

Note to the Reader

The chapter opens with a heartfelt reflection by the author on their maternal grandmother, who, despite being unaware of Thales of Miletus, recognized water as a vital principle of life. The author recounts how literature ultimately bridged their understanding of water's intrinsic mysteries, which represent not only the flow of life but also the desiccation of ancient landscapes. The narrative shifts to Mesopotamia's historical context, where the once-thriving Tigris and Euphrates rivers, now drying, expose ancient settlements, marking a dire reality for water-stressed nations.

The figure of King Arthur of the Sewers and Slums emerges, a fictional representation inspired by the once-renowned George Smith, a self-taught Assyriologist pivotal in decoding cuneiform and discovering the **Epic of Gilgamesh**. The author's homage to Smith and other scholars underscores their extensive research, drawing from works like **The Buried Book** by David Damrosch and **The Ark before Noah** by Irving Finkel, which highlight water's significance both literally and metaphorically.

Various historical characters and events interweave throughout, such as the vivid accounts of the Yazidis and the devastating mentalities that led to massacres and the tragic genocide faced by this community. The author emphasizes the complex, nuanced relationship with the cultural heritage of the Yazidis and the broader implications of their plight, connected thematically to the world's response—or lack thereof—toward ongoing human rights atrocities.

The author expresses gratitude to numerous scholars and survivors whose stories and resilience inform the narrative, illustrating a deep connection to the history and cultures represented. The chapter closes with a poignant image of Thales observing water, emphasizing the continuity of life through the ages and the shared experience of humanity represented by a single droplet connecting us all, transcending time and space. This reflective note encapsulates the themes of interconnectedness, history, and the weight of cultural narratives within the flow of water.