

SOME NOTES ON INSCRIPTIONAL GENRES AND THE SILOAM TUNNEL INSCRIPTION*

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Summary: Some Notes on Inscriptional Genres and the Siloam Tunnel Inscription.

While most questions with regard to the Siloam Tunnel have been resolved, the question of the location of its inscription remains open. Almost without exception, the Siloam Tunnel inscription (*KAI 189*) is classified as a “commemorative inscription” despite the inclusion of elements that are never found in the commemorative genre. If the Siloam Tunnel inscription is not commemorative, what is it? In this paper, a brief re-examination of the vow in antiquity and a review of entitlement formulas are followed by an examination of the elements included in, and the location of, the pertinent genres of inscriptions. The distinctive characteristics of each genre are summarized, the Siloam Tunnel inscription is then re-examined. The evidence places the Siloam Tunnel inscription in the category of votive offering; type, thanks given for services rendered; class, private; artifact, wall inscription; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, victory. Its location, then, becomes typical for its category, class, and genre.

Keywords: Siloam Tunnel – inscriptions – genres – entitlement formula – votive offerings

Resumen: Algunas notas sobre los géneros de las inscripciones y la Inscripción del Túnel de Siloam.

Mientras la mayor parte de las cuestiones relativas al Túnel de Siloam han sido resueltas, la cuestión de la ubicación de su inscripción permanece abierta. Casi sin excepción, la inscripción del Túnel de Siloam (*KAI 189*) fue clasificada como una “inscripción conmemorativa”, a pesar de la inclusión de elementos que nunca fueron hallados en el género conmemorativo. Si la inscripción del Túnel de Siloam no es conmemorativa, entonces, ¿qué es? En este trabajo, una breve re-examinación del voto en la antigüedad y una revisión de las fórmulas de titulaturas son continuadas por

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un examen tanto de los elementos incluidos en los géneros pertinentes de inscripciones como su ubicación. Se sintetizarán las características distintivas de cada género, luego se reexaminará la inscripción del Túnel de Siloam. La evidencia ubica la inscripción del Túnel de Siloam en la categoría de ofrenda votiva; tipo, agradecimientos dados por los servicios ofrecidos; clase, privada; artefacto, inscripción sobre pared; género, dedicatoria; sub-género, victoria. Su ubicación, entonces, es típica para su categoría, clase y género.

Palabras clave: Túnel de Siloam – inscripciones – géneros – fórmulas de titulación – ofrendas votivas

The Siloam Tunnel has been the subject of scholarly debate in terms of its date, its course, and the location of the inscription (*KAI* 189) that was found on the eastern wall of the tunnel six meters in from the current entrance. Radiocarbon dating of grains and seeds embedded in the plaster used to finish the walls and U-Th dating of particles has confirmed the date to be seventh-century BCE¹ and a combination of geological, structural, and archaeological data have resolved the question of its sinuous course.² The question as to the location of the inscription (*KAI* 189)³ remains unanswered. With few exceptions,⁴ the Siloam Tunnel inscription (hereafter STI) is referred to as a “commemorative inscription”⁵ despite the inclusion of elements that are never found in the commemorative genre. Nor was it located where a commemorative

¹ Frumkin, Shimron, and Rosenbaum 2003: 169-171.

² Frumkin and Shimron 2006: 227-237.

³ The inscription is written in Paleo-Hebraic. See Appendix 1 for a rendering of the text in Hebrew square script and a literal translation of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription. For a photograph of the STI, see, <<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ames150/slide8.jpg>>

⁴ William Schniedewind places the STI under the genre of dedicatory inscriptions.

⁵ Since it was found in 1891, the STI has been assumed to be a commemorative inscription; when an assumption appears in encyclopaedias, assumption has become unquestioned “fact.” The following are some examples in the literature of the STI stated to be commemorative. “Commemorating the Final Breakthrough of the Siloam Tunnel” (Shea 1988: 431-442); “*It commemorates the digging of the waterway, which was an event in the history of Jerusalem and is mentioned more than once in the Bible.*” (Hirsch and Berger 1901: 339). “*The Siloam Tunnel inscription was written to commemorate the building of the tunnel by Hezekiah in the eighth century.*” (Brooks 2005: 4) “... *although a commemorative text for some stone masons could be set up.*” (Young 1998: 408-422).

would be located. If the inscription is not commemorative, what is it? If this question be answered, then the answer to its location follows naturally.

Throughout the Ancient Near East (hereafter ANE) we find inscribed on tablets, cylinders, cones, walls, steles, gates, and statues texts that refer to royal deeds. A number refer to victories in battle, others refer to construction projects; yet others describe accomplishments during a royal reign. These artifacts are found in the ruins of administrative archives and in the ruins of temples, in the rubble of cities and in the layers of man-made mounds. They are found in public sites, meant for all who pass by to see, and inside private sites, meant for only a god's eyes to see. This massive diversity of location and content are described collectively under the term "commemorative inscriptions." The very diversity of content and location states that "commemorative inscription" is an unsatisfactory designation for these texts.

Millard made a valiant attempt to bring some order to the classification of NWS inscriptions by dividing them into categories of monumental [public],⁶ professional [trained scribe],⁷ and occasional [names on pottery; miscellaneous "scribblings"].⁸ These classifications are equally unsatisfactory; they are too broad. Drinkard, in his approach to the determination of the category of inscription to which the Mesha stele (KAI 181) belongs, divides monumental into "dedicatory" and "memorial" inscriptions and considers the order of the elements found in each of his designated genres significant.⁹

Drinkard assigns the Mesha inscription [MI] to the category "memorial." He notes that memorial inscriptions, however, are often "blends" of dedicatory and memorial.¹⁰ He comments that "*the purpose of the dedicatory inscription is to dedicate an object to a deity.*"¹¹ As the Mesha is one of the "blend" inscriptions, in his conclusions Drinkard states: "*This inscription is also religious/cultic in nature. The MI reminds the reader that the high place where this stele was to stand was **built** [my **emphasis**] for Kemosh because he delivered Mesha from all assaults.*"¹²

⁶ Millard 1972: 99.

⁷ Millard 1972: 100-101.

⁸ Millard 1972: 101.

⁹ Drinkard 1989: 133; 142.

¹⁰ Drinkard 1989: 149.

¹¹ Drinkard 1989: 140.

¹² Drinkard 1989: 140.

Drinkard's case essentially rests on two differences he determined between his two proposed genres. In his classifications, dedicatory inscriptions list the object dedicated first and are written in the third person, while memorial inscriptions list the dedicator first and are written in the first person. Drinkard's analysis is excellent; nevertheless, there are flaws in his argument for the Mesha as a memorial inscription. Firstly, many dedicatory inscriptions list the name of the dedicator first and are written in the first person. Naveh, for example, notes that "*the use of the first person [’nk PN] is quite frequent in the Phoenician votive [sic] inscriptions (KAI 12, 17, 18, 43, 48, 54).*"¹³ Secondly, in chronicling accomplishments during his reign, Mesha is merely following traditions in place by the time of Shamshi-Adad in 1831-1791 BCE.¹⁴ Finally, a memorial inscription, as its name clearly states, is dedicated to the memory of the dead. The thousands of inscribed steles, sarcophagi, tombs, funerary statues, and ossuaries are "memorials." What may be the earliest war memorial inscription lists the names of the Athenians who died in the Persian wars in 480 BCE.¹⁵ If Mesha is speaking in the first person, and he is [’nk], then the inscription cannot be "memorial." If not memorial, then the Mesha inscription must be commemorative; but it cannot be commemorative because it was set at "this high place" [*hbmt z’t*] that Mesha "made" [’s] for Kemosh in Qarho (line 3). Therefore, the Mesha inscription, as Drinkard showed through his divisions, is dedicatory. The questions that remain are what category, class and type of dedicatory?

I have not been digressing from the subject; the Mesha demonstrates that assigning an inscription to a specific category is complicated by the religious/cultic element. A further complication with categorization of these inscriptions arises from the fact that, while *private* inscriptions may or may not include the name of the dedicator, all *public* inscriptions fulfill two purposes. The primary purpose is public notice of fulfillment of a vow. Public inscriptions identified the dedicator to ensure that the offering was attributed to the correct individual.¹⁶ That the name also acted as mnemata, or reminder of an individual, was secondary. A reminder is a mnemonic aid; it is not a memorial. Drinkard admirably analyzed the secondary mnemonical aspect,

¹³ Naveh 1968: 67.

¹⁴ Luckenbill 1968: 1.15-17.

¹⁵ Keesling 2003: 24-25.

¹⁶ Keesling 2003: 24-26.

but failed to address the primary purpose. In this paper, the inscriptional habits of the ancients are approached from the primary purpose.

While Drinkard understandably focuses on an assortment of inscriptions in North-West Semitic languages from approximately the same time-frame as the Mesha, the range must expand to include the inscriptional habits from the ANE and the Greek and Roman spheres. This expansion of range is essential as commemorative inscriptions are late; they appear during the third century BCE and by the first century CE became closely bound to Imperial Roman inscriptional habits.

Drinkard's comment on the religious/cultic aspects of ancient public inscriptions is fundamental to categorizing inscriptions.¹⁷ Ancient religions of the ANE and Mediterranean basin were votive religions. In votive religions, the gods are witness to all human actions and humans are bound for their actions by their vows to their gods. Nakhai, in the introduction to her study of archaeological materials in relation to religion in Israel and Canaan, observes that *"those of us raised with a constitutional commitment to the separation of church and state must remember that this modern social construction bears no resemblance to ancient society. In antiquity, religion, economics and politics were all deeply embedded within the structures of society."*¹⁸

Perhaps we should take this statement further; in votive religions economics and politics are subordinated to religion. No action could be taken without a god as witness. One consequence of votive religions is that the vast majority of ancient texts are in the category of votive inscriptions. Hence, every text that calls upon a god as a witness, whether in aid or in thanks given for services granted, is primarily votive in nature. A treaty between peoples, such as the treaty of Kadesh between the Hittite king Hattusilis III and the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II, invokes the gods of each people as witness to their vows. Indeed, as Naveh notes, *"the vast majority of the ancient graffiti even those which contain only personal names were actually prayers."*¹⁹ Votive inscriptions are varied and thoroughly embedded throughout ancient societies no matter the time or the place.

What this means is that an inscription on whatever artifact, large or small, public or private, and whether a god is named or whom (to) is lacking on an

¹⁷Drinkard 1989: 154.

¹⁸Nakhai 2001: 2.

¹⁹Naveh 1979: 27.

artifact found at a site dedicated to one god,²⁰ is primarily votive in purpose. In other words, no matter the material attributes, they are different types of votive offerings.

As Umholtz notes, votive offerings range from entire buildings to porticos, from stoas to gates, from tripods to inscribed large statues²¹—and, of course, to the more familiar small plaques and objects. Keesling’s comment that “*statues with inscribed bases fit only with difficulty into some modern scholarly constructs of votive religion*,”²² underscores an area where votive offerings cause difficulties in perception. Her comment applies equally well to studies of votive inscriptional habits in the ANE where a votive offering is perceived as restricted to small plaques and objects, structures made to fulfill vows are merely houses/temples or high places, and votive statues are classified as simply dedicatory. Reed’s work in the ANE, however, suggests that this seemingly fine distinction between “dedicatory” and “votive” is significant.²³ Keesling concentrates on statuary votive inscriptions from the sixth and fifth centuries BCE.²⁴ Umholtz examines the votive architectural inscriptional practices of Greece from the sixth-century BCE and later;²⁵ nevertheless, her statements as to what is meant by a votive offering apply equally to inscriptional practices in the ANE.

Although it is well known that ancient houses of god (temples) are dedicated to a god, what may not be quite as clear is that the houses themselves are in the category, votive offering, type thanks given for services rendered; class, public; artifact, building; genre, dedicatory. The Amman Citadel inscription of the late ninth-century BCE dedicates an entry portico to a temple²⁶ and

²⁰ Inscribed votive armaments at the temple of Zeus at Olympia frequently do not state the name of the god, as noted more than a century ago by Greenwell 1881: 65-82. Few offerings from the Dictian cave are inscribed with the name of the god.

²¹ Umholtz 2002: 261-263.

²² Keesling 2003: 11.

²³ Reed 2005: No. 30. An abstract of Reed’s paper is available at: <<http://www.asor.org/AM/abstracts05.pdf>>. Presentation on this subject was regretfully cancelled for the 2006 Meeting (private correspondence, 14 Jan. 2007).

²⁴ Keesling 2003.

²⁵ Umholtz 2002.

²⁶ Fulco 1978: 39-42.

has parallels in archaic and classical Greek inscriptions that dedicate a stoa, portico, or porch at a temple or shrine treasury as a votive offering.

The votive aspect of a temple is somewhat obscured in translation. In English idiom, we say “built a temple.” In Drinkard’s translation of the text of the Mesha stele inscription he correctly wrote “*made*;²⁷” in his summation he reverted to English idiom and wrote “*built*.”²⁸ Once again, this slight difference is crucial to our understanding of ancient inscriptional habits. A votive offering is *made*; hence, in line 3, Mesha “*made this high place for Kemosh*” (w’s.hbmt.z’t.lkmš). *IG I³ 596*, a poros altar found on the Acropolis in Athens and set up for Athena Nike, states *Patrokleides epoiesen*, “Patrokleides made [this].”²⁹ Dated to ca. 580 BCE, *IG XIV 1*; *SEG XXXI 841*, the oldest known archaic inscription in Greek, is from the temple of Apollo in Syracuse.³⁰ Badly weathered, there are lacunae, although most of the letters have been identified. The name of the dedicator is incomplete; however, *epoiese topeloni*, “made to Apollo,” is clear.

The Latin word *fecit*, “made,” is specifically used in inscriptions on temples, such as those on the Pantheon in Rome and the Eumachia in Pompeii; *fecit* is notice that the building is a votive offering. A temple is erected to fulfill a vow, that is, a temple is made as thanks given for favors granted by a god to the petitioner, whether the petitioner be an individual or a corporate polity. Aside from the Amman Citadel inscription, few inscriptions found thus far in the ANE state this important point in words. In other places and times, we are specifically told that temples are fulfillment of a vow.

As Orlin notes with respect to the erection of new temples in Republican Rome (early sixth to mid-first centuries BCE), “*the most common scenario, that of a general on his campaign vowing a temple, will be familiar to any reader of Livy.*”³¹ Republican Rome made a distinction between *sacra publica* and *sacra privata*.³² The former were temples vowed to cults sanctioned by the Republican Senate. Orlin’s chart detailing all *publica* temples made in

²⁷ Drinkard 1989: 152.

²⁸ Drinkard 1989: 154.

²⁹ See also Ulmholtz 2002: 266.

³⁰ See also Ulmholtz 2002: 263-264.

³¹ Orlin 2002: 4.

³² Orlin 2002: 11.

Rome yields much information, and a very large number of temples made to fulfill vows.³³

For example, because of a drought, the temple to Ceres Liber/a was vowed by the dictator;³⁴ the drought clearly ended because the temple was dedicated in 493 BCE by the consul.³⁵ The temple of Castor and Pollux was vowed by the dictator Aulus Postumius Albinus at the battle of Lake Regillus. The temple was finished and dedicated by his son in 484 BCE.³⁶ The temple made to Apollo apparently was vowed by the Senate due to a plague; again, the plague ended because the temple was dedicated by the consul in 431.³⁷ Moving down the centuries, the temple to Qirinus was vowed by the dictator in the war against the Samnites; the temple was dedicated by his son in 293 BCE.³⁸ The temple to Flora was vowed by the aediles because of drought; it was dedicated in 241-238 BCE.³⁹ The third temple made to Juno Regina was vowed by the consul in the war with the Ligurians and dedicated by the censor in 179 BCE.⁴⁰

At the battle of Pharsalus in 48 BCE, Julius Caesar vowed to make a temple to Venus if he were successful. After the battle of Phillippi in 42 BC, where the assassins of Julius Caesar were defeated, Augustus vowed to make a temple dedicated to Mars Ultor [the avenger]. The temple and forum took more than 40 years to build and was incomplete when the temple was dedicated. Dates on Imperial inscriptions are when a structure was dedicated, not when it was completed. While this method of dating is also prevalent in Republican Rome, Orlin lists nine instances where the date of dedication is not known, but the date of the vow is recorded.⁴¹

³³ Orlin 2002: 199-202.

³⁴ In Republican Rome, a “dictator” was elected by the Senate during emergencies for a term of six months, which was renewable if necessary.

³⁵ Orlin 2002: 199.

³⁶ Orlin 2002: 199.

³⁷ Orlin 2002: 199.

³⁸ Orlin 2002: 200.

³⁹ Orlin 2002: 200.

⁴⁰ Orlin 2002: 201.

⁴¹ Orlin 2002: 200.

Filson, writing on inscriptions in Jewish synagogues from the third century BCE through the sixth century CE, notes that “*in a large number of inscriptions, the individual or group who has built or repaired the synagogue is said thereby to carry out (teleō) or to fulfill (plēroō) a vow (euchē)...*”⁴² Keesling comments that “*the dedicatory inscriptions on a total of 19 sixth- and fifth-century Acropolis statue dedications explicitly refer to the fulfillment of a vow through the dedication.*”⁴³

It may seem redundant to re-iterate the role of the vow in antiquity, which has been thoroughly addressed by, among others, Berlinerblau⁴⁴ and Cartledge,⁴⁵ however, there are some points that need to be stressed as they frequently are undervalued in the secular approach to the past prevalent in the twenty-first century CE.

THE VOW IN ANTIQUITY

Vows are covenants between an individual, whether singular or corporate, and his, her, or its deity, with the deity both witness to, and recipient of, the pledge. Friedman succinctly makes an important point often forgotten in the examination of ancient inscriptions: “*The seriousness with which making vows was viewed is ancient Israel is well known. Once made, a vow had to be carried out; one dare not break his pledge.*”⁴⁶ Thayer points out another aspect of a vow: “*In ancient times a sacramental ritual was an essential part of the law of obligations. A man was bound not by his promises but by his vows.*”⁴⁷ Van der Toorn’s study of how females prostituted themselves testifies to the lengths people would go to fulfill vows.⁴⁸ Garrett re-examined female prostitution in light of Proverb 7:13-14.⁴⁹ The MT warns that it was better to not make a vow, than to make a vow and not fulfill it (Deut. 23:23); a warning that probably accounts for the small percentage of inscriptions on

⁴² Filson 1969: 42.

⁴³ Keesling 2003: 5.

⁴⁴ Berlinerblau 1996.

⁴⁵ Cartledge 1992.

⁴⁶ Friedman 1971: 222.

⁴⁷ Thayer 1901: 509.

⁴⁸ Van der Toorn 1989: 193-205.

⁴⁹ Garrett 1990: 681-682.

extant Jewish ossuaries.⁵⁰ Funerary inscriptions are in the category, votive type 1; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, memorial. To inscribe a name on an ossuary, a tomb, or a stele was to vow, with a god as witness, to remember the deceased, forever. Without exception, every inscription in Rahmani was written by members of the family of the deceased.⁵¹ Not all are inscribed with a name.⁵² For example, no. 217 has the word “shalom” written six times by six different hands, but no name and, therefore, no vow.

The requirement that a vow must be carried out was hardly confined to ancient Israel; this was as true of Egypt and Akkad as it was of Greece and Rome. Among votive inscriptions from the Acropolis in Athens we find offerings of the required dekate, the one-tenth of spoils due to the gods.⁵³ Although it is not clear if the tithe offering operated in the Roman Republic, the Romans believed failure to fulfill a vow led to dire results.⁵⁴ The sons completed and dedicated the temples of Castor and Pollux and of Quirinus to fulfill the vows of their fathers, for the fulfillment of a vow fell upon the heirs. Keesling notes inscriptions that mention vows that were not inscribed by the dedicator but by another family member.⁵⁵

As the vow itself must be written in the hand of the person making the pledge, names inscribed on simple Archaic funerary stelae from Athens are rather clearly not written by professional stone scribes. For example, artifacts Nos. 86, 712, 713, and 818, among the funerary inscriptions that were unearthed during the construction of the extension to the Metro in Athens, were not written by professionals. Further examples of the simple funerary

⁵⁰ Approximately twenty-five percent of ossuaries known in collections and museums bear inscriptions. Of ossuaries found in situ, those inscribed with names appear most frequently in clusters in a single cave-tomb complex, as can be seen in Fitzmyer and Harrington (1978: 168; 170-184); Nos. 72-84; 85-88; 90-94; 95-98; 99-107; 110-114 (plus ten uninscribed ossuaries); 115-117; 118-120; 124-125 (ten uninscribed); and 139-141. In his article, Geraty (1975: 73-78) comments on the *one* of thirteen ossuaries, which was inscribed, that the name ‘*yhwspbrhgy*’ [Yehoseph son of Haggai] was written three times in three different locations. Geraty reports two hands; there are, however, three different hands, none of whom were professional scribes.

⁵¹ Rahmani 1994.

⁵² Of the 895 ossuaries in Rahmani, 233 have inscriptions; eleven of these inscriptions do not name the deceased.

⁵³ Keesling 2003: 6-10.

⁵⁴ Orlin 2002: 37-38.

⁵⁵ Keesling 2003: 5-6.

stele, that is, an undecorated block of stone, are in the Acropolis Museum in Athens—a number of which are narrow, inscribed vertically with only a name, and are not written by a professional scribe. Far better known, and studied, are the large, sculpted funerary monuments.

The funerary monuments display inscriptions written by semi-literate individuals, by fully literate persons, and, sometimes, appear to have been written by professional scribes.⁵⁶ This last, though possible, seems unlikely on a regular basis. Funerary inscriptions written by a professional scribe would avoid the consequences of an unfulfilled vow for the “dedicator,” but would then commit the scribe who wrote it. The exception to the use of professional scribes on a votive *may* be public war memorials set up by a polity. Doubt is cast on the likelihood that the writing on war memorials was done by professionals by EM 13190 (IG I³ 11846), dated to ca. 411 BCE. This memorial lists the names of those who died in the Sicilian Expedition. The writing on EM 13190 varies substantially from column to column and name to name, which suggests that the names were written by individuals who either were related to, or comrades of, the fallen.

The inscription on the epistyle⁵⁷ of NM 3845, from the fifth-century BCE, was set up by the parents for their children and, from the varying control of letter forms and the wavering lines, was not written by a professional; the writing, as usual, was over-carved by the sculptor or a stone mason. The inscription on a statue base for a *kore*, IG I³ 1251 (NM 81), was written by a literate person or a professional scribe (who may have been a member of the family) or, possibly, the sculptor Phaidimos, who made the statue.⁵⁸ Known as the Kore of Phile, the base and the feet of the statue were found at Vourva. Phaidimos also sculpted IG I³ 1196 (MMNY 16.174.6) from the Kerameikos in Athens. Written in boustrophedon, this inscription definitely was not written by a professional. Unlike the letters on IG I³ 1251, the letter forms

⁵⁶ A member of the family, of course, could have been a professional scribe. At least three ossuaries in Rahmani have inscriptions that clearly were written by professional scribes who were, just as clearly, relatives of the deceased.

⁵⁷ The epistyle is also called the architrave or the lintel. The lintel sat across the columns (pillars) at, for instance, the entrance to a temple. The majority of the large sculpted funerary monuments display their votive aspect by enclosing the sculpted figures in the entrance to a temple. The text on the lintel/epistyle/architrave would have been written and over-carved prior to installation on the “columns.”

⁵⁸ See <<http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/Athens/IGI/1200series/1251m.jpg>> for a photograph of IG I³ 1251.

on IG I³ 1196 vary considerably from word to word and from line to line.⁵⁹ The inscriptions on NM 723, NM 3472, and NM 3624, from the fifth-century BCE, were not written by professionals. With (apparent) rare exception, the funerary monuments of the fourth-century BCE were written by family members and over-carved by a professional stone carver.

A characteristic of votive inscriptions of both types is that they are usually placed at the location where the petitioner made his covenant with a god. Hence, the majority of votive inscriptions are located near or within temples and shrines or in consecrated funerary sites, such as the Tophet in Carthage. Mesha placed his stele at “this high place” that he had “made for Kemosh.”

While anyone may make a private vow, there are restrictions on who may make certain types of *public* votive offerings. The dedicator must state “who” he is to show that he is entitled to dedicate the “what” to the “whom.” Nor is the requirement to demonstrate that the “who” is entitled confined to the ANE.

THE ENTITLEMENT FORMULA

As Umholtz comments, “*there is no question that limitations of various sorts did apply to Greek votive behavior. Many categories of public offerings could only be made by those entitled to do so.*”⁶⁰ In Greece, such entitlements would apply, for instance, “*to military trophies, choregic monuments, and athletic victor statues.*”⁶¹ As has already been noted, Republican Rome made a distinction between *sacra publica* and *sacra privata*;⁶² entitlement was earned and similar restrictions applied. Indeed, there were laws “*that placed restrictions on who could dedicate a temple.*”⁶³ In Greek and Roman inscriptions, the formula stating that the person is entitled to make an offering

⁵⁹ See <<http://www.csad.ox.ac.uk/Athens/IGI/1100series/1196m.jpg>> for a photograph of IG I³ 1196.

⁶⁰ Umholtz 2002: 479.

⁶¹ Umholtz 2002: 479.

⁶² Orlin 2003: 165-172.

⁶³ Orlin 2003: 165-172.

contains the same entitlement elements as those used in the ANE: who, inclusive of position and ancestry.⁶⁴

Drinkard states that the difference between dedicatory and memorial inscriptions in the order of the elements in the formula was “*primarily one of emphasis.*”⁶⁵ The differences, though, may indicate the *persona* of the “who.” Greek dedicatory inscriptions state “who,” “what,” and “whom,” although not necessarily in this order. Which formula was used, “who *anethexen*⁶⁶ what” or “what *anethexen* who,” appears to depend upon whether the offering is by a governing body or by a private individual. The third formula, “whom *anethexen* what from who,” is extremely common on the thousands of athletic victory inscriptions from Greece and Rome as the offering frequently was a statue of a god. Likewise, Republican Rome had three different formulas.⁶⁷ These same three formulas appear on inscriptions from the ANE.

The rulers of the ANE were required to demonstrate that they were entitled; hence, the formulaic statements, “who,” including position and ancestry, found on so many ancient documents. The entitlement formula was required even in letters, such as *ABC 19*, written (most likely) by Damiqilišu (ca. 1816-1794 BCE) to Apil-Sin (ca. 1830-1813 BCE). The Hittite text of the Treaty of Kadesh begins with the entitlement formula, as do other extant treaties. In royal votives from the ANE, the entitlement comes from a god or gods. God-chosen, a ruler could delegate his god-given entitlement. A viceroy of Tiglath-Pileser, Bel-Harran Bel-Usur, who founded a city and made a temple, states his entitlement (“*as commanded*”) came from his King.⁶⁸

Rare indeed is the royal inscription or letter or decree or covenant lacking its entitlement formula. The entitlement formula remained an integral part of a *public* inscription across time and culture and remained integral from Akkad through the Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern periods. Likewise,

⁶⁴ Entitlement operated at all levels. In the colophon of the exchange of property on the bronze tablets found on the fifth-century BCE Etruscan *Tabula Cortonensis*, the name of the transcriber of the deed onto the tablets with the transcriber’s ancestry (Velcha Cusa, descendant of Avle, of Velthur Titlnis, descendant of Velthur, etc.) is stated to show that he is entitled to write an authoritative version of the exchange, presumably to be stored as a legal record.

⁶⁵ Drinkard 1989: 151-152.

⁶⁶ “*Anethexen*” literally means “set up;” it does not mean either “built” or “dedicated.”

⁶⁷ Orlin 2003: 35-75.

⁶⁸ Luckenbill 1968: I. 295-296.

the elements “what” and “why” were (and still are) integral. The elements “whom,” “where,” “when,” and “how” are characteristic of specific genres.

The choices made among the seven elements, “who,” “whom” (to), “what,” “when,” “where,” “why,” and “how” that are included in an inscription, as well as its location, define its category, class, and genre. Each genre has characteristic elements included within the text and is located at specific types of sites.

A comprehensive survey is impossible. Volume I of Luckenbill includes inscriptions of 103 rulers between the 23rd and the 8th centuries BCE. *JIE* contains 226 pages of inscriptions. *KAI* now includes at least 312 inscriptions. *CIL* has 17 large volumes containing more than 180,000 inscriptions catalogued thus far in Latin.⁶⁹ There are more than 30,000 inscriptions in the Epigraphic Museum in Athens; more than 1,000 in just volume 1 of *Inscriptiones Graecae*. Nor is a comprehensive survey necessary. When Treu remarked, “*inscriptions conform to the traditional models of the genre*,” he was not underestimating the rigidity of votive inscriptional habits.⁷⁰

Methodologically, the following survey is straightforward. Examples typical of common genres of votive inscriptions from across the millennia are examined and their characteristic elements delineated. Votive inscriptions appear in two sub-categories. For convenience I will refer to them as Type 1, a prayer for aid of some sort, and Type 2, thanks given for services rendered.

Although translations by others may be cited with a high degree of assurance for a study of the elements in an inscription, unless otherwise stated, translations are the author’s.

THE LITERARY GENRES OF INSCRIPTIONS

Dedicatory Inscriptions and their locations

The applicability of Keesling’s comment regarding statues⁷¹ to artifacts from the ANE is made even clearer from the inscriptional practices of Gudea, the ensi, or governor/city-ruler, of Lagash (2141-2122 BCE). Gudea’s inscriptions and votive plaques mention construction projects of houses for

⁶⁹ The first volume of the *CIL* was published in 1853. Additional fascicles are published as new inscriptions are found.

⁷⁰ Treu 1991: 129.

⁷¹ Keesling 2003: 11; 3-21.

his gods. He had images of himself made in various sizes that range from small to larger than life-size statues. Twenty-six of these statues, designated A-AA, have been found. All twenty-six extant statues of Gudea are votive offerings dedicated to a god or goddess, as are the temples themselves.

Statue M, in the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA),⁷² is an example of Gudea's inscriptions and it states "why" he made this offering. The inscription in cuneiform on the right shoulder identifies the person depicted by the statue. The inscription on the back contains the votive thanks given to Geshtinanna and the name that Gudea gave to the offering: "a-azi-mu-a," "*becoming one with his house.*"⁷³

The translations, with two very slight modifications ("governor/city ruler" for "city ruler;" "made/built" for "built"⁷⁴), are from Edzard.⁷⁵ The inscription on the shoulder reads in translation:

Gudea, governor/city ruler of Lagash, the man who made/built the house of Ningishzida and the house of Geshtinanna.

The inscription on the back reads in translation:

Gudea, governor/city-ruler of Lagash, made/built to Geshtinanna, the queen "a-azi-mu-a," (to become one with his house)⁷⁶ the beloved wife of Ningishzida, his queen, her house in Girsu. He created for her [this] statue. "It [the statue] stands in (constant) prayer," he gave it a name for her (benefit) and brought it into her house.

⁷² The authenticity of this statue has been questioned. The same text appears on statues N and O; the name given the offering, "a-azi-mu-a," however, is unique, which suggests authenticity (J. M. Sasson, private correspondence 18 December 2006). Nevertheless, DIA st.M has been chosen as the example for the accessibility of excellent photographs, including eminently readable enlargements of the inscriptions, available on the web from the DIA at: <<http://www.dia.org/collections/Ancient/mesopotamia/82.64Alarger.html>>

⁷³ Edzard 1997: 55.

⁷⁴ The verb in question is *du3* and is not that specific. "It has to do with erecting, building, even making." Different verbs are used when the project is "to fashion," e.g., a statue, etc., *tu/ tud* or *dim* according to the dictionaries and to private correspondence.

⁷⁵ Edzard 1997: 55.

⁷⁶ Edzard (1997: 55) translates "a-azi-mu-a" as "*the lady who grew to become one with his house,*" which tends to support Reed's arguments (2005: No. 30).

Gudea's dedicatory inscription illustrates the basic formula. Entitlement is presented in "who" inclusive of position. The elements of Gudea's formula, in order, are:

Who: Gudea

a) Position: governor/city-ruler of Lagash

Whom: Geshtinanna

Where: within the house at Girsu

When: after he made/built to Geshtinanna, etc., her house

What: [this] statue

Why: perpetual offering

How: not stated

These statues of Gudea stood inside the temples; hence, they fall into the class of private offerings. Gudea's order of the formula may indicate that, although he is governor/city-ruler, the offering is from him in his persona as an individual. The possibility that the order indicates the persona gains support from another aspect of these votive statues that may account for the location inside the temple. Moorey writes:

[Postgate] drew a sharp distinction, based on the ancient terminology between an "effigy (icon)" and a "substitute." The former, for which the Sumerian/Akkadian words are alan and salmum respectively, refers to a physical representation of another specific identity, whether it be a deity, a demon or a human being, not to undifferentiated members of a category. This "icon" is a means of communication giving access to the entity itself.⁷⁷

Reed notes that *"the ancient Mesopotamians sculptured images and imbued them with divine life through sanctification rituals, a practice that transcends the millennia and cultural boundaries."* She argues that the painted statue of Sargon II confronting Assur located in Palace K at Khorsabad *"not only represents a living god, but that the exchange between god and king occurs on a continuous plane, reflecting the necessity of constant renewal of the relationship between the ruler and the deity in order to assure prosperity in the land."*⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Moorey 2005: 10-11.

⁷⁸ Reed 2005: No. 30.

The name given to the statue, *a-azi-mu-a*, “to become one with his house,”⁷⁹ on DIA statue M and the location inside the temple suggests an offering in perpetuity to permit the “constant renewal” of the “continuous exchange” of the king’s living image with the god’s living image.⁸⁰

Otherwise Gudea’s inscriptions are without ambiguity; the words on DIA, statue M, “It [the statue] stands in (constant) prayer,” “he gave it a name for her (benefit),” and the location, “into her temple,” identify the inscription as category, votive offering type 2; class, private; artifact, statuary; genre, dedicatory. Statues that stood outside a temple, such as in Greece, were public offerings.

The inscription on the Ishtar Gate at Babylon was dedicated by Nebuchadnezzar (ca. 605-562 BCE). The text includes all seven elements. Nebuchadnezzar displays the well-known habit of later rulers of the ANE to co-opt the past to shape the present. Nebuchadnezzar follows Gudea’s formula: “who,” position and ancestry, are listed first, then “whom” and “what.” He states that he understood the divine being of the gods. Nebuchadnezzar then describes *how* he restored the gates to the high place of the entrance dedicated to the Goddess Ishtar—by digging down to the water line.

Who: Nebuchadnezzar

a) Position: king of Babylon, faithful prince appointed by Marduk, etc.

b) Ancestry: eldest son of Nabopolassar, king of Babylon

Whom: Pantheon led by Marduk, Nabu, Ishtar, etc.

What: the gate of the high place precinct

When: After the street had risen (filled)

Why: to let the high place of festival be built firm

Where: On the entry wall at the gate of Ishtar

How: digging to the water line; with asphalt and bricks

(Translations based on Marzahn)⁸¹

Rebuilding of the gates to protect and “make firm like a mountain” the high-place festival house is a thank offering to the gods. The inscription is in category, votive offering type 2; class, public; artifact, wall inscription; genre, dedicatory.

⁷⁹ Ezhard 1997: 55.

⁸⁰ Reed 2005: No. 30.

⁸¹ Marzahn 1981: 29-30.

The Pyrgi Lamellae (ca. 500 BCE), a bi-lingual Phoenician-Etruscan inscription on gold leaves, were found in 1964 buried in the ancient sanctuary at Pyrgi, the port city of Caere. The leaves record a temple and statues made and dedicated to the Phoenician Goddess Astarte. There are three leaves, one is written in Phoenician (*KAI 277*); the other two are written in Etruscan. The three leaves have matching holes where they were bound together, presumably with leather thongs, and folded one on another like a triptych. The Phoenician serves as a bi-lingual to decipher the Etruscan. Although the writing on the three leaves is clear, there is little consensus on the readings of the Etruscan text or on the syntax of the Phoenician, and, as a result, the interpretation of the Phoenician text.⁸² No attempt will be made to translate the Etruscan text; some portions relevant to understanding the Phoenician are discussed below. While there is no consensus on the exact meaning of the Phoenician text, this does not affect the elements, although it does affect the interpretation. With the caveat that while some scholars agree, others may disagree, with the following interpretation, the elements in the Phoenician text are as follows:

Whom: Astarte

What: sacred place (that was made and given/donated by “who”)

Who: Tiberia Velanas⁸³

Position: King/Ruler of the Caerites

Why: Astarte raised “who” to his reign for three years in the day of the burial of the divinity

When: in the month of the sacrifice to the sun

Where: foundation

How: through burial of the statue of the goddess in the temple [it] will last as long as the stars

The Etruscan and the Phoenician follow different order traditions. The Phoenician text employs “whom,” “what” (from) “who;” the Etruscan employs “what” (the house and the statues), “whom” (to the lady *Astre*) from “who”

⁸² For an overview of the various interpretations and readings of both the Etruscan and Phoenician texts, see Schmitz 1995: 559-575.

⁸³ Etruscan ‘th’ is the equivalent of Greek ‘theta.’ The ‘f’ in the name “Thefariei” is intervocalic and would be pronounced ‘v’. The Phoenician transliteration is *tbry*, which tends to indicate that both the *taf* and the *bet* were spirantized. See also Schmitz 1995: 563.

(Thefariei Velianas).⁸⁴ From various readings of the Etruscan on the lamellae, the Etruscan apparently refers to Velianas as “city-leader” or something like that, rather than as a king/ruler (*mlk*), which would explain the length of three years as his “reign.” The Etruscan is more expansive than the Phoenician. Velianas was made city-ruler(?) in the month of Xurvas; the temple and statues were dedicated in the month of the sacrifice to the sun, and the *zilach* (praetor?) ordained that both the images of Astre/Astarte and the gold leaves be buried in the temple.

The practice of embedding votives in foundations or burying within sacred precincts to ensure that temples (or walls or houses) be everlasting is well known from the ANE; hundreds, if not thousands, of small votives buried in foundations have been recovered. Apparently, this practice was also common outside of Mesopotamia. The Pyrgi inscriptions are in the category, votive type 1; class, private; artifact, metal leaves; genre, dedicatory.

Two early NWS inscriptions explicitly refer to the vows: the Melqart inscription (KAI 201) and the Amman Citadel inscription. On the Melqart (ca. ninth-eighth centuries BCE), in lines 3-5 (line 5 being one letter) Bar-Haddad bar ?? Hazyan states: “He vowed [this statue/stele?] to him [Melqart] and he listened to his voice.” The Melqart was located inside the temple of Melqart north of Aleppo, Syria. The elements in order are:

What: This statue/stele?

Who: Bar Haddad

a) Ancestry: מ?ר?ר? מ?ר?ר? ⁸⁵ ‘son of ??? hazyan’

b) Position: King of Aram

Whom: Melqart

Why: Melqart listened to his voice

When: after Melqart granted the request

Where: In the temple

How: not stated

The Melqart inscription is in category, votive type 2; class, private; artifact, stele/statue(?); genre, dedicatory.

⁸⁴ The name is written as *thefarie veliunas* in the short text (REE 6314) and as *thefarie velianas* in the longer text (REE 6315). As the scribe who wrote the text would have taken it down from dictation, the orthographic variation may be due to the pronunciation of two different individuals.

⁸⁵ In the cursive script used on the Melqart, *resh* has a pointed lobe; *dalet* has a round lobe; indecipherable letters are marked by question marks.

The Amman Citadel inscription (ca. late ninth-century BCE) is a small fragment of a longer inscription.⁸⁶ We will never know “who,” for “who” clearly preceded the extant text and is missing. We do know “whom,” [Mi]lcom, and “what,” the precinct entry. We therefore know “where” (a temple). We also know part of “why:” a place for the just to lodge (line 4). Apparently the entry/portico was dedicated upon completion of its construction, but had not yet been completed as to its “fittings,” for we also have part of the vow itself: *“there will hang from its doors an ornament. . . .”*⁸⁷ It is too fragmentary to tell us “how” or “when.” The inscription is in category, votive type 2; class, public; artifact, building inscription; genre, dedicatory.

The Amman Citadel inscription is an example from the ANE of a specific portion of a temple made as an offering. We find equivalent inscriptions offering portions of temples and temple precincts dedicated to a god from Greece, all of which are votive offerings and all of which are project-specific.

The inscriptions examined thus far tend towards the verbose; Archaic and Classical Greek simple dedicatory inscriptions, as well as those from both Republican and early Imperial Rome, are terse. This terseness in Roman epigraphic habits is not surprising; Rome acquired its epigraphic traditions from Etruria and Greece.⁸⁸

From the first half of the sixth-century BCE, found in the ruins of the archaic temple of Artemis at Ephesus, we find fragments of the base moldings of carved marble column drums. When pieced together, the fragments of each base molding fill in the missing parts of the repeated inscription.⁸⁹ Inscribed on four column bases are the words:

βασιλευς κροισος ανεθηχεν
King Croesus set [this] up

Unlike royal simple dedicatory inscriptions from the ANE, Greek simple dedicatories do not state “when,” “where,” “how,” “why,” and sometimes, as

⁸⁶ Fulco 1978: 39-42.

⁸⁷ Fulco 1978: 41.

⁸⁸ The subject of epigraphic habits and literacy in Rome has an enormous bibliography. For a concise overview of Roman epigraphic habits and literacy in general, see, Cornell 1991: 7-33. For a general bibliography on literacy in Antiquity, see, <<http://faculty.biu.ac.il/~barilm/bibliter.html>>.

⁸⁹ For a description of the column bases, see Ulmholtz 2002: 264-265.

on this one, not even “whom.” “Why” does not appear on simple dedicatories. “Why” appears on Greek inscriptions only if the offering is a *dekate* (tithe), an *aparche* (first fruits), a victory, an honorific inscription, a decree, or a law; all of which are sub-genres of the dedicatory genre.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, because of the location, these dedicatory inscriptions on the column bases contain four of the seven possible elements: the entitlement “who” (King Croesus of Lydia), “what” (this column), “whom” (Artemis), and “where” (the temple at Ephesus).

Several inscribed altars from Athens of the sixth and fifth centuries BCE have been found on the Acropolis; all are in the genre, dedicatory. The earliest, *IG I³ 690*, is from the first quarter of the sixth century.⁹¹ The text, written from right to left in one line, reads:

[...ca. 13... ανεθ]εκεν αθηναιαι χα[ι]ριον ταμιευον κλεδιq[ο υιος]⁹²
[..... set] up to Athena Cha[i]rion treasurer [son of] Kleidiq

The missing portion stated “what.”

What: the/this altar

Whom: Athena

Who: Chairion

a) Position: treasurer

b) Ancestry: son of Kleidiq

Chairion was treasurer, but he was not a ruling body. Croesus was a king and the order seems to reflect his position as a ruler. Similarly, altars dedicated by a polity place “who” first.

Altars tended to be large, more akin to buildings than to a block of stone. Sited in front of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi is an altar offered by the Chians in ca. 500 BCE. The following text is inscribed on the crown molding.⁹³

χιοι απολλώνι τον βώμον
Chians, to Apollo, the altar

⁹⁰ Treaties and other contracts, of course, state “why;” however, treaties are not in the dedicatory genre; they are in the covenant genre.

⁹¹ See also Ulmholtz 2002: 266.

⁹² “Kleidiq” is spelled with a *qoppa*, i.e., Phoenician/NWS *qof*.

⁹³ For a description of the site of the Chian offering, as well as a photograph, see Ulmholtz 2002: 268.

The Chians, a corporate polity, were entitled to dedicate a public offering. The inscription lists the three main elements in a votive offering: “who,” “whom,” and “what.” “When,” “where,” “how,” and “why” are not stated. “Where” is unnecessary; the “what” is in front of the temple of Apollo at Delphi, not in front of the temple of Athena.

Only the columns and the stylobate of the large Athenian stoa at Delphi remain (ca. 479 BCE). The inscription (*IG I³ 1464*), written in one line on the stylobate, is somewhat lengthier. The stoa was funded by the dekate of a war; which one, though, is the subject of debate. The inscription reads:

αθηναιοι ανεθεσαν τον στοαν και τα ηοπλ[α κ]αι τακροτερια ηελαντες
τον πολε[μιο]ν
Athenians set up this stoa and the arm[s a]nd the stern ornaments, the
spoils of their adversar[ie]s

In order, the elements are:

Who: Athenians
What: this stoa
Why: tithe
When: after a war

Neither “whom” nor “where” are necessary; the stoa is in front of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. “How” the war was won is not stated. The Athenians, a polity, were entitled to set up a public offering and, like the Chians, list themselves first. As previously noted, on Greek dedicatories, “why” on an inscription immediately places a Greek inscription in a sub-genre of dedicatory. As the stoa was set up from spoils, this inscription is in the category, votive type 2; class, public; artifact, building inscription; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, victory.

By the third and second centuries BCE, the Hellenization of the Jews in Egypt was advanced. Therefore, the fact that Jewish dedicatory synagogue inscriptions in Greek from the third and second centuries BCE in Egypt display Hellenic influences is understandable. *JIE 22* dates to 246-221 BCE and clearly was not written by a professional scribe.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ A photograph of *JIE 22* is available at: Donald D. Binder, “Image Gallery.” <<http://www.pohick.org/sts/egypt.html>>

[.γ^α] βασιλευες
 πτ[ο]λεμαιουκαι
 βασιλισσης
 βερενικης αδελ
 ησκαιγυναικ[.]και
 τώντυκνον
 τηνπρ[.]σευχεν
 [ιο]υδαιοι

A literal translation reads:

[. .]gi[.] king/Ptolemy and queen Berenice his sis/ter and wife and
 their children/the house of prayer/the Jews

The elements are:

Why: [on the part of/?on behalf of?]⁹⁵ Ptolemy and Berenice and their
 children

What: the house of prayer

Who: the Jews

“Whom” is not stated; it is unnecessary on a Jewish synagogue. Precisely “when” is not stated; it was not necessary at the time. Berenice was the wife of Ptolemy Euegertes I; the inscription dates to between 246-221 BCE. “Where” is not given as the inscription would have been on the building. “Why” is [on the part of/?on behalf of?]. “How,” of course, is not stated in a simple Greek dedicatory.

The shift from the verbosity of the ANE votive tradition of a detailed listing of the seven elements to the barest minimum of the ‘important’ elements, “who,” “what,” and “why,” in the Archaic, Classical Greek, and the Hellenized Synagogue dedicatory inscriptions of Ptolemaic Egypt, is quite noticeable. As already noted, in Greece, “why” is given in sub-genres of dedicatory inscriptions. “Whom” may or may not appear if the votive was offered at a site dedicated to one god. “When” does not appear on Archaic offerings. “Where” was normally unnecessary. “How” is not included in the

⁹⁵ *JIE* 22 is cited as one of two unusual Jewish inscriptions dedicated to an Egyptian Pharaoh; however, there is no dedicatee. The wording in the lacunae is known from other inscriptions. Whether one wants to translate the lacunae as “on the part of” or “on behalf of,” semantically this is a “why,” not a “whom.”

simple dedicatory genre. We find the same terseness in the Republican and early Imperial Roman dedicatory inscriptions. Only one example is necessary; the inscription on the Pantheon in Rome is representative of this unadorned genre.

The Pantheon was destroyed twice and rebuilt the third time under Hadrian. Rather than identify himself, Hadrian had the inscription carved into the architrave of the building giving the original text, which had been on a bronze plaque. The inscription on the Pantheon in Rome is a typical Roman dedicatory inscription; it states who, what, and when.⁹⁶

M. AGRIPPA.L.F.COS.TERTIUM.FECIT

Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, Consul for the third time, made [me]

The elements are:

Who: Marcus Agrippa
 a) Ancestry: son of Lucius
 b) Position: consul
 What: made [me, the temple]
 When: third consulship

Like the Greek and ANE simple dedicatories, the inscription is project-specific. As consul for the third time (and Octavian's best friend and "right-hand," as well as his top military leader), Marcus Agrippa had a long list of achievements; no others are mentioned. There is no need to further elaborate on "where" as the inscription is on the architrave of the physical object. "When" is by consul: the original Pantheon was dedicated during the third consulship of Marcus Agrippa (27 BCE). "Why" was recorded elsewhere: the naval victories credited to Agrippa, including the crucial battle of Actium in 31 BCE where Anthony and Cleopatra were defeated. The inscription itself does not refer to a god or gods. Nor is there any need to; the Pantheon was erected as part of the new Roman quarter of the Campus Martius. The inscription was (and is) on the building, which itself is the votive offering to all the gods in the Roman pantheon, led, of course, by Mars.

So far we have been examining the elements in simple dedicatory inscriptions. Dedicatories, though, frequently are intended to fulfill more

⁹⁶ See, <<http://classics.furman.edu/~rprior/imgs/RCU5/5-159.jpg>> for a photograph of the inscription on the Pantheon.

than one purpose. Hammurapi's stele (ca. 1792-1750 BCE), complete with invocation, entitlement formula, and symbolic pictorial, is in the genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, laws. Chronicles of a reign are recorded in an inscription by Shamshi-Adad in 1831-1791 BCE.⁹⁷ The dedicatory-chronicle is extremely common in the ANE.

Dedicatory-Chronicle Inscriptions and their Locations

The Zakkur (formerly Zakir) inscription (*KAI* 202) lists all seven elements and, unlike the Mesha inscription, which employs Drinkard's "memorial" formula,⁹⁸ employs Drinkard's "dedicatory" formula order.⁹⁹ Drinkard's dedicatory formula places "what" first.¹⁰⁰

The elements in the Zakkur inscription are:

What: a stele

Who: I am Zakkur

a) Position: king of Hamath and Lu'ash

Whom: Ba'alshamain

Why: stood with who and helped who and made who king

When: after who's triumph over attacks by 11 kings

Where: in the temple precinct

How: oracles of whom

We can see why Drinkard specifically mentions that his two different formulas have many elements in common.¹⁰¹ The blend of elements Drinkard finds in the Zakkur/Zakir¹⁰² and Mesha¹⁰³ inscriptions are widespread; they appear on every victory inscription from the ANE as well as in the lists of achievements during a reign, and they all contain the element "how."

⁹⁷ Luckenbill 1968: I:15-17.

⁹⁸ Drinkard 1989: 142.

⁹⁹ Drinkard 1989: 151-152.

¹⁰⁰ Drinkard 1989: 132.

¹⁰¹ Drinkard 1989: 151-152.

¹⁰² Drinkard 1989: 149-151.

¹⁰³ Drinkard 1989: 151-153.

The mention of a god's name plus blessings/aid immediately places an inscription in the category of votive offering, type 2; genre, dedicatory. The questions then remain: which sub-genre of dedicatory and does a list of achievements mean that these are the deeds of a ruler? The first question is easily answered: a list of achievements during a reign places an inscription in the sub-genre, chronicle. The other question needs a bit more analysis and seems to have been partially answered by Reed.¹⁰⁴ Zakkur clearly states that the listed deeds were achieved through the blessings and aid of the god while Zakkur acted as the *hands* of the god.

Front:

Line 3: Ba'alshamayn [helped me] and stood with me....

Left Side:

Line 13: I set up before [Ilu-Wer]

Line 14: this stele and I w[rote]

Line 15: [upon] it the story of my hands.

(Translations by Drinkard)¹⁰⁵

Zakkur neither claims to “commemorate” the deeds of the king nor claim that the inscription is a “memorial” of his deeds. The stele was set-up before the god and the text appears to be a report to the god, chronicling “how” the god achieved his ends through the hands of his chosen human vessel. This may seem like a fine point; however, if we are to arrive at an understanding of ancient votive inscriptional habits, we must bear in mind the central role played by religion in the ANE. We must also recall the drastic change in religious habits that occurred with the overthrow of the Sumerian city-states by Semitics. In the Sumerian concept of kingship, divine-rule was meant literally. As Langdon observed nearly a century ago, “[b]eginning with the early years of *Dungi*, second king of the dynasty of Ur, the doctrine of the deification of kings holds perhaps the foremost place in Sumerian theology and certainly the practice of this belief occupies the chief position in their liturgy.”¹⁰⁶

The concept of a living king-deity died hard; it endured despite catastrophe after catastrophe. The Semitic peoples who supplanted the Sumerians

¹⁰⁴ Reed 2005: No. 30.

¹⁰⁵ Drinkard 1989: 149; 151.

¹⁰⁶ Langdon 1917: 106.

“abolished the entire institution of king worship” as the facts did not “support their claims.”¹⁰⁷ Semitic rulers thereafter repudiated any claims that a human king was a deity. One must show humility before the gods. One must stress that it was the god’s achievements; the chosen human is only the hands of the god. Zariku (ca. twenty-third century BCE) is the *Viceroy* of Assur,¹⁰⁸ the human hands of the god, as is Zakkur.

The Zakkur inscription does not commemorate the deeds of the king. It lists *how* the god achieved his ends through the hands of his chosen human vessel. The Zakkur inscription was found in the remains of the ancient city of Hamath, north of Aleppo, Syria. Lines 13 and 14 specifically state that the stele was set up before [qdm] Ilu-Wer; therefore, the offering was located within the temple. This places the Zakkur inscription in category, votive offering type 2; class, private; artifact, stele; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, chronicle.

The Zakkur inscription spells it out, but so does every other royal public and private votive offering from the ANE. Those long lists of achievements and *how* they were accomplished are the achievements of a god or gods through the hands of the chosen human vessel.

The Karatepe bi-lingual, Luwian-Phoenician inscription (*KAI* 26; ca. eighth century BCE), follows Gudea’s entitlement formula order. It states “who” first: (line 1) “I am Azatiwadda, chosen/blessed of Ba’al, servant of Ba’al... (line 2) king of Adaim,” (line 3) “the Adanim.” Once again, the king is the blessed, the chosen vessel and the human hands of the god.

“I am a humble man,” Azatiwadda asserts. One must stress that it was the god’s achievements; the chosen human is only the hands of the god. Azitawadda then spends many lines of text stating *how* he accomplished the god Ba’al’s ends by listing what he, the human agent, did to do so. These deeds include defense of the borders, suppression of outlaws, the building of Adana, the bringing of other territories under the protection of Ba’al, and the founding of a cult of Ba’al. This inscription also describes a short cultic sacrificial calendar to be performed at all the temples of Ba’al Azatiwadda had had constructed in the valley of Adana: a yearly sacrifice of an ox, a sheep at the time of plowing/sowing, and a sheep at the time of harvesting. It was located on a gate within the Hittite religious precinct on the “Cilician Common.” Its location defines its class. The Karatepe inscription is in the

¹⁰⁷ Langdon 1917: 106.

¹⁰⁸ Luckenbill 1968: I.11.

category, votive offering type 2; class, public; artifact, building inscription; genre dedicatory; sub-genre, chronicle.

The Nabopolassar Cylinder (seventh century BCE) is an example of a private building inscription. Written in Akkadian on a clay cylinder found in the foundations of the inner defense wall in Baghdad, Iraq, the order of elements lists first “who.” Nabopolassar, parallels Azitawadda’s *“I am a humble man”* assertion. In column one, Nabopolassar states that he was *“a nobody”* who through his devotion to the gods was raised to his high position. In column two, he again claims his role as the human hands of the gods. *“But I the weak one, the powerless one, the one who constantly seeks the lord of lords... He (Marduk) made Nergal the strongest of the gods walk at my side.”* And, thus, Nabopolassar maintains, through his hands, the gods threw the yoke of the Assyrian from off the Akkadians. He recounts “how” he mustered the ranks of Marduk to restore the inner defense wall surrounding Babylon by digging down to the foundations buried under a mountain of debris. Throughout the inscription, Nabopolassar stresses that he is the human agent of the gods.

Who: Nabopolassar

Position: King of justice, the shepherd called by Marduk

Whom: Marduk and Nabu

What: the inner defense walls

Why: to thank Marduk, the supreme Lord, for his aid

When: after removal of the Assyrian yoke from Akkad

How: with hoes and baskets, etc.

Where: in the foundations

(Translations from Beaulieu)¹⁰⁹

The inscription on the Nabopolassar cylinder, however, ends with the plea (column 3) that Marduk and Nabu will not let the walls fall again,¹¹⁰ which places the inscription in the category, votive offering type 1; class, private; artifact, foundational; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, chronicle.

The ca. ninth-century BCE Fekhariyeh bi-lingual, Assyrian-Aramaic inscription (*KAI* 309) is inscribed on a life-sized statue.¹¹¹ The statue was found in 1979 by a farmer with a bulldozer at the edge of the ruined city

¹⁰⁹ Beaulieu 2002: 307-308.

¹¹⁰ Beaulieu 2002: 308.

¹¹¹ Millard and Bordreuil 1982: 135-149.

known as Tel Fekhariyeh. The position of the arms and the expression on the face exudes piety and, as Gudea's statues, clearly is a votive offering dedicated to Adad. The elements are in the following order:

Whom: Adad

What: the image of who

Who: Hadad-yis

a) Position: King of Guzan

How: a list of the good things accomplished through Adad's will¹¹²

Why: For hearing my prayer, for accepting my words

Where: In the temple precinct

When: not stated

This inscription is in a common variant of formula number 3: "whom," "what," from "who." It is in category, votive type 2; class, private; artifact, statue; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, chronicle.

Memorials, and chronicles are not the only sub-genres of the dedicatory genre. The Athenian stoa at the shrine to Apollo at Delphi discussed above is not simply in the genre, dedicatory; it is in the sub-genre, victory inscription.

Victory-Dedicatory Inscriptions and their Locations

Victory inscriptions are votive offerings and they tend toward specificity. The most common type of victory inscription from the ANE is for victory in battle. There are, however, other types of battles; there are thousands of athletic victory votives from Greece and Rome, and there appears to have been some from the temple of Ašerah/Elat at Sidon.¹¹³ Victory inscriptions are dedicatory. Whether the victory votive is an ancient stele from Akkad or Egypt, a Greek athletic victor statue,¹¹⁴ or a Roman triumphal arch, entitlement to dedicate a *public* victory votive went to the winner. The offerings and the inscriptions are the public notice of a personal victory.

The familiar Victory Stelae of the ANE are of the category, votive type 2; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, victory. All of them are dedicated to gods.

¹¹² Millard and Bordreuil 1982: 137.

¹¹³ Betlyon 1985: 53-56.

¹¹⁴ For example, NM 3344, is an athletic victor sculpture set up in thanks to Athena.

All of them include all seven elements. Most are public inscriptions.¹¹⁵ Many victory offerings, such as that of Essarhaddon of Assyria found at Zincirli, or Kilamu(wa) of Yadi (*KAI* 26), or Naram-sin of Akkad, depict pictorially, by symbols, to whom an object is dedicated.

One side of the Victory stele of Naram-sin (ca. twenty-third century BCE) is inscribed in cuneiform;¹¹⁶ the other side is a pictorial “inscription.” The textual inscription follows the traditional practice and contains all seven elements; the pictorial inscription deserves closer inspection. Pictorials also display cross-cultural correspondence across the millennia.

Until wrenched from its location,¹¹⁷ the pictorial inscription of Naram-sin contained all seven elements. As in all pictorials, the “inscription” employs redundancy to ensure that a viewer does not miss the point. At the top of the stele the symbol of the god Shamash, the sun, was repeated three times.¹¹⁸ The sun symbols state to whom the stele was dedicated. In addition to the three sun-symbols, Naram-sin is depicted standing on a mountain facing a tall pinnacle, the abode of the gods. The sun symbols are above the pinnacle further pointing to whom the stele is dedicated. In the iconography of the ANE, the largest figure on a pictorial is the ruler/lord/god. Naram-sin is a giant compared to the other figures on the stele. However, his large size only states “who” he is: a war leader. Gods wore pointed headdresses with rows of wrap-around horns ascending in the shape of the pinnacle depicted on the stele. In a pictorial, something is needed to show that the leader is a ruler and the chosen of the god.¹¹⁹ Naram-sin displays his position as the chosen of Shamash

¹¹⁵ Sennacherib’s Prism is only thirty-eight centimetres in height. The text contains all seven elements and clearly is in the sub-genre of “Victory” inscription. It was supposedly found in a mound at modern Mosul; but it was purchased from an antiquities dealer. From its size and material, it probably was located within a temple. The prism does not appear to have been intended as a public inscription.

¹¹⁶ The Naram-sin inscription gives the name of the subjugated mountain people, the Lullubi, as well as the chronicle of the victory over the king of the Lullubi.

¹¹⁷ According to the addition to Naram-sin’s inscription by Shutruk-Nahhunte, the Elamite king who took the stele as booty, it was removed from Sippar.

¹¹⁸ One complete symbol of Shamash, most of the second, and a small portion of the third remain.

¹¹⁹ Hammurapi, for instance, wears the hat of an ensi and receives the rod of rulership from Shamash; on the Behistun monument, Ahuramazda flies over Darius I. Roman Imperators displayed the goddess Victory riding in a quadriga at the shoulder of the ruler. Pharaohs are depicted with gods.

by a single horn standing out on each side of his helmet.¹²⁰ “What” and “how” are shown pictorially by the defeated foes crushed underfoot or hiding in the forest pursued by the king’s men at the base of the stele, while an enemy is depicted with a spear through his throat falling backwards at the king’s feet. “Why” is also clear; the re-duplicated dedication to Shamash shows that the stele is a votive type 2, a thank you to the god for his aid in battle. “Where” is difficult to determine as the stele was not found in its original location; it was found at Susa in Elam. The stele probably was originally located at the site where the prayer/request for aid was asked of Shamash.

Starting at the top, the elements are:

Whom: Shamash

Who: Naram-sin, chosen of Shamash

a) Position: ruler/leader

Why: aid in warfare

When: after defeat of the enemy

How: depicted pictorially

What: the stele

Where: house of Shamash in Sippar?

The pictorial inscription is in category, votive type 2; class, public; artifact, stele; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, victory.

The obelisk of Shalmaneser III (ca. mid-ninth century BCE) is a victory inscription and, at two meters in height, clearly falls into the class of public inscriptions. Like the stele of Naram-sin, the obelisk is both a pictorial and a textual inscription; it is also a chronicle of conquests in the name of his god. The pictorial portion is for the illiterate; the textual for the literate. The texts both identify and explain the pictorial. Shalmaneser reports himself to be the chosen hands of Assur: “*at the command of Assur, the great lord, my lord, I fought with them...*” (lines 54-60). “*The terrifying splendor of Assur and Marduk overcame him... I cut down with the sword of Marduk*” (lines 77-84).

Shalmaneser’s inscription commences with a list of the gods whom he invokes. Only after invoking the gods, does he state his entitlement formula of “who,” position, and ancestry. “*Shalmaneser, king of all, lord, priest of*

¹²⁰ While the soldiers, both victorious and defeated, look to Naram-sin, Naram-sin looks upwards towards his god. Whether he claimed divinity or merely asserted his role as the divinely chosen of the gods in other texts is an open question.

Assur... son of Assur-nasir-pal, the high priest, whose priesthood was pleasing to the gods...." Following the by now long established tradition, the text then chronicles, year by year, for thirty-one years, "how" he accomplished his victories as the hands of the gods. For example:

Lines 22-26: *At the beginning of my reign...I mobilized my chariots and troops. I entered the passes.*

Lines 26-31: *In my first year, I crossed the Euphrates... I advanced to the shore... I offered sacrifices to my gods.*

Lines 54-60: *In the sixth year of my reign... at the command of Assur, the great lord, my lord, I fought with them....*

Lines 77-84: *In the ninth year of my reign, I marched . . . I besieged . . . I pursued. I cut down with the sword of Marduk. . .*

Lines 87-89: *In the eleventh year of my reign, I crossed.... I captured.... I descended...*

The record of 'how' Shalmaneser acted as the hands of the gods ends as it began:

Lines 174-190: *In the thirty-first year of my reign. . . I destroyed, I devastated, and burned. . . I captured. . . I slew . . . I descended. . . The awe-inspiring terror of Assur and Marduk overwhelmed.*

(Translations from Luckenbill)¹²¹

The elements of the inscription are:

Whom: The entire Pantheon, led by Assur, the great lord

Who: Shalmaneser III

a) Position: king of all, lord, priest of Assur...

b) Ancestry: son of Assur-nasir-pal, the high priest

What: The obelisk

When: after the 31st year of his reign (858-824 BCE)

Why: To thank the great gods, who ordain destinies, who have made great his kingdom

Where: Calah (modern Nimrud)

How: Detailed in 166 lines

¹²¹ Luckenbill 1968: 200-211.

Shalmaneser's inscription is in category, votive type 2; class, public, artifact stele; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, victory.

Another pictorial victory stele, or rather column, is found in the heart of Rome. Unlike Shalmaneser's obelisk or Naram-sin's stele the inscription on the plaque at the base of the column does *not* elucidate the pictorial. The inscription on Trajan's Column (*CIL* 6.960) is among the best known inscriptions in the Western world as its letter forms are considered the exemplar of Roman Capitals and are used to teach calligraphy.¹²² Dedicated in 113 CE, Trajan's column was located at what was the very centre of Trajan's forum with open space around it on all sides. In fact, a "high place," a hill, 42 meters in height was leveled by order of the Senate and the column is 42 meters, the height of the high place it replaced. The column and the inscription are in two different genres. The column is a pictorial chronicle of his victory over the Dacians carved in an ascending spiral similar to the path up a ziggurat and includes, among other reliefs, the goddess Victory at Trajan's shoulder to show his position as the chosen human agent. The *column* is a pictorial dedicatory offering to the gods. The *inscription* is an honorary.

Honorary Inscriptions and their Locations

The Roman Honorary inscription is not to be confused with the Greek Honorific inscription. Greek Honorific inscriptions are always a Type 1 votive dedicated to a god. Roman Honorary inscriptions are dedicated to a living person.

Greek honorifics tend to be lengthy as the texts go into details on "what" the honoree(s) did to deserve special public notice, "why" the honor should be granted, "how" the inscribed stele should be set up and "where." EM 12864 dated to 236-35 BCE is a decree from the fortress of Rhamonous honoring Dikaiadchos from the deme of Thriason.¹²³ EM 7845 (*IG* II² 1277), dated to 277-76 BCE, is a decree by a religious group honoring an individual; likewise, EM 7855 (*IG* II² 1315), dated to 211-10 BCE, and EM 7842 (*IG* II² 1320), dated to 175-74 BCE, are decrees by religious groups honoring an individual. Set up on a stele at Abdera in Thrace, a daughter colony of Teos, *SIG*³ 656 honors

¹²² The inscription on Trajan's Column may be seen at the following calligraphy instruction site: <<http://www.abc26.de/bilder/trajanss%E4ule.jpg>>

¹²³ Pouilloux 1954: No. 15.

Amymon and Megathymos, two citizens of Teos, for their part in an embassy to Rome in ca. 166 BCE.¹²⁴

The Greek honorific inscriptions also tend to be large. EM 12864, EM 7845, and EM 7855 mentioned above, for example, are slabs approximately 80cm–90cm in height by 26cm–30cm in width and entirely covered with writing in the equivalent of a 14–point type font. In mainland Greece, honors were bestowed on living persons, but such honors were always for specific actions that merited acknowledgement. Honorifics also were always dedicated to a god who acted as witness to, and recipient of, the pledge to honor. Greek honorifics are in the category, votive type 1; class, public; artifact, stele/wall tablet; genre, dedicatory, sub-genre, honorific, type decree (or what have you).

In Ptolemaic Egypt, which was undergoing “pharonisation,” there was a revival of the concept of king-worship. A living ruler was perceived both as a divinity and as a necessary intermediary with the gods.¹²⁵ Rome embraced the Greco-Egyptian concept of a deified human ruler—albeit with a decidedly Roman twist.

Unlike Greek honorifics, the honorary inscriptions of Imperial Rome are terse; they also mark an important change in Roman votive habits. During the Republican period votives were dedicated to gods in the Roman pantheon. Entitlement was earned and position was bestowed by the Senate. Like the Semitic rulers of the ANE and the demes of mainland Greece, Rome avoided the claim of a living human as a god; in Roman votive habits deification of a ruler was only posthumous. After the death of Augustus Gaius Julius Octavius in 14 CE (who styled himself “Augustus,” “Caesar,” and “divi filius” son of the divine [posthumously deified] Julius Caesar), royal inscriptions still state “who,” position, and ancestry. Position is still technically bestowed by the Senate; entitlement as the chosen individual is now bestowed by a predecessor deified posthumously by the Roman Senate.

The distinction between Greek honorifics and Roman honoraries must be stressed. Like the Greek honorifics, Roman honoraries are set up for living persons. Thereafter, the two genres of inscriptions part company. Greek honorifics are a sub-genre of dedicatories; Roman honoraries are a new genre.

¹²⁴ Sherk 1984: No. 26.

¹²⁵ Iossif 2005: 235-237.

Roman honoraries are votives dedicated to an Emperor, or a member of the Roman aristocracy, or members of local aristocracies, or a senator, or a governor of a province. Unlike the practice in Greece, where honorifics were an acknowledgment of a specific action, such as the embassy of ca. 166 BCE mentioned above, the purpose of Roman honoraries, whether dedicated to an Emperor in Rome or to a governor in some town at the edge of the Empire, was utilitarian; the idea was to bestow prosperity on the people. While the entitlement formulae on honoraries tend to be lengthy, as position(s) and ancestry require a great deal of writing space, the texts of Roman honoraries are terse. Honoraries are located in conspicuous places meant for all to see. Honoraries never state in the text “how” a project was completed.

The inscription on Trajan’s victory column is dedicated to Trajan, a living Imperator; it is not dedicated to a god. Words are separated by medial points and the line shown as under the Roman numerals are carved *above* in the inscription. The text is full of abbreviations. The inscription reads:

SENATVS.POPVLVSQVE.ROMANVS
 IMP.CAESARI.DIVI.NERVAE.F.NERVAE
 TRAIANO.AVG.GERM.DACCIO.PONTIF
 MAXIMO.TRIB.POT.XVII.IMP.VI.COS.VI.PP
 AD.DECLARANDVM.QUANTAE.ALTITUDINIS
 MONS.ET.LOCUS.TANT[IS.OPER]JIBUS.SIT.EGESTV

Deification was decreed by the Senate and only posthumously; divi refers to Nerva, the father.

The Senate and people of Rome, to Imperator Caesar, son of the divine Nerva, Nerva Trajan Augustus, Germanicus, Dacicus, High Priest; Tribunician power 17 times, Imperator 6 times, Consul 6 times, Father of his Fatherland, according to the declaration [by the Senate] that the hill and place of great height is to be emptied out by such works.

Entitlement is required; the Roman senate, a governing body, is entitled to dedicate an offering. The order and the elements are as follows:

Who: Senate and People of Rome (S.P.Q.R.)

Whom: Trajan

- a) Position: Emperor, tribune, consul, high priest, father of his fatherland
- b) Ancestry: Son of deified Nerva
- Why: Conquest of Germania and Dacia
- When: Tribunician 17 times, Emperor 6 times, Consul 6 times
- Where: this place
- What: such works

The only deity in the text is the deceased Nerva. Trajan's entitlement to be Caesar comes from being the adopted son of the deified Nerva; his position is rubber-stamped by the Senate. "What" was ordered done is stated; "how" the work was done is not. Dedicated to Trajan, a living person, the inscription is in category votive type 2; class, public; artifact, column; genre, honorary; sub-genre, victory.

Romans also erected triumphal arches that dot the landscape of the Imperial world.¹²⁶ Triumphal arches are both pictorial and textual. Like Trajan's column, the arches include images of the goddesses Victoria and Roma. Usually Victoria is at the Emperor's shoulder in a quadriga and Roma leads the horses. The inscriptions, placed across the attic (the area spanning the passage through an arch) are also votive, but the "whom" is not a god. The inscriptions on triumphal arches are honoraries.

Only three triumphal arches remain today in Rome. In order of dates of dedication, the three remaining inscribed arches are the Arch of Titus (81 CE), the Arch of Septimus Severus (203 CE) and the Arch of Constantine (314-15 CE). On the arch of Titus, like the order on Trajan's column, "who," S.P.Q.R., comes first. Significantly, the order of the elements changes on the two later triumphal arch inscriptions. Reflecting the decreased political power of the Roman Senate, "whom" now comes first. Again, just as the column, an arch is in one genre, the inscription in another. Otherwise, the honorary inscription on Trajan's column suffices to illustrate this genre. Nor do we need to spend much time on the honorary genre; honoraries did not exist in the ANE.

After the Sumerian king-deity failure, the inscriptions show how careful Mesopotamian kings were to maintain that they were only the human agents of the gods. Even Darius I, after his lengthy entitlement formula on the Behistun

¹²⁶ In Roman Provence, Triumphal Arches appear, for instance, at Tarragona, Cavaillon, St. Rémy, and Orange. Ruins of another are found at Timgad, Algeria. Yet another ruin can be seen at Pola, Croatia.

inscription, keeps inserting references as to how he, the human chosen by Ahuramazda, was serving his god's will. To the mainland Greeks and Macedonians, honoraries, dedicated to a living Emperor, were treated with disdain.¹²⁷ While Greek city-states would erect statues in honor of athletic victors, who brought acclaim to a home town, and issue honorific decrees, to acknowledge merit, dedication was to the appropriate god. To Judeans, deification of a human, emperor or not, was enough to cause a revolt.

Roman honoraries are votives, but the dedicatee is a living human and they form a new easily dated genre of their own. Honoraries are tightly bound to Imperial Roman votive habits. Like honoraries, commemorative inscriptions lack any reference to a god in the text; the commemorative genre became just as tightly bound to Imperial Rome. The massive diffusion of the commemorative genre is a product of Rome.

Commemorative Inscriptions and their Location

The earliest commemorative inscriptions found thus far are from the third century BCE and not before. Stringently formulaic, the commemorative genre shows Greek influence; the genre first appears in Ptolemaic Egypt.

Commemoratives are intended to be open to public view; they state "who," "what," and "why." In Roman, and apparently Carthaginian practice, they also state "when." As they are displayed at the entry to, or are placed on, the physical object, they do not state "where." Nor do they include "whom," the name of a god, because "where" (location) indicates the dedicatee. Commemoratives *never state how*. Commemoratives lack any element of the votive. Votive elements may not be lacking in a project; however, votive elements are *not* included in the inscription itself.

One commemorative from Carthage is known and tentatively dated to sometime in the third century BCE. Like most inscriptions from the ANE, the Carthaginian commemorative is wordier than Greco-Egyptian or Roman commemoratives. The order is: "what" (this street); "why" (to connect the street in the direction of the gate in the South Wall); "who" number one (the people of Carthage); "when" (in the time of the Suffetes Shafat and Adonibaal, in the magistracy of Adonibaal); "who" number two (the [named] chief engineer of public highways and a long list of financial contributors). In addition, the text lists the fine for removing or destroying the inscription (translations from

¹²⁷ Iossif 2005: 235-237.

Dupont-Somers).¹²⁸ “Whom” is not stated. “Whom” possibly may have been Kothar, the God of Craftsmanship, as most financial contributors listed were among craftsmen.

The three basic elements of a commemorative are already in place: “who,” “what,” and “why.” “When” appears in this sole example of a Carthaginian commemorative inscription; “when,” that is, the name of a ruler or a consul or a magistracy, sometimes also appears in Ptolemaic synagogue commemoratives, such as *CIJ* 2.1440.

Adopted by the Romans, by the first century CE, commemoratives became tightly bound to Imperial Roman votive habits. The genre is rigidly formulaic in its elements; one example from Rome is sufficient. The Roman “aqua” inscriptions are typical of the commemorative genre as a whole.

The water supply to the city of Rome was always a problem. More than 300 inscriptions record construction of aqueducts and their repair; the laying of pipelines and repairs to pipelines; references to inspections, and so on. Three inscriptions at Porta Maggiore record: (1) the construction of two aqueducts by Claudius; (2) repairs by Vespasian; and (3) Titus builds a new channel because the old one was in such bad repair. All three contain the same four elements; *CIL* 6: 1256¹²⁹ is the Claudian commemorative.

The inscription reads:

TI.CLAVDIVS.DRVSI.F.CAISAR.AVGVSTVS.GERMANICVS.
PONTIF.MAXIM/TRIBVNICIA.POTESTATE.XII.COS.V.
IMPERATOR.XXVII.PATER.PATRIAE/AQVAS.CLAVDIAM.
EX.FONTIBVS.QVI.VOCABANTVR.CAERVLEVS.ET.
CVRTIVS.A.MILLIARIO.XXXXV/
ITEM.ANIENEM.NOVAM.A.MILLIARIO.LXII.SVA.IMPENSA./
IN.VRBEM PERDVCENDAS.CVRAVIT

Literally translated, the inscription reads:

Tiberius Claudius, son of Drusus, Caesar Augustus Germanicus High Priest; Tribunician power 12 times, Consul 5 times, Imperator 27 times, Father of the Fatherland, ordered that the Claudia waters, from the springs which are called Caeruleus and Curtius, at the 45th

¹²⁸ Dupont-Somers 1968: 23.

¹²⁹ Inscriptions from the city of Rome are in volume 6 of the *CIL*. As the *CIL* is an ongoing project, another fascicle of volume 6 was published in 2000.

milestone, the same [for] Anio Novus at the 62nd milestone, to be led into the City at his own expense.

The elements of the inscription are:

Who: Claudius

a) Ancestry: Son of Drusus

b) Position: Emperor Caesar Augustus, Tribune, Consul, Father of the Fatherland

When: 12th time as tribune; 5th time as consul; 27th time as Emperor (52 CE)

What: Aqueducts Claudia and Anio Novus.

Why: to bring water into urban Rome

All Imperial aqueduct inscriptions are in the commemorative genre and follow this same pattern. “Who,” “when,” “what,” and “why” are found on all Roman commemoratives. “When” is the time of dedication; the two aqueducts took approximately twelve years to build. “Where” is not necessary; the inscription is on Porta Maggiore, the outlet of the two aqueducts in Rome. It is unnecessary to state “whom;” the location states “whom”: Fons is the Roman goddess of springs. “How” the work was actually done is not stated. Nor is how ever stated on a commemorative, whether the inscription was found in Rome or Roman Palestine.

Roman commemoratives are votive, but the name of a god is never included in the inscription; the dedicatee is indicated by the location of the inscription. Commemoratives appear with increasing frequency under Roman influence; the Roman formula was the model for commemorative inscriptions of the Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern periods.¹³⁰ The Roman formula always included “when” the project was dedicated. “When” remained standard on commemoratives in Italy. This was not true elsewhere at this early period.

Like the Romans, the name of a god is also lacking on commemoratives from other areas if the object dedicated is at a shrine, temple, or other site devoted to only one god, or if the name of a god or goddess is unnecessary, as on the aqueduct inscriptions. “Who,” “what,” and “why,” however, are quite clearly stated.

¹³⁰ Petrucci 1993: between pp. 62-63, provides approximately 100 illustrations of commemoratives from Italy across the centuries.

The Theodotus inscription (*CIJ* 2.1404), was found in a cistern on Mount Ophel in Jerusalem in 1913.¹³¹ It was dated epigraphically to the first century CE. As this inscription is used as evidence for the existence of synagogues in Judea prior to 70 CE, the debates about this inscription relate to its date, which seems to range from the first-century BCE to the third-century CE depending upon the scholar. There is little argument about the text of the inscription. The entitlement is in letters one third larger than the body text, which is common in Greek and Roman inscriptions. The inscription reads:

ΘΕΟΔΟΤΟΣ ΟΥΕΤΤΗΝΟ[Σ]ΙΕΡΕΥΣ ΚΑΙ
 ΑΡΧΙΣΥΝΑΓΩΓΟΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΑΡΧΙΣΥΝ[Α]ΓΩΓΟΣ
 Γ[Ο]Υ ΥΙΟΝΟΣ ΑΡΧΙΣΥΝ[Α]ΓΩΓΟΣ ΩΚΟ
 ΔΟΜΗΣΕ ΤΗΝ ΣΥΝΑΓΩΓ[Η]Ν ΕΙΣ ΑΝ[ΑΓ]ΝΩ
 Σ[Ι]Ν ΝΟΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΕΙΣ ΔΙΔΑΧΗΝ ΕΝΤΟΛΩΝ ΚΑΙ
 ΤΟΝ ΞΕΝΩΝΑ ΚΑ[Ι] ΤΑ ΔΟΜΑΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΑ ΧΡΗ
 Σ[Τ]ΗΡΙΑ ΤΩΝ ΥΔΑΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΚΑΤΑΛΥΜΑ ΤΟΙ
 Σ[Χ]ΡΗΖΟΥΣΙΝ ΑΠΟ ΤΗΣ ΞΕ[Ν]ΗΣ ΗΝ ΕΘΕΜΕ
 Λ[ΙΩ]ΣΑΝ ΟΙΠΑ ΤΕΡΕΣ [Α]ΥΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΙ ΠΙΡΕ
 Σ[Β]ΥΤΕΡΟΙ ΚΑΙ ΣΙΜΩΝ[Ι]ΔΗΣ

A literal translation reads:

Theodotos, son of Vettanos, priest and leader of a synagogue; son of a leader of a synagogue, grandson of a leader of a synagogue, constructed the synagogue for the reading of the law and the teaching of the commandments; and the stranger-house and the rooms and water installations for those from abroad in need. Foundation laid by his fore-fathers and the elders and Simonides.

The elements follow the Roman pattern for a commemorative, except for “when.”

Who: Theodotos son of Vettanos

a) Position: priest and leader of a synagogue

b) Ancestry: son of a leader of a synagogue, grandson of a leader of a synagogue

What: building complex

¹³¹ See <<http://www.williams.edu/jewishstudies/images/2a.jpg>> for a photograph of the Theodotus Inscription.

Why: for reading the law and teaching the commandments and for lodging needy strangers.

The Theodotos inscription lists the three essential elements of a commemorative: “who,” the entitlement formula including position and ancestry, “what,” and “why.” The text does not state “when,” nor does it state “how.” “Where” is not recorded; the inscription appears to have been on the floor of the synagogue. That the building itself was a votive offering in fulfillment of a vow that descended upon the heirs can be seen in the final statement, inscribed in the larger letters of the entitlement formula, that the building project was started by his [Theodotos’] ancestors. “Whom” is not stated; it is unnecessary. In a Jewish synagogue, there would be only one god.

Two synagogues of the early Mishna period (ca. third-century CE) were located at what is today Bar’am National Park in the Galilee. Both of the Synagogues had commemorative inscriptions on the buildings. Little of the smaller of the two synagogues remains; however, “where,” the lintel, was found in 1861 by Ernest Renan, who carried it off to France where it remained in the storerooms of the Louvre. Eventually, it was temporarily displayed in the Bar David Museum at Bar’am. A copy of the lintel is in the Museum at Kibbutz Bar’am. The dedication was made by *ywsh bn lwy hlwy* (Jose ben Levi HaLevi). The English translation is as follows:

May there be peace in this place and in all places of Israel. Jose, the son of Levi the Levite made this lintel. May blessings come upon his deeds.

The elements are:

What: this place

Who: Jose

a) Ancestry: son of Levi the Levite

Why: request for a blessing

The request for a blessing places this inscription into the category, votive type 1; class, public; artifact, building inscription; genre, commemorative.

The commemorative inscription on the large synagogue is still in its original location below the Eastern portal. In accord with other synagogue inscriptions, the Eastern portal would have been funded by the dedicator, Banahu Elazar bar

Yodan, “Banahu Elazar, son of Yodan.” Only a name, yet it supplies two of the three essential elements included in the text of a commemorative.

Who: Banahu Elazar son of Yodan

What: the Eastern portal of the synagogue

“Where” is unnecessary; the inscription is on the façade under the portal. “Why” is not stated; it normally is not necessary. In a commemorative, a Personal Name (PN) is a *mnemata*, the PN is intended as a reminder of the person. According to Naveh, synagogue inscriptions and offerings on other surfaces, such as bowls, frequently contain the Aramaic formula *dkyr ltb*, “Remember be PN for good,” or simply *ltb* (the good).¹³² The majority of Jewish commemoratives are type 1 votives; they ask for something in return for the “gift,” to be blessed or to be remembered. The formula is standard and may simply not have been thought necessary; however, the lack of the formula places the second inscription in the category, votive type 2; class, public; artifact, building inscription; genre, commemorative. As both commemorative inscriptions are on Jewish synagogues, there is no need to state “whom.”

The Distinctions among the Genres

All the genres examined are votive offerings. While the order of the elements shifts about somewhat, the possible elements in an inscription remain seven. The choices made from among the seven elements, as well as the *location* of the artifact, define the characteristics of a given genre. These characteristics have been tabulated and presented in Table 1.

The Location of Votive Inscriptions

The major characteristic of the public votive inscription is that the inscription is intended to be seen by any who pass by. Although the majority of public inscriptions are sited at the place where the vow was made, there are known exceptions: a general may make a vow on the battlefield and fulfill the pledge after his return home.

The major characteristic of the private votive inscription that distinguishes it from all other votive inscriptions is its location. This class is not intended

¹³²Naveh 1979: 27.

for public viewing. Private votive inscriptions are meant only for the eyes of the god. This class of votive is found at sites that are inaccessible to public view under normal circumstances. They are buried in foundations or left in caves or atop a mountain peak or placed inside a temple or shrine.

With the characteristics of the genres and sub-genres tabulated and the locations distinguished, we will now re-examine the STI.

THE SILOAM TUNNEL INSCRIPTION

The STI had been located six meters from the current outlet of the tunnel. The inscription is not at the juncture point, which is where the prevailing opinion expects it to have been placed. One suggestion, proposed by Faust, is that the “*workers worked down-stream until they reached a point at where they realized that they could save precious time by working from both ends.*”¹³³ According to Faust’s scenario, the inscription is where they met. It was placed there, he writes, “*as a result of ‘final’ finish conducted only after the course was clear.*” That the inscription marks where the two teams of workers met is not supported by the evidence. The juncture point is well demarcated. Faust also ignores two simple facts. First, the workers did not make decisions. Any such decision would have been made by the hydraulic engineer in charge of the project. Second, sudden realization was not necessary; the normal method of digging a water tunnel was by teams of workers digging from both ends, e.g., Megiddo,¹³⁴ Hazor, Samos.

What made, and still makes, the ST an extraordinary feat of engineering is that the ST was a blind dig. There was no way to calculate the course from surface measurements. The engineer could not raise a surveyor’s pole at the top to calculate the path to the other end. The water tunnels at Megiddo and Hazor were line of sight digs. The Samian water tunnel (524 BCE) was calculated by Epaulinus from surface measurements on the visible opposite sides of a small mountain of a known height and a known distance.¹³⁵

The content of the STI states “what” and “when.” This inscription also states “where.” The inscription does not state “who” or who’s entitlement. There was a prepared blank area above the inscription, which could have been used to include the entitlement formula, but it was not filled in. If it were not for the entries

¹³³ Faust 2000: 3-11.

¹³⁴ While there is dispute as to the exact date, the Megiddo tunnel certainly antedates the ST.

¹³⁵ Apostoi 2004: 30-40.

in II Kings 30:20 and Chron. 32:30, we would not even know who ordered its construction. All we know of “who” and, incidentally, “why,” is from the two references in the MT that King Hezekiah ordered that a tunnel be built to protect the source of water. Nor does the STI state “whom.” Above all, the text explicitly states *how* the work was completed and refers to the workmen.¹³⁶

The elements in the content are as follows:

Who: ??

What: the breakthrough by the workers

When: after water flowed from the source to the pool

Why: ??

Whom: ??

Where: the tunnel

How: acoustic guidance

We shall proceed systematically as if the commemorative genre existed in the seventh-century BCE. Thus, the following question is asked: If the inscription is not commemorative, then, what is it? If this question be answered, then the answer to its location follows logically.

The Genre of the Siloam Tunnel Inscription

The text of the STI includes “how” and “where;” hence, as can be quickly determined from Table 1, the inscription cannot be either an Honorary or a Commemorative. The inscription is not a Covenant; therefore, it is a Dedicatory. The text does not include “why;” therefore, it is in a sub-genre of Dedicatory. Next, we examine the sub-genres of the dedicatory genre. There is no reference to the dead; thus it is not in the sub-genre Memorial. It does not state “who;” therefore it cannot be in the sub-genre Honorific. There are no references to laws and the content is project-specific; therefore, it cannot be in the sub-genres Laws or Chronicle. Therefore, the inscription is in the sub-genre, Victory. The content does not include a request for aid; therefore, it is a votive type 2. There is no dedicatee; however, the *location* states the name of a dedicatee. The lack of “whom” indicates that the inscription is dedicated to a single god as in other votives found at locations devoted to only one god.

¹³⁶ Luckenbill 1968: I.20, No. 56, is a fragmentary very early inscription that refers to “*the chief of the workmen.*”

We then examine the location. The artifact is obviously a wall inscription. The inscription was placed in an inaccessible location; therefore, it is in the class of private offering.

The open questions that remain are: why the lack of entitlement and why that particular site? To answer such questions when we know the category, class, genre, and sub-genre of an inscription, we turn to the standard technique of epigraphic analysis. The answers lie in the script used to write the inscription and the execution of the text.

The Script

The text is not written in a monumental or lapidary script; it is written in a cursive script.¹³⁷ The script explains why the name of the king who ordered the tunnel built was not written in the prepared space above the inscription. A mere engineer, no matter the achievement, was not entitled to dedicate an inscription for public display. That was the prerogative of the king. The script and blank prepared space tells us in definitive terms that this was not a royal inscription.

The Execution

The execution of the inscription is that of an educated and literate person; someone who was accustomed to writing on a regular basis. The lines are straight and control of letter forms is consistent throughout. The spacing between lines is even.¹³⁸ The cursive forms are written rapidly and fluently. There are no signs of hesitation marks. Nevertheless, that the inscription is “workmen’s graffiti” is an opinion that appears to be held by, among others,¹³⁹

¹³⁷ For the distinctions between formal (official) and cursive scripts, see Naveh 1968: 68-69; 71.

¹³⁸ The standard transcription of the STI is inaccurate in its reproduction of the spacing between lines 1 and 2 and between lines 4 and 5. In a good photograph, it is quite clear that the spacing between these lines is the same as the spacing between lines 2, 3, and 4, and between lines 5 and 6.

¹³⁹ The most recent assertion, on October 26, 2006, appeared on the b-hebrew scholarly discussion list; Karl W. Randolph wrote: “*And the Siloam inscription was basically workman’s graffiti.*” Lehmann’s reply pointed out “*that the Siloam inscription was a workman’s graffiti has been claimed already by A. Lods in 1955*” and also “*by Ian Young.*”

Faust, as Faust assigns the engineering decisions to the workers. Laborers did not make such decisions and “*workmen*” certainly did not write this inscription. The men with the pickaxes were at best semi-literate. The only person who could have written this text was the engineer who was in charge of the project, a point made by Coote: “*The success of the moment enabled and induced the engineer to commemorate the event by an inscription.*”¹⁴⁰ From Table 1, we can quickly determine the category, class, genre, and sub-genre of the inscription. To this has been added the standard epigraphic analysis. We now have the answer as to why the inscription was placed at that specific location.

As Frumkin and Shimron show, the tunnel is

*“an authentic engineering project, without any pre-existing natural conduits that could have guided its excavators.... A combination of geological and archaeological evidence demonstrates that the circuitous route of Siloam Tunnel and the final meeting of the two excavating teams are associated with continuous modifications of the plan to allow acoustic communication between the hewers and the surface teams.”*¹⁴¹

Engineering a blind tunnel by acoustics was (and remains) a novel concept. The digging of this tunnel was an exceptional feat of engineering. It is not surprising that the moment when the waters flowed after the workmen met at the juncture point, where acoustic directions from above could no longer be employed, is recorded in the inscription. The completion of the tunnel was a triumph, a private victory in a different type of battle.

We might recall that in Antiquity inspiration was a gift from the gods. As in so many dedicatory votives, the inscription was located at the site where the idea of “how” to build the tunnel occurred to the engineer charged with this seemingly impossible task.¹⁴² To re-state this from an ancient point of view, the inscription is at the place where the inspiration for the solution to the engineering problem of how to build a blind tunnel through solid rock without intermediate shafts was received from his god.

¹⁴⁰ Coote 1992: 23-24.

¹⁴¹ Frumkin and Shimron 2006: 236-237.

¹⁴² It should be mentioned that the engineering feat accomplished in digging the Siloam blind tunnel was only matched 2,700 years later using the most modern technology. We call the resultant modern blind tunnel dig the “Chunnel,” short for “the tunnel under the English Channel” (Apostoi 2005: 32-33).

If we know the category and class of this inscription, then we know why it was placed at that location. The Siloam Tunnel inscription is in the category of votive offering type 2, thanks given for services rendered; class, private; artifact, wall inscription; genre, dedicatory; sub-genre, victory.

Its location, then, is typical for this category, class, and genre of inscription.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- ABC* GRAYSON, A.K. 1975. *Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles*. Series: Texts from cuneiform sources. Vol. 5. Locust Valley, NY: J. J. Augustin.
- CIJ* FREY, J. B. 1975 [1936]. *Corpus of Jewish inscriptions: Jewish inscriptions from the third century B.C. to the seventh century A.D.* Vol. 1: Europe. New York: Ktav Publishing House. [Reprint of *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum*].
- CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
- EM Epigraphic Museum, Athens

- IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae Inscriptiones Atticae Euclidis anno anteriores. Inscriptiones Graecae, consilio et auctoritate Academiae.* 1994. Vol. I, 3rd ed. Fasc. 2. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- JIE* HORBURY, W. and D. NOY. 1992. *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt: with an index of the Jewish inscriptions of Egypt and Cyrenaica*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- KAI* DONNER, H. AND W. RÖLLIG. 1971. *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*. 3 vols. Weisbaden: Harrassowitz.
- MMNY* Metropolitan Museum, New York
- MT* Masoretic Text
- NM* National Archaeological Museum, Athens
- NWS* Northwest Semitic
- REE* *Rivista di epigrafia etrusca*
- SEG* *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*
- SIG*³ DITTENBERGER, WILHELM. 1960 [Leipzig, 1915-1924]. *Sylloges Inscriptionum Graecarum*. 4 volumes. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag.

For the convenience of the reader, wherever possible, examples from the literature that contain both the cited inscriptions and more examples of the genres have been used.

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APPENDIX: THE SILOAM TUNNEL INSCRIPTION

Transliteration into Square Script:

- 1 [.....]הנקבה.וזה.היה.דבר.הנקבה.בעוד[.....]
2 הגרון.א.ש.אל.רעו.ובעוד.ש.לש.אמת.להנ[.....].עקל.אש.ק
3 ר.א.אל.רעו.כי.הית.זדה.בצר.מימןו[.....].ל.יום.ה
4 נקבה.הכנו.החצבם.אש.לקרת.רעו.גרזן.על[.....].רזן.וילכו
5 המים.מן.המוצא.אל.הברכה.במאתי[.].אלף.אמה.ומא
6 ת.אמה.היה.גבה.הצרעל.ר'אש.החצב[.]

Translation:

1. [...] the tunneling; and this was how the tunneling was completed. As [.....]
2. their picks, each crew towards the other, and while there were still three cubits to g[o] the voice of men call[ing to]
3. each other [.....] because the sound got louder on the right [.....]t and on the day the
4. break through came, the stonecutters hacked towards each other and flowed
5. the water from the source into the pool, two hundred and one thousand cubits even though
6. the height over the heads of the stonecutter[.] was one hundred cubits.

(Adapted from Coote)

Table 1: Genres and Sub-Genres of Votive Inscriptions to 3rd-century CE

Genre	Who	Whom	What	Why	When	Where	How
Dedicatory:							
ANE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Greek	X	X ¹	X	-	-	-	-
Roman	X	-	X	-	X	-	-
Jewish							
Ptolemaic	X	- ²	X	- ²	X	-	-
Judea and Mishnaic	X	-	X	X	-	-	-
Sub-Genres:							
Laws	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
Chronicle	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Victory							
ANE	X	X ³	X	X	X	X	X
Greek	X	X ³	X	X	-	-	-
Pictorial	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Honorific	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Memorial							
Greek	X ⁴	-	-	X ⁵	X ⁶	-	X ⁷
Jewish	X ⁴	-	-	X ⁵	X ⁶	-	X ⁷
Roman	X ⁴	-	X	X ⁵	X ⁶	-	-
Covenant⁸	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Honorary	X	-	X	X	X	-	-

¹ Greek and Roman dedicatories may not state “whom” dependent upon location, e.g., Athenian stoa at Delphi; Croesus’ columns at Ephesus, Inscription on the Pantheon.² A few Jewish Ptolemaic dedicatories state “whom”; two are known to state “why.”³ Rare in victory inscriptions, but does occur that “whom” is given from location, e.g., athletic victor offerings.⁴ “Who” is uncommon in the Greek tradition (e.g., husband, children). “Who” is very common to nearly universal in the Roman tradition. See Meyer 1990: 74-76. “Who” is rare on early Christian funerary inscriptions; many state only “here lies” and the name of deceased.⁵ “Why” is the deceased; usually includes ancestry on Jewish and Greek individual memorials may include position if deceased was of special status. Roman always includes ancestry and position(s).⁶ “When” may state the age of the deceased at time of death (all traditions).⁷ Cause of death is rare, but occurs on a few Jewish ossuaries (e.g., death in child-birth) and is implicit on Greek war memorials.⁸ Sub-genres of Covenant (all places and times) include treaties, contracts, transfers of real property, etc.⁹ “When” by consul, tribune, or imperator is standard on Roman Commemoratives; occasionally appears elsewhere in Late-Antiquity. Actual dates are standard on Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern commemoratives.