in urban/economic development projects that typically cause displacement of low-income residents. The great news is that employers are increasing their participation with CTE institutions so they can work with districts with curriculum development and work-based learning opportunities. Among the biopharmaceutical companies surveyed, \$100 million has been invested in STEM education programs and initiatives across the U.S. Support for STEM education programs also involves in-kind contributions—non-financial resources can include employee volunteers, equipment donation or use permission, and allowed use of facilities (PhRMA, 2014).

These types of support is extremely helpful for CTE in low-income districts that would need funding to attract employers to become partners, purchase necessary equipment, and organize any additional community-based programs . “In an advanced technology industry such as the biopharmaceutical sector, these resources are extremely valuable as the expertise of

scientists, as well as, expensive materials particularly in the K-12 levels” (PhRMA, 2014). Most importantly, professionals that come from underrepresented communities can be essential in improving confidence in students to challenge themselves in working towards these careers. Generational mentorship will greatly close some of that gap in skills and earning power for the next 30 years because you are rebuilding mindsets. “Based on American Solar Energy Society and Management Information Services, Inc., the renewable energy and energy efficiency industry could generate up to \$4.3 trillion in revenue and create more than 37 million jobs by the year 2030” (CTE 2016).

Governor Murphy has signed countless bills and executive orders to promote STEM industries. In addition, seeking to make New Jersey 100% clean energy by 2050, therefore, would be an opportunity for low income and predominantly Minority CTE institutions to incorporate in these curriculums. “Among underrepresented minorities, there have been steady gains in their share of science and engineering degrees over the last two decades with increasing degrees in psychology, social science, and computer science fields” (PhRMA, 2014). In the past Minorities and women would choose careers that generate lower income, such as careers in human or social services, education, and counseling. Now with state elected officials that are working to sponsor and pass bills that promote STEM to women and minorities, hopefully, representation will continue to increase.

If you ever examine any plans on the state and county level, elected officials are connecting CTE curriculum as a component to their Master Economic Development plan. Many industries and local universities have increased partnerships with CTE districts, particularly institutions with predominately underrepresented students so they can be introduced to higher education. NJIT, New Jersey’s “public STEM university,” is conducting nearly \$140 million for

medical research and deploying a China-wide system of ultra-high speed bullet trains (Twiste, 2017). Therefore, the university would have the means of exposing High School students to these types of research. NJIT has introduced 4,000 pre-college students each year – predominantly underrepresented females and minorities from the Northern NJ region (Twiste, 2017). Such a project may increase opportunities for underrepresented students to potentially enroll and successfully complete their education at this university. PSE recruited future pre-college level engineers in Salem and Gloucester while Lockheed Martin created a corporate model for how to work with higher education to create relevant courses (Twiste, 2017). Salem and Gloucester counties have a higher number of low- income, underrepresented populations, therefore, would benefit from this program that will increase their contribution to economic growth. New Jersey has identified the design, computing, engineering and life sciences clusters in its State Strategic Job Growth Plan, which aims to use technology and the sciences to improve quality of life and spur economic growth (Twiste, 2017). In addition, create state-wide organizations, such as NJ STEM and Innovative NJ that work with stakeholders to foster these partnerships by hosting quarterly meetings.

Discussion

Bottomline, state and county elected officials along with education and STEM professional stakeholders must align CTE curriculum with the needs to stimulate economic growth. Since CTE is the engine to produce a large amount of young talent, expanding STEM will possibly close some of the gap. Especially, when vocational institutions have transitioned from job-focused into career and education preparation models, this will be an opportunity to increase representation in the global economy. K-12 and CTE institutions must recognize that

underrepresented students have similar potential as their white and affluent counterpart, but must take steps to provide such encouragement. When CTE is innovative, students would more likely take their studies and responsibilities more seriously, especially with the increasing number of potential partners. Representation in CTE initiatives and employer partnerships play a critical role so that students can have confidence of following their footsteps. When economic development is part of the discussion, key players will increase their participation because their success is built on the economic status of states.

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The King of Isin Lied-The Sumerian King List as a Political Document and What It Says About Now

Christopher R. Binetti

Introduction to the Problem

Political manipulation of historical documents is not foreign to us modern people. However, it is not new either. In fact, the ancient Mesopotamians, on whose foundations much of modern Western Civilization is built, were not immune to the political manipulation of history.

This article is written for those not acquainted with ancient Mesopotamian history but who are interest in the study of history and politics. The concept of political manipulation of history is an important part of any complete diet of history and politics. It is important to understand that manipulation exists and how it exists. It is also important to understand that there are patterns within the political manipulation of history, particularly relevant in culturally and geographically similar areas.

For example, Mesopotamia, the region today known as Iraq, eastern Syria and a small part of Turkey, reveals historical patterns of manipulation that are characteristic, though not necessarily specific to that region³. The ancient Sumerian King List and the somewhat-related Assyrian King List show tendencies not dissimilar to today's modern Assyrian movement, which itself uses the manipulation of history for political purposes. By analyzing and assessing these

³ Charpin, Dominique, "The History of Ancient Mesopotamia: Overview", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 807-830 and Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East: ca 3000-323, Second Edition*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, in its entirety.

ancient and modern forms of the political manipulation of history, we can understand both the nature of such a phenomenon and how it has worked and continues to work within the important context of Mesopotamia⁴.

One key point here is the manipulation of history implies a real history that can either be fairly interpreted or manipulated. There is more or less, an objective and empirically knowable history that we either study honestly or manipulate. History, as far as this article and author are concerned, is thus not merely a social construct and thus identities are not simply wholly socially constructed but can be evaluated as based on reality or as artificial manipulations of fact.

Periodization and Context

Before we get to the Sumerian and Assyrian King Lists, the two core documents on which so much of ancient Mesopotamian history is based, which will show the connection between ancient and modern historical-political manipulations in Mesopotamia, it is best to explain the periodization and terminology used in this paper⁵. The highly-specialized scholars of the ancient Near East prefer to use archaeologically-derived terminology to further periodize this epoch in easier-to-digest periods. The ancient Near East as an epoch is divided primarily into two- the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Within the Bronze Age, the Early, Middle, and Late

⁴ Marc Van de Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East: ca 3000-323, Second Edition*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, in its entirety.

⁵ Glassner, Jean-Jacques, *Mesopotamian Chronicles, Writings From the Ancient World Series*, ed. by Benjamin R. Foster. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004, originally in French published by Les Belles Lettres in 1993 in Paris, 117-125 and 136-143.

Bronze Age periods are used frequently, also derived from archaeological parlance. The further, more specific periods vary from age to age and area to area⁶.

Within ancient Mesopotamia, the Early Bronze Age is divided historically into the Early Dynastic Period, the Akkadian Period, the Gutian Period, and the Ur III Period. The Early Dynastic Period is the first historical period in the history of Mesopotamia and covers a lot of ground. The Early Bronze Age begins at the beginning of ancient history, where ancient history and prehistoric archaeology meet and covers the entire Third Millennium BC. The Early Dynastic Period's end date is controversial in the discipline, but for our purposes, it ended around 2330 BC⁷.

The Early Dynastic Period is the main subject of the Sumerian King List, but it was not written then. It was actually written in the Middle Bronze Age. The Early Dynastic Period was ended by the conquest of Sumer, the first civilization in Mesopotamia by a Semitic-speaking group now known as the Akkadians, led by Sargon of Akkad. The Akkadian Period was the first sustained empire in Mesopotamia, but it did not last long. The Akkadians were defeated by the Gutians, a “barbarian” group from the east, probably Iran⁸. The Gutians were gradually defeated by various group of Sumerians, who now began the Sumerian Renaissance, which is most encapsulated in the Ur III period⁹.

⁶ Niels Peter Lemche. “The History of Ancient Syria and Palestine: An Overview”, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 1,195-1,218.

⁷ *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*, 2019. Accessed at <https://cdli.ucla.edu> on 1/21/19.

⁸ Sabina Franke, “Kings of Akkad: Sargon and Naram-Sin”, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 831-842.

⁹ Dominique Charpin, “The History of Ancient Mesopotamia: Overview”, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 807-830.

Ur III was the Third Dynasty of the city of Ur; thus, the name and it was the second big empire in Mesopotamia. It also was the last significant Sumerian-speaking culture or empire. It also signaled the end of the Early Bronze Age with its fall around 2004 BC¹⁰. The Middle Bronze Age, the time in which the Sumerian King List was written, was a complicated period of time¹¹.

Introduction to the Interconnected Cases of the Sumerian King List

The Sumerian King List is one of the foundational documents of the study of Mesopotamian civilizations. It is unusual in being cobbled together from a variety of different sources, that most likely derive from a single, original source. It is essentially a single, composite document. Its first version came down to us very incomplete. It is mostly just the preamble of the Sumerian King List, dealing with the antediluvian kings. This earliest fragment, WB 62, is from c. 2000 at the earliest date¹²¹³.

Thus, it was not a genuinely Sumerian document, as Sumerian was in true decline by this time. By the time of the other, later versions of the Sumerian King List, there were few if any Sumerian-speakers left. Instead, Akkadian-speakers were mostly opposed by Amorite-speakers,

¹⁰ Jacob Klein, "Shulgi of Ur: King of a Neo-Sumerian Empire, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 843-858 and

¹¹ Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, 225-240.

¹² Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*. Accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19

¹³ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19.

Akkadian-speaking writers were more concerned in justifying themselves and stave off an Amorite cultural and political victory.

The Sumerian King List is perhaps misnamed, as it has more to do with the Akkadians than the Sumerians themselves. The use of Sumerian by Sumerian-speakers is different than its use by Akkadian-speakers. The ethnic identity and labels of Sumerians versus Akkadians have long been in dispute in the discipline of ancient history, but the different significances of the use of language by native speakers versus as a liturgical or literary language is undisputable.

This paper looks at how the Sumerian King List was created and used as a political document, predominantly, if not entirely Akkadians to justify the defeat of Sumerians in their own language. The Akkadians in essence culturally appropriated the Sumerians in order to justify or obfuscate their actions, which led to the decline of Sumerians as a distinct group. I will here argue that Sumerians were a distinct ethnic group and never viewed themselves or were viewed as interchangeable with Akkadians until the Akkadians' cultural and political victory over them.

There are two major cases that illustrate the political nature of the Sumerian King List. First, is the essential whitewashing, or Akkadian-washing, of history to make it look as if Semitic-speakers, the precursors to the Akkadians, were always an essential part of Sumer, when the real evidence for this is too minimal to substantiate it. The chief evidence for Semitic people being essential to Sumer from the earliest historical period is centered around Kish. However, evidence from Kish itself does not, despite the common perception, justify such a conclusion. In fact, absent the Sumerian King List's Kish sections, there is nothing to support the idea that Kish was a Semitic-majority city early on. Thus, the Kish case is important because it shows how the

incorrect idea of Semites being largely responsible for the success of Sumerian civilization was purposefully inculcated in the Sumerian King List¹⁴.

The second major case is in a sense the reverse of the first one. Rather than the addition of false information, the second case involves the intentional omission of relevant information. This is the Lagash case. Why was Lagash, a very significant Sumerian city-state excluded from all of the versions of the Sumerian King List? Lagash was a typical Sumerian city-state and one of the most prominent of them, both before and after the Akkadian Empire Period. If the Sumerian King List were anything except for a political document, Lagash would be included. It was not simply forgotten, because other city-states and peoples no longer extant by the time of the later versions, the late 19th-century and even later, were not excluded from the list¹⁵.

The inclusion or exclusion of city-states and peoples in the Sumerian King List, careful, selective, and deliberate. There was intent, political intent involved. This paper will examine what was included and the reasons for this. Then the exclusion of Lagash will be analyzed. We will look at why it was excluded.

The Kish and Lagash cases are the two best case studies in the political nature of the Sumerian King List and its intent to whitewash history in an Akkadian direction. My methodology for this paper is obviously qualitative historical-comparative case study. I am not studying the Sumerian King List simply for the benefit of ancient history scholars. I believe it to be relevant to today. The selective and political use of history is not new and the Sumerian King

¹⁴ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19.

¹⁵ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Rulers of Lagash", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr212.htm> on 1/21/19.

List shows that, but it has never really gone away. It is still used today by many interest groups, elites and others included, and even governments.

I will proceed by looking at my two case studies then make some general conclusions about the Sumerian King List. Next, I will talk about the use of history for political purposes in one modern case also relevant to Mesopotamia- the use of Assyrian identity by modern Aramaic-speakers. This use is very different from that of the Akkadians' appropriation of Sumerian culture, history, and language, but it is both important in today's middle eastern politics and disturbing. Lastly, this paper will conclude by dealing with the moral problem of the phenomenon of cultural manipulation a phenomenon that underlies both the Sumerian King List cases and the modern Assyrian-Aramaean case¹⁶.

The Case of Kish

Kish was a major Sumerian city-state. The term king of Kish seems to have meant the strongest king of Sumer, if not the hegemon of the land. Much of this ideology is inferred from the Sumerian King List, however, and thus establishing that the king of Kish was an important institution of this sort independently of the Sumerian King List is important. The king of Kish does not appear to have been an actual hegemon of the land, nor did the Sumerians themselves

¹⁶ Sabina Franke, "Kings of Akkad: Sargon and Naram-Sin", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 831-842; Lipinski, Edward. "The Bilingual Inscription from Tell Fekherye" in *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics, Volume 2*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1994:19-81, particularly 19-21; and The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature. "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19.

necessarily view the king of Kish as a title for the strongest king of Sumer, unlike what is implied by the text of the Sumerian King List.

However, it does appear that the tradition preserved in the Sumerian King List, unlikely much of the ideology in the work, is not an intentional political manipulation, but instead an honest reflection of an earlier, genuine tradition. This genuine tradition about the supremacy or at least strength of Kish almost certainly reflects Kish's early importance as the strongest city-state in historical Sumer. Enmebaragesi is the first attested Sumerian ruler in history and his existence in both archaeological evidence and in the Sumerian King list confirm his actual and perceived importance. Kish appears to have been important from the earliest historical times and the while the king of Kish was not merely a title for the strongest ruler in Sumer, it does show that the kings of Kish were viewed as a model of Sumerian kingship from the earliest contemporaries of Kish down to the Isin period, when most of the Sumerian King List was composed¹⁷.

In addition, the title of King of Kish is likely have added by non-Kishites like Mesannepada of Ur because they conquered Kish, even if temporarily. Mesannepada seems to have been an early aspiring conqueror and he is likely to have at least succeeded in conquering Kish. Since Kish was a prestigious and once-powerful city-state, adding the title of a city that he had conquered makes sense. Also, locals often appreciate when a conqueror takes the autonomy and identity of their state seriously enough to add their name to his or her title.

¹⁷ Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, 114-121, 130-143, and 146-155; The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature. "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19; Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC). *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, Accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19; and *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*, 2019, accessed at <https://cdli.ucla.edu> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

Thus, the kings of Kish were actual kings of Kish, but could be foreigners (non-Kishites who conquered it). Very few kings of Kish, native or otherwise, are historically attested outside of myths, legends and the Sumerian King List itself. However, the few kings of Kish that are independently attested are important and revealing of the political and cultural bias of the Sumerian King List. Only seven royal inscriptions from Kish have been recovered so far. Only four different kings of Kish have been independently attested.

Of these, two are no more than names in history. Uhub has one royal inscription mentioning him. His name is Sumerian, as far as anyone can tell. Lugal-namnir-sum, or Lugal-namnir-shuma is another unknown but attested king. His name in fact is also Sumerian. Despite the last part of his name, the word shuma, appearing Akkadian, the Sumerian language dictionary shows numerous translations of that word in good Sumerian, showing a Sumerian etymology. Both kings are evidence of the Sumerian nature of Kish in the Early dynastic Period, as they had Sumerian names and wrote in Sumerian¹⁸.

Of the only two other attested Kings of Kish that were actually from Kish, one of them was not included in the Sumerian King List anymore than these two other, probably forgettable kings. His name was Mesilim. He wrote, or more likely had written for him, three inscriptions. To political scientists and historians of even antiquity of later years, this does not seem like a lot of evidence for a ruler. However, in Third Millennium and especially Early Dynastic terms, this is huge, as it is nearly half (three of seven) of the corpus of historically-attested royal inscriptions from native Kings of Kish.

¹⁸ Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, Accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

In Mesilim's inscriptions, we get actual historically-relevant data other than his name and that he was king of Kish. All three inscriptions are both useful and different from each other. Only one appears to be for public consumption in Kish itself, which is interesting. Here, Mesilim dedicates the inscription to Ninhursag, a goddess with a significant following in Kish. The other two inscriptions are even more interesting. They both seem to be copies of originals placed in other cities, and they both name the rulers of other Sumerian city-states. Lugal-shag-engur (could be anglicized as Lugal-sag-engur) of Lagash is mentioned as an ensi, which in this period meant an independent ruler. However, this ensi appears to have been in subordinate in power to the King of Kish if not an out-and-out vassal. Mesilim is here shown to be dedicating a mace, a sacred weapon, for Ningirsu in Ningirsu's home city-state of Lagash. Mesilim goes further and claims to have built the local temple in Lagash¹⁹.

This shows that the king of Kish had a hegemonic position though not necessarily as political overlord, but that this title was not given to just any traditional hegemon, but instead was originally established because the kings of Kish were the first one to establish this inter-state sort of hegemonic representation. Mesilim does not appear to be conqueror or overlord but more of a friendly patron here. We know from other evidence that Lagash on at least one other time requested the help and mediation of a later king, Mesannepada, to settle the long-running dispute between Lagash and its arch-rival city-state, Umma. We will talk about Mesannepada in his own right soon. However, for now, what it is important to show is that Mesilim was a powerful king of Kish.

¹⁹ Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

The third inscription of King Mesilim's shows a similar action taken in Adab. The ensi of Adab, Nin-kisale-si, is mentioned in connection with a *burgi*-ritual. This *burgi* ritual appears to have been a ritual for the benefit of the priests of the temple and the city of Adab, rather than associated with an particular deity. It seems logical that the purpose of the ritual to demonstrate the bond between the more powerful city of Kish and the less powerful city of Adab, but it does not appear to be an overlord-vassal relationship per se. This seems to have been amicable and of an international relationship rather than the domestic politics relationship of predominant and subservient powers within one state system. An interesting possibility is that Nin-kisale-si might have been female, but it is hard to know as Nin in divine names can be either gender, though *nin* when applied to humans tended to be female. Speculation about female queens will be discussed where relevant below. It is not likely that Nin-kisale-si was female, but it is an intriguing thought²⁰.

What all of three of these inscriptions show that Mesilim is a very important person, both in his time and for historical-comparative political purposes. However, he is not mentioned in the Sumerian King List. On the other hand, unattested kings are included in the list. The inclusion of unverified and I argue, fictional kings (although some of the unverified kings were probably real) over the inclusion of a real and powerful king implies the question: Why would such a qualified king not make the Sumerian King List?

His exclusion cannot be justified on the notion that his information was simply lost. Enmebaragesi, the only king to be cross-referenced by independent historical attestation and the Sumerian King List, was even older than him and his information was not lost. Enmebaragesi

²⁰ Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

only had two inscriptions, neither of which provide more than his name and position, which seems typical before around the time of Mesilim. If anything, Mesilim is an even more important figure than Enmebaragesi, other than the fact that Enmebaragesi is the first historically-verifiable ruler in all of Mesopotamian history and one of the first few verifiable rulers in all of human history. Mesilim's exclusion is puzzling. Enmebaragesi got into the mythology and legendary history of the Sumerians. Mesilim did not. Enmebaragesi son Aga of Kish is famous for having been defeated the extremely famous legendary king Gilgamesh of Uruk, who is not independently attested but is largely believed to have been historical. I too think that Gilgamesh, a very Sumerian king, was real, as was Aga, because of the close association with the real king Enmebaragesi. However, why did Enmebaragesi successfully pass into legend and mythology and not Mesilim?

Something about Enmebaragesi made him non-excludable by the Akkadian-language writers of the Sumerian King List, while Mesilim was excluded because he was excludable. The earliest written stories about Gilgamesh seem to have been written down around the time of the earliest Sumerian King List, so what motivating did this same class of Akkadian-speaking scribes have to include Gilgamesh's Sumerian-language associates while excluding Mesilim? The answer is because Gilgamesh was already widely-known and in fact already attested in at least one inscription²¹.

Utu-hegal was the man who first reclaimed the Sumerian world for the Sumerians after the fall of the Akkadian Empire. He did this by driving out was the Gutians. He brought back

²¹ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19 and Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

Sumerian self-rule, although he ultimately could not stop the decline the Sumerian people. He was a follower of Gilgamesh's and even deified him. He dedicated his efforts to this hero-king. The cat was thus out of the bag. Gilgamesh was already known. What was the point of trying to minimize a well-known Sumerian king by ignoring his associates? So, Aga could not be excluded from the list, as Gilgamesh and Aga were linked in oral tradition most likely even at this time. Excluding Enmebaragesi did not make sense either. So, both were included on the Sumerian King List. Enmebaragesi was included ultimately because of the good luck of being associated with the greatest Sumerian hero-king of all time, albeit two degrees removed from him. Utu-hengal and the Ur III dynasty that replaced him revered Gilgamesh and this preserved Enmebaragesi, alone among the attested kings of Kish, from the bias of the Akkadian-speaking scribes²².

However, there is another reason why the scribes themselves would want to include Enmebaragesi and Aga of Kish in the Sumerian King List. The major theme of the Sumerian King List is that all of Sumerian civilization is a cycle, a circle you will, that repeats itself constantly. One dynasty holds kingship, rise to glory, gets a lot of the work of civilization done, and then declines and falls at the hand of another dynasty. This cyclical behavior however is not exactly what happened in history, as different dynasties battled for supremacy in Sumer at the

²² Roux, Georges, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, 114-121; The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19. The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19; and Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC). *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

same time. However, in many cases, it is possible that the Sumerian King list is properly recording to some degree the most prevalent dynasties in each period.

Thus, when the Sumerian King List mentions Kish's fall to the dynasty of Uruk, it may be recalling a real struggle for supremacy, that eventually led to the fall of Kish to Uruk, although it is likely that Kish retained its independence but lost its power, at least for a while. Mesilim is not recorded in the Sumerian King List, but he probably features between the First and Second dynasties. He was excluded despite being at least a contender for the supremacy of Sumer, if not the kind of hegemon that Enmebaragesi seems to have been. So, even though the Sumerian King List does indeed appear to have some remnants of a legitimate historical function of recording the strongest dynasty at each time, it still once again reveals its essential nature as a political document by selectively including and excluding sub-sets of the relevant set of dynastic contenders. So, it is very possible that Aga and Gilgamesh really did duel for the supremacy in Sumer and that Gilgamesh really won. This would have happened around 2700 BC, at the dawn of the conflict between various city-states for such a supremacy. This explains why the Sumerian King List declares this transition of power from Kish to Uruk as the first transition of power in the historical (post-diluvian) period.

On the other hand, the transition of power, while real, was also more powerful to the pseudo-historians of the Sumerian King List for its symbolism. Gilgamesh was an icon for them, the Akkadian-speakers of the Isin dynasty and the time immediately before it. To exclude Gilgamesh was impossible. So, the First Dynasty of Uruk needed to be included. Also, the kings of Kish were too well known to excise entirely from history. Instead, the last two rulers of the First Dynasty of Kish in the Sumerian King List seem to have not been the last two members of the actual First Dynasty of Kish but the last two rulers of the First Dynasty of Kish that the

Akkadian-speaking scribes cared about. Enmebaragesi and Aga were engaged in a real struggle for supremacy with Gilgamesh and his predecessors in the First dynasty of Uruk, but they represented a transition of power between one city-state's dominance to another one²³.

That this emphasis of transitions of power is significant is hard to deny. The transitions of power are the glue that holds the whole Sumerian King List together. One dynasty from one city-state defeats and replaces another. The defeat and replace of one dynasty and city-state by another is the essential theme of the narrative structure of the entire work. It is of utter importance to the scribes that all of life is circular and cyclical. Obviously, the cyclical nature of Mesopotamian life was not something invented by them. Mesopotamians loved precedent, consistency, and cycles. However, the cyclical nature of life was even more important to them.

This is because the Akkadian-speaking scribes were self-consciously replacing Sumerians in their own language. They needed to justify this replacement both to themselves and to the few remaining Sumerian-speakers who remained. The Akkadians culturally appropriated the Sumerians and they destroyed them as a distinct entity, but they seem to have also profoundly respected the Sumerians. They sought to perpetuate the Sumerian language when they did not have to do so. Was this out of guilt? Probably, to an extent, but mostly from a feeling that they really were genuine heirs to Sumerian culture, language and history. They

²³ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19; Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC). *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19; Glassner, Jean-Jacques. *Mesopotamian Chronicles, Writings From the Ancient World Series*, ed. by Benjamin R. Foster. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004, originally in French published by Les Belles Lettres in 1993 in Paris, in its entirety, but specifically 95-100 and 117-125; and Roux, Georges, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, 179-184.

wanted to justify it both because such a justification was not obvious, but also because they thought that it could be justified.

These scribes were rewriting history in part, but they were not radically transforming it, at least not in their own eyes, but simply whitewashing it, making it more convenient. Thus, they emphasized transitions, to show that transitions from one dynasty or city-state, each of which regarded themselves as distinct from one another, were a natural part of Mesopotamian life. It seems that this cyclical tradition was based in a real history of transitions, so it was not made up out of whole cloth. However, the cyclical, even circular nature of this process was emphasized well out of proportion to its historical roots. Thus, the Kish-Uruk conflict was blown out of proportion into literally an epic struggle, but it was not made up out of whole cloth.

The emphasis on transitions thus meant that it was in the best interest of the scribes to include Enmebaragesi and Aga, thus preserving Enmebaragesi name when all other historically-attested kings were not preserved the Sumerian King List. Enmebaragesi's unique preservation thus shows the innately political nature of the Sumerian King List, while also showing that it has some historical value as well. It also shows why Mesilim, arguably even more powerful and important than Enmebaragesi was excluded from the list, he did not serve the purpose of showing transitions of power and culture. He did not lead to major historical transition, but seems to have only briefly been supreme, important for historians and political scientists, but not for the project of the scribes of the Sumerian King List. So, Mesilim was excluded but Enmebaragesi was included. Enmebaragesi was also helped by the fact that unlike Mesilim, he was associated with a figure who simply could not be excluded, Gilgamesh²⁴.

²⁴ The above section uses the following references: The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at

So, of the four attested kings of Kish actually natively from Kish, only one made it into the Sumerian King List. However, there were other kings of Kish. These do not appear to have been just metaphorically using the title as some have stipulated, but to have actually ruled at Kish, or at least over Kish. Mesannepada, mentioned above, is one clear example of this. Mesannepada seems to have been actual king of Kish through conquest.

Mesannepada was not being metaphorical when he became king of Ur and Kish but included the people of Kish whom he conquered. Mesannepada was now the supreme ruler in reality and while he understood the power of prestige, Mesannepada was including the kingship of Kish not to prove this supremacy but in order to include the people in his new personal union, his conjoined state. He did not merely take the title, but dedicated an entire inscription, one of only four found written by or for him, to his role as King of Kish. Also, his son, Aya-anne-pada dedicated an inscription Ninhursag, probably in connection to Kish. However, he was not the son of Mesannepada mentioned in the Sumerian King List. He was unlikely to still have ruled over Kish but could have had a strong relationship with instead. Perhaps he was in conflict with Mesilim, often confused by scholars with his own father, Mesannepada, or perhaps he simply preferred peaceful relations to conquest. However, Aya-anne-pada, does seem to have had some connection with Kish through Ninhursag.

There is only one king other than Mesannepada from the First Dynasty of Ur attested in contemporaneous documents, one inscription to be exact. Elulu, who seems have to conquered Eridu is named in one of his own inscriptions, found at Eridu. He was likely included for being a

<http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19; Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*. Accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19; and *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*, 2019. Accessed at <https://cdli.ucla.edu> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

conqueror. A more important king from the internal history of Ur, Meskalamdug, father of Mesannepada, attested in both his own inscriptions and one of his son's, seems to have been the true founder of the power of Ur I. However, he is not referred to in the Sumerian King List. He seems to have been the earliest truly powerful king of Ur, and the possibly the first-named or first-attested king of Ur²⁵.

This returns the questions of Kish and its kings. The evidence for a high amount of Semitic-speakers early on in Kish, as far as this author can tell, is based upon Ignace Gelb's finding at Kish. The *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative*, the gold standard for referencing cuneiform inscriptions and finding transliterations and translations for them, has no transliteration or translation for Gelb's alleged Early Akkadian inscriptions from Kish. Gelb's purported evidence of early Akkadian-language documents at Kish have never been transliterated or translated to the best of this author's knowledge²⁶.

If one goes to the authoritative CDLI database, you will find the documents found by Gelb, but they are not translated or transliterated unlike the rest of Gelb's documents, such as later Akkadian-language documents and Sumerian-language documents at the same time. In other words, he held himself to a high standard of showing his work in all his work, except when it came to this sub-group of alleged early Akkadian-language documents at Kish.

²⁵ Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC). *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*. Accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

²⁶ *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*, 2019, Accessed at <https://cdli.ucla.edu> on 1/21/19.

The important point here is that modern archaeologists and ancient historians have motives to reflect history in a certain light, a motive that the ancient authors of the Sumerian King List would fully understand. However, the ancient authors' motive were both deeply political and led them to manipulate King List in significant ways. The rulers of Kish who are listed were a mixture of real who are not independently attested, and fake rulers interpolated into the list by the authors. The more famous and important group of Semitic names associated with Kish are the kings in the first part of the First Dynasty of Kish section.

These kings were the first postdiluvian kings cited, but only Etana and the kings after him are Sumerian. Etana is not independently attested but is a legendary figure in a variety of myths. He certainly not invented by these scribes and is likely at least based on a real king. Etana is often viewed as the first real king on the Sumerian King List and I agree with that assessment. The kings between him and Enmebaragesi may be real but are unattested but Etana is likely real. It matters that the first real postdiluvian king is in fact Sumerian.

Of the many kings in the First Dynasty of Kish section before Etana all are Akkadian and all have fanciful names, including animal-names. These names are clearly fanciful, as animal names are not otherwise attested for real kings in Mesopotamia in the King List or otherwise. One non-animal name, Kulassina-bel, is not a personal name, meaning "all of these were king". Zuqaqip's name means scorpion. These were not real kings and were clearly interpolated for political effect by the scribes.

The case of Kish is perhaps the best evidence of the political nature of the Sumerian King List. The city-state of Kish is often cited as evidence of the general theory that the Semites that became known as the Akkadians were a major part or even coequal in the creation of the Sumerian culture. However, the so-called evidence falls apart. The early part of the King List

with Semitic Kings has no legitimacy whatsoever and we can through it out. We do not have strong evidence at Ur of an immigrant community of Kish. Thus, the evidence for significant Semitic influence in Kish is reliant on the legend of Sargon, which connects Ur-Zababa late in Early Dynastic Kish to both Kug-Bau, who was real but later worshipped as a goddess, and Sargon who was real. Ur-Zababa is assumed to have been an Akkadian from Kish but his name is Sumerian. Also, Kug-Bau was Sumerian. His alleged father Puzur-Suen, is has a Semitic name, but there is no evidence of him outside of the Sumerian King List.

Puzur-Suen, son of Kug-Bau as a missing link between Kug-Bau and Ur-Zababa is important to the political narrative that Sargon, the great Akkadian and the person most responsible for the decline of Sumerian culture and language at the expense of the Akkadians, was a legitimate ruler (Sargon is Sharrukin in Akkadian and literally means legitimate king). Ur-Zababa is attested by both the Sumerian King List and the legend of Sargon, neither of which alone are credible but together seem to be credible enough that the present author accepts Ur-Zababa as real. However, Ur-Zababa, with his name based upon that of a Sumerian god, was clearly a Sumerian king. Some it was necessary to interpolate an Akkadian between the two Sumerians, Kug-Bau and Ur-Zababa. So, the Akkadian authors made up this particular Puzur-Suen. Just as the Sumerian King List added a Mes-ki-anna-pada, it needed a Puzur-Suen. There were Puzur-Suens in the Akkadian Period and afterwards, such as in the period around the fall of Ur III, when the King List was written. It was simple for Akkadians to convince fellow Akkadians that a familiar name was used earlier²⁷.

²⁷This section uses the following references: The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19; Sabina Franke, "Kings of Akkad: Sargon and Naram-Sin", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 831-842, particularly 836.

In sum, there is no evidence for Semitic kings or even a widespread elite presence at Kish or other sites, such as Ur, in the core of Mesopotamia. However, the evidence is strong for significant non-elite Semitic presence at Kish if not at Ur. The exact ethnic contours are unknown, but Mari was Semitic from an early period. Assyria is often viewed as Semitic from the beginning, but the Assyrian King List has a lot of its own problems that reinforce the idea that king lists, at least in Mesopotamia, were very political. Archaeologists and ancient historians have also been active in trying to shape the narrative here²⁸.

The Amorite kings in the list were not native Assyrian kings. They were Shamshi-Adad, his family and their ancestors. The later Assyrians were embarrassed by the conquest so they legitimated in order to create an artificial continuity between the early Assyrian rulers and themselves. Akkad seems to have established the first governors in Ashur, although there is some evidence of a pre-Semitic, perhaps Hurrian population before the arrival of the Akkadians and even afterwards. The first independent rulers did not occur until around 2000 BC with the fall of Ur III²⁹. Mesopotamia as we normally think of it came to Assur and established the first governors. Later native Akkadian vice-regents, with perhaps some Hurrian rulers reigned before kingship properly was established by Shamshi-Adad and his dynasty³⁰. Later Akkadian-speaking

²⁸ Eckart Frahm, "The List of Assyrian Kings", in *A Companion to Assyria*, ed. by Eckart Frahm, pages 613-616. John Wiley & Sons Ltd: Hoboken, NJ, 2017.

²⁹ Klaas R. Veenhof. "Kanesh: an Assyrian Colony in Anatolia", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 859-872.

³⁰ Lewy, Hildegard, "Assyria c. 2600-1816 BC" in *The Cambridge Ancient History Third Edition, Volume I, Part 2: Early History of the Middle East*, 1971: 729-770.

Assyrians had to thus manipulate the data to get a narrative establishing a narrative, more to their liking³¹.

Thus, the Kish case is not unique. The Sumerian King List itself is not unique. The Assyrian King List was clearly a political document too. What this document also shows is that Akkadians were colonists (culturally if not physically), with some individuals and even families at Kish, but not in the north or south of Mesopotamia in droves. Eventually, the area around Kish became the site of significant Semitic/ Akkadian population, but this must have been gradual migration not one large mass migration.

Thus, Kish was not a Semitic city early on or even up to the time of Akkad, but there was a community of Semites there. In other words, the kind of community often assumed to be at Ur was actually at Kish. The Semites of the East Semitic group, the Akkadians and Elbaites were ironically from the West, though distinct from the West Semitic-speaking Amorites³².

The Case of Lagash

The political nature of the Sumerian King List is not merely revealed by the case of Kish, which is one of interpolation, false evidence added to the King List. The case of Lagash is the opposite case, in which real evidence is erased from history. We saw some of this is the case of

³¹ Pierre Villard, "Shamshi-Adad and Sons: The Rise and Fall of an Upper Mesopotamian Empire", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 873-884.

³² Robert M. Whitting, "Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 1,231-1,242.

Kish, but not to the extent that the Lagash case reveals. An entire city-state was “disappeared” from the Sumerian King List³³.

There is plenty of evidence that the writers of the Sumerian King List knew that Lagash existed. They knew about the existence of Eridu, a city that had vanished before the time of the writing of the King List. However, it was included in the antediluvian portion of the King List. Other cities that could have easily been forgotten, like Shuruppak, were preserved in the King List and other traditions. Umma, Adab, and other second-tier Sumerian cities were included in the King List.

However, Lagash was not included at all. It was an immensely powerful and important city, both before and after the Akkadian conquest. Lagash had a series of strong rulers, as noted by Lagash’s own King List. The Lagash King List only lists Lagash’s own kings. It seems to be older than the Sumerian King List but is often viewed as an alternative to supplement to it. It is chronologically possible that the reverse is true, that Lagash’s king list came first and that the Sumerian King List was written in response to it.

Why was Lagash excluded from the Sumerian King List? Was it strictly for politico-cultural gain like in the Kish case or was it something different? It appears to be a little bit of both. The writers of the Sumerian King List had a grudge that they had some reason to feel against the Lagashites.

The Lagash King List was written by real Sumerians in Sumerian, not Akkadian-speaking cultural appropriators. It was written in a politically aware time, however, because it

³³ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, “Sumerian King List”, *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19.

references Gudea, the last major independent ruler of Lagash. Lagash was conquered by Akkadians and subjected to the same forces that threatened to and eventually did defeat native Sumerian culture. However, it got free. The Gutians, described as the archetypal barbarians by the ancient Mesopotamians regardless of affiliation or ethnicity, defeated the Akkadians and temporarily gained control or at least suzerainty over most of Sumer³⁴.

However, the Gutians seem to never have gained control over Lagash. Why would the Gutians not take over Lagash? Did they give them a pass when the rest of Sumer was not so lucky? It seems that the Gutians never tried to exercise control or suzerainty over Lagash. Eventually the Lagashites fought the Gutians, but it was Uruk and later the dynasty and state known as Ur III that defeated them decisively.

It seems clear that Lagash, on the eastern side of Sumer when the Gutians almost certainly came from the east, probably Iran, could easily have fallen to the Gutians. The Gutians could have captured Lagash at any point early on but did not so. They conquered harder to defeat areas, such as Akkad itself, but left Lagash alone. Clearly, the Gutians could have taken it and chose not to do so. At least initially, the Lagashites and Gutians were not enemies.

In fact, the Gutians were most likely helped by the Lagashites in their invasion. Gudea of Lagash, a ruler later on in Lagash's history was not connected to the Gutians at all despite the superficially-sounding similarity between his name and theirs. However, earlier rulers carved out a niche for themselves as independent rulers at a time when Gutians subjected other cities and setup governors for them much like the Akkadians did. The Gutians were not particularly powerful at first. Instead, they needed help to win and found a willing partner in Lagash.

³⁴ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Rulers of Lagash", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr212.htm> on 1/21/19.

Sumerians that resented the Akkadians' actions, which were harsh and hurt Sumerian culture for all time, the Lagashites preferred the more tolerant Gutians at first.

Of course, they eventually fought the Gutians, but alliances of convenience often fall apart. The idea that locals would turn on the ruler and align with foreign, so-called barbarian invaders only seems far-fetched. It is documented as having happened in the fall of Ur III, which was the powerful empire after the Akkadians and Gutians³⁵.

The Sumerians of Lagash were independent for generations, but they fell to other Sumerians, most likely Ur III. Utu-hegal of Uruk ruled most of Sumer, but not necessarily Lagash and defeated the Gutians overall. The Ur III regime defeated the Uruk and remaining Gutians. Ur III established a centralized system of government even more extensive and at times as oppressive as the Akkadians. They tried to restore Sumerian culture, but they probably hurt it in the wrong run. They fought against Sumerian independentists³⁶.

The Sumerians of Ur III had to deal with the immigration of the Amorites, a major revolt of the Elamites, and Sumerian and Akkadian independentists. The Elamites were not strong enough on their own to take Ur, but they aligned with a variety of factions, ultimately including

³⁵ This section uses the following references: Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC). *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*, accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19; Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC); The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature. "Rulers of Lagash", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr212.htm> on 1/21/19; The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19; and Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, 166.

³⁶ Jacob Klein, "Shulgi of Ur: King of a Neo-Sumerian Empire, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 843-858.

Isin, the dynasty that claimed the Sumerian heritage but was Akkadian-speaking and was predominantly responsible for the Sumerian King List. Isin betrayed Ur and the Elamites conquered it, before Isin turned on their allies and chased them out³⁷.

Isin was complicit in the destruction of Ur III and with its native Sumerian culture. This behavior does not merely show that Lagash probably helped the Gutians but also the motivations of Isin's writers in excising Lagash from history. Lagash had committed a great sin against the Akkadians by betraying them. Worse, it reminded Isin's elites of Ishbi-Era's sin. Ishbi-Era was the founder of the First Dynasty of Isin. Echoes of his sin must be erased to ensure that Isin was viewed as legitimate³⁸.

Lagash was Sumerian and it was in Isin's interest to excise some of the native Sumerian heritage. However, it was also important to punish Lagash for its betrayal of Akkad. It is also true that Isin wanted to cover up any memory of its betrayal of Ur III and Sumer. Overall, Lagash was inconvenient in many ways for the Akkadian-speaking writers of Isin³⁹.

Lagash was extremely important. It is the city-state that gave us the rule of law, with the first law code being created by Urukagina, the last ruler of Lagash in the Early Dynastic Period. The first evidence of organized military strategy and formations comes from the Stele of the

³⁷ Dominique Charpin, "The History of Ancient Mesopotamia: Overview", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 807-830 and The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19.

³⁸ The last section uses the following references: Jacob Klein, "Shulgi of Ur: King of a Neo-Sumerian Empire, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 843-858 and The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, "Sumerian King List", *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19.

³⁹ Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*, London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, 23-25, 31, 179-188 and 222-224.

Vultures of Eannatum of Lagash, an earlier king. Puzer-Mama and kings like him held up Sumerian culture at a time of the rise of Akkadian and Gutian powers. Gudea of Lagash was largely responsible for the cultural Sumerian Renaissance. He helped ensure not only that Sumerian-language literature lasted a long time, he also ensured that people still study Sumerian culture and politics today⁴⁰.

Lagash was not the only city-state excised by the Akkadians of Isin. Larsa was an Amorite city-state battling with Isin was excised from history too as best as the Isin dynasty could. The Sumerian King List was propaganda of the “pro-civilization” camp against the “anti-civilization” camp. Isin viewed themselves as the last defenders of civilization and did not view their co-opting of the Sumerians as problem. Their propaganda was defensive in nature. They ought to prevent being defeated and appropriated by the Amorites of Larsa like they had done to Sumer⁴¹.

⁴⁰ The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, “Rulers of Lagash”, *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr212.htm> on 1/21/19; The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, “Sumerian King List”, *The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL)* at <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/section2/tr211.htm> on 1/21/19; Pierre Villard, “Shamshi-Adad and Sons: The Rise and Fall of an Upper Mesopotamian Empire”, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 873-884; Robert M. Whitting, “Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia”, in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 1,231-1,242; *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*, 2019, accessed at <https://cdli.ucla.edu> and subseq. on 1/21/19; and Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Electronic Royal Sumerian Corpus of Inscriptions (ERSCI) Project*. Accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/etcsri/> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

⁴¹ Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative, “Larsa”, in *Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI)*. Accessed at https://cdli.ucla.edu/search/search_results.php?SearchMode=Text&requestFrom=Search&PrimaryPublication=&Author=&PublicationDate=&SecondaryPublication=&Collection=&AccessionNumber=&MuseumNumber=&Provenience=Larsa&ExcavationNumber=&Period=&DatesReferenced=&ObjectType=&ObjectRemarks=&Material=&TextSearch=&TranslationSearch=&CommentSearch=&StructureSearch=&Language=Akkadian&Genre=&SubGenre=&CompositeNumber=&SealID=&ObjectID=&ATFSource=&CatalogueSource=&TranslationSource= on 1/21/19.

Ethnic politics was not limited to Lower Mesopotamia. Around the same time, in fact just a little bit later, Amorites and Akkadians battled it out in Upper Mesopotamia. In Assur, the city that gave rise to the nation-state we call Assyria, Akkadian settler from Akkad battled against invading Amorites. They were conquered and subjugated for several generations, before Puzur-Sin overthrew the Amorite dynasty of Shamshi-Adad. Puzur-Sin wrote that he drove out the foreigner for ethnic politics-related reasons⁴².

He was excised from the Assyrian King List because he reminded everyone on Assyria that the native Akkadians owed many of their institutions and beliefs from foreign Amorites. So, they erased the great Akkadian liberator, Puzur-Sin, from history while editing history to include the Amorites as ancestors to the Assyrians. I have referenced this before. The Assyrian King List is thus related to the Sumerian King List in both the Kish and Lagash cases⁴³.

So, the Lagash case shows the Sumerian King List's political nature just as the Kish case does. It was inconvenient and was removed. At the same time, Larsa was removed because it was Amorite and the Akkadians wanted to defeat the Amorites who they worried would defeat them as their ancestors had done to the Sumerians, whose civilization they themselves claimed as their own. By excising both the best defenders of the culture they were claiming and the biggest threat to their culture, they sought to preserve their Akkadian cultural and political status. They

⁴² Online Richly Annotated Cuneiform Corpus (ORACC), *Royal Inscriptions of Assyria Online (RIAO) Project*. Accessed at <http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/publications/index.html> and subseq. on 1/21/19.

⁴³ J.G. Dercksen, *Old Assyrian Institutions*, MOS Studies 4. Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2004, in its entirety, especially 11-13, 48-54, 76-93, 103-105, 121-147 and 231-244.

eventually fell, but by then the Amorites were so Akkadianized that Akkadian ethnicity survived the conquest of Larsa or later, the more famous city of Babylon⁴⁴.

Conclusion

The most important task of this article is show that the politicization of the otherwise historical Sumerian King List is relevant to our modern world. Not only has the politicization of history not gotten away, but it has not even changed that much in degree or type. More importantly, the politicization and manipulation of history still exists in the Near East/Middle East. Specifically, it still affects the territories of eastern Syria and Iraq which together constitute historical Mesopotamia⁴⁵.

The fascinating part is that one case of modern historical manipulation for political purposes is not even unrelated to the historical storyline that we have been looking at in this article. In fact, it is the continuation of our story into modern times. The Sumerians were culturally appropriated and co-opted by the Akkadians of Isin, who were then co-opted or at least imitated by the Akkado-Amorites of Assyria and Babylonia⁴⁶. However, the Akkadians or various sorts in Mesopotamia eventually had to contend with Aramaeans, speaking the Aramaic language.

⁴⁴ Sabina Franke, "Kings of Akkad: Sargon and Naram-Sin", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 831-842; and Robert M. Whitting, "Amorite Tribes and Nations of Second-Millennium Western Asia", in *Civilizations of the Near East, Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack M. Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1995: 1,231-1,242.

⁴⁵ Michael Izady, "Languages of the Middle East", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019.

⁴⁶ Ur Region Archaeology Project, supported by Dr. Jane Moon et al, "Tell Khaiber" in *the Ur Region Archaeology Project*, found online at <http://www.urarchaeology.org/tell-khaiber/> on 2/10/2019.

The Arameans both migrated and were deported by the Assyrians into Mesopotamia. Eventually, they became the ethno-linguistic majority in Assyria, probably by the end of the Neo-Assyrian Period in the 7th-century⁴⁷. As the fall of Assyria, Akkadian died out as anything but a liturgical language, but Aramaeans remained in Babylonia. They formed their own kingdoms in what had been Assyria and near it. They eventually became (at least most of them) the Syriac people, an Aramaic-speaking Christian people that still live in northern Iraq and eastern Syria and have come under incredible pressure to convert to Islam and subject to forces of persecution and discrimination⁴⁸.

These Aramaeans or Syriacs have numerous identities. One is to claim relation to Assyria. In fact, internationally, Aramaics/Syriacs/Aramaeans are most likely to refer to themselves and be referred to as Assyrians. The historical question of the so-called Assyrian continuity problem is too complex to discuss in depth in this article. However, there are good reasons to view Arameans declaring themselves as Assyrians as the same kind of cultural and politico-historical manipulation as that related to both the Sumerian and Assyrian King Lists⁴⁹.

Historical and cultural manipulation is a complex phenomenon and it is not always, or even usually, bad. Aramaeans are likely to have intermarried with the last Akkadians much as the Akkadians themselves how culturally appropriated are likely to have intermarried with the last Sumerians. However, Aramaic culture while related to and certainly influenced by

⁴⁷ Edward Lipinski, "The Bilingual Inscription from Tell Fekherye" in *Studies in Aramaic Inscriptions and Onomastics, Volume 2*. Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 1994:19-81, particularly 19-21.

⁴⁸ Paul M. Dion, "Aramaean Tribes and Nations of First- Millennium Western Asia", in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East Volumes I & II*, ed. by Jack Sasson. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2000, pp. 1281-1294.

⁴⁹ Michael Izady, "Iraq Linguistic Composition in 2000", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019.

Akkadian, is not Akkadian culture any more than Akkadian culture, which was influenced probably even more heavily by Sumerian, was genuinely native Sumerian culture.

However, there is more to it than the switch from Akkadian to Aramaic. The claim to be Assyrian is recent and not a continuous claim, unlike the Akkadians, who never stopped using Sumerian as liturgical language, but as a marker of ethno-religious identity. The Arameans did not preserve the Akkadian language or other Assyrian traditions. They in fact preserved West Semitic traditions closer to the culture of the Jews of the region, including in Mesopotamia than to Akkadian culture⁵⁰.

The claim to continuity is political and recent. It is not completely false, but it is still a form of political-historical manipulation of the type investigated throughout this article. Language was clearly an important part of Assyrian culture and the language of identity was consistently Akkadian, even when the spoken language situation became more in the last century or two of the Assyrian Empire.

More important than the Aramaeans having no relation to Akkadian is that native Assyrians were proud of their geographic roots, which was centered not around Nineveh, the capital of the late Neo-Assyrian period, but Assur to the south. Aramaeans do not live in the Assur area anymore; it is Turkmen territory. The area around Mosul, the Nineveh Plains, however, are one of the homelands of the Aramaeans, but by no means the only one. The Khabur River Valley and much of Iraqi Kurdistan has strong Aramaic Christian populations, many of

⁵⁰ Michael Izady, "Iraq's Religious Composition in 2015 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019; and Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq (Third Edition)*. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992, in its entirety, specifically 81-83, 85-103, and 150-159.

whom do not identify as Assyrians, but many use the even less valid term of Chaldean, claiming a kinship with the later Babylonians that has less validity within Assyrian identity⁵¹.

A fragile people often feel that their identity and true history are not good enough and seek to get a better one by appropriating it. Such an appropriation is understandable given that both peoples, but especially the modern Assyrians, are facing the threat of cultural and possibly physical destruction. But understandable is not the same thing as justifiable.

The Aramaeans of eastern Syria and Iraq deserve a future and identity and the world needs to protect them. However, the kind of political manipulation of history and culture in which they undertake is a problem that cannot be ignored by either academics or policy-makers. The type of cultural co-opting that the modern Assyrians undertake is not that different from what the ancient Akkadians who they themselves appropriated did⁵².

In sum, political manipulation of history is scary, even when not done maliciously and is often done by sympathetic persons, such as the modern Aramaic Assyrians. We, as political scientists, historians, and archaeologists need to stand up for those who have no cultural descendants of voice, such as the Sumerians appropriated by the Sumerian King List.

⁵¹ Aaron Michael Butts, "Assyrian Christians", in *A Companion to Assyria*, ed. by Eckart Frahm, pages 599-612. John Wiley & Sons Ltd: Hoboken, NJ, 2017.

⁵² Michael Izady, "Syria Religious Composition in 2010 (detailed)", in *Atlas of the Islamic World and Vicinity*, (Columbia University, Gulf/2000 Project). Found online at <http://gulf2000.columbia.edu> on 2/9/2019.

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Closing

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This collection of articles underscores the great ideological diversity that the State of New Jersey in particular, and American academia in general, is capable of, but does not always embrace. All forms of diversity and inclusion are welcomed in this Journal, but ideological diversity is the most treasured commodity of all for the New Jersey Journal of Politics. Unlike so many other peer-reviewed, scholarly journals, we do not screen out otherwise worthy articles due to ideological bias. While our peer review process is as rigorous as any other, we work hard as an Editorial Board not to make editorial decisions based on ideology. This makes us unique in many ways and bodes well for our success going forward into the future.