

FACIAL HAIR AND BEARD COVERINGS

MOTIVES FOR GROWTH AND COVERAGE IN THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN AND MESOPOTAMIAN DOCTRINE

BY

Reda Attalla

Lecturer, Faculty of Archaeology, Luxor University, Egypt

[AR] أغطية شعر الوجه واللحية: دوافع إطلاقها وتغطيتها في عقيدة المصري القديم وبلاد ما بين النهرين
عرف شعر الوجه واللحية في الشرق الأدنى القديم بشكل عام وفي مصر القديمة وبلاد ما بين النهرين على وجه الخصوص، إلا أن عملية تغطية شعر الوجه واللحية في هاتين الحضارتين من الموضوعات التي لا تزال بحاجة إلى مزيد من الدراسة فيما يختص بالاسم ومرادفاته ومخصصاته من جهة، وذكر اللحية والذقن في المناظر والنصوص من جهة أخرى، وأسباب إطلاق شعر الوجه والذقن ودوافع تغطيته من جهة ثالثة، وأشكال هذه الأغطية كما ظهرت بالتمثيل في كلتا الحضارتين من جهة رابعة. حيث اعتمدت الباحثة في دراستها على المنهج الوصفي القائم على التحليل النقدي لأشكالها المختلفة. كما اعتمدت على المنهج التحليلي في عرض الآراء المختلفة حول تربية شعر الوجه واللحية وأغطيتها في سياقات مختلفة في كلتا الحضارتين. وأخيراً تطرقت الدراسة إلى أبرز النتائج، والتي منها: أن الذقون واللحي وأغطيتها قد عُرفت بالعديد من الأسماء والمدلولات اللغوية في اللغة المصرية والسومرية والآكادية، كما تطورت أشكالها وأنواعها في كل من مصر وبلاد ما بين النهرين عبر العصور. وميزت الدراسة من خلال شكل اللحية بين العرق المصري والعراقي والليبي والسوري، كما ميزت الدراسة بين مرتبة المصري القديم سواء أكان ملكاً أم فرداً عادياً من خلال شكل اللحية ومظهرها. وميز العراقي القديم بين الكاتب الآشوري والكاتب الآرامي من حيث إطلاق اللحية أو حلقها. علاوة على ذلك، خلصت الدراسة إلى تعدد دوافع إطلاق اللحية بين كونها مقياساً للذكورة والنضج، ومقياساً للحكم والسلطة، ومقياساً للأبوة والشيخوخة، ومقياساً للعمر، ومقياساً للقوة والهيبة، ومقياساً للتدين. وتعددت دوافع تغطيتها ما بين تثبيت اللحية والشارب، ومنع تعرضها للأتربة، وللتستر والتخفي، وللشعور بالدفء، وللتعبير عن الحزن والحداد، وبصفتها مقياساً للقداسة والطهارة. وتباينت أنواع أغطية اللحية من خلال الدراسة ما بين غطاء لربع الوجه (الذقن واللحية)، وغطاء لثلث الوجه (اللحية والذقن والفم)، وغطاء لنصف الوجه (اللحية والذقن والفم والأنف)، وغطاء قناعي لكامل الوجه (باستثناء فتحات العينين).

[EN] Facial hair and beards were known in the ancient Near East, especially in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, covering facial hair and beard in both civilizations is a topic that still needs extensive study regarding the name, appearance in scenes and texts, reasons for rising, and motives for covering in both civilizations. In this paper, the researcher adopted the descriptive approach based on a critical analysis of the various shapes. She also relied on the descriptive analytical approach of presenting facial hair and beard coverings in different contexts. The study concluded that the beard and its coverings were known by many names and linguistic connotations in the Egyptian, Sumerian, and Akkadian languages. The beard shapes in Egypt and Mesopotamia were developed through the ages as they distinguished the Egyptian, Iraqi, Libyan, or Syrian races. The ancient Egyptian distinguished between a king and an individual through the beard shapes. The ancient Iraqi also distinguished between the Assyrian writer and the Aramaic writer regarding rising or shaving the beard. The motives for growing a beard were measures of masculinity and maturity, judgment and authority, parenthood and old age, power and prestige, and religiosity. The motives for covering the beard included fixing the beard and mustache, protecting them from dirt and dust, concealment and incognito, feeling warm, expressing mourning and sadness, and measures of holiness and purity. The types of beard coverings varied and included covering the quarter, third, half, and entire face.

KEYWORDS: Beard, facial hair, cover, hood, mask, lytham (veil), Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Pre-dynasty.

I. INTRODUCTION

From pre-dynastic times, facial hair and beards¹ were known in the ancient Near East, especially in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. However, historical sources have not defined an explicit time limit for growing beards in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, especially during the Pre-dynastic era. Small numbers of ivory statues discovered lately in the cities of «Nekhen»² and «Naqada II»³ in Egypt and the cities of «Ur»⁴ and «Eridu»⁵ in Mesopotamia were mostly portrayed as gods or people with loose clothes, beards, and sometimes with a helmet like a hooded head, which Dellaporte considered symbols of ancient heroes⁶.

While most of the ancient world's people grew their beards, some men used to shave them under the pretext of personal cleanliness and avoid dirt and insects⁷. Others covered them with covers or *lytham* (veils) for purity, ritual or religious purposes, a community tradition of manliness, or expressing sadness in some Ancient near East peoples, such as the Jews⁸.

Some studies addressed the beard. For example, Burch⁹ tackled the beard as one of the vocabularies of the Bible. Dunn¹⁰ discussed wigs, in general, and fake beards, in particular. Hardy¹¹ conducted a short study of the history of the beard and its forms. Moreover, Naomi and Demond¹² explored the fake beard of the Pharaoh. Mahrān¹³ discussed the chin and beard and their types and shapes.

The present paper explores the name and cover of the beard in the Egyptian, Sumerian and Akkadian languages, the mention of the beard in the archaeological and

¹ The beard «*lihya*» in the dictionaries of the Arabic language is the hair growing on the face of an adult man, and may refer to the mustache and beard is a name that collects from the hair that grows on the cheeks and chin. The beard is on which the hair grew, and the plural of the beard «*luha*», «*liha*». To Burch, it represents: «All hair that grows around the chin area, including or without the mustache». BURCH 2000: 15; IBNMAKRAM 2003: 185.

² The city of *Nekhen* (Hierakonpolis) is in the south of Luxor about 140 km, between the cities of Esna and Edfu. HOFFMAN 1982: 1; HOFFMAN 1986: 175–187.

³ Naqada II is the center of the Qena governorate. It is located on the western shore of the Nile, and it overlooks the Nile River. Naqada is 31 km south of Qena and 25 km north of Luxor. HISHMAT 2016.

⁴ Ur is the archaeological site of a Sumerian city located in Tal al-Muqeer, southern Iraq. It was the capital of the Sumerian state in 2100 BC. It was an oval city located on the mouth of the Euphrates River in the Persian Gulf near Eridu. LLOYD 1993: 4.

⁵ Eridu, now known as Tal Abu Shahir, is an ancient Iraqi city located 7 miles southwest of Ur. Archaeologists believe Eridu was one of the Sumerian's oldest towns, dating back 5000 years BC. CAMPBELL 1920: 44–101.

⁶ DELAPORTE 1997: 196; BIGOT 1913: PL. XCVI.

⁷ KEITA 1993: 132.

⁸ SHULCHAN 1565: 182.

⁹ BURCH 2000: 3.

¹⁰ DUNN 2018: <http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/beards.htm> (Accessed on 19/04/2021)

¹¹ HARDY 2015.

¹² NAOMI 2020: <https://classroom.synonym.com/meaning-egyptian-pharaohs-fake-beards-9120.html>

¹³ MAHRĀN 2016: 217- 256.

textual evidence in both ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, as well as the material and moral motives for growing and covering the beard. It also deals with types and various forms of beard covering.

The hair of the head and beard were one of the most important features of ancient Egyptian art. The ancient Egyptians showed a great interest in their head and beard hair and how to care for it¹⁴. Therefore, the paintings and sculptures showed that the Egyptians meant to cut and trim their hair and used wigs and fake beards to garnish during celebrations and holidays¹⁵.

Cutting hair and shaving beards are old as the Egyptian civilization itself, as expressed in the pyramid texts in the Old Kingdom and some scenes of hair cutting from the Middle Kingdom. Furthermore, the tools used to cut hair and shave beards appeared in the pyramid texts of the Old kingdom¹⁶.

Nevertheless, cutting hair and beards was not dominant in ancient Near East countries, especially in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The keeping and growing of beards were one of the ancient customs known in those civilizations. In most of the ancient East Asia peoples¹⁷, many finest works added beards of a particular and authentic nature to the features of their characters¹⁸.

The facial hair and beards in the ancient Near East, in general, and ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, in particular, were known during the pre-dynastic times. However, historical sources have not specified an explicit time limit for growing beards in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia during the Pre-dynastic era. Small numbers of statues made of clay, ivory, or wood were discovered late in the cities of *Nekhen* (Hierakonpolis) and «*Ur*», as some scholars believed that they might represent the god of fertility: *Min*¹⁹ in ancient Egypt or *Anki* in Mesopotamia, and among those statues was a stone statue dating back to the era of the *Naqada* II civilization (around 3500 BC)²⁰ [FIGURES 1–2].

¹⁴ STEELE 1997: 69.

¹⁵ LEVENTON 2008: 86.

¹⁶ PECK 2013: 74.

¹⁷ SMITH 1962: 47.

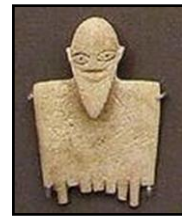
¹⁸ ROAF 1990: 116.

¹⁹ SELIGMANN 1911: 165; BLACKMANN 1916: 199 –206; VAN DER 1918: 64; MORET 1913: 80 –3; RICE 2003: 109–10; FRANKFORT 2011: 73; HELCK 1950: 120-142, (126); POSENER 1955: 193–5.

²⁰ KEITA 1993: 129–154; FRANKFORT 2011: 73; HELCK 1950: 120 - 142, (126); POSENER 1955: 193-195.



[FIGURE 1]. A statue of a bearded man from Naqada
<http://www.nemo.nu/ibisportal/0egyptintro/2aegypt/index.htm>,
 (Accessed on 7/6/2021)



[FIGURE 2]. An ivory comb topped with a bearded man with a covered beard
<http://www.nemo.nu/ibisportal/0egyptintro/2aegypt/index.htm>,
 (Accessed on 7/6/2021)

From the early archaic period [FIGURE 3],²¹ male kings and sometimes queens were portrayed in many statues and paintings in men's shapes with false divine beards²². They grew their beards as a sign of the king's greatness and power. Furthermore, for the kings of the age of establishment, growing beards was the dominant feature of the royal personality of the time²³.



[FIGURE3]: A wooden statue of a bearded man from Naqada; OKASHA 1971: FIG.59



[FIGURE 4]. A fake beard of the king Scorpion; SELIM 2000: 78, FIG. 5.



[FIGURE 5]. A fake beard of King Na'r-mer; SELIM 2000: 82, FIGS. 6-7

Growing beards was a distinctive feature of differences between peoples and races, especially between the ancient Egyptian and other peoples of the ancient Near East or ancient Asians ²⁴ [FIGURE 6].

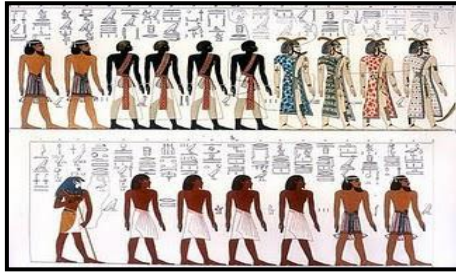
²¹ Many archaeological studies proved this. For instance, on the top of his limestone scepter, the king Scorpion had both a beard and a chin [FIGURE4]. On the stela of Na'r-mer, the king and his follower the «Vizier» or the royal sandal bearer, had beards and chins [FIGURE5].

²² COTTRELL 1955: 21.

²³ REDFORD 2002: 36.

²⁴ COTTRELL 1955: 33;

For example, one of the «Aamu» people painted on the walls of the tomb of the Khnumhotep II in Beni-Hasan appeared in distinctive clothes. He painted his skin with a light color that was different from the skin color of those around him. He had his hair long until it reached behind his neck. A short beard on his cheek and chin looked like that of the Aamu people. KAMRIN 2009: 26, FIG.4.



[FIGURE 6]. Four Egyptians, Nubians, Syrians, and Libyans with beards
www.christian-guys.net,
(Accessed on 7/6/2021)



[FIGURE 7]. A member of the *Aamu* people with a beard.
KARIN 2009: 26, FIG.4

Although Hornblower believed that the statues and scenes depicted with beard covers refer to the human race, they might not be Egyptians but Sumerians²⁵. This is confirmed by Baumgartl that the difference in the representation of the beard on these small statues only indicated the difference in the human race also ²⁶[FIGURE8]. In contrast, others argued that these statues referred to the emergence of certain deities during this early period. Then, it appeared clearly in the subsequent periods.

Growing beards was generally common in the old world's art²⁷, especially in Mesopotamia. Nonetheless, many paintings showed the Assyrians with strange and unfamiliar beards that were not common in Assyrian art²⁸.

During the Old Kingdom, many statues of kings [FIGURE 9] and individuals showed facial hair and beards²⁹. In the First Intermediate Period, beards appeared widely on the masks of mummies³⁰. Then, in the Middle Kingdom³¹, the habit of keeping beards was known in rare cases, such as mourning or on an exploratory trip³².

²⁵ HALL 1985: 73.

²⁶ VANDIER 1952: 421.

²⁷ Apparently, caring about chins and growing beards was a habit of Punt land peoples since old ages; the ruler of Punt land appeared on one of the wall paintings of the Temple of *Deir al-Bahari* with a hanging beard with a sharp end. It is the same form that the delegations of Punt land had from the reign of king *Khufu* of the fourth dynasty. COTTRELL 1955: 171. This finding asserts that growing beards was one of Punt land's peoples' features. Moreover, Syrian people were recorded in many ancient Egyptian paintings with several types of chins and beards.

²⁸ In one of the scenes, a group of Assyrians appeared with their known Semitic features. They were portrayed in a profile position. In comparison, iris-eye had a sectorial line that first appeared in art works dating back to the reign of King Sargon (about 72 –705 BC). TARBELL 1907; MELLINK 1974: 63.

²⁹ TARBELL 1907.

³⁰ BAINES 1984: 8.

³¹ It appeared in many of the Middle Kingdom paintings preserved in the British Museum, such as those kept under the N^o. BM226 - some individuals sat on a chair without a backrest, while the chin and prominent jaw area were decorated with the hanging beard [FIGURE 10]. FRANKE 2002: 8, FIG.1.

³² DUNN 2018: <http://www.touregypt.net/featuresstories/beards.htm> (Accessed on 19/04/2021)



[FIGURE 8]. Two prisoners, one of them a Libyan with a mustache and a beard and the other a Nubian

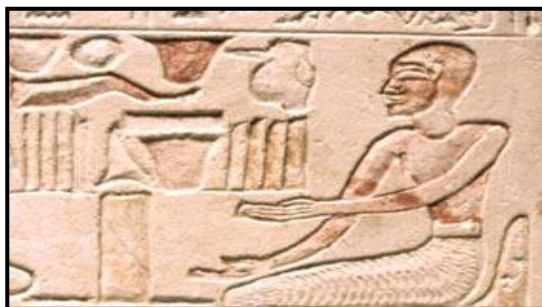
[Http://louvre-statuette-personnage-masculin.com](http://louvre-statuette-personnage-masculin.com)(Accessed on 20/10/2020)



[FIGURE 9]. A black granite statue of King Menkaure with a rectangular beard

EGYPTIAN MUSEUM GUIDE 1999: 36.

In the New Kingdom, Egyptian kings used to grow their beards or put on artificial false ones³³ to look like gods. For instance, queen Hatshepsut (Ca. 1500 BC.) put on a beard as a symbol of manliness, cruelty, and force³⁴[FIGURE 11]. Growing beards, perhaps, was one of the matters that affected many of the following civilizations in Egypt, especially during the Greek and Roman ages³⁵. It was the same in Mesopotamian, where the king *Nebuchadnezzar Baal* (Ca. 884-860 BC.) was portrayed in one of the wall paintings in his palace in *Nimrud*³⁶, with a very normal beard combed in lines with braided curls³⁷.



[FIGURE 10]. A scene of an individual with a distinctive beard; British Museum Stone BM EA 226. FRANKE 2002:8, FIG.1



[FIGURE 11]. The head of a statue of Queen Hatshepsut with the royal beard of men;

EGYPTIAN MUSEUM GUIDE 1999: 65

The beard was portrayed on a wall sculpture³⁸ from the reign of the Assyrian king *Sargon* (Ca. 721-705 BC) on the chins of two writers recording the numbers of prisoners and spoils. A striking thing about this inscription was that the writer who wrote on the parchment was bearded, while the writer who wrote on the clay tablet appeared to have shaved facial hair and a mustache. This does not necessarily mean that the

³³ SCHÄFER 1925: 79; BRUNNER 1952: 253-262

³⁴ BURCH 2000: 157.

³⁵ TARBELL 2002: 9F.

³⁶ *Nimrud* is an Assyrian city, located 30 km south of Mosul in Iraq. It was founded in the thirteenth century BC. In the ninth century BC, it became the capital of the modern Assyrian empire during the reign of king *Ashur Nasir pal II* and was destroyed in the year 612 BC by the Chaldeans and the Medes, 2020.

³⁷ TARBELL 2002.

³⁸ This sculpture is likely to date 715 BC. WOLFRAM 1996: 179; READE 1972: 97.

bearded writer, who appeared in the Assyrian paintings, was an Assyrian writer, nor was the one who shaved beard and a mustache Aramaic³⁹.

Growing beards by some characters in ancient Egypt as they appeared in religion and art remained a mystery that needed further clarification and explanation. In ancient Egypt, shaving⁴⁰ the beards and cutting the facial hair were signs of respect and reverence, as was the case in Mesopotamia⁴¹. Nevertheless, growing beards was one of the matters that connected a person to the ranks of the great gods, whose beards were made of lapis lazuli and were depicted braided and raising the king to be like a god on earth⁴².



[FIGURE 12]. Barbers in the Egyptian market
YWSİF 2012: FIG.32.

While the great majority of the peoples of the ancient Near East kept their beards, some men used to shave the maunder on the pretext of personal cleanliness, priesthood, or ritual scruples⁴³. Some others used to cover their beards with covers, *lytham* (veils), or a piece of cloth for either purity, ritual or religious purposes, a community tradition of manliness, or express sadness in the peoples of the ancient Near East, such as the Jews⁴⁴.

³⁹ SAAI 1997: 16; RUSSELL 1998: 137; AL JUMAILY 2005: 201.

⁴⁰ The ancient Egyptian Barber used razors, often made of copper or bronze, and had wooden, metal, or gold handles. They used stones for sharpening them. They also used combs in hairdressing, similar to those that have been used until recently, including wide combs with double edges, and some with fine teeth for cleaning. The combs were used for decorating their hair too [FIGURE 12]. YOUSSEF 2013: 270-271, FIG.100.

⁴¹ The registrars of war spoil' records during the campaigns of king *Taglat Blazer* III (745-727 BC) illustrated a haircut of Aramaic origins. AL-ḤĀDĪDĪ 2001; WOLFRAM 1996: 179-180; SAAI 1997: 96.

⁴² REDFORD 2002: 36; BEEK 1962: 27.

⁴³ SROUHAL 1989: 235.

⁴⁴ ATALLAH 2005: 171.

II. THE BEARD AND ITS COVERS IN THE EGYPTIAN, SUMERIAN, AND AKKADIAN LANGUAGES

The facial hair and beards were known in the dictionaries of the ancient Egyptian language by many words, including (𓆎𓆏𓆐𓆑) «*hbswt*»⁴⁵, (𓆎𓆏𓆐) «*in^c*»⁴⁶, (𓆎𓆏𓆐𓆑) «*in^ct*»⁴⁷, (𓆎𓆏𓆐𓆑) «*n^cn*»⁴⁸, (𓆎𓆏𓆐𓆑) «*r^cr*»⁴⁹, (𓆎𓆏𓆐) «*m³^c*»⁵⁰. So, it showed the difference between a natural and a false beard from its determinative. The natural beard had a natural beard determinative: (𓆎), while the false one had a fiber beard determinative: (𓆏).

The covers were referred to by many words, such as (𓆎𓆏𓆐) «*ndb*» «i.e., to cover»⁵¹, (𓆎𓆏𓆐) «*hbs*» «i.e., to cover or hide using clothes or fabrics»⁵², (𓆎𓆏𓆐𓆑) «*hbsw*» «i.e., to cover with clothes»⁵³, (𓆎𓆏𓆐𓆑) «*hbs-hr*» «i.e., to cover or hide the face»⁵⁴, (𓆎𓆏𓆐) «*hbs*» «i.e., to cover with the clothes»⁵⁵, and (𓆎𓆏𓆐) «*sm³*» «i.e., the hair cover that covers part of the head, the scalp, or the side»⁵⁶.

⁴⁵ FCD 1976: 187.

⁴⁶ ERMAN&GRAPOW (EDS.): *Wb.1*: 12, 94.

⁴⁷ ERMAN&GRAPOW (EDS.): *Wb.1*: 94, 13; SMITH PAPYRUS 8.10; 9.4; 9.13; 9.16. ERMAN&GRAPOW (EDS.) 1971: *Wb.1* (Belegstellen): 13, 94.

⁴⁸ It showed a group of human body parts represented by the front of the head, eyebrows, eyes, nose, mouth, teeth, throat, tongue, lips, chin, ear, neck, shoulders, and *m³^c* - an area between the chin and the ear. Although the word «*n^cn*» represented one of the parts of the human body in Singer's opinion, Erman translated it as «the skull» Schädel, contrary to the Berlin dictionary *WB*: SINGER 2021: 62 -3; ERMAN2018: 20; ERMAN&GRAPOW(EDS.) 1982 : *Wb.1*: 13, 191; This name was mentioned in the papyrus of Leiden I 348 (ZANDEE 1984) and the papyrus of Chester Beatty: GARDINER 1931, Mutter & Kind: *P. Leiden* I 348, Spells 5 (3, 2), 15 (10, 1), 16(10, 3), 17 (10, 8)& 18 (11, 3), Chester Beatty V = P. BM 10685 Vs. 3(4, 10), 2(5, 2), 2(6, 3), 2 (6, 4)& 2(6, 5), P. Budapest 51.1961, Spells 2 (1, 7), 3 (2, 6) &3 (2, 7); ERMAN 1901: E (4, 2); ERMAN&GRAPOW(EDS.) 1982: *Wb.1* (Belegstellen): 13, 191.

⁴⁹ *Wb* as: «part of the human body» (*Korperteil*) without determining which part it refers to (?). It belongs to the Book of the Dead *Totenbuch* because it was defined by Berlin Dictionary ERMAN&GRAPOW(EDS.) 1982: *Wb.1*; NAVILLE 1886: 17, 172; ERMAN&GRAPOW (EDS.) 1982: *Wb.1* (Belegstellen): 6, 210.

⁵⁰ It dates back to the Middle Kingdom. The Berlin dictionary translated it as «a part of the human body», including the area between the eye (*Ouge*) and the ear (*Ohr*). It might refer to the hair bread and its curls (Harrflechte). In contrast, SINGER explained it as a part of the human face, containing the chin, ears, jaw area, or eye area. ERMAN&GRAPOW (EDS.) 1982: *Wb.2*: 9-10, 24; SINGER 2021: 63.

⁵¹ BATES 2004: 125.





⁵² (𓆎𓆏𓆐𓆑), (𓆎𓆏𓆐): BATES 2004: 125.





⁵³ BATES 2004: 125, 397.

⁵⁴ BATES 2004:125.

⁵⁵ BATES 2004: 131.

⁵⁶ BATES 2004: 155.

Still, other words have the meaning of «enclosing or surrounding something to cover and hide it» such as: (, , ) «šni»⁵⁷, and: () «k3p» meaning: «to cover himself to hide like Lytham (veil)»⁵⁸.

In the Sumerian language, the word: (, , , )⁵⁹ «NUNDUN- LĀ»⁶⁰ means: «Beard»⁶¹, while the word «beard» is mentioned in Akkadian language to mean (*Zaḡnu*) «Zaḡānu»⁶².

The word «SA», meaning «strand» or «cue», while the words: «šētu» and «riksu» always come in the form of an adjective for the syntactic, which is either «hair», «ropes», or «nets».⁶³ As for the covering or the process of covering with clothes or fabrics. It was mentioned in Sumerian as «liwitu», i.e., «cover» or «wrap» and «liwiti», i.e., «covering» or «wrapping»⁶⁴.

III. THE BEARD AND ITS COVERS IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TEXTUAL EVIDENCE

Bearded statues were known in ancient Egypt from the era of «Naqada I» and the beginning of Naqada II. According to Hornblower, they mostly represented carved pieces imported from the countries bordering Egypt⁶⁵, in general, and Mesopotamia, in particular⁶⁶.

This issue was evidenced by the presence of the head of a god made of burnt-coloured clay with an oval shape that was found broken in the *Marmadat Bani Salama* area⁶⁷. The chin of this head was decorated with a group of holes in which ribbons or ropes were attached (a metaphor for the beard), which was only hung during the celebrations⁶⁸.

Petrie mentioned that those statues, which depicted men with shaved heads while they were provided with beards, were of people who came before the Egyptians⁶⁹. He found a similar statue in the «Naqada» area depicting a statue of a man with holes in

⁵⁷ BATES 2004: 183, 341.

⁵⁸ BATES 2004: 192.

⁵⁹ BATES 1979: 18.

⁶⁰ BATES 1979: 51.

⁶¹ (su6) which means «beard» in: Towards an etymological dictionary *SUMERIAN EGYPTIAN*2020.

⁶² BLACK 2000: 445, LABAT 1979, «Towards an etymological dictionary (Sumerian Egyptian)», <https://mahjoubinfo.wordpress.com/2016/12/04/> (Accessed on 18/9/2020)

⁶³ AL-OBAIDI 2012: Z.

⁶⁴ AHMED 2012: 187, VEENHOOF 1972: 27, MALLOWAN 1957: 69.

⁶⁵ VANDIER 1952: 421.

⁶⁶ ŠYTT 2000: 127.

⁶⁷ ADIB 1997: 17.

⁶⁸ It is considered as a sort of flags in Ancient Egypt: ENGELBACH 1999: 74.

⁶⁹ CAPART 1905: 158- 159, FIG.121; ATALLAH : 163–191 (171).

his chin hanging, from which four black bands might be a metaphor for the beard if the statue was of a man⁷⁰ or with holes in the chin area only [FIGURE 13].



[FIGURE 13]. A wooden statue with holes in the chin area to fix the beard.

SELIM 2011: 159, FIG.19.

The beard was, in some cases, depicted with its lower part widening slightly from the top, as was the case in the statues of the king *Menkaure*, a model that was prevalent in the official depiction of kings in the Old Kingdom⁷¹ [FIGURE 14]. Instead, kings wore flat and synthetic beards attached to ropes around the ears or head, which soon developed into the form of the *Osird Beard*⁷², in the form of a braided plait of several strands, while its end was bent slightly forward, resembling *Wsir*, the god of the dead⁷³, linking the wearer to the ranks of the gods⁷⁴. In contrast, individuals wore a short beard of one lock⁷⁵.



[FIGURE 14]. The king has a large beard statue in his triad sculpture.

EGYPTIAN MUSEUM GUIDE 1999: 36



[FIGURE 15]. The golden mask of Tutankhamun

EGYPTIAN MUSEUM GUIDE 1999:86.

In Mesopotamia, male statues were naked, with a snake-like face, a conical-shaped crown, and long beards⁷⁶. Male statues made of mud-colored with a light beard were also discovered in the city of «*Ur*» and «*Eridu*»⁷⁷. Later, the Sumerians were distinguished by shaving their beards, while the Babylonians kept them long and cropped in square shapes⁷⁸. In the Assyrian era, the hair and beard were wavy, curled and braided⁷⁹. The men of the ancient Greek⁸⁰ and Mesopotamia civilizations wore

⁷⁰ PETRIE 1895: 13-4.

⁷¹ DUNN 2018: <http://www.toureygypt.net/featurestories/beards.htm> (Accessed on 19/04/2021)

⁷² Sometimes, *Osiris* appears without his divine artificial beard. See, his scene in «*Philaè*», where he appears standing between *Isis* and *Nephtys*. BUDGE 1973: 48, FIG.29.

⁷³ As well as the Mask of the king *Tutankhamen*: for example [FIGURE 15].

⁷⁴ REDFORF 2005: 36; BEEK 1962: 27.

⁷⁵ WILKSON 2003: 116.

⁷⁶ AL-SHEIKH 1985: 68; JEREMY 1992, LAMBERT 1992: 541.

⁷⁷ AL-AGĀ 2004: 117.

⁷⁸ LLOYD 1964: 131, FIG.93; LLOYD 1993: 102; SELIM 2011: 149, BEEK 1963.

⁷⁹ PARROT 1961: 19, FIG. 23.

beards and treated them with incredible respect and care, using wax, oils, and moisturizers that helped them maintain the appearance of their beards in their best condition at all times⁸¹.

One of the frescoes of the Assyrian king *Tjellat Blazer III*⁸² (Ca. 745 - 727 BC) in *Tell Parsib*⁸³ showed two writers. The first with a beard was an Assyrian, and the second portrayed as a shaven-bearded was an Aramaic writer⁸⁴. Perhaps, these two writers represented the two styles of writing (cuneiform and Aramaic) during the modern Assyrian era (Ca. 911-612 BC)⁸⁵.

Bearded scribes might appear regularly during the reign of *Tjellat Blazer III* and beyond⁸⁶. Researchers disagree on these two writers. For example, Reade believes that the shaved writer was an Aramaic writer who wrote in Aramaic⁸⁷. In contrast, Mazloum argues that the clean-shaven writer was not an Aramaic writer but an Assyrian painter.⁸⁸

Often, this beard was provided with an accurate representation of the beard's hair or a brief representation of the lines and grooves of the sides of the chin [Figure 16], with grooves and ornaments covering the entire chin [FIGURE 17]. It might also be provided with holes indicating the beard hair⁸⁹ [FIGURE 18].



[FIGURE 16]. The head of a statue shows the beard in the form of two sidelines
©ATALLAH 2005: FIG.20.



[FIGURE 17]. One of the statues found in the temple of *Apo*. SELIM 2011: 152, FIG.12.



[FIGURE 18]. The bronze head of a statue of King *Urnmo*;
SELIM 2011:153, FIG.14.

⁸⁰ The Greece civilization knew the raising of the beard as a punishment for the enemy. The great Alexander asked his soldiers to shave beards before the war, so the enemies did not sign it as a weakness in war: HARDY 2015.

⁸¹ ABDALLA 2000; <https://beardpilot.com/pages/beard-history>, (Accessed on 25/08/2022).

⁸² EL-KILANY 1999: 32-33; HABIB 1986: 115-116.

⁸³ *Tell Barsab (Tell al-Ahimer)*: It was an impregnable fortress and was considered the principal city of the Aramaic queen *Bet-Adeni*. This city is located on the Euphrates River in Syria. The Assyrian King *Shalmaneser III* (858-824 BC) changed the name of this city after seizing it in the famous battle of *al-Qarqar* against this kingdom and its allies. It continued as a center for an Assyrian province until the fall of the Assyrian state: MAZLOUM 1985: 85.

⁸⁴ MAZLOUM 1971: 116.

⁸⁵ MAZLOUM 1971: 118.

⁸⁶ READE 1972: 96-97.

⁸⁷ READE 1972: 97.

⁸⁸ MAZLOUM 1985: 116.

⁸⁹ PETRIE 1895: 45, PL.59, 2, 4, 8a, 10; PETRIE 1920: 7, 9, PLS.1, 9; 1-2, 4; PETRIE 1933: 29, PLS.10, 46; CAPART 1905: 76, 80, FIG.47; LECLANT 1979: 43; 56, FIG.47; 62.

However, most statues and engravings depicting male figures with beards were greatly exaggerated in engraving and decorating the curls of the hair and beard [FIGURES 20-21].



[FIGURE 20]. An inscription of king *Ashur II* showing hair and beard decorations; SELIM 2011:156, FIG.18.



[FIGURE 21].An engraving of a group of musicians with wrinkles of hair and beard SELIM 2011: 154, FIG.17.

Most of these beards in both Egypt and Mesopotamia civilizations were not provided with grooves or ornaments, confirming that most of these statues, if not all, were provided with beard covers. Most of these beard covers were depicted on primitive statues carved from ivory⁹⁰ or alabaster⁹¹ in particular [FIGURES 22-23], which according to the material and the technique of manufacture, date back to pre-dynastic times⁹².



[FIGURE 22]. Bearded statues Brooklyn Museum



[FIGURE 23].Bearded statue Brooklyn Museum

If we consider the exaggerated shape of the beard, the lack of details, notches, or braids expressing the strands of the beard's hair, and its elongation outside the bounds of the chin area, we may conclude that it did not reflect a natural beard. Rather, it represented the covers containing the beard as if they were like a veil [FIGURES 24-25], as the features of the face and eyes appeared naturally. In contrast, the features of the mouth or nose sometimes disappeared completely under the hood or the veil or appeared in simple lines under the veil at other times.

⁹⁰ PETRIE 1920: PLS.7, 9, 1, 10; VANDIER 1952: 420, PL.282, 10; PETRIE 1886, PL.59. 3; BAYNE 2012: 237, FIG.81.

⁹¹ VANDIER 1952: 423, FIGs.3, 283.

⁹² SCHARFF 1929: 28, PL.29.



[FIGURE 24]. Ivory-bearded statue of a man or gods-Naqada
OKASHA 1971: FIG.59.



[FIGURE 25]. Another ivory-bearded statue of a man or gods-Naqada
OKASHA 1971: FIG.54.

Beard hoods were unusual for the inscriptions and statues of men depicted with a beard, as these hoods appeared in their most straightforward states of elongation parallel to the size, shape, and length of the chin⁹³, especially in most statues and decorative combs [FIGURE 26] during pre-dynastic ages in both civilizations, which were mostly made of small ivory pieces. The masculine bodies were characterized by an exaggerated elongation of the chin, which some described as «a long pointed beard»⁹⁴. The writer believes it represented a beard or veil.



[FIGURE 26]. A comb in the form of a bearded man.
© Brooklyn Museum

Perhaps, most of the beard covers took the shape of a triangular tapered end with straight sides. The chin covering was a clear example of statues with a long, tapered triangular beard, which might reach close to the chest⁹⁵, waist area, or sometimes to the navel area [FIGURES 27/a-b], distinguished by being convex hoods. Thus, the entire beard was wrapped and covered with it⁹⁶.



[FIGURE 27/A]: A statue of a bearded man to the top of the navel;
©Boston Museum



[FIGURE 27/B]: A detailed view of the previous figure;
©Boston Museum

⁹³ cATALLAH 2005: 163–191.

⁹⁴ CAPART 1905: 80, FIG. 47; VANDIER 1952: 421, FIG. 283, 7; PETRIE 1886: 45, PL.59, 7; SCHARFF 1929: 30, PLS.10, 47-48; DE MORGAN 1896: 451, FIG.373; PAYNE 1993: 20, FIG.12, 47.

⁹⁵ ROAF 1990: 67.

⁹⁶ MELLINK 1974: FIG.195/a-b; PAYNE 2012. 13, PL. 6; AL-SHEIKH 1985: 57.

The habit of covering the lower part of the face with a cover in general or covering the chin and beard with a hood was a known habit during the late «*Naqada I*» era (stages 50-60). When small pendants were found, they were made of seashells [FIGURE28], limestone, or, in rare cases, copper, where such tools were attached to the forehead of a person. Therefore, according to some opinions, a hook was fixed at the bottom of it, to which the hood or the beard cover was attached⁹⁷ [FIGURE 29].



[FIGURE 28]. A piece of a seashell holds the veil or the beard cover.
©ATALLAH 2005: FIG.49.



[FIGURE 29]. A piece of an engraved seashell with a hole in the bottom; Louvre Museum
DELAPORT 1997: 185, FIG.22.

It is worth noting that it was possible to find one of these pendants fixed in its place on the skull of one of the dead, demonstrating how they were decided and the purpose of their use. Perhaps, the reason for not finding many examples of these pendants is that most of them were probably made of perishable and mortal materials, suggesting their rarity in tombs and on mummies. Otherwise, we would have found many adequate numbers to study⁹⁸.

IV. MOTIVES FOR THE BEARD'S RAISING AND COVERING

The beard and its covering were important matters in the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamia civilizations because they highlighted the social status of a person, whether a king or a common person; Egyptian, Iraqi, or foreigner; god or human. The habit of covering the beard was one of the few things to depict and model, despite its primitive origin. The reasons that prompted some ancient Egyptians and Iraqis to grow beards, on the one hand, and the motives for covering them, on the other, varied. The following section is an enumeration of the most important reasons and motives.

⁹⁷ ©ATALLAH 2005: 171.

⁹⁸ CAPART 1905: 104, FIG.21, ©ATALLAH 1995: 40ff.

1. Motives for growing a beard

A. A measure of masculinity and maturity

Although the ancient Egyptians had an original beard that grew normally, they preferred false beards out of great concern for hygiene. They considered long beards, mustaches, and thick eyebrows signs of a lack of hygiene⁹⁹. The ancient Egyptians were careful not to remove only facial hair but also full-bodied hair¹⁰⁰.

The beard in ancient Egypt was indicative of the level of strength, manliness, and fertility. Raising the beard usually gave an impression of the characteristics of those with experience and wisdom in the tribal community due to their old age, which was the same reason that prompted the ancient Egyptians and Iraqis to grow beards¹⁰¹.

The concern of the king of Assyria, «the father», with his son, the ruler of the city of «Mary», was expressed in one of the cuneiform writings in a letter through the «royal delegates¹⁰²»: «*You are still a child, and you are not a man. Has the beard not grown on your chin yet? Have you not yet succeeded in achieving maturity, and have you not established a house for yourself yet?*»¹⁰³.

B. A measure of beauty

In one of the poems about the spinning between the goddess «*Inana*» and the god *Damouzi*, we read about the beauty of the beard of *Damouzi*, which *Inana* likened to lapis lazuli: «*How charming is his lapis lazuli beard, that shepherd that Anne created for me*»¹⁰⁴.

C. A measure of the legendary hero

A statue¹⁰⁵ of a bearded, prolific man, animalistic, wicked-smiling, red-skinned, was found. Its face was marked by a slanting tangle that was deliberately executed, starting from the top of the nose, passing through the right cheek, and ending at the root of the abundant curly beard around the sides of the face. It probably represents a statue of a mythical warrior hero whose face was left behind by wars and battles¹⁰⁶ [FIGURE 30].

⁹⁹ HARRIS 2012.

¹⁰⁰ STEELE 2009: 13.

¹⁰¹ FOX 2012: 110.

¹⁰² About the royal delegates, see: Mazloun 1985: 95ff.

¹⁰³ OTTOS 1985: 64.

¹⁰⁴ EL-MAGEDY 2001: 108.

¹⁰⁵ This statue dates back to the third millennium BC in the district of Persia, eastern south of Sheraz.

OKASHA 1971: 108.

¹⁰⁶ OKASHA 1971: 108.



[FIGURE30]. A statue of a legendary bearded hero;
OKASHA 1971: 109, FIG.48.

D. A measure of judgment and authority

In ancient Egyptian arts, we usually find the ancient Egyptians who were viziers and officials¹⁰⁷ with shaved beards. They were prompted to use «false beards»¹⁰⁸; to follow the example of the ruling class. According to Emery¹⁰⁹, the beard was a symbol of rule and authority, as evident in their statues, inscriptions, and colourful drawings as a feature of kings and pharaohs¹¹⁰. It was also evident in their texts:



«This beard of King P is among the elite stars of hm (Letopolis)¹¹¹».

It is worth noting that the king¹¹², even after his death, used to wear the royal beard. Maspero believed that the beards and nails were fixed to the royal mummies due to their importance after treating them chemically¹¹³. Whether natural or artificial, the beard's mission was not limited to playing the role of the beard. It referred to its owner with high social positions, such as kings¹¹⁴[FIGURE 31].

This case might differ from the situation in ancient Mesopotamia, as the beard was not one of the most important symbols and insignia of royalty¹¹⁵. A statue was found

¹⁰⁷ Two sons of vizier *Dagi* were shown seated on a chair, wearing a short skirt and curly short wig; while the chins were decorated with a short beard with a triangle-end shape. ARNOLD 2015: 124.

¹⁰⁸ These fake beards needed to be fixed with stripes around the head or ears, which were clearly shown in many statues and illustrations.

¹⁰⁹ EMERY 2000: 18.

¹¹⁰ STEELE 2009: 13.

¹¹¹ PYR: 1308A; ERMAN& GRAPOW(EDS.) 1982: Wb.1 (Belegstellen): 12, 94.

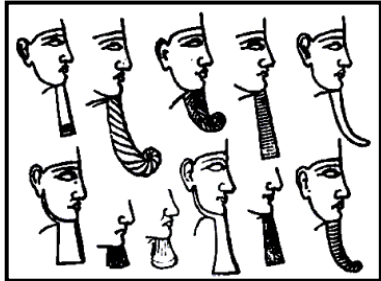
¹¹² There was: «The house of the morning». In the royal palace, there were specialists in cutting the king's hair and shaving his beard, as well as members of his family. In the Arab world, the barber is still called the *hairstylists* /«المزين»-الحلاق. JOACHIM 2006: 36.

¹¹³ SANDISON 1963: 63.

¹¹⁴ PECK 2013: 106.

¹¹⁵ The most important symbols of kingship in ancient Mesopotamia: «The crown, Scepter, crook, and measuring rope». AL-ṬĀ'Y 2008.

inside a vessel of the master of the city of *Warka*[FIGURE 32], showing him with a hood pulled to the forehead and neck together with a padded tie. It was provided with an unnatural beard rich in hair, fluted horizontally, as one of the artistic features of that era, which made a kind of heavenly holiness conferred on the statue¹¹⁶. Thus, the beard was to be covered in a grooved cover.



[FIGURE 31]. The different shapes of royal chins; www.arab-rationalists.net (Accessed on 25/6/2020)



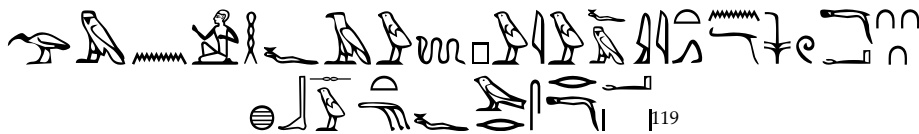
[FIGURE 32]. Alabaster statue of «the priest-king» and the bearded master of Uruk (*Warka*)-late Uruk; Iraq Museum, Baghdad, IM 61986crow. OKASHA 1971: 114, FIG.57.

E. A measure of parenthood and old age

For the ancient kings of Mesopotamia, the beard was a symbol of fatherhood and old age. It was not used for priestly purposes, as was the case in ancient Egypt. In contrast, the beard of the Assyrians in Mesopotamia and the Persians symbolized wisdom, similar to that in ancient Egypt, in which the beard was an important sign of authority¹¹⁷.

F. A measure of power and prestige

Ancient Egyptian history highlighted the extent of the Egyptians’ interest in having their heads and beards trimmed¹¹⁸. While many texts referred to the importance of growing a beard during different periods as an expression of power and prestige, in the story of «the drowned sailor», which dates back to the Middle Kingdom, we see how a huge snake with a beard more than two arms long greeting the sailor upon his arrival on this remote island:



gm.n.i hf3w pw iw.f m ii.t n swmh 30 hbsw.fwr.s r mh 2

«I found that what was coming to me was a huge snake whose length was 30 cubits, and it had a beard that was longer than the two arms¹²⁰». This indicates the role of the beard in maximizing a person’s strength and prestige so that the good deceased spoke

¹¹⁶ OKASHA 1971: 112.

¹¹⁷ COOPER 1971: 103.

¹¹⁸ Shaving hair and beard was one of the mandatory things of Egyptian soldiers where the barber in ancient Egypt always roamed the streets of villages. VON DASSOW 1998: 46; MILLBURN n. d.

¹¹⁹ DE BUCK 1948: 9–10, 101.

¹²⁰ LICHTHEIM 2006b: 212; *SHIPWRECKED SAILOR* 63-64; PEET 1931: 29.

to his soul as an analogy to «*Wsir*» to reach the end of his beard in the sense of power and prestige[FIGURE 33].

«*May you reach even the hairs of my beard, let you reach me even my feet*¹²¹».

One of the favorite subjects in Akkadian engraving art was also the depiction of the king surrounded by symbols of divinity, such as the sun and moon¹²², as an image of a mighty hero with a curly beard and strands¹²³ as a symbol of strength and prestige¹²⁴. Rather, pulling a person's hair¹²⁵ or beard¹²⁶ was a sign of humiliation¹²⁷.



[FIGURE 33]. *Wsir* in the human body with a beard;
MĀNĪŠ 2002: 64, FIG.52.



[FIGURE 34]. Two scenes of the victory stela of king *Naram Sin*;
Musée du Louvre

G. A measure of immortality and survival

The Egyptian pharaohs always imitated the god of the dead in the other world, *Wsir* even in his beard, after their departure from this world and transferring to the other. The kings of Egypt wore false beards after their death, and they were depicted on the roofs of the coffins wearing the beard, especially the slender divine beard that ended with a folded edge towards the front¹²⁸. On the contrary, the ancient Iraqi did not link between the beard, on the one hand, and the afterlife, the rites of death or burial, on the other hand.

¹²¹ *BD*. 1898: CXXXI (286. 11-12).

¹²² Such as the inscription of the Akkadian king *Sharrumkin*, who was depicted in the image of a deified king, climbing a steep slope in front of the warriors, and made a larger body than his companions on the obelisk of *Naram-Sin* on the occasion of his victory over Lullubini [FIGURE 34]. DIAKONOV 2000: FIG.92.

¹²³ As an inscription for the same king he fought with lions, his muscles tight, and in one hand held a jumping lion, and a dagger with which he stabbed a beast in western Persia with the other: DIAKONOV 2000.

¹²⁴ DIAKONOV 2000.

¹²⁵ It was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an when the Prophet *Moses* dragged his brother *Aaron* by his hair and beard to reprimand him for having instigated the Israelites to worship idols (calf). Allah says "[Aaron] said, "O son of my mother, do not seize [me] by my beard or by my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, 'You caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe [or await] my word.'" Compare with God speech: *He throws stelae and takes his brother's head pull him*": Holly Quran: VII/150.

¹²⁵ KORAN XX/94.

¹²⁷ LANGE 2016: 77-100.

¹²⁸ GABRIEL 2005: Nr°. 51.

Chapter 170 of the Book of the Dead refers to the role of the beards as one of the secrets of the king's survival, not only on the throne of worldly life but on the thrones of the gods in the afterlife, as well.



Tw ṛṛ.k ḥbsw<.k> mndtwy.ky mn<.k>ḥr stw.sn

«Your chin, <your> beard¹²⁹, and your cheeks hold <you> on their thrones¹³⁰».

H. A measure of religiosity

Although wearing beards was not the primary criterion of masculinity in ancient Egypt. But it also linked its owner to the ranks of the great gods. Hence, the Pharaohs wore beards. The prevailing style of the beard was by braiding a group of strands in the form of a thin and narrow braid, a pattern that connected them to the ranks of the gods. Perhaps, goat hair-according to Freedman - was the main component of this type of beard, which was usually wide at the top and slender at the bottom. The great Pharaohs put on a false beard during the celebration to express its importance, on the one hand, and to emphasize their divine lineage, on the other hand¹³¹.

Ancient Egyptian art also depicted the arts of neighboring countries in general and Mesopotamia in particular; their deities were similar to the features and characteristics of the Egyptian gods, and their religions were provided with beards of many shapes¹³².

Growing the sacred natural beard was one of the things that lost its popularity early in the history of ancient Egyptian civilization, as it was perhaps replaced by the divine beard of the gods and the fake human beard of the king, which also dates back to the ancient Egyptian civilization's concerns about cleanliness and purity. Certain types of legal restrictions on all groups of people made the poor wear beards continuously and regularly¹³³.

Beards were very interestingly depicted in ancient Egyptian art, indicating that the natural life of the individual outside the fanatical religious system imposed the presence of beards for many persons in the ancient Near East. The artists of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia expressed their opinion about growing beards among their neighborhood enemies with their various types and forms [FIGURE 35], which might

¹²⁹ FCD 1976: 187.

¹³⁰ BD. 1898: CLXXII (446. 13).

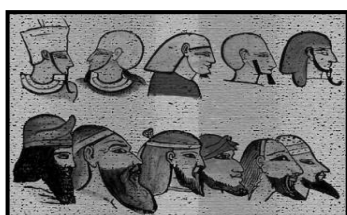
¹³¹ FREEDMAN 2000: 158.

¹³⁰ So Joab said to Amasa: «Are you at peace, my brother?», And Joab's right hand took a beard of Amasa to kiss it). Like a good fat on the head that goes down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, which goes down to the end of his clothing). (On that day, the master shaves with a rented razor the head and the hair of the two legs, and the beard shall be taken away also, and crosses the river, with the king of Assyria).Sam. 2: 9; 20; Ps. 2: 133; Is. 7: 20.

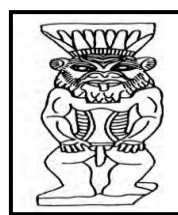
¹³³ SHAW & NICHOLSON 1995: 95.

highlight the reason for the popularity of growing the beards of most kings and individuals of the ancient Near East countries when they travelled abroad¹³⁴.

Even most of the Egyptian and Mesopotamia gods had beards indicating holiness and purity, including the god *Ra* that had a divine beard¹³⁵ and the god *Bes*¹³⁶ that was depicted in the form of a funny dwarf¹³⁷ whose face had curly hairs¹³⁸ with two long strips of hair in cheeks and a curly beard¹³⁹ [FIGURE 36]. The god *Khnum* was depicted in the form of a raised ram with two horns extending upwards and his chin adorned with a beard, indicating sacred nature¹⁴⁰ [FIGURE 37]. Moreover, the god *Ptah* appeared mostly in the form of a youth¹⁴¹ whose chin was adorned with a long straight beard¹⁴².



[FIGURE 35]. Different shapes of Egyptian kings, individuals, and foreign people's beards; <http://www.martialvivot.com/blog/2015/08/27/ancient-grooming-history/> (Accessed on 30/8/2020)



[FIGURE 36]. The god *Bes* with a thick beard and mustache; Fitz Museum EMERY 2000: FIG. 32.

In Mesopotamia, many gods also knew the importance of having a beard, such as the god *Baal* who wore a triangular Asian beard¹⁴³ [FIGURE 38], the god *Shamash* who was depicted in a human form with a long beard¹⁴⁴, and the god *Inana* who was depicted in the form of a bull with large horns and a blue lazuli beard and was worshiped in «*Ur*»¹⁴⁵. Moreover, the god *Anki*, the god of world waters¹⁴⁶, was

¹³⁴ STROUHAL 1989: 114.

¹³⁵ D'AURIA 2008: 36.

¹³⁶ About the god *Bes*, see: IKRAM 2005: 15; NĀ'ĪL 2003: 12.

¹³⁷ Dwarves had an important role in Egyptian society, especially in introducing pleasure and joy to the heart of the king and performing dances at religious events and various celebrations. A scene on one of the walls of the temple of king *Amenhotep* III in Thebes depicted three dwarves carrying sticks while their beards were draped, and they performed a *jhb* dance with four normal stature people. BRUNNER 1992: 1-80; DASEN 2013: 146.

¹³⁸ DASEN 2013: 86.

¹³⁹ DASEN 2013: 59.

¹⁴⁰ *Khnum* was the deity of waterfalls (the source of water), who was guarded by *Hapi* and who was the creator of mankind. It was depicted in the form of a ram from whose genitalia was exaggerated to indicate creation, rebirth, and fertility. ARMWR 2005: 134; 'ABDEL-NA'ĪM 2002: 860.

¹⁴¹ DASEN 2013: 41.

¹⁴² HOLMBERG 1946: 7-182; DASEN 2013: 87.

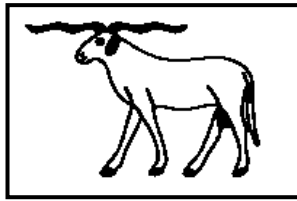
¹⁴³ HINNELLS 2007: 148, FIG.3.1.

¹⁴⁴ SELIM 2011: 352.

¹⁴⁵ Diakonov 2000.

¹⁴⁶ Diakonov 2000.

represented as a seated deity with a long beard, a hat with horns, and a long robe with folds¹⁴⁷.



[FIGURE 37].*Khnum* god with a beard.

<http://www.martialvivot.com/blog/2015/08/27/ancient-grooming-history/>, (Accessed on 30/5/2020)



[FIGURE 38].*Baal* god with a beard

Ugarit stela. HINNELLS 2007: 148, FIG.31.

The god *Sin* was also depicted as an old man with a drooping beard and a crown with four horns topped with a crescent¹⁴⁸. The same applies to other sacred symbols, such as the *Mashkhoshu* dragon, whose statues came from China¹⁴⁹.

I. A measure of fertility and virility

Keita believed that some Egyptian and Iraqi fertility deities, such as «*Min*» in ancient Egypt and «*Anki*» in Mesopotamia, were among those bearded statues found in both civilizations and dating back to pre-dynastic times¹⁵⁰. Some of these statues represented the erect penis as a sign of fertility and virility. [FIGURES39-40]



[FIGURE39].A statue of a bearded man sticking out a penis. Metropolitan Museum



[FIGURE 40]. Another statue of a bearded man sticking out a penis. Metropolitan Museum

We can realize that growing beards for the people of Egypt and Mesopotamia was one of the basic habits they had, which belonged to a social motive of masculinity, fertility, and virility, or a tribal motive of old age and wisdom, or a religious motive for the gods, or a sacred prayer of purity and honor. Other motives included communicating with royal or divine authorities. It was one of the matters that neither the rulers nor the people could disavow. If a person had no beard, wearing it as a borrowed might fulfil the purpose.

¹⁴⁷ MICHALOWSKI 1985: 222; EL-DAWRY 2009: 180.

¹⁴⁸ JEREMY 1992: 135.

¹⁴⁹ FORBES 1955: 94; El-Dawry 2009: 127.

¹⁵⁰ KEITA 1993: 129-154.

Some tried to compare this to the habit of growing the beard at the time of grief or covering it with that custom known to the Jewish¹⁶² who cover their beards as an expression of grief and mourning at funerals and obsequies¹⁶³. Growing or covering a beard may indicate a state of sadness, melancholy or mourning.

E. A measure of holiness and purity

The presence of the beard referred to the sacred nature of the bearded person or god¹⁶⁴. It was one of the things that might bestow a kind of holiness on the owner of this beard and his statue¹⁶⁵ [FIGURE 41]. Covering the beard might be to ensure purity during various religious ceremonies, following the custom of Egyptian priests who were required to shave their heads and beards. The hair of the whole body was also removed before performing the various religious rituals to avoid the dirt that might arise as a result of growing hair and beards or preventing the emergence of hair insects¹⁶⁶. This prompted some to grow light beards that did not exceed two lines to decorate the side frames of the chin area¹⁶⁷.



[FIGURE 41]. A wooden statue with a sacred beard

<http://louvre-statuette-personnage-masculin.com>, (Accessed on 3/8/2020)

Because of the great importance of the divine beard to the kings, both «Isis» and «Nephtys» referred to its importance to the king in their obituary to *Wsir* in the spell Nr^o. 169 of the pyramids texts, entitled: «Encouraging the soul to enter the Horizon *3ht*»: «*It is your identity belonging to the beard of god, which has attached to you so that you are not angry*¹⁶⁸».

¹⁶¹ LICHTHEIM 2006a: 233, (*Sinuhe*: § 294).

¹⁶² cATALLAH 2005: 171.

¹⁶³ That match with the story of the prophet: «Jesus» (PPUBH), when he grew his beard in prison. When he was called to meet the king to explain his dream, he cut his hair and shaved his beard. «*Pharaoh sends a messenger and call Jesus, they faster with him from prison; so he shaves and change his clothes*». Gn. 41: 14: FREEDAM & ALLEN 2000; GABRIEL 2005: N^o. 51.

¹⁶⁴ 'ABDEL-NA 'IM 2002: 860.

¹⁶⁵ SMITH 1958: 13.

¹⁶⁶ CAPART 1905: 45.

¹⁶⁷ PETRIE 1920: 7, 9, PLS.1, 7; VANDIER 1952: 420, Fig.7, 282.

¹⁶⁸ ALLEN 2015: 81.

Most of the bearded statues were in the form of artifacts of old men or gods as an indication of their sanctity, and they were depicted wrapped in long coats covering the entire body¹⁶⁹. Their beards were triangular with straight ribs and angles, and these statues were pierced and hung as amulets to take advantage of their sanctity. These holes were made at the bottom of the statue [FIGURE 42], provided with a ring on the top [FIGURE 43], or with two holes in the place of the chest [FIGURE 44].



[FIGURE 42]. An ivory statue of a bearded man with a hole for hanging as an amulet; Metropolitan Museum



[FIGURE 43]. A bearded statue with a ring at the top for hanging; Metropolitan Museum



[FIGURE 44]. An ivory statue with two holes in the chest for hanging; Boston Museum

These statues were sometimes equipped with grooves to fix the hang ropes in the streams of these grooves to prevent the amulet representing the bearded person or deity with a sacred character from falling [FIGURES 45-46].



[FIGURE 45]. A bearded statue equipped with grooves to fix the hang ropes in the streams; Réunion des Musées Nationaux-Grand Palais



[FIGURE 46]. Another bearded statue equipped with grooves to fix the hang ropes in the streams; Réunion des Musées Nationaux-Grand Palais

‘Atallah reported that these statues were hung upside down as an amulet after piercing so that the wearer could see them and benefit from their holiness, unlike if they were hung in an upright position¹⁷⁰ [FIGURES 47-48]. Mojsov believed that the bearded male statues were an image revered and venerable by the tribe and clan during the

¹⁶⁹ KAISER 1967: 11, 52, 10.38; SCHARFF 1929: 28, Pls.29.

¹⁷⁰ cATALLAH 2005: 169.

primitive ages¹⁷¹ Or they might represent sacred deities, ancestor worship, a father's and grandparents, or a tribal leader's memorial.



[FIGURE 47]. A hanging amulet;
©ATALLAH 2005: FIG.27



[FIGURE 48]. Another hanging amulet;
©ATALLAH 2005: FIG.45

V. TYPES OF BEARD'S COVERS

1. Quarter-face cover (chin and beard)

The beard covers varied and included covering for a quarter face, covering only the chin and beard area. The cover was fixed behind the ear and contained the beard [Compared with FIGURE 49]. In some statues, the beard appeared to be covered with long, transmitted lines interspersed with holes that represented the gaps between the strands of the beard, according to Okasha¹⁷², in which I see a beard covered with long decorations and textile gabs that matched with the style of the decoration of the garment worn by the statue [FIGURE 50].



[FIGURE 49]. An ivory statue of a man with a
quarter-face beard covering;
Museum of Fine Art, Boston



[FIGURE 50]. A statue of king *Lamji
Mari* from the Temple of Ishtar;
OKASHA 1971: 184

It is noted in the following statue [FIGURE51] that all facial features were shown, including the eyes, nose, mouth, and ears, and a large beard that might have been covered. The tapered end of the elephant's tibia featured a long headdress, while the lower part represented the statue's body wrapped in a mantle without detail. The presence of a hole in the upper part of the statue confirmed that it was used as a pendant hung around the neck, but the use and the true meaning of this statue have not been known yet¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ MOJSOV 2008: 7.

¹⁷² OKASHA 1971: 184, FIG.128.

¹⁷³ This statue is dated back to the Naqada I era and early Naqada II (ca. 3800–3600 BC), from the collection of: «Pre-dynastic in Ancient Egypt» (Egyptology Hall), 3rd floor. It measures 21.9 cm X

It also appeared in the statue of king *IkuShamajan*¹⁷⁴ [FIGURE 52] whose beard was decorated with square motifs intersecting and intertwining. In reality, this did not match the nature of the beard and its locks which always appeared in the form of drop-down lines or spiral circles, suggesting that the idea of cladding or covering the beard with a patterned cover the correct opinion.



[FIGURE51]. Ivory statue of a bearded and crowned man;
Brooklyn Museum,
<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3358>,
(Accessed on 1/12/2021)



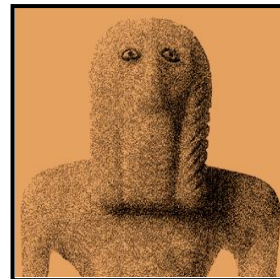
[FIGURE52]. Statue of the king
IkuShamajan –Ishtar Temple
OKASHA 1971:184, PL.129.

2. Third-face cover (chin, beard, and mouth)

It is a cover that hides a third of the lower face and contains only the chin, beard, and mouth so that only the nose and eyes appear from the face of the statue. This cover is also usually fixed behind the ear (Compared with FIGURE 53). The features of the statue are unreal, such that the nose is huge, and the lip is prominent [FIGURE54]



[FIGURE 53]. A faience statue of a bearded man without facial features except for its nose and eyes; Brooklyn Museum



[FIGURE 54]. Worshipper statue from Tal-Asmar; Baghdad Museum
OKASHA 1971: 180, FIG.124

3. Half-face cover (chin, beard, mouth, and nose)

It is a cover that hides half of the face; the veil covers the chin, beard, mouth, and nose so that it fits behind the ear. Only the eyes are visible from the statue, and there are holes and pricks in the chest area¹⁷⁵ to hang from (Compared with FIGURES 55–56).

3.3cm. It is saved in Brooklyn Museum N°. 35.1266, of «Charles Edwin Wilbur Fund»:
<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3358>, (Accessed on 25/06/2020).

¹⁷⁴ OKASHA 1971: 184, FIG.129.

¹⁷⁵ <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/3358>, (Accessed on) 08/12/2020.



[FIGURE55]. A bearded man statue only its eyes are visible; Brooklyn Museum



[FIGURE56]. Another bearded man statue only its eyes are visible; Brooklyn Museum

4. Full-face cover (mask)

It is a complete cover similar to a mask or the veil that removed two holes for the eyes. It covered the entire face and head (Compared with FIGURES 57-58).



[FIGURE57]. A bearded statue of a man or god has a cover for the full face;
©Brooklyn Museum



[FIGURE58]. Another bearded statue man or god has a triangle cover for the full face;
©Brooklyn Museum

VI. CONCLUSION

Many previous studies addressed beards. For instance, Amal Mahrān explored the names, shapes, and types of beards without being exposed to the coverings of beards, types, shapes, or purposes. ʿAbdullah tackled the nature of hair, its length and the shape of the beard, and its impact on the ethnic nature of the captive, without being exposed to its cover or the purpose of its growth and coverage. Moreover, Mustafa Atallah dealt with the uncommon forms of men and women and briefly addressed, in one phrase, the lines the shape of a beard of one of the pre-dynastic statues without discussing their forms, types, and purposes. This is the issue addressed in the current study.

The custom of raising the beard was known since pre-dynastic times in both Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The bearded statues were found in many archaeological sites in Egypt: *Naqada I & II, Meramadat Banī Salama ...* and Mesopotamia: «*Ur, Eridu ...*». The beard and its covering were known by many names and linguistic connotations in the Egyptian, Sumerian, and Akkadian languages. The ancient Egyptian distinguished between the natural and the prosthetic beard in terms of its name and determinative. Similarly, the ancient Iraqi distinguished between the name of the beard in the Sumerian and Akkadian languages.

The shape and type of beard in Egypt and Mesopotamia were developed through the ages. The shape and type of beard in Egypt were developed from the natural and small beard to the natural and triangular beard, the linear borrowed, and the divine Osiris metaphor beard. In contrast, in Mesopotamia, the shape and type of beard were developed from the long to triangular naturalness, the grooved natural, the curly, and spiral natural bread. The viewer can also distinguish between people and their races through the beard. It is only through the shape of the beard that it was possible to distinguish the Egyptian, Iraqi, Libyan, or Syrian races.

The ancient Egyptian distinguished between a king and a common man through the shape of the beard. The ancient Iraqi also distinguished between the Assyrian writer and the Aramaic writer in terms of growing or shaving the beard.

The sources of bearded man statues, both archaeological and textual, were multiple in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. The lengths of the beard varied between the short covering of the chin area, the long one up to the chest area, and the very long one even to the navel area. The sources of bearded male figures also varied between regular statues, combs, and amulets. The materials for making bearded statues varied, including stone, ivory, faience, and alabaster. The materials for making ornaments used to fix the covers also varied between nacre and copper. The motives for growing a beard varied between being a measure of masculinity and maturity, a measure of judgment and authority, a measure of parenthood and old age, a measure of power and

prestige, and a measure of religiosity. The motives for covering the beard varied between fixing the beard and mustache and preventing them from being exposed to dirt and dust, to concealment and incognito, to feeling warm, to expressing mourning and sadness, and a measure of holiness and purity. The beard was one of the most important divine symbols indispensable to the Egyptian and Iraqi deities. The types of beard coverings varied between the covering for a quarter of the face (chin and beard), the covering for a third of the face (beard, chin, and mouth), the covering for half of the face (beard, chin, mouth, and nose), and the covering for the entire face (excluding the two eyes' openings).

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