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**TITLE**

**Mesopotamian aquatic symbols in the British Museum glyptic collection**

**ABSTRACT**

The aquatic element is so fundamental to the Mesopotamian civilization that even its Greek designation integrates it (“land between the rivers”). In fact, water is the basis for the development of this world, given that not only allowed the development of agricultural activities, but also communication within the territory and with neighboring regions.

The abundance of water and its power was transferred to the symbolic sphere, representing the primeval element in most Mesopotamian cosmogonies. At the same time, aquatic deities, such as Enki/Ea, occupied a central role in the cosmic order. The aquatic environment was thus transformed into religious metaphors. So, the analysis of these aquatic metaphors can help to shed light on the ancient Mesopotamian natural environment and of human use of aquatic resource.

Recently, we started working on this subject, intertwining Ancient History, History of Religions, and Environmental History, and focusing mainly in the aquatic symbols displayed in the cylinder seals dated from the Jemdet Nasr period to the Akkadian epoch. The analyzed cylinder seals are part of the British Museum collection. In this work, we aim to present some of the ongoing results of our work.