

Persian translation of this paper entitled:

پژوهشی در معناشناسی و ویژگی‌های بازنمود اساطیر مصر باستان در بازی رایانه‌ای: «کیش یک قاتل: ریشه‌ها»

is also published in this issue of journal.

### Original Research Article

## A Study of the Semantics and Characteristics of Representing Ancient Egyptian Mythology in “Assassin’s Creed: Origins” Computer Game

Pooriya Tahmasebi<sup>\*1</sup>, Mahyar Asadi<sup>2</sup>

1. M. A Student of the history of Islamic Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, Iran.
2. Assistant Professor, College of Visual Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Tehran, Iran.

Received; 02/06/2021

accepted; 13/06/2021

available online; 01/07/2021

### Abstract

Nowadays, the creators of computer games represent a variety of events and themes. Reconstruction of ancient civilizations and the use of historical and mythological capacities are among the topics that have been considered in many games. Myths are one of the main cultural elements of any civilization. Understanding the mythological culture of any civilization will lead to more familiarity with the attitude of its predecessors toward the phenomena of existence. The language of mythological works is symbolic. As the category of symbols and symbolism has always been reflected and discussed in many branches of the humanities; given the capabilities of computer games in reflecting symbols and myths, this category can also be considered and recognized in this new artistic medium. One of the most successful computer games that has realistically reconstructed ancient civilizations is Assassin’s Creed: Origins. The game received many positive reactions with the reconstruction of the ancient and great civilization of ancient Egypt. One aspect that has been reconstructed in this game is the attention to gods, myths, motifs, and symbols. For the first time in the country, the present study examines and symbolizes the symbolic elements and myths of Egyptian civilization based on images taken from this computer game in a descriptive-analytical manner. The purpose of this study is to study the symbolism of mythological elements in an internationally successful computer game and to analyze the various methods used in this game to reflect these civilizational and mythological capacities. Finally, from the sale of this game at the international level, it can be concluded that mythological fields and cultural symbols have a wide potential for use in computer games, And by analyzing the elements of this game, it is possible to produce computer games based on the rich mythological and civilizational capacities in the Iranian-Islamic civilization.

**Keywords:** *Computer game, Mythology, Symbols, Ancient Egypt, Assassin’s Creed.*

\* Corresponding author: pooriya.tahmasebi@ut.ac.ir, +989036101929

## Introduction

The video game industry is growing and developing rapidly. The unique features and characteristics of this medium have led to the production of outstanding works at the international level. One of the areas in which computer games have been considered is the inspiration of ancient civilizations and the re-creation of these civilizations. One of these games is called *Assassin's Creed: Origins*, which was released in 2017 by Ubisoft. In this game, the reconstruction of the ancient Egyptian civilization is dealt with. Egypt, as one of the oldest centers of civilization in the world, has been at the peak of its prosperity for many years, and the Egyptian belief system and myths, culture and art, the mystery of the people of this land, have always been controversial throughout history. In this study, for the first time, a symbolic look at Egyptian mythology with an emphasis on samples and images taken from a computer game and in accordance with written sources and remnants of existing antiquities is done. Images and descriptions have been extracted from the same game by analyzing more than one hundred hours of the original version and the add-on version of "Curse of the Pharaohs." Areas of study include examples of the most frequent: gods, myths, motifs, and symbols that are represented in various ways in this game. In each section, the sources are first reviewed, in the next step, the type of representation of the myths in the game and adaptation to the available sources will be mentioned, and at the end, images taken from the game in accordance with the previous two steps will be presented. Finally, while examining the methods used in this successful international title and the symbolism of the symbolic and mythological elements of this game according to the three-stage pattern mentioned in each section, in addition to better understanding the archetypes and establishing the relationship between present and future generation with this great human civilization. The rich and prolific mythological culture of Iran

can be used in the production of computer games with similar themes. The main questions of the present article are as follows: What are the symbolic meanings of the Egyptian mythology represented in the game "Assassin's Creed: Origins"? Considering the capabilities of the art industry of computer games to reconstruct great civilizations and cultural capacities, what were the methods chosen by the creators to represent the mythical effects in this game? Also, what are the differences between the audience's experience of encountering these works in a computer game and facing these works in other places such as books, cultural centers, and museums?

## Research background

In the field of computer games with mythological themes or symbolic analysis of these games, very limited research has been done at home and abroad, as mentioned earlier, on the symbolism and characteristics of the manifestation of ancient Egyptian mythology in a No computer game research has been done. In an article entitled: "Matching Sign-semantics Patterns on Garshasp's Playbook" (Razizadeh, 2016), the narrative structure and matching of Sign-semantics patterns on Garshasp's Iranian game playbook has been analyzed. In the article: "Semiotic study of Journey computer game" (Amani, 2016), the signs used in the "Journey" game have been analyzed and studied. In another group of researches such as: "The three patterns of adaptation of Shahnameh in writing screenplay" (Soleimani & Kasiri, 2016), "Computer games based on long Iranian folk tales (based on the story of the murderer hero)" (Taheri Qalehno, Zolfaghari & Bagheri, 2013) have studied the literary and cultural capacities of Iran to be used in the construction of computer games. Among the limited research done abroad, we can mention a very short article entitled: "Assassin's Creed: Origins, Computer Games as a Time Machine" (Casey, 2021). The article only

praises the recreation of this moment in history in this game. In another short article entitled: "Assassin's Creed: Origins, Exploration Tour, Behind the Scenes" (Poiron, 2021), written by a member of the game's development team, there are also limited references to the game's capabilities. The weaknesses in the few studies conducted close to the subject of discussion in the country are lack of selection and review of successful international examples, emphasis on written sources and lack of citation and providing appropriate visual examples of the game, and the neglect of this important issue due to the visual nature of this art-industry. In addition to the symbolism of the elements and myths represented in this game, the present study will examine the various methods used by the creators to better reflect these elements and familiarize players with the Egyptian civilization.

### Research method

The type of research is applied from the perspective of the goal and seeks to answer the main question in a descriptive-analytical manner. Data was also qualitatively analyzed. The statistical population included computer games and a sample of the Assassin's Creed: Origins and a side version of the same game entitled: The Curse of the Pharaohs. Data was collected from bibliographic resources and images taken from the game stream.

### Definitions and history

Defining computer games is not as easy as some may think at first. The Oxford Dictionary defines a computer game as a type of game that is made by the player through electronic images made by computer programs. In academic studies related to this field, this definition is not limited to meaning and is associated with different interpretations, if sometimes computer game is considered as a work of art, sometimes media content or game in its general sense (Crawford, 2018, 22). Taheri Qalehno

et al. (108-1092), in their research, have divided the history of computer games into 4 time periods: 1- The period that covers the years 1932-1950, in this There is no mention of computers in the period, and coin-operated machines are very popular in this period. 2- The period that covers the years 1960-1975. During this period, Ralph Bauer wrote a program that told a story known as "Space War." The world's first game console, the Magnavox Odyssey, was built during this period, and some consider the 1972 Pong game to be the industry's first. 3- The period that covers the years 1978-1990, this period is called the golden age of archery. The first games were made using graphic techniques in the same period. 4- A period that includes recent years (Taheri Qalehno et al., 2013, 109-108).

### The importance of computer games

Due to the increasing development and abundant and unique capacities of computer games in various fields such as realistic simulations as well as the wide range of audiences of these games, it is important to pay attention to the facilities of this media. "The importance of computer games comes at a time when the developers of these games convey a set of messages through this medium; these messages are often influenced by culture and cultural ideologies. In fact, it is through play that culture is once again created" (Khaniki & Barakat, 2015, 1-2).

### Investigating the reflection of ancient Egyptian myths and symbols in Assassin's creed: origins

This game in the style of "Action-Adventure"<sup>1</sup> and "Open World", was released by Ubisoft on October 27, 2017. The game takes place in ancient Egypt, dating to 49 BC during the reign of Ptolemy XIII. The main character of this game, called "Bayek," is an Egyptian Medjay in the oasis of Siwa. After the unintentional murder of his son during a conspiracy by five of Pharaoh's servants, he seeks revenge on

them and travels to other parts of Egypt. In addition to using interesting story content for narration, the creators of the game use various methods to introduce myths to the audience. In the original version and the add-on version: The Curse of the Pharaohs, the player sees representations of myths in the form of statues of gods, small statues, murals, etc., during Bayek's trips or in an abstract form in dreams caused by the torment of unwanted child murder. The main game encounters manifestations of Egyptian mythology and gods. The reflection of the sanctity of the sacred animals in the eyes of the Egyptians is another interesting point of the game. In the following, we will deal with the symbolism, position analysis, and the type of representation of some myths and motifs in this game.

#### • Anubis

In mythology, the jackal is Anubis, the Egyptian god who was probably a desert dog. Here God is either completely animal or human with a dog's head. His role was in the funeral, passing a mummy and weighing the heart in the "Arbitration Hall" (Hall, 2011, 52). The worship of Anubis spread in most parts of Egypt. The jackal is a desert animal in Egypt, and the Egyptians associated the dead with Western Sahara. Anubis is one of the mythological characters reflected throughout the game in various formats, including statues in people's homes, huge statues in temples, funeral ceremonies, or in an abstract format based on the characteristics mentioned in the sources. The game development team has simulated and recreated such elements in the game using 3D scanning and modeling. In fact, 3D modeling is the process of creating a three-dimensional mathematical representation of an image of an object, the final result of which is processed in the game (Figs. 1-1 to 1-4).

#### • The Sphinx

The oldest sphinxes were Egyptian and date to the middle of the third millennium BC. The Egyptians generally portrayed Pharaoh with a human body

and a curved lion body, which was a symbol of his superhuman power (ibid.) or a mythical creature made up of several parts of the human body and various animals watching the sunrise, which seems to mean both earth and sky. The Sphinx is the highest embodiment of a riddle, the guardian of meaning that must remain forever beyond human comprehension (Cirlot, 2010, 118). The most obvious manifestation of the Sphinx in the game goes back to the huge statue in Giza, the simulation quality of this structure, along with physical health and the attention to patterns and details on the head and looking at the sky is obvious and important in comparing the images with today (Figs. 2-1 & 2-2).

#### • Sobek

Sobek, or "Sukhos," an Egyptian deity in the form of a crocodile, maybe entirely an animal or a human with an animal's head. This animal is a symbol of the power of the pharaohs, and this connection becomes clear when he wears a two-feathered royal crown. In "Kum Ombo" and in "Fayum" (Hall, 2011, 41) and also in Crocodilopolis (city of the crocodile) was the most prominent deity worshiped (Zecchi, 2010, 153) Sobek was also called the god of water. His name has been interpreted to mean that it causes fertility and fertility (Ions, 1996, 140). During the game in Crocodilopolis, the Sobek temple on the Nile was rebuilt (Fig. 3-1), in addition to the huge statues in the temple that show people in a state of worship. Live crocodiles are depicted on the temple grounds or even on the banks of the Nile. Simulating the location of crocodile bodies in Fayum for embalming is another point that draws the attention of the creators to the attention to detail. In addition, the player is faced with an abstract representation of Sobek during the game (Figs. 3-2 to 3-4).

#### • Amun

Amun is an ancient Egyptian creator god of Hermopolis who is first mentioned in pyramid texts. He became synonymous with Ra, the sun-god of Heliopolis, and has since become known as Amun-



Fig. 1.1. Statue of Anubis, 664–30 BC. New York Metropolitan Museum. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544075>.



Fig. 1.2. 3D modeling of Anubis body. Source: <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/XZd6a>.



Fig. 1.3. Demonstrations of Anubis in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.

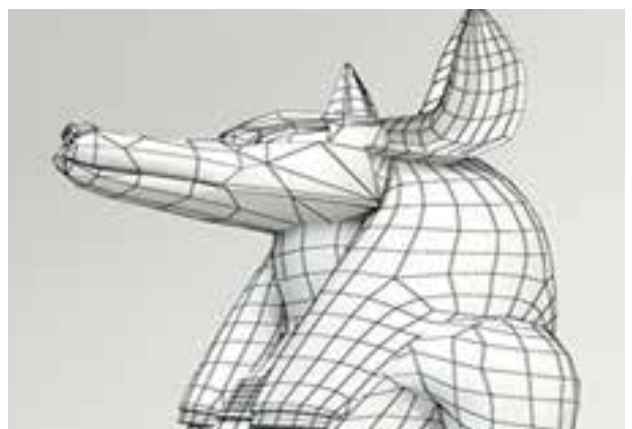


Fig. 1.4. Example of 3D modeling. Source: <https://www.artstation.com/artwork/XZd6a>.



Fig. 2.1. Image of the Sphinx statue in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 2.2. Sphinx statue in reality. Source: <https://www.viator.com>.



Fig. 3.1 The huge statues of Sobak at the entrance of a temple in Crocodilopolis in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.





Fig. 3.2. Views of the Representation of Sobek in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 3.3. & 3.4. Views of the Representation of Sobek in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.

Ra. His name meant “he who is hidden.” He was personally portrayed as having a crown with two long feathers. We often see him sitting on a throne holding a scepter and a threshing floor (Hall, 2011, 322). It had a special place among the Egyptians and in this period (16th to 11th centuries BC) it had a transcendent, self-created position (Dick, 1999, 184). During this game, sculpture parts of Amun with the appearance mentioned in the sources, in addition to the temples of Amun in Thebes and the temple of Luxor in Karnak can be seen in other parts of Egypt (Fig. 4-1 & 4-2). The simulation has been based on one-on-one comparisons with the remnants left from Egyptian civilization in the game (Figs. 4-3 & 4-4).

#### • Apophis

In Egyptian mythology, Apophis, or Apep, was

a serpent-god who lived underground. At dawn and dusk, he tried to destroy Ra by attacking his boat (Fig. 5-1), but his attack was repulsed and he himself was sometimes caught. The blood of Apophis' wound made the sunset red. Snakes - The goddesses are specifically cobras (Hall, 2011, 94). In Egypt, the god “Seth,” in the last stage of his development, acquired the attributes of an evil god and was considered one with “Typhon” in Greek mythology (Warner, 2010, 534). In one of the bike game sequences in a dream, he is confronted with a terrifying image of Apophis in complete darkness, which is an accurate visual representation of the features of this mythical creature (Figs. 5-2).

#### • Horus

Horus was an Egyptian god in the shape of a hawk. From pre-dynastic times, the king was known as the god of Gods, and therefore, this bird was a symbol of his divinity. The images of Horus show



Fig. 4.1 & 4.2. Statues of Amun during the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 4.3. (Left) Amun statue. 1336-1327 BC. Louvre Museum, Paris. Source: <https://www.pinterest.de/pin/741897738605935650>.

Fig. 4.4. (Right) Golden statue of Amun. Ca. 945–712 BC. New York Metropolitan Museum. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/544874>.



Fig. 5.1. A picture of the battle of Ra and Apophis. Papyrus page from the Book of the Dead. Castello Sforzesco Museum, Milan. Source: <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/722/book-of-the-dead-papyrus>.



Fig. 5.2 A representation of Apophis in an abstract format. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 6.1. Statue of Horus. 1360 BC. Munich State Museum of Egyptian Art. Source: <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/3396/statue-of-horus>.



Fig. 6.2. Representations of Horus in the form of statues and murals. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.

him completely like a bird in all eras. However, from around the Middle Dynasty, the falcon's head is more common on the human body (Hall, 2011, 405). The falcon is a symbol of victory and war. Horus was a god with a complex personality who, with certain forms, gained the status of a national god (Warner, 2010, 167). Horus in the game only in the form of There are statues and murals (Fig 6-& 6-2).

• **Winged tablets**

The image of a sun-god or sky-god, in the form of a sun disk with wings, is widely found in the Middle East. Its origin was Egyptian. From the fifth dynasty, the sun disk was placed between the wings of Horus and formed a solar symbol. Later, it appeared on the doors of temples and in the art of burial as a protection against harm (Hall, 2011, 74). In a broad sense, the wing symbolizes spirituality, the power of imagination, and thought (Cirlot, 2010, 188). Inspired by written sources and existing works, this symbol can be seen on murals, boxes, and tombs (Figs. 7-1 & 7-2).

• **Pyramidal column**

The ancient Egyptians originally called these columns "Tekhenu," the Greeks used the Greek term "obeliskus" to describe them, and the word gradually found its way into Latin and eventually into English (Baker & Baker, 2001, 69). Among several types of ancient columns, the Egyptian pyramidal pillar has been worshiped as the abode of the sun-god. The obelisk was a symbol of the sun's rays due to its appearance, the oldest of which is called "Heliopolis" "Ben Ben" (Sunstone) and belongs to the fifth dynasty. In fever and elsewhere, pairs of columns were placed at the entrances of temples, symbolizing the sun and moon. The upper part of the pillar was pyramidal and on it was a sheet of a mixture of gold and silver that reflected the sunlight brilliantly (Hall, 2011, 149). During the game of obelisks in the temples of Heliopolis, Fayum and Karnak have been recreated in great





Fig. 7.1. Winged disc on the roof. Temple of Ramses III. Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/326511041707241574>.



Fig. 7.2. Examples of winged tablets. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 8.1. Examples of the obelisk column in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game .



Fig. 8.2. Karnak obelisks. Around 1500 - 1400 BC. Karnak. Source: <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/6008/egyptian-obelisks-karnak>.

detail with specifications consistent with the features mentioned in historical sources (Figs. 8-1 & 8-2).

#### • Horus eyes

In Egypt, the eye was used primarily as a protective talisman. A pair of eyes painted on ancient coffins. It enabled the deceased to find his way into another world. From the time of the new monarchy, the eye on the coffin or the mummy had a guarding aspect. The most common form in Egyptian art is the human eye; in addition to some signs of the hawk, this eye is the “eye of Horus” and his right or sun eye; His left eye, called the moon, is the eye of the “Wadjet” (completed, returned) that has brought both of them out of the set (Hall, 2011, 238; Pinch, 2002, 131). One of the first motifs that the player encounters during the game is the symbol that appears as a protective spell on the shield and armband of Bayek, which is itself an Egyptian guard or Medjay (Figs. 9-1 & 9-2).

#### • Ankh

It is an Egyptian hieroglyphic symbol that signifies eternal life, and when placed in front of the dead Pharaoh's nose, they provided him with eternal life. On the walls of the temples, God protected the dead (Hall, 2011, 12-13). Many researchers believe that the emergence of this sign results from a knot composed of flexible materials such as fabric or straw (Gordon & Schwabe, 2004, 102-103). Egyptian gods are sometimes seen holding the cross high (Cirlot, 2010,630). The reflection of ankh's role in the game is more in the details of the statues (in the hands of the statues) or murals (Figs. 10-1 & 10-2).

#### • Ba

With a broad symbol of the soul, especially when it ascends to heaven after death, it flies over a mummy in grave paintings; And it has been a symbol of the power of the gods and the pharaohs. Later, it referred to the soul of the deceased and was considered the same as “Psukhe”, or the Greek psyche (Hall, 2011, 39). The Egyptians believed in a direct relationship





Fig. 9.1. Images of the eyes of Horus in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 9.2. Pendant with the image of the eye of Horus. 1332–1323 BC. Cairo Egyptian Museum, Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/430867889346651049>.



Fig. 10.1. Ankh in the hands of Amun, Subek, Horus. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 10.2. Image of Horus with Ankh. Around 1275 BC. Louvre Museum, Paris, Source: <https://www.akg-images.fr/archive/anch-2UMDHUNY9Z8C.html>.

between the greatness of the gods and the greatness of the soul or their idiom. One of the most interesting abstract representations of the game is facing Bayek with a “Ba bird” in the form of a dream during the game, where he seeks to get news of his child in the underworld through this legendary creature, in addition to narrative subtlety to induce symbolic concepts. The simulation of the abstract character “Ba” in accordance with the existing works is a remarkable point (Figs. 11-1 & 11-2).

• Lotus

Various species of lilies were worshiped in ancient Egypt and many parts of Asia; Its sacred aspect came from its aquatic environment because Water was the symbol of the ancient ocean from which the universe was created. The lotus, which was moving on the surface of the water, was considered as its uterus (Hall, 2011, 309). In Egypt, the lotus symbolizes the beginning of creation (Cirlot, 2010,793) and the newly created earth (Warner, 2010,575). The representation of the lotus in the game is related to the murals in different areas, especially the capitals of the temple (Fig. 12).

• Cat

Cats are generally thought to have mysterious powers and have sometimes been worshiped. The Egyptian cat goddess Bastet, who evolved from a female lion goddess, was mainly worshiped in Lower Egypt, especially around 1000 BC. The cat was sacred to Bastet, and their bodies were embalmed (Hall, 2011, 89). In some narrations, she is called Ra’s daughter, and in some, she is called his wife (Ions, 1996,158). According to the Egyptians, animals are a representation of cats during the game; mummified cats are seen in burials and tombs. During the game, people are seen feeding and caring for this animal, and the player will be able to pet this animal. A feature that is not installed in relation to other animals in the game, which itself contains a message regarding the sanctity of this animal to the ancient Egyptians, from the creators



Fig. 11.1. A representation of “Ba” in an abstract form and mural. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 13.1. Cat mummies in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 11.2. Mural painting of “Ba”. 1189-1077 BC. Inherkhao Tomb. Source: <https://www.nilemagazine.com.au/2017-february/2017/2/4-the-ba>.



Fig. 13.2. Cat mummies in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 12. Examples of lotus in murals during the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 13.3. Cat petting by player. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 13.4 The mummified cats of Thebes. 30 BC. British Museum. Source: [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y\\_EA6752](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/Y_EA6752).

to the audience! (Figs. 13-1 to 13-4).

#### • Apis Bull

The bull was worshiped during the First Dynasty. He was called the son or messenger of Petah, the creator god of Memphis. Apis is often depicted with a sun disk and a “Uraeus” between its horns (Hall, 2011, 85). Some also believe that the worship of Apis as a chosen deity began in the second dynasty

(Kahl, 2007, 59). The cow is another animal that is mentioned in the game; in addition to the re-creation of the huge statues of Apis in The temple of Petah,



a ceremony related to this sacred animal, is also reflected in this game. Another noteworthy point is the similarity of the decorations with this animal in the simulated ceremony of the game with historical documents (Figs. 14-1 to 14-4).

#### • Aaru

In mythology, the “Aaru” or reed fields were, for the ancient Egyptians, a paradise in the afterlife for the righteous souls in which they lived after passing through all the stops of death. Chapter 110 of the Book of the Dead states that in the fields of Aaru, the harvest is plentiful; the deceased could evaluate the fields as far as he could see and see Ra, Osiris, and Thoth every day (Ziegler, Palayret & Baud, 1999, 236-237). One of the fascinating scenes in this game is the viewing of Aaru by Bayek in a dream, where he meets his son, and he informs his father of his eternal peace in the second life (Figs. 15-1), this sequence is an example of the deep connection between the representation of myths and the way the story is told during the game, which leads to familiarity and the establishment of ritual and cultural values in the minds of the audience. Reconstruction based on historical evidence has also been carefully observed in this case (Figs. 15-2 & 15-3).

#### Assassin’s Creed: Origins, a unique experience

There are many differences between the experience of encountering antiquities in this game and encountering these artifacts in other places such as written sources, cultural centers, and museums, some of which are mentioned:

1. The artifacts in museums are usually not in good physical condition. In contrast, the works represented in the game have favorable conditions because they are in the historical period of its construction, and what the audience encounters is not a destroyed object. For example, many Egyptian antiquities, such as the tops of the obelisks used to be covered with gold, which can be seen in its

representation in this game.

2. The works in the museums have been moved from their original place and placed in the showcase, and this affects the audience’s understanding of the use of that work and creates a different and sometimes far-fetched understanding while representing and illustrating these objects in their main and historical place in this game gives the audience a more understandable view of the identity of these objects.
3. The interactive experience of a computer game and the direct influence of the audience on the game flow, dynamism, and objectivity along with the



Fig. 14.1 & 14.2. Pictures of Apis in the game. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 14.3. Remains of a statue of Apis. 100-400 BC. Cleveland Museum. Source: <https://www.clevelandart.org/art/1969.118>.





Fig. 14.4. Image of the Apis at the end of the coffin. 800 to 400 BC. National Museum of Scotland Edinburgh. Source: <https://www.worldhistory.org/image/4259/painted-coffin-footboard-with-apis-bull>.

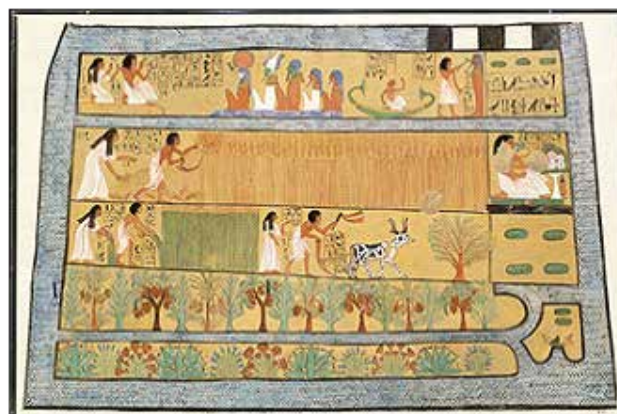


Fig. 15.2. Picture of “Aaru”. 1295–1213 BC .The tomb of Sanjam. Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/548354>.



Fig. 15.1. bayek encounter with his son in “Aaru”. Source: Assassin’s Creed: origins video game.



Fig. 15.3. Bayek in “Aaru”. Source: Assassin's Creed: origins video game.

player’s sense of immersion, are other possibilities that are not possible in the face of written sources. In addition to these, other advantages can be

mentioned, for example, the variety of methods chosen by the creators to represent the mythical-civilizational effects, attention to detail of objects, buildings and their similarity with real examples, high-quality design, and illustration of the game, appropriate visual and graphic effects, which are significant factors, and conversations of people about their daily lives and beliefs during the game, the reflection of religious ceremonies in shrines, indigenous and local soundtrack, among other cultural values.

### Summary and conclusion

After studying how Egyptian mythology is reflected in the game “Assassin’s Creed: Origins”, in response to the main research question, it should be said that

many mythical gods and creatures such as Amun, Sphinx, Anubis, etc. are represented in this game. In the text of the research, their symbolic meaning was discussed. The initial study appears that these mythical representations, embodied in the form of sculptures, reliefs, paintings, or abstract forms, are in complete agreement with archaeologists and bear a striking resemblance to specimens found in ancient sites, written sources, and museums. To answer another part of the main question of the article, it should be said that what is offered to users through the representation of myths is a unique experience of a virtual and dynamic presence in one of the great ancient civilizations, which is helped by the use of technologies. The computer game industry brings a different experience. What happens in this game is a deep connection between the technologies used in computer games and art to create a platform for familiarity with the remnants of the ancient Egyptian civilization in its main place. By analyzing the structural elements and methods of representing myths in the content of successful examples such as this game, it is possible to produce native computer games based on the rich mythological and artistic capacities of the Iranian-Islamic civilization and to spread cultural values and strengthen Iranian-Islamic identity. took a step. Also, considering the wide range of audiences of these games from children to adults and the use of reliable scientific resources in making these games, it is possible to produce such games from their educational capacities to increase the level of audience information in a new context. Attractive benefit.

## Endnotes

1. Action-adventure style is a combination of two types of games: 1- (action) that the person goes through stages through obstacles in the path and management in time and strategies. 2-( Adventure) whose excitement is lower than the action style. Questions are answered and the person enters the next stage. In the action - adventure style, the path and adventure mode are open, but using a series of more emotional strategies , The path is passed for the player.
2. Open world style is a game mechanic and term that refers to a form

of space design in a video game that allows the player to move freely in a virtual world and has considerable freedom in choosing how and when to achieve objectives.

## Reference List

- Amani, H. (2016). *Barresi-ye neshane-shenakhti-ye baziye journey* [A semiotic review of the computer game Journey. Paper presented at the 2th National Conference on Computer Games; Opportunities and challenges, Isfahan, Iran.
- Ions, V. (1996). *Egyptian mythology* (M. H. Bajilan Farrokhi, trans.). Tehran: Asatir.
- Cirlot, J. E. (2010). *dictionary of symbols* (M. Ouhadi, trans). Tehran: Library and Documentation Center of the Iranian Studies Foundation.
- Khaniki, H. (2015). Baznamaei-ye eidolizhi-ha-ye farhangi dar bazi-ha-ye rayane-ei [Representation of cultural ideologies in computer games]. *Modern Media Studies*, 4 (1), 99-131.
- Razizadeh, A. (2016). *Tatbigh-e olgho-ha-ye neshane manashnasi bar baziname-ye garshasp* [Matching Semantic Patterns to Garshasp video game]. Paper presented at the 2th National Conference on Computer Games; Opportunities and Challenges. Isfahan, Iran.
- Soleimani, F. & Kasiri, M. (2016). *Olghoy-e se ghane-ye eghtebas az shahname dar negaresh-e bazinameh* [The triple pattern adapted from Shahnameh in writing the letter]. Paper presented at 2th National Conference on Computer Games; Opportunities and Challenges.
- Taheri Qalehno, Z., Zolfaghari, H. & Bagheri, B. (2013). Sakht-e bazi-ha-ye rayaneei bar asas-e ghesse-ha-ye boland-e amiyane-ye Irani [Making computer games based on long Iranian folk tales (based on the story of the murderer hero)]. *Children's Literature Studies*, 8-11 (4), 105-126.
- Crawford, G. (2018). *Video gamers* (Z. Madadi, trans.). Broadcasting University of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Digital Games Research Center (DIREK).
- Warner, R. (2010). *Encyclopedia of World Mythology* (A. Ismailpour, trans.). Tehran: Ostore.
- Hall, J. (2011). *Illustrated dictionary of symbols in Eastern and Western art* (R. Behzadi, Trans). Contemporary culture (Publication of the original work in 2001).
- Baker, R. F. & Baker, Ch. F. (2001). *Ancient Egyptians: people of the pyramids*. Englad: Oxford University Press.
- Casey, Ch. (2021). Assassin's Creed Origins: Video Games as Time Machines. *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 84(1), 71-78.
- Dick, M. B. (1999). *Born in heaven, made on earth: the making of the cult image in the ancient Near East*. United States: Eisenbrauns.

- Gordon, A. H. & Schwabe, C. W. (2004). *The quick and the dead: biomedical theory in ancient Egypt*. Brill : Styx.
- Kahl, J. (2007). *Ra is my Lord: searching for the rise of the Sun God at the dawn of Egyptian history*. Berlin: Harrassowitz.
- Pinch, G. (2002). *A guide to the gods, goddesses and traditions of ancient Egypt*. Englad: Oxford University Press.
- Poiron, P. (2021). Assassin's Creed Origins Discovery Tour: A Behind the Scenes Experience. *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 84(1), 79-100.
- Zecchi, M. (2010). *Sobek of Shedet: the crocodile God in the Fayyum in the dynastic period*. Tau.
- Ziegler, Ch., Palayret, N., Baud, M. & Musée, D. (1999). *L'art de l'Ancien Empire égyptien: actes du colloque organisé au Musée du Louvre par le Service culturel les 3 et 4 avril 1998*. Documentation française.

#### COPYRIGHTS

Copyright for this article is retained by the author (s), with publication rights granted to the journal of art & civilization of the orient. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



#### HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

Tahmasebi, P. & Asadi, M. (2021). A Study of the Semantics and Characteristics of Representing Ancient Egyptian Mythology in “Assassin’s Creed: Origins” Computer Game. *Journal of Art & Civilization of the Orient*, 9 (32), 51-64.

DOI: 10.22034/jaco.2021.289055.1200

URL: [http://www.jaco-sj.com/article\\_132856.html?lang=en](http://www.jaco-sj.com/article_132856.html?lang=en)

