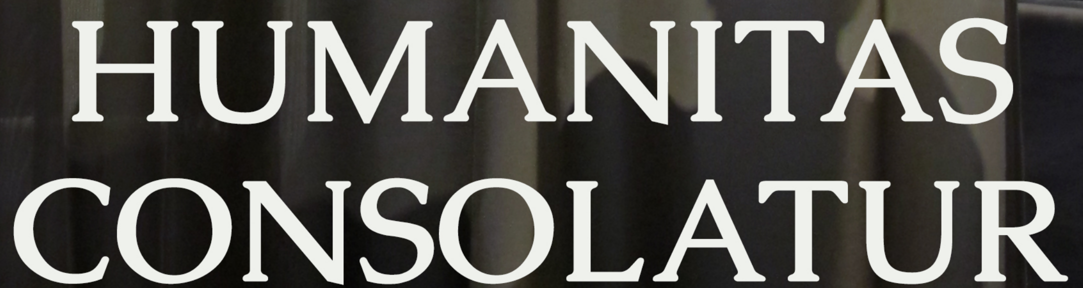

HUMANITAS CONSOLATUR

Edited by
Lucija Krešić Nacevski &
Vojislav Sarakinski

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Preface
Humanitas consolatur
(Cic. *Ad fam.* III, ad Ap. Claudium pulchrum)

The phrase in the title, *humanitas consolatur*, was used by Cicero in a letter to his friend Appius Claudius Pulcher during a particularly difficult time in his life. While Cicero was away in Cilicia, his daughter Tullia married Dolabella, who, in turn, was prosecuting Appius under the *lex maiestatis*. In this context, Cicero writes that Appius' *humanitas* was a genuine source of comfort to him throughout that period, and he thanks his friend warmly for the support.

If the term *humanitas* had consistently meant "consolation" throughout the entirety of Roman and later Latin literature, medieval and early modern alike, there would never have been any need for a volume such as this. It is precisely the richness and variability of its meaning, shifting from period to period, genre to genre, author to author, and so on, that has made the term so conceptually challenging. This very complexity has drawn the full attention of the editors of the present volume, who have brought together this collection of essays by our esteemed colleagues, all centered on the exploration of a single, yet remarkably multifaceted concept: *humanitas*.

The task proved to be more than demanding. What initially appeared as an intellectually stimulating challenge was, more than once, replaced by a kind of speechlessness in the face of a concept so vast and profound. At first glance, the foundational meaning of *humanitas* seems deceptively straightforward. And yet, in every Latin dictionary, lexicon, and reference manual, *humanitas* comes with an extensive and nuanced entry. It is most commonly linked to the Greek concept of *paideia* – first as its Roman or Latin equivalent, and then as a point of departure for the term's later intellectual and cultural developments.

Among the various impulses behind the creation of this volume, one of the central driving questions was precisely the Greco-Roman connection between *paideia* and *humanitas*: does the Latin term *huma-*

nitas emerge as a conceptual translation – or transformation – of the Greek model of *paideia*? And to what extent does *humanitas* in Latin preserve, or reinterpret, the educational and formative dimensions inherent to *paideia*, the shaping of the human being?

This inquiry naturally led to a closer look at Greek authors and works that develop this idea of *paideia*, which can serve as a point of comparison, if not of direct equivalence, with Latin *humanitas*. Which Greek writers first articulated and developed the concept of *paideia*, and in which of their texts does this development take place? For which authors does *paideia* carry a meaning parallel, or even identical, to that of the later Latin *humanitas*? And for which, possibly, does it diverge significantly?

Does *paideia* evolve exclusively within Greek philosophical discourse, or can it also be identified in other literary forms – for example, in the Homeric epics? If so, how is it expressed, and which texts and authors are involved?

Later, once the link between *paideia* and *humanitas* had been established as foundational – as the conceptual core from which the Latin *humanitas* can be more fully understood – it became essential to examine which Roman authors first adopt and further elaborate the term. Do they in fact develop it, expand its meaning, adapt it to new cultural and intellectual contexts? Or does *humanitas* in Roman literature remain firmly anchored to the Greek *paideia*, functioning primarily as a direct continuation of its Hellenic predecessor?

Cicero's phrase in the title points to a development of the concept. In this synchronic and diachronic examination of humanitas and its connection to paideia, we may therefore ask: does humanitas evolve over time, or does its meaning become narrower? Perhaps even degraded? Is it possible that some authors "misuse" the term, interpret it incorrectly (intentionally?), distort it, or distance it from Greek paideia to such an extent that it becomes unrecognizable, disconnected, with no traceable core meaning? For instance, how might we interpret Suetonius' biographies in this context and his "obsession" with the imperial figure, portrayed in its "human" rather than "divine" aspect? Does such a way of writing contribute at all to the development – or instead to the degradation – of the concept of humanitas?

From a diachronic perspective, we might ask whether the variations in interpretation stem from the individual readings of different Roman (and even earlier or contemporary Greek) authors, or whether they result from the inevitable influence of shifting social circumstances. For instance – how might we describe *humanitas* in the time of Re-

publican writers, then in authors of the early Empire, and during the transition from one political order to another? In that sense, how does the concept of *humanitas* change (if it does) over the course of the first, second, and third centuries?

By the fourth century, Christianity had already brought profound transformation to society, and with it to systems of belief and conceptual frameworks. In that light: what are the equivalents or synonyms of *humanitas* among Christian authors? Is it limited to the frequently cited *misericordia*, or do we find, within Christian Latin, other terms that encompass the same meanings?

When it comes to individual authors, attention must certainly be given to works of both "high" and "low" literature. Is it possible (or not?) that Plautus and Terence, in their comedies, developed a primitive, simple, passionate, rough, even vulgar form of *humanitas*, one that is "natural" and "characteristic" of human beings, without much deeper reflection, perhaps even reducing the concept to its crudest expression in human habits – passions and excess – exposing both the "man" and *humanitas* to mockery and ridicule?

In contrast stands Cicero's elevated, unique, even ideal conception of *humanitas*. Do we find in his work a direct continuation of the Greek *paideia*? In which of his texts is this most clearly expressed? Does the concept evolve in Cicero, or does it remain stable?

Is there, then, a particular, distinctive *humanitas* of poetry – *humanitas artis poeticae*? From that perspective, can *humanitas* be reflected (and if so, how?) in short-form love poetry, or exclusively (and why?) in long epic poems of high literature? For example, how might one interpret *humanitas* in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the concept seems to appear and vanish with the transformations of form? And again, centuries later, in the context of metamorphosis – the transformation of Apuleius' protagonist Lucius into a donkey – where is *humanitas* then?

The themes outlined above (which are by no means exhaustive) struck us as vast and profound. As a result, only some of them are represented in this volume, and the exploration of the concept of *humanitas* has proven far more complex than its initial association with the Greek term *paideia* might suggest.

That the question of *humanitas* remains urgently relevant today is evident in everyday life – in the people we meet and speak with, the films we watch, the books we read, the institutions we attend.

We are all too familiar with the attitude found in every period of human history – beginning with Livy, that great *laudator temporis acti*

– that the present age is the worst yet, and that anything of true value lies far behind us. Convinced that this is not the case, we present this volume *ad legendum vobis studentibusque,* in the hope of recognizing and reaffirming eternal values.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the authors who contributed to the making of this volume, *imo de pectore.*[1]

The Editors,

Lucija Krešić Nacevski
Vojislav Sarakinski

[1] The attentive reader will quickly notice that almost every contributor comes from a distinct field within the social sciences and humanities – a fact that is particularly welcome, given that the subject of this volume is by its very nature both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary. As a gesture of respect for the diverse methodologies employed by the authors and the specific scholarly traditions of their respective disciplines, the Editors made the difficult decision to allow each contributor to retain his or her preferred citation style. Ultimately, the editors believe that what matters most is the substance of the contributions; variations in referencing conventions are a minor concern, easily navigated by any dedicated reader.

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1.

On Some (Dis)similarities between Near Eastern Scribal Education, *paideia*, nam.lú.ùlu and Humanitas

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A comparative examination of the traditions of παιδεία and *humanitas* alongside the scribal tradition of the Ancient Near East reveals not only some expected dissimilarities, but also intriguing parallels in pedagogical methods, educational objectives, and societal roles of the educated elite. It is undeniable that the scribal education which was going on in the *bit tuppi* was a kind of παιδεία that corresponds to the Greek one, at least in a technical, if not in a social context. Although the specific methods, content, and cultural contexts of the Near Eastern, Greek and Roman educational systems varied, they all shared the common goal of making the elite members of society effective administrators, scribes, and leaders. Moreover, a comparison between the Sumerian concept of *nam.lú.ùlu* and the Roman concept of *humanitas* reveals two distinct, but overlapping understandings of what it meant to be human and urban in the context of their respective cultures. While both *nam.lú.ùlu* and *humanitas* offer frameworks for understanding humanity, they reflect the different values and priorities of their respective cultures: the former was rooted in a communal, religious view of humanity that focuses on collective responsibility and divine order, while the latter emphasized individual moral development, cultural refinement, and civic responsibility within a more secular framework.

Greek παιδεία and Roman *humanitas* represent two cornerstone educational ideals that have shaped Western intellectual traditions. Παιδεία covered the holistic upbringing of Greek youths, blending physical, intellectual, and moral education aimed at cultivating well-rounded citizens. Similarly, *humanitas* in Roman culture highlighted the development of virtues, oratory skills, and a broad knowledge base to foster civic responsibility and personal excellence. These classical models are widely studied within their respective academic fields. However, a

comparative examination of these traditions alongside the scribal education of the Ancient Near East reveals not only some expected dissimilarities, but also intriguing parallels in pedagogical methods, educational objectives, and societal roles of the educated elite. Although the specific methods, content, and cultural contexts of the Near Eastern, Greek and Roman educational systems varied, they all shared the common goal of making the elite members of society effective administrators, scribes, and leaders.[1]

1. The development of literacy in the Ancient Near East paralleled the development of urban communities. At first, literacy was proclaimed as a gift from heaven, but also as a skill to be learned, cultivated, and developed under the watchful care of the elder scribes and the patron gods Ea, Nabu, and Nisaba. The ability to write quickly became an integral part of urban life, a necessary skill to meet the needs of society that were constantly changing and growing, just as the urban body was becoming more complex. Writing may have originated in decorative illustration, but it quickly became a tool for statistical and archival needs. Generations of scribes took the written sign farther and farther away from illustration, eventually tying it exclusively to language.

The spread of extensive grain farming throughout the region, combined with fruit growing, horticulture, and animal husbandry, opened the way for large surpluses of value, which in turn required a developed storage economy. Such an economy meant that wages and meals had to be logged, property, land, and rents had to be registered, payments for crops, transportation of basic products and materials, and many other similar transactions had to be recorded. The temple, otherwise the linchpin of social if not political order, was at the center of this complex system of circulation and distribution of raw materials. Temples were self-sustaining, autonomous institutions with their own land and settled population. Contrary to the common explanation of their time – that they were organized to provide an adequate dwelling for the divine presence – they actually functioned as the chief regulators of commerce and public affairs in general; it is reasonable to assume that temples were the very first institutions whose functioning literally depended on a literate class of administrators. In the same way, the Mesopotamian courts needed educated bureaucrats to run the affairs of the state – and thus some kind of schools to train them in their work. The preserved tablets[2] of economic, administrative, political, and lite-

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[1] *Cf.* the review of scholarship and the extensive bibliography in Oniga 2009, Elsner 2013 and Pušić 2023.

[2] Admittedly, most of the documents relating to the scribal education and economic and political record-keeping date back to the Third Dynasty of Ur and the Old Babylonian

rary content testify that the number of scribes who practiced their craft in the service of temples and palaces from Sumerian times onward was in the thousands.

To meet all these needs, a formal structure was established to ensure a steady production of scribes; it consisted of two parts - *bit tuppi* and *bit mummi. Bit tuppi* (in Sumerian *e-dubba*, 'the house of tablets') was the place where the general initial training of scribes was carried out; it produced scribes called *dub.sar* or *tupsar*. In turn, *bit mummi*, the 'house of counseling', was a place that offered higher educational preparation, producing *mar mummi*, 'sons of thought', namely, literate, cultured and educated people. It is true that such schools have been found only in a few places, including Nippur, Uruk, Sippar, and Mari; however, this does not mean that the teaching was limited to these places, but only points to the coincidence of the archaeological findings – otherwise, the training of scribes could have taken place within the family of the scribe.[3] In any case, it is certain that the beginnings of the 'house of tablets' were closely linked to the temple as the driver of life in the urban community, before this institution gradually became independent or received the patronage of the palace.

2. Thanks to the terminology used in connection with these schools, we have a rough idea of their structure.[4] In the 'house of tablets', the student who was expected to master the art of writing was practically an apprentice, called 'the little one' or 'the young one', fitting his nature and position. He began by making school copies, thus overcoming the initial difficulties associated with cuneiform writing; copies were made by reading and writing or by dictation, preferably without pauses and interruptions. Excerpts from older didactic or religious works were usually copied; it was noted whether it was a series of excerpts, a copy of the original text, or a commentary.[5] They wrote

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Kingdom. *V.* Jones & Snyder 1961; Sollberger 1966; Oppenheim 1967; Jones 1976; Lucas 1979, 306.

[3] Groneberg 1980, 153. A formal educational institution is mentioned in at least two Old Babylonian letters. "Instruct my son to go to school," writes a parent to his son's teacher, "watch over his handwriting and help him" (*British Museum, Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum* 2, London, 1896-, T. 11, 29-31.) The second letter alludes to schooling in the context of a brief message that is passed between the teacher and the student: "I entered the house of tablets and read the composition beginning with 'ga-nu,' correcting the tablet of 'ga-nu' which you left" (*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*, Vol. 21, Z, 75). For a case study of scribal material in (admittedly very late) private houses, *v.*, *e.g.*, Clancier 2024.

[4] On this, *v.* Lucas 1979; Moreno 1989; *cf.* especially the wealth of details presented in Paulus (ed.) 2023.

[5] The level of critical attention is indicated, for example, by the note: "According to the dictation of a wise man; I have not seen the original writing". *V.* Hunger 1968, no. 486.

on clay tablets, but scribes also used waxed wooden tablets, similar to those used later in antiquity.[6] Each copy was cataloged and carefully interpreted, providing information about the original document, the library to which it originally belonged, a description of the material, the number of lines it contained, whether it was legible, where it was damaged or illegible, including the date the copy was made, as well as a warning to respect the original text. After the task was completed, the tablet was sent for examination and comparison of the two texts.

Thus the seed of literacy was sown, a remarkable achievement worthy of great praise. In a hymnic narrative, the speaker recounts:

> I was in the *edubba* since I was a child; I learned the scribal art on the tablets of Sumer and Akkad. Of all the young, no one could write a tablet like me; in the place of wisdom, where the scribal art is learned, people [...] I am perfectly able to subtract and add; I am skilled in counting and accounting; fair Nanibgal, Nisaba, has given me ample wisdom and intelligence; I am an 'open' scribe [...][7]

A further reference to the school is made later on in the same royal hymn:

> May the scribe stand ready for my prayer in the Ekur[8] [...] may he record it with his hand; may the singer stand ready for it and perform it; in the *edubba*, it will never be changed; in the place of learning, it will never cease.[9]

The art of the scribe was much more than an art of writing down thoughts in cuneiform script: it was called "the mother of orators and the father of the wise".[10] This is evidenced by the bilingual "Examination Text A", which preserves a wealth of details about a knowledge test in the 'house of tablets' and thus about the Babylonian curriculum.[11]

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[6] Such tablets are attested from the Middle Assyrian period – one tablet is mentioned to be a copy of an older wooden tablet; *cf.* Hunger 1986, No. 64.

[7] Castellino 1972, 30–31; Hymn B, 13-20, referring to the education of Ishme-Dagan of Ekallatum. *Cf.* Oppenheim 1964, 242.

[8] i.e., the Temple of Enlil in Nippur.

[9] Castellino 1972, 62. *V.* Römer 1965, 21 *sqq.*

[10] Lambert 1960, 213. The Mesopotamian scribes kept the traditional unity of their activities by calling themselves simply 'scribes' (*tupsarru*), and modern scholarship accepts this without having to elaborate further. In reality, these scribes acted in several distinct capacities (*v. infra*), so scholars tend to use modern terms and approximations, e.g. the scribe as bureaucrat, the scribe as poet, the scribe as scholar, etc. Each variation of the trained scribe had a specific function, though it was obscured by the general name for his craft.

[11] Musée national du Louvre, *Textes cuneiformes*, Paris, 1910, #1696; Driver 1976, 65-66.

The scene is the court of an *eduba*, where an *unmia* proposes to an 'assembly of masters' to informally examine a young scribe. The 'school father' asks the candidate: "You have sat in the tablet house from childhood to adulthood. Do you know the art of writing that you have learned?" The candidate answers with confidence, "What do I not know? Ask me and I'll give you the answer." The 'school father' reacts with suspicion, predicting that his young student will not answer all the questions, as it turns out.

Immediately, the young scribe is faced with a series of difficult and complex problems. He is asked to translate from Akkadian to Sumerian and vice versa; to demonstrate his mastery of various types of calligraphy and rare characters; to know the different classes of priests and other types of professions; to know how to prepare and seal official documents; to explain the different categories of songs; and to explain the problems of conducting a choir. The examiner asks the student to explain the technical terms used by the various classes of temple officials, followed by those of goldsmiths, shepherds, and porters. The teacher gives mathematical problems involving distribution of meals and division of land. Finally, various techniques for playing musical instruments are covered. At one point, the young scribe gives up and tells the examiner that he has not taught him enough. The 'father' responds with a stern warning:

> So, what have you done? What good has it done you to sit here? You are already a mature man, almost old! You are as teachable as an old donkey; you are past your season like withered grain. How long will you play around? But it's not too late for you! If you study day and night, if you make constant efforts with humility and without arrogance, if you listen to your colleagues and teachers, you can still become a scribe! Then you'll be able to share this craft – a fortune for its owner, an angel to guide you, a bright eye in your possession. And that's what the palace needs!

We find additional data in another text that describes an argument between two students, the elder Girnishag and the younger Enkimansi. Girnishag criticizes Enkimansi for not following his recommendations and instructions, and for behaving unbecomingly as a scribe, and Enkimansi retorts:

> What do you mean, I am not a scribe like you are? You write documents that make no sense. You write illegible letters. You go to divide an estate and it turns out you're unable to do the job. When you go to survey a field, you can't keep hold of the tape and the measuring rod; you can't drive in the pegs of the field;

> you can't figure out the sense. [...] You don't know how to arbitrate between contesting parties; you make the fights among brothers worse. You are the most unfit of all the scribes. Can anyone say what you're good for?

Girnishag responds in kind, highlighting his own expertise. He claims to be a skilled surveyor, with experience in resolving disputes and settling disagreements effectively. He then turns to address the younger scribe's criticism, responding in a lighthearted but mocking tone: "You're incompetent in just about everything; the most negligent person one can imagine. Even when you multiply, your work is full of errors [...]"[12] Girnishag claims that Enkimansi doesn't know how to write a ritual prayer, can't transfer an inscription from a tablet to a stele, and can't explain the secrets of a ceremony. Once the teacher steps in, the fight calms down. Of course, we are not concerned with who won the argument, but rather with the function of this colorful one-act play. It is quite likely that this and other Sumerian school texts were actually written to demonstrate what would-be scribes should strive for, both in and out of school.

These two excerpts – along with many more – clearly show that the totality of the scribal training was not, to borrow a well known expression, οἷον σωρὸς, ἀλλ' [ἦν] τι τὸ ὅλον παρὰ τὰ μόρια. First, we note the development of two distinct strands of literary tradition. One strand consisted of a more or less fixed set of texts that became the basis of the educational system.[13] This strand provides the bulk of the data on the work of scribes who did not work in the temple or palace, but served as professional educators in Mesopotamian schools; virtually no other ancient source offers us such a vivid, detailed, and complete picture of the archetypal institutions of learning that preserved and transmitted culture to future generations. The second strand, on the other hand, included the informal or non-canonical literature through which the poet could express his artistic aspirations, the political thinker his ideologies, and the scholar his theories.[14]

With all this in mind, it is not difficult to imagine why the student of *bit tuppi* could, if he so wished, quickly detach himself from the limited horizon of administrative records. Because he possessed a key skill, the ability to record thoughts on a clay tablet, the scribe was inevitably given other strategically important social positions, such as temple official, court secretary, royal advisor, civil bureaucrat, trade correspondent, poet, or scholar. Oppenheim notes that the role and im-

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[12] Civil 1966, 123.

[13] Oppenheim 1967, 36.

[14] Lucas 1979, 309.

portance of scribes trained in this way can be compared to that of the clergy in medieval Europe, and their knowledge and skills to the extensive body of training, knowledge, and skills encompassed by the Islamic term *adab*.[15] But education in the ancient Near East did not imply only the utilitarian, technical training of personnel for the needs of the state. The education of the scribe pointed higher than the attainment of simple literacy: it aimed at the full and rounded formation of character and soul, which Marrou loosely calls 'wisdom'.[16] On a cultic level, the whole process culminated in the *bit-mummi*, the 'house of counsel', which was under the patronage of the gods Ea, Nisaba, and Nabu.[17] Unlike the *bit tuppi*, this 'house of counsel' remained forever attached to the temple. It included selected candidates who were ready to advance in the true training of the great sages – the esoteric knowledge; [18] there they delved into the secrets of divination, learned to debate the *omina*, the signs of the gods, they learned to observe the stars and perfected their arithmetic to enter the field of astrosophy. As Ashurbanipal points out in reference to his own preparation:

> I studied what the sage Adapa left us, the hidden meaning of all written knowledge. I was introduced and initiated into the omens of heaven and earth. I can take part in a discussion at a meeting of sages, I can discuss the heparoscopy series with the most learned doctors. I know how to solve reciprocals and products that have no given solution. I am an expert in reading learned texts where the Sumerian is enigmatic and the Akkadian difficult to decipher. I understand the meaning of the pre-flood stone inscriptions, which are hermetic, general and complex.[19]

This fictional praise of Ashurbanipal's abilities undoubtedly represents another idealized template, providing us with a picture of the abilities of a student who has completed the path of learning in *bit-mummi* and gone through a strand of professional training, acquiring not only literacy and knowledge, but all the prerequisites for a fruitful social, political, and scholarly life.

3. This calls for a contextualization of the system within the broader intellectual tradition. The peculiarities of scribal training, which at its foundation included the mastery of cuneiform writing, mathema-

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[15] Oppenheim 1965, 253; *cf.* Lucas 1979, 305.

[16] Marrou 1948, 23.

[17] *Mummu* can also be translated as 'thought' (*viz.* λόγος), 'wisdom', 'ability'. Ashurbanipal was fond of being called *mar mummi*, 'the son of wisdom', 'the Learned'; v. Seux 1976, 121.

[18] On *tupšarrūtu*, astronomy, astrology and astrosophy, as well as the transfer of knowledge in the cuneiform world, *v. esp.* Rochberg 2024.

[19] A somewhat differing translation in Labal 1968, 79 *sqq.*

tical skills, and literary knowledge, suggest an interesting parallel with the classical Greek concept of παιδεία. Just as scribal education in the ancient Near East was not a vocational training, but rather an immersive intellectual pursuit that fostered critical thinking, ethical understanding, and a deep appreciation of cultural heritage, the Greek notion of παιδεία similarly encapsulated a holistic educational philosophy aimed at cultivating well-rounded individuals who possessed both intellectual and moral virtues. While παιδεία was admittedly a uniquely Greek phenomenon, the goals and methods of scribal education were in many ways analogous to the Greek educational ideal, as both systems aimed to produce a well-rounded, educated elite capable of serving the state/community and preserving cultural traditions.

This parallel not only illustrates the sophistication of the scribal curriculum, but also underscores its role in shaping the intellectual and cultural ethos of the society it served. While it is true that the classical meaning of the term is not entirely clear, and is best understood through diachronic inquiry, παιδεία is broadly considered to be "a tool for social promotion; a *sine qua non* to the political power; and central to the topic of the elite".[20] This corresponds to all the functional characteristics of Near Eastern scribal training described above, so that it easily falls into the three categories defined many centuries later. These words of Isocrates follow Ashurbanipal's praise quite naturally:

> "... ἔτι δὲ τοὺς εὐθὺς ἐξ ἀρχῆς ἐλευθέρως τεθραμμένους ἐκ μὲν ἀνδρίας καὶ πλούτου καὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἀγαθῶν οὐ γιγνωσκομένους, ἐκ δὲ τῶν λεγομένων μάλιστα καταφανεῖς γιγνομένους, καὶ τοῦτο σύμβολον τῆς παιδεύσεως ἡμῶν ἑκάστου πιστότατον ἀποδεδειγμένον, καὶ τοὺς λόγῳ καλῶς χρωμένους οὐ μόνον ἐν ταῖς αὑτῶν δυναμένους, ἀλλὰ καὶ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐντίμους ὄντας."[21]

Fragmentary evidence from the time of the Third Dynasty of Ur indicates that the scribes considered themselves, probably not without reason, to be members of the intellectual elite.[22] The scribes themselves

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[20] Pušić 2023, 9 *sqq*. Respectively, Elsner 2013, 136-137; Van Hoof 2013; Watts, 2006; Brown 1992, 35–70.

[21] Isocrates, Panegyricus 49.

[22] *E.g.*, Many of the self-reflective documents from the Edubbaʾa view Nippur as the center of the world; this perspective is reflected in the special relationship of the kings of Isin and Larsa to Nippur as the source of divine legitimation of kingship. The scribes of Nippur saw themselves in direct correspondence and service to the king; a satirical literary letter informs us that education at Nippur was unique and that nothing could compare. Paulus (2023, 10) remarks that this claim may be exaggerated, since we know that scribal training was comparable in many Babylonian cities, but there is little doubt that the edubbaʾa trained the local elite and that this local elite aspired to national leader-

were not explicitly members of the ruling class, but they certainly enjoyed the patronage and respect of the rich and powerful. Because of the extensive training they had received, they felt that they belonged to a group with common interests, a strong and prestigious body of litterati, enriched also by all the past experience of their teachers; this sense of collegiality and particularity was in many cases stronger than the interests of the rulers in whose service they worked. [23]

At this point, one cannot help comparing the elite status of those who passed through this characteristic Near Eastern παιδεία with their Greek counterparts. At first glance, it seems strange to compare the social status of an individual in a Near Eastern monarchy with that of an ἐμπολιτεύων; but, as we will see in a moment, this comparison is not entirely out of place. The obvious divergent elements – the ἀγορά, democracy, the free academic pursuit of wisdom – are latecomers to the equation, and their importance should not be overstated. As late as Cleisthenes, the Greeks lived in a world dominated by broadly timocratic oligarchies and/or tyrannies. Democracy was hardly a part of the political landscape; it was Cleisthenes, ἑσσούμενος, who finally τὸν δῆμον προσεταιρίζεται, so that that the people of Athens began to believe that the former ally and now enemy of the Peisistratids was going to stand up for them against the aristocrats.[24] In a similar vein, Hanson points out that Greek culture and philosophy did not originate in the garden of the academy, nor in any sophisticated discussions in the ἀγορά; he believes that the intellectual life of the city, like its temples and buildings, was supported by the wealth of the farmer-hoplites who came to the city only occasionally to sell their produce or to cast their votes.[25] Thus, it seems that early social conditions in Greece were not so different from at least some of the Middle Eastern societies we know about.

Even if this line of thought probably overstates the importance of the farmer-hoplites – a question we will leave aside since enough ink has been spilled on it – it is perfectly on target in addressing the prerequisite for παιδεία – σχολή, ‘free time’ or ‘leisure’, a portion of the time which people demand for the cultivation of the mind. This ‘abstention from labour’ or even ‘liberation from the necessity of working’ required a man to be well off, or at least not to be toiling away in the fields; this

ship. *V.* Paulus 2023, 10 *sqq.*, as well as the corresponding chapters in Paulus (ed.) 2023.

[23] On the difference between the concepts of the “strategic elite” and the “ruling class”, *v.* Keller 1991, who does indeed explain the phenomenon in later societies, but nevertheless manages to draw out some general regularities.

[24] Hdt. 5.66.2; Samons 1995, 119.

[25] Hanson 1995, *passim*; Samons 1998, 100.

makes the concept of *παιδεία-requiring-σχολή* undeniably elite, the citizens who went through it being no less elite than the near Eastern *litterati.* [26] On balance, this is the concept that gave wings to the upstart κακοί and, in due time, made them the privileged ἀγαθοί,[27] superseding the old, largely discredited 'aristocracy of birth' with a new elite, the 'aristocracy of wisdom'.[28]

However, it is very difficult to apply the corresponding verb σχολάζειν to a near Eastern scribe. Σχολάζειν is a prerequisite for building democracy, a necessity for participation in the time-consuming system of government and administration of justice in a Greek city-state. In the same vein, σχολή is an exceptional basis for participation in politics, as it represents the factor of 'time at one's disposal' in a political aspect.[29] This is exactly what makes the two systems different: the elite παιδεία that one enters *sua sponte* is the so-called ἐλευθέριος παιδεία, the education of a free and noble person, which also implies the existence of ἐλευθέριοι τέχναι, free and noble occupations.[30] The contexts in which these terms are used make it clear that "free" in this case does not mean every person who is not a slave, but only the truly free – the members of the noble and wealthy upper class. This kind of παιδεία is neither χρησίμη nor ἀναγκαία, but ἐλευθέριος and καλή; in

[26] Anastasiadis explains that the concept of leisure, as applied to ancient Greek sources, oscillates between two similar, though not identical, formulations. The first formulation would be "abstention from work", an indication of economic superiority and social prestige, which the ancient Greeks contrasted with work, indicating inferiority and subordination to a master. The second formulation identifies leisure with a state of liberation from the necessity of work or any undesirable activity, a state distinct from "spare time", which in itself constitutes an ideal state of existence, a concept closer in spirit to the idealization of leisure formulated by the Greeks. *V.* Veblen 1934, 35 *sqq.*; De Grazia 1962, 14; Anastasiadis 2004, 59.

[27] Hanson 1995, 195.

[28] Baldry 1965, 56. Even in a democracy, which seriously sought to provide general equality, the generals – who were usually also the political leaders – and some financial administrators had to belong to the highest census class for reasons of competence and security; despite general equality, merit and competence were not neglected; *v.* for instance, Thuc. 2.37.1; *cf.* Raaflaub 1983, 519. Until the end of the Periclean era, almost all political leaders belonged to aristocratic families: "in the paradoxical formulation which we find in Thucydides and in Plato, democratic equality was not equitable, because it distributed a kind of equality to the equal and unequal alike". *V.* Raaflaub 1983, 519; *cf.* Ps.Xen. *Ath. Pol.* 1.1 *sqq.*, Hdt. 3.81; 82.4; Eur. *Suppl.* 409 *sqq.*; *contra* Thuc. 2.37.1.

[29] Anastasiadis 2004, 78. For example, Plato often refers to σχολή as to the 'luxury' of intellectual culture, at a point when it was certain that people have sufficient necessities of life to survive; *v.* Plat. *Crit.* 110a; *Leg.* 828d.

[30] The formula ἐλευθέριος παιδεία, later used as synonym with ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία and translated into Latin as *artes liberales*, is alluded to in Aristotle and Plato; *v.* Plat. *Ep.* 7.334B; *Nom.* 643E-44B; Arist. *Pol.* 1338a 30-32. Furthermore, "persons who have been raised or educated freely" appear in Isocrates' Panegyric (380) and Xenophon's Memorabilia (after 393) as an established and familiar category.

contrast to professional training in a specialized discipline, which enables a person to earn a living, this ἐλευθέριος παιδεία aims to introduce a person to noble pursuits that fit a life of leisure, but also promote political skills and, most importantly, a career of political leadership.[31] By all accounts, the Near East was not aware of this aspect of engagement in παιδεία *sua sponte* with the specific goal of participating in the public life of the community and advancing in the sphere of τὰ πολιτικά. In the case of the great monarchies, this is quite understandable; in the case of many smaller states, however, we simply have far fewer sources from which to make an informed decision than we do for the Greek city-states.

Despite these differences, it is undeniable that what was happening in the *bit tuppi* was a kind of παιδεία that corresponds to the Greek one, at least in a technical, if not in a social context. In the same vein, one can look at the upgrading of the initial technical knowledge and skills, i.e. the process that continued in the *bit mummi*. *Bit mummi* is described as "a house with a foundation like the heavens; a house like a vessel covered with linen; a house like a goose standing on a firm foundation; one with eyes not opened went in, one with eyes open came out: [...] a school."[32] The metaphorical meaning of the open eyes in the second part seems clear enough: the purpose of the school was to transform the ignorant and illiterate into men of learning and wisdom. It was the place of transition from writing to interpretation, from reading to understanding, from apparent to esoteric knowledge, from knowledge to wisdom, from learning to applying what has been learned.[33] Did this application open a way to *humanitas*, and are we

[31] Raaflaub 1983, 529.

[32] *Cf.* Kramer 1963, 236. It is important to note that alongside pedagogical work, artistic training, and scientific research, institutions for systematic education were also developed. It seems that the Assyrians had even established a kind of 'Academy', called *taphurti ummani* or "Council of Sages". During the reign of Sargon II, a certain Nabû-shallim-shunu held the titles of "Chief Royal Scribe", "Sage of King Sargon", and "Supreme Lord" (Hunger 1968, 264); perhaps he was the head of the supposed 'Academy'. Prominent scholars in the time of Esarhaddon were Nabu-ahhe-eriba, who bore the title "astrologer and interpreter of syllables", and the physician Adad-šumu-uṣur, who called himself "a noble of my lord the king" and was probably Ashurbanipal's teacher. The supposed 'Academy' should be associated with the establishment of Ashurbanipal's library. It would not have been a simple archive of tablets, but a sort of a scholarly, humanistic laboratory where academic discussion and collaborative work took place. Evidence from Ashurbanipal's self-praise suggests that the 'Academy' would be the most appropriate place for the scholar dialogue and research mentioned in the text. Most attention was paid to botany, divination, writing and medicine, astrology, chemistry, and various "cultural" disciplines; *v.* Hunger 1968, 320, 324, 326, 333; *cf.* Moreno 1989.

[33] Contrary to the traditional view in Assyriology, which in the past spoke of an unchanging flow of information called the "stream of tradition" that was merely copied

able to recognize its essential features, as we have recognized those of παιδεία? Again, this depends on how we understand the term *humanitas*.[34]

4. The word *humanitas* is often considered to be an original Roman concept. Building on two Greek ideas, φιλανθρωπία ('human kindness') and παιδεία ('education'), the Romans are said to have molded them into an ideology that was again greater than the sum of its parts: a definition of *humanitas* would thus encompass both a civilized attitude toward all people and a cultural background appropriate to that attitude. The concept may have first appeared in the late second century BC, when the circle of Scipio Aemilianus came into contact with Panaetius and Polybius; however, Bauman is right to remind us that the underlying ideas – *aequitas, iustitia, fides, venia, clementia, indulgentia, maiestas* – were known long before that.[35]

One would expect an overlap between the concepts of παιδεία, φιλανθρωπία and *humanitas*. Indeed, Aulus Gellius tries to set the record straight:

> Humanitatem non significare id, quod volgus putat, sed eo vocabulo, qui sinceriter locuti sunt, magis proprie esse usos. Qui verba Latina fecerunt quique his probe usi sunt, humanitatem non

from generation to generation, today the emphasis is rightly placed on the power of creation and change in traditions. Robson (2019, 34) is right to point out that "scribal education – which, for Oppenheim, was what fed the 'stream of tradition' – was neither unchanging nor purely 'operational'. It did far more than simply impart the conventional technical skills necessary for the smooth transmission of ancient written knowledge. It adapted to socio-political upheaval by creating new traditions to stabilise itself, traditions that settled into custom in quieter times. Now, over half a century after Oppenheim, it would be eccentric to maintain that the choice of curricular material was entirely independent of current social forces, as he then had it, and was purely utilitarian in aim."

[34] We will not dwell here on the meaning and the most correct translation of the term *humanitas*, on which much more ink has been spilled than on the farmer-hoplites. It is enough to say that Braund notes the problems with the English term even before switching to the Latin one: "[...] The OED entry reflects contemporary thought and usage by connecting the word 'humanity' with the words 'human' and 'humane'. Thus 'humanity' as connected with the adjective 'human' is 'the condition of being human; the human faculties or attributes collectively; human nature; man in the abstract' and hence 'the human race; mankind; human beings collectively'. And 'humanity' as connected with 'humane' is defined as 'the character or quality of being humane; behaviour or disposition towards others such as befits a human being, disposition to treat human beings and animals with consideration and compassion; kindness, benevolence'. So much is uncontroversial. Yet what it is to be human is contested, particularly in discussions of topical issues like abortion and euthanasia and persistent vegetative state, and modern philosophers continue to debate the point. This is a salutary reminder that the concept of 'humanity' is not simple or monolithic." *v.* Braund 1997, 16. In any case, *humanitas* is an enormous topic which has been discussed extensively; for an overview, among many others, *v.* Rieks 1967; Veyne 1993, 342–369; Oniga 2009; Pušić 2023.

[35] Bauman 1996, 14; *cf.* Schadewalt 1973, 44; Oniga, 2009.

> id esse voluerunt, quod volgus existimat quodque a Graecis *philanthropia* dicitur et significat dexteritatem quandam benivolentiamque erga omnis homines promiscam, sed humanitatem appellaverunt id propemodum, quod Graeci *paideian* vocant, nos eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artis dicimus. Quas qui sinceriter cupiunt adpetuntque, hi sunt vel maxime humanissimi. Huius enim scientiae cura et disciplina ex universis animantibus uni homini datast idcircoque humanitas appellata est. Sic igitur eo verbo veteres esse usos et cumprimis M. Varronem Marcumque Tullium omnes ferme libri declarant. Quamobrem satis habui unum interim exemplum promere. Itaque verba posui Varronis e libro rerum humanarum primo, cuius principium hoc est: Praxiteles, qui propter artificium egregium nemini est paulum modo humaniori ignotus. "Humaniori" inquit non ita, ut vulgo dicitur, facili et tractabili et benivolo, tametsi rudis litterarum sit – hoc enim cum sententia nequaquam convenit, sed eruditiori doctiorique, qui Praxitelem, quid fuerit, et ex libris et ex historia cognoverit.[36]

On this basis, Pušić identifies παιδεία as the earliest fixed component of humanism, with the concept of Roman *humanitas* "a result of the maturation of its Greek counterpart," which valued the education of a child *that would lead to the achievement of excellence in adulthood*. Thus, the concepts of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία had arguably become the central premises for the development of Latin *humanitas* – meaning that *a liberally educated person was different from the professional,* "both in terms of the general knowledge of the culture that the former possesses and of the ability to solve the problems related to the human sphere."[37]

But there is more to the story and things do not seem to be particularly straightforward. Braund argues that the most important part of *humanitas* comes from context, as the concept of *humanitas* could be used *inclusively* or *exclusively*. This is an important distinction, considering that in ancient texts the exclusive usage is more common than the inclusive one, in contrast to modern texts that deal with the concept of "humanity". *Inclusive use* refers to a generalizing statement about phenomena that apply to the whole of humanity and connect all members of the human race, a common and expected concept from a modern perspective. Likewise, in Roman antiquity, Seneca[38] uses the

[36] Aul. Gell. Noct. Att. 13.17.

[37] Pušić 2023, 13.

[38] Sen. *Ep.* 65.7: itaque homines quidem pereunt, ipsa autem humanitas ad quam homo effingitur permanet et hominibus laborantibus, intereuntibus illa nihil patitur.

term *humanitas* to refer to the Platonic form of humanity, Hieronimus defines *humanitas* as 'the entire race of humankind',[39] while Terrentius, of course, provides us with the most famous quotation on the subject.[40] Braund calls this an "essentially assimilating use, which ignores or overrides any differences, in order to emphasise shared 'humanness'".[41] However, much more often the term is used exclusively, i.e., in contexts where it distinguishes one group from another, to create a clear distinction between the proverbial "us" and "them". In some cases, this distinction is simply between man and beast, actually emphasizing the "non-beastliness" of being human. Often, however, the term "beast" is used metaphorically, distinguishing one group of humans from another by labeling one group as bestial or savage and another as civilized: this is often expressed by emphasizing an antithesis between "barbarism" and "civilization".[42]

The first century B.C. was a time of remarkable social and intellectual development in Rome, as well as a time of new concepts and semantic shifts in philosophical thought. The developments of the first century B.C. – for example, the gradual process of displacing the term *hellenismos* by the term *latinitas*, which began with the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* – opened the way for the virtual synonymy of the terms *humanitas* and *urbanitas*.[43] At this time the two words make their earliest unambiguous appearance in literature – *humanitas* in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and *urbanitas* in Cicero's speech for Roscius Amerinus. In Cicero, *urbanitas* is glossed by the word *humanitas* and is evidently almost synonymous, so that both *humanitas* and *urbanitas* denote a degree of refinement and culture.[44] In Cicero's words, *humanitas* was not

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[39] Hieronim. *Ep.* 55.3.4: "humanitatem" in hoc loco dicimus non mansuetudinem et clementiam, quam Graeci philanthropian vocant, sed omne hominum genus.

[40] Terr. *Heaut.* 77: homo sum; humani nil a me alienum puto; *cf.* Cic. *De Leg.* 1.33, *De Off.* 1.30; Sen. *Ep.* 95.52.

[41] Braund 1997, 19.

[42] Braund brings up the notorious example of Agricola's skill in dealing with the native Britons, describing their gradual conversion from barbarism to culture, *humanitas*, culminating in their appropriation of "delenimenta vitiorum, porticus et balinea et conviviorum elegantiam"; Tacitus goes on to comment that "idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset" (*Agr.* 21.3). But even before him, in the famous *incipit* of *De Bello Gallico*, Caesar fixed this concept in the hendiadys *cultus atque humanitas*, "human civilization" (1.1.3).

[43] *Urbanus* was not used in earlier centuries with any positive extension of meaning; however, early in the 1st century B.C. it appears in an extended sense, which seems to have been generally recognized and accepted by that time. In the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (4.51.64), the double negative *non inurbanus*, used to describe a slave, is practically equivalent to the English "polished" or "clever". *Cf.* many other examples in Ramage 1963.

[44] *Rhet. ad Herenn*, 2.50, Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am.* 120-1; cf. Ramage 1963; Ramage 1973, 55 *sqq.*

a doctrine, but a style of reasoning typical of the open-minded members of the aristocracy – a style that found its full expression in individuals who possessed a special sensibility, sensitivity to delicate matters, and a literary education. The qualities of humanitas belonged to the domain of their private lives when they were on a break from public affairs.[45] Culture, as represented by the qualities of *humanitas*, was now rooted in the city of Rome, the Urbs, from which the noun *urbanitas* derives. This *humanitas* was a specific cultural construct that could be used to assert a crucial difference, to distinguish the in-crowd (as Gellius would have it, the ones who had *eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes*) from the rest. The corresponding education taught the right way of thinking and behaving, if one was to be considered in possession of *humanitas*, which was more or less identified not only with *urbanitas*, but also with what Braund calls *Romanitas*.[46]

5. It is rather thought-provoking that we can recognize a similar idea in the Epic of Gilgamesh. The worldview of the Old Babylonian Gilgamesh is undeniably urban; one of the basic messages of the text is that a life worth living can only be lived in the city, so the Savage from the steppe must go to the city, which will be his path to humanity.[47] In this process of humanization, the presence of the urban woman also plays an important role: through her love, he comes closer to the gods; she opens new worldviews to him, "and taking his hand like a bridegroom she leads him". But this woman's love is only provisional, and one could almost say that it is only a mediator for another kind of love; after reaching humanity, the former Savage of the steppes discovers the gift of human companionship and friendly love.

On the other hand, despite living in a civilized society, the Great Man of the City is also a loner who knows no love, only violence. His only friend is his axe, whom "deeply drawn towards, he loves like a woman and wears at his side". In the Old Babylonian version, the city magnate is a friendless loner and oppressor, while the hermit from the steppe is a friendless savage who has only the company of animals. The only way to resolve this balance of imperfect and unsatisfied beings is the creation of a model situation of "a Great Man in Society". Enkidu realizes first the love of a woman, then the love of a friend, and thus, first humanized, then heroized, meets death; Gilgamesh realizes first the love of a friend, then the love of a woman, and finally meets

[45] Pušić 2023, 16.

[46] Braund 1997, 30. Cf. Lee-Stacum 2014, who offers a deeper insight into the origins of the interlocking of these three terms.

[47] More on Gilgamesh as a "poem about civilization and wilderness, about war and peace, and about a world of cities" in Woolf 2020, 62 *sqq*.

death as a humanized hero. Accordingly, the Old Babylonian version of the epic can be arranged as follows: a) It is not good, even for a Great Man, to be alone; the urban hermit is an oppressor; the steppe hermit is a savage. b) The Great man, if he finds love, can be a hero; female love humanizes, and friendly love heroizes. c) Death relativizes and valorizes love.[48] The fragments of the Old Babylonian version invite us to reflect on the state of humanity, urban life, and the centrality of interpersonal relationships in an urban, civilized life.

The standard version of the text probes even deeper into the themes of life, city, and death. According to Moreno, the central idea of the standard version is "The City and Peace", where the point of view is monarchical and distinctly urban, the message being that only Uruk, the City, can be monumental, not the individual.

Everything begins in well-fortified Uruk, whose ruler is two-thirds god and one-third mortal; the trials of the city are the fruit of its ruler's unrestraint. The Savage is created to serve the city and its peace, but before he can face the king, he must qualify by embracing urbanity. The epic dwells on this process of education, entrusted to the *harimtu* Shamhat. In the steppe, the Savage turns away from his animal urges by sleeping with her and learning a new way of life, which is only possible "inside Uruk-Haven | where the people show off in skirted finery | where every day is a day for some festival | where the lyre and drum play continually, | where harlots stand about prettily | exuding voluptuousness, full of laughter | and on the couch of night the sheets are spread!"[49] Already qualified and made human – that is, having embraced urbanity – the new Man can fight against the old to achieve the ideal of harmony. The epic warns us that not everyone can confront the unretrained ruler: "it was you, Aruru, who created mankind | now create a *zikru* to it | let him be equal to his stormy heart | let them be a match for each other so that Uruk may find peace!"[50] The oppressed nobles, the youth, the warriors, have no recourse but to take their grievances to the Assembly of Gods, and they, in turn, have created someone who will "change the order of things".

In essence, Moreno suggests that the epic should be read as a roadmap to the attainment of wisdom as ruler through humanization. In the first part, Uruk is presented as a sublime cultural-political model; the City is the ideal of human life, not just any City, but a City where peace and harmony reign. The ruler is charged with ensuring harmony among the inhabitants, but also faces the danger of becoming

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[48] v. Moreno 1989.

[49] I, v, 6-11, tr. Maureen Gallery Kovacs.

[50] I, ii, 30-31, tr. Maureen Gallery Kovacs.

an oppressor through unbridled arrogance. It is necessary to balance his power and energy with another entity that is equal and opposite to him. Out of this tension comes harmony: "Let them be a match for each other, so that Uruk may find peace!"

The text insists on the figure of the ruler devoted to his own project, as opposed to the project outlined by the gods; however, he should really turn his attention to what is his primary task – managing the City in Harmony. A king can be 'rich in Wisdom' only in functional relation to his duty as scribe, thinker, and builder and guardian of the city – understood at this stage as the totality of civilized life, that is, of humanity. The glorious, even heroic, king is a mortal whose chief function, if he has Wisdom, is to build the City of Men (i.e., civilization). Thus, in the hands of the ancient Eastern scribe and creator, the epic provides a pedagogical proposal for the implementation of government, the establishment of organized order, and ultimately urban, i.e., civilized, human life.

6. Deeply intertwined with the concept of *urbanitas*, the Roman notion of *humanitas* represented an important cultural ideal that encompassed not only the intellectual and moral cultivation of an individual, but also the cultivated, urbane manners associated with city life. Going beyond a simple translation of 'humanity' or 'kindness', *humanitas* embodied a set of refined, cosmopolitan virtues that distinguished the educated and cultured members of society. This notion was particularly emphasized in the *Urbs*, which provided a fertile ground for social interaction, public discourse, and the arts. The principles of *humanitas* were vividly demonstrated through speech, behavior, and knowledge of literature and philosophy, marking a clear distinction from the seeming simplicity and rusticity of rural life.

In Sumerian literature, the term *nam.lú.ùlu* seems to be an equivalent of *humanitas* in the extensive palette of its meanings, from 'the collectivity of mankind' to 'the complete blossoming forth of human values, humanism'.[51] A comparison between the concept of *nam.lú.ùlu* and the Roman concept of *humanitas* reveals two distinct but overlapping understandings of what it meant to be human and urban in the context of their respective cultures. *Nam.lú.ùlu* is based on the principle of an interconnected collective with a shared destiny, with individuals deeply embedded in their community; social and moral order is paramount, and the well-being of the community depends on the fulfillment of each person's role within the urban collective. The destiny of the *civilized community-come-city-come-civilization* is based on the civilized individual and collective choices, with a strong emphasis on

[51] *V.*, *e.g.*, Gordon 1960, 123; Oppenheim 1964, 181, *et. al.*

communal worship and ethical behavior to maintain divine favor. On the other hand, *humanitas* is based on the individual, emphasizing the cultivation of personal virtues such as wisdom, kindness, and a sense of duty. It is closely tied to the idea of becoming fully human through education, moral development, and the pursuit of excellence, and *only afterwards* contributing to society by embodying the highest human virtues, which in turn benefits the collective. Unlike the nature of *nam.lú.ùlu*, which naturally follows a divine order of things, *humanitas* is secular, focusing on the intrinsic value of human beings and their capacity for reason and ethical behavior;[52] however, education is central to both concepts, which place a strong emphasis on developing the intellect and moral character to fulfill one's potential as a civilized human being.

While both *nam.lú.ùlu* and *humanitas* offer frameworks for understanding humanity, they reflect the different values and priorities of their respective cultures: the former was rooted in a communal, religious view of humanity that focuses on collective responsibility and divine order, while the latter emphasized individual moral development, cultural refinement, and civic responsibility within a more secular framework. Of course, these concepts, especially the concept of *humanitas,* were not set in stone.[53] By the time the Sophists crystallized the idea that a citizen's duty was to embrace παιδεία from the positions of both teacher and student and to develop those qualities that make him human, the concept had already moved from 'potentials and prospects' to 'civic duties and responsibilities'. Moreover, with Christianity, the Roman world embraced the idea of another eternal city beyond Rome, one that was universal for all humanity. Augustine came up with the famous *civitas Dei* and contrasted it with the *civitas terrena* that was

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[52] *Cf.* Finkelstein 1963, 463 *apud* Brown 1988, 130: "In Mesopotamian thought, man was not the center of the universe; an autonomous study of man would have made little sense [...] To the Mesopotamian, the crucial and urgent subject of study was the entire objective universe [...]." Incidentally, it is worth noting here that things were not much different in pre-classical Greece. In Homer, for example, Legaspi (2018, 18 *sqq.*) interprets something very similar to the ancient Eastern worldview: "[...] knowledge and power [*sc.* In Homer] lie with the gods. When it comes to power, humans are subordinate; when it comes to knowledge, they are consumers rather than producers. For this reason, the human field of action is staked not on knowledge and power but on character and choice within a much more limited span. This, in turn, brings wisdom into focus as the ability to understand and inhabit prudently one's allotted share."

[53] *Cf.* Elsner (2013, 151) on παιδεία: "I am not at all sure that even now we really know what *paideia* meant in antiquity or, rather, at different times in a changing antiquity. There is a unitary, holistic and arguably monolithic idealism at constant play in both Jaeger and Marrou, which remains the case whenever *paideia* is invoked by modern scholarship as an explanation of cultural background, which is its most common function in its current use."

Rome. This was the path that led to the development of the concept beyond the confines of Roman, or even ancient, culture, eventually leading to the emergence of the modern ideal of humanism.[54]

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