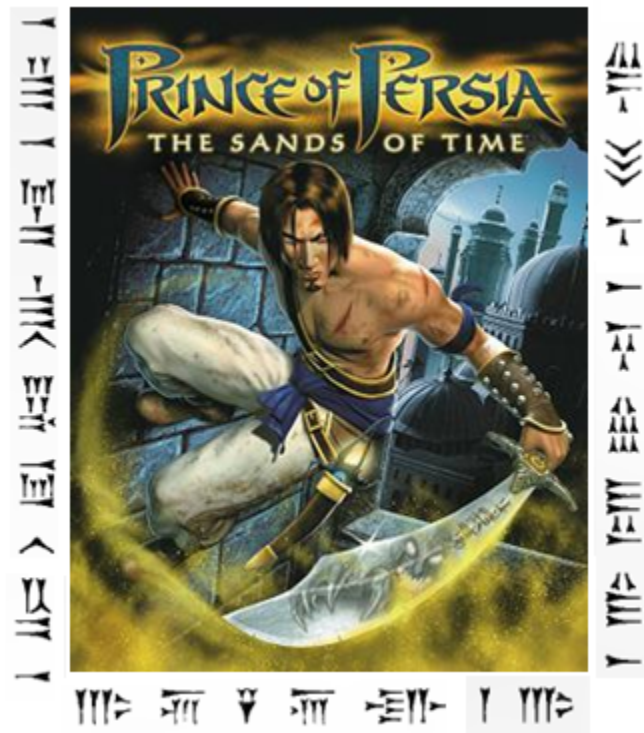**Save Ancient Studies Alliance**

11 April 2022 - Archaeogaming & Assyriology Master Class

Ancient Cuneiform Inscriptions in the Videogame
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

Blurb

Are you interested in learning how the videogame *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (2003) makes use of an ancient cuneiform writing system to create a sense of immersion?

There are currently limited sources that discuss the *Prince of Persia* videogames using an interdisciplinary Archaeogaming and Assyriolgical perspective. Most sources of information are focused on the more general "game studies" aspect and do not rely too much on commenting on historical accuracy/authenticity. There even less sources that discuss the ancient inscriptions that are used in game. This Master class, therefore, aims to bridge this gap between Archaeogaming and Assyriology.

About Archaeogaming

For those new to this subject, the field of Archaeogaming can be described as the study of ancient history as presented through videogames. In many cases some games can be used to assist in teaching ancient history. The three main areas of study in the filed of Archaeogaming include: (1) "Heritage and Archaeology/Architecture", (2) "Anthropology/Sociology and Ethnography", and the more general (3) "Game Studies/Design" discipline.

About Assyriology:

Assyriology can be briefly described as the study of ancient Near-Eastern history, culture and languages (the discipline of Philology). Assyriology also includes the brach of Cuneiform Studies which generally deals with texts written in Sumerian and Akkadian. It should be noted that other ancient languages, also written cuneiform script, are also studied by Assyriologists.

Aim & Structure

The aim of this Master class is to bring more attention to the study of Assyriology in gaming using *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* as reference. The main focus is to consider how accurate the use of in-game cuneiform inscriptions are in relation to the time period the game is theoretically set in.

The first step in the analysis will be to provide a brief storyline synopsis. The next step will be to discuss the architectural settings and characters. This will be done inorder to provide a overview of the implied historical context. Once this has been established an attempt at translating some of the in-game cuneiforum inscriptions will be made. This will inform us about how authentic the use of cuneiforum is within the game.

*The information from this Master Class presentation comes from the preliminary findings from an ongoing analysis. The final conclusions will be published in a forthcoming article.

Your SASA Educational Ambassador

My name is Dylan Lawrence Gibson and I will be your Educational Ambassador for this Archaeogaming Master Class.

I am a former Archaeogmaing Intern and a current volunteer at *Save Ancient Studies Alliance* (*SASA*).

In my previouse degree I minored in Ancient Culture Studies and this is where my interest in all things ancient arose.

I am currently a Musicology PhD Student at *Stellenbosch University* (*Africa Open Institute*) specialising in ancient Near-Eastern music theory and notation (an Interdisciplinary study between Musicology and Assyriology - refed to as Archaeomusicology).

Institutional Email:
dgibson@saveancientstudies.org

Date
Monday, 11th of April 2022 @ 15:00pm EST

Location: (Provided by SASA)
Zoom Meeting Link

Zoom Meeting ID

Zoom Meeting Password

Links to Readings

- Andrew, Reinhard (2013). About Archaeogaming.
  Available: https://archaeogaming.com/about/

*A blog dedicated to archeogaming which includes an extensive bibliographical list. This is a good resource to become familiar with the body of literature related to archaeogaming.

- Drew, Davidson (2010). 'Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time: The Story of Playing A Game', in *Well Played 2.0: Video Games, Value and Meaning*. Dartmouth: ETC Press pp. 17-49.
  Available:
  https://books.google.co.za/books?hl=en&lr=&id=KvYeAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA16&dq=prince+of+persia+sands+of+time&ots=JGowNLKsN5&sig=Zt_GwBwRQ4VIvOIMqg2rSr7jOzo&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=prince%20of%20persia%20sands%20of%20time&f=false

*This book chapter/article engages with an in-depth close reading of the game *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* from a general game studies perspective. In other words, it discusses the experience of plying the game in relation to how the narrative development matches the games design. According to Davidson the storyline can be analysed from a feminist perspective.

- Derya, Cetin (2015). Representation of Women in Computer Game "Prince of Persia". *Procedia - Sociology & Behavioural Sciences*, 176: pp. 439-443.
  Available:
  https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276838639_Representation_of_Women_in_Computer_Game_Prince_of_Persia

*This article provides a detailed synopsis of an earlier rendition of the game. The focus of her analysis is placed on a feminist reading and this can be used as a template and applied to *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*. More research in this filed is required.

- Gregory Meerees-Young, Hannes Ricklefs & Robert Tovell, Cetin (2010). Managing Thousands of Assets for the Prince of Persia City of Alamut. *SIGGRAPH: Applied Perception in Graphics and Visualisation*, 30.
  Available: https://dl.acm.org/doi/abs/10.1145/1837026.1837066

*This conference article shows the effort that was put into designing the digital city of Alamut in Medieval Persia for the film adaptation of *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*.