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The Birth of Brand: 4000 Years of Branding History

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The Birth of Brand¹

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Abstract

This paper seeks to show that brands are as old as civilization. It derives evidence of branding, in various forms, from important historical periods beginning 2250 BCE in the Indus Valley through to 300 BCE Greece. This evidence is compared with modern research directed toward developing a meaning of “brand”.

INTRODUCTION

The first *Journal of Marketing* article on the topic of “brand” can be traced back to H.D. Wolfe’s 1942 “Techniques of Appraising Brand Preference and Brand Consciousness by Consumer Interviewing”, with several other articles on brands and branding appearing in the popular literature even earlier in the 20th century. While some thirty brand and branding articles appeared in the top three consumer behavior journals (*Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*) from 1942 to 1969, branding as a major topic of study in the marketing discipline, began in earnest in the 1970’s. Books and journal articles have tackled the topic of branding from a variety of perspectives. Specifically, a good portion of the research on brands is devoted to building a better understanding in the areas of brand choice (or preference), brand switching, brand loyalty and brand extensions. Table 1 provides an overview of articles, according to topic area, from the top three consumer behavior journals (*Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing Research*) where the main focus was examining brands and branding. We note that this sample of articles is based on a keyword search for “brand” or “branding” in the citation, and thereby is not exhaustive. As such, there are likely to be many other articles on these topics that have not been included. However, we feel that this sample provides a good overview and an idea of the level of focus on each topic category that has been achieved to date in the literature.

Place Table 1 about here.

Interestingly, very few of the listed articles have strictly examined the inherent characteristics of brands themselves. In other words, very few of the articles take the approach of asking the

question: “What is a brand?” Rather they have focused almost exclusively on the consumer side of the equation in order to determine what makes an effective brand from the perspective of the consumer, as reflected by most of the topic categories listed in Table 1 (i.e., brand choice, brand switching, brand loyalty and the like). While we understand that effectiveness is an important component of brands both from a strategic perspective and from a consumer satisfaction perspective, a better understanding of the actual characteristics inherent to brands, will help to both enrich our understanding of the topic and point to new potential avenues of research. As such, this article seeks to gain a better understanding of what makes a brand, and will do so using an historical methodological approach as has been applied in discussion on the occurrence of the first proto-multinationals (Moore and Lewis 1998; Moore and Lewis 2000).

As Marketing’s study of branding has progressed, so too has the usage of branding by managers. Several popular journals, including *Brandweek*, *Brand Marketing* and *Brands and their Companies* have been mainstays for marketing management during the last two decades. Further, Ries and Ries’ critically acclaimed “The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding” (1998) and Trout and Ries’ “Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind” (1981) have created a veritable cult around the importance of branding for today’s marketing managers. Taken in combination with the evidence provided in Table 1, an important question arises as to whether branding really only began in earnest in the latter half of the 20th century. Or, has branding existed, before the advent of modern marketing? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to first probe the extant literature to determine whether it is possible for brand characteristics to exist separately from consumer interpretation. Second, in order to answer the question regarding the existence of

brands and branding prior to the latter half of the 20th century, it will be necessary to find historical evidence of products demonstrating brand characteristics.

This paper seeks to show that brands and branding are as old as civilization. We will demonstrate evidence of “proto-brands” from as early as it has been possible to trace human existence. This paper derives evidence of branding, in various forms, from important historical periods beginning 2250 BCE in the Indus Valley through to 300 BCE Greece. Further, this evidence is compared with modern (20th century) research directed toward developing a meaning of “brand”. Two key roles played by brands are witnessed during each period of interest: first, as a conveyor of information (origin and quality) regarding goods and/or services and second, as a conveyor of image or meaning (power, value and/or personality). We hope that the examination of branding in ancient times may lend a better understanding to an overall conceptualization of branding and how it influences and plays a role in macromarkets and society.

METHOD

The historical method is applied in this paper to gain a better understanding of what brands and branding are, whether these phenomena have evolved over time, and if so, how. There is a precedent for the use of the historical method applied successfully to the discipline of marketing (Fullerton 1987, 1988; Low and Fullerton 1994; Nevett 1991 to name but a few) and it is expected that such a method will effectively shed light on the above-mentioned questions. The main reasons necessitating the use of historical method include the following: evidence suggesting that brands and branding did exist in ancient times, lack of research on these topics from prior to the 20th century, and archaeological observations from periods in history for which

consumer responses or marketing literature are non-existent. Further, new methods now exist which have led to the discovery of artifacts previously unknown to our culture, and, which importantly shed light on the questions we are examining.

THESES

As is the convention for historical research, we state upfront our theses, which are representative of our principal findings, followed by a presentation of the evidence and reasoning by which these theses are supported. The theses are as follows:

1. Brands, from all periods in history, display two immutable characteristics related to the conveyance of information to stakeholders: information about quality, and information with the purpose of indicating the origin of the product (which sometimes includes differentiation information to help with the logistical functions of marketing i.e., sorting, storage, transportation, etc.).
2. The evolution of brands shows a movement to greater complexity in character, including the addition of image or meaning (power, value and/or personality) to the list of critical information elements.
3. Brands, from all periods in history, played critical roles not only for end customers, but for stakeholders throughout the channel.
4. Brands did exist prior to the 20th century, but should be referred to as proto-brands.

BRANDING IN ANCIENT TIMES

Early Bronze IV: 2250 – 2000 BCE - The Indus Valley

The Sumerian and Akkadian economies of third and second millennia BCE were at the core of an international economy that extended from Egypt in the west to the Indus Valley in the east.

The Indus Valley or Harappan civilization, located in modern-day India, arose in tandem with Mesopotamian society. The cities and villages of the Harappan civilization covered 1,500 kilometers from north to south, stretching from what is now the southeastern corner of Iran to the region of the Aral Sea in Russia (Moore and Lewis 1999a).

Sir John Marshall and D.R. Sahnii began the excavation of two regions of the Indus in 1921: Harappa in 1921 and Mohenjo-Daro, 600 kilometers to the southwest, in 1922. Virtually no written records from Harappan society exist outside of a number of seals from this excavation written in an as yet undeciphered script. As such, dating the rise of the Indus civilization proves a challenge given the absence of written records, however some overlap between Indian and Sumerian artifacts provide a few clues. A consistent pattern of radiocarbon dates, strongly indicates the rise of the Indus cities began around 2600 BCE. The cities reached their peak between 2300-1700 BCE (Lal 1994).

Findings from the excavation revealed that the whole of the Indus Valley cultural region was linked together by trade and common cultural, social, religious, and political ties. The

civilization of Harappan India represented a vast cultural and linguistic community with the same weights and measures. Red-and-black wheel-made pottery and figurines with painted pottery symbols and seal motifs appears at all of the Indus sites, decorated with animal and geometric motifs (Kenoyer 1994, p. 75).

The Harappan cities were home to craftsmen working in stone and bronze, who created little square seals, which they sold to merchants. There are hundreds of square seals with animal figures, used as trademarks, found at Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and Lothal. Lothal was a transportation center, strategically located between the major Indus cities and the cities of Gujarat, the part of India which borders on the Arabian Sea. The city/The region was both a transit center and a place where opening, checking, repacking, and sorting took place (Ratnagar 1981). Further, a Harappan seals have been found in Sumer, suggesting the presence of at least a few Indian merchants in Mesopotamia, who 'had come abroad to see the dispatch of goods to India' and that 'to a certain extent at least, Harappan goods were sent under contract or commercial partnership to Mesopotamia' (Wolpert 2000, p. 192). A large number of seals have also been found at Failaka in the heart of the Persian Gulf, a processing center where the Indus trade circuit met the Sumerian one (Wolpert 2000). The seals found at Lothal are attached to jars, baskets or other containers. Those found at the other two cities are message documents unaccompanied by goods. These seals indicate, firstly, that 'at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa goods were received, stored, processed and finally redistributed' and secondly, the function of the seals was to convey 'the identity of the sender of a certain piece of merchandise, or the authority allocated by an individual or state department to a particular agent who carried the seal

impression' (Wolpert 2000, p. 188). The pattern of the seals indicates that Mohenjo-daro and Harappa were administrative and redistributive centers.

While most of this trade was probably between state administrations, professional private merchants may have been involved, as proposed by Wolpert (2000). These merchants would have had to be supplied with market information as well as organized and able to send shipments quickly. It was, 'a contractual trade with a scheduled and predetermined movement of merchandise, of the Assyrian type' probably 'partly under state control and partly in the hands of professional merchants, subject to price-regulating market conditions (Wolpert 2000, p. 225).

Here, we believe, one finds the earliest known example of branding. According to UCLA Indianologist Stanley Wolpert, the magnificent seals of tigers, Brahma bulls, elephants, and other Indian animals were “probably made for merchants who used them to 'brand' their wares” along with accompanying writing in a yet untranslated language (Wolpert 2000). These were India's first business documents, written in some 400 picture characters, which may well have been the names of the merchants using the seal. One seal found near Mohenjo-Daro, showed a yogi with a horned dress surrounded by a tiger, elephant, rhinoceros, water buffalo, and deer. It is possible that this seal may have represented the mighty hunter and destroyer Shiva, who was venerated as both a fertility god, tamer of beasts, and planter of seed (Wolpert 2000).

The artifacts from the Indus Valley allow us to draw some conclusions regarding the use of the seals in commerce. First the markings on the seals were used for informational purposes in trade, for manufacturers, re-sellers and government authorities. The markings have been shown to

indicate origin of manufacture and allow for the performance of various functions of marketing (for example: sorting, storage, transportation) both by re-sellers and government authorities.

There is some indication that an occasional secondary reason for the seals was to promote some imagery to potential buyers and users. For example, the fertility god label of Shiva described above therefore becomes the oldest known use of brand imagery – thereby showing that the art of using sex to sell was not unknown to ancient civilization. The degree of use of imagery in the seals, however, seems to have taken a back seat to the informational characteristics implicit in the brand, as shown by the evidence.

Whether these seals can be called brands is another issue. They certainly contain the important information requirements of all modern day brands (information regarding quality and origin) - if not more (information regarding the logistical functions of marketing) – however, the use of imagery seems to be much less prevalent and therefore using the Keller (2003) understanding from a consumer perspective of brand, we might suggest that what we are dealing with here is really a “proto-brand”.

The Middle Bronze Age: 2000-1500 BCE- Shang China

While the Old Kingdom Pharaohs erected their pyramids and the *damgara* of Ebla and Sumer flourished at the dawn of the Bronze Age, the peasants of the *Huang He*, or Yellow River remained in a stone-age economy. The Yangshao people of the 4th and early 3rd millennium BCE lived in small villages, fought with bows and arrows, grew millet, and made a few primitive pots and silk cloth. Their more advanced successors, the Longshan people (late 3rd and early 2nd millennium BCE) still lagged behind their Akkadian and Indus Valley contemporaries. A

trail of their black pottery identifies their settlements, now enclosed with walls and spreading along the Yellow River, with a few outlying towns as far away as Manchuria, the Yangzi, and the southern regions populated by the Vietnamese. The group that followed, Shang China, was a more advanced economy.

Most of what is known about Shang China comes from the excavations begun in 1928-1937 on the site of Anyang, located in the northeastern part of today's Henan Province. Anyang was also the site of some 100,000 of the most ancient Chinese records, carved on bone and tortoise shells, of which 1,000 have been translated. The Shang records are royal, not commercial, and suggest very strongly that the early Chinese economy was a completely state-run operation (Moore and Lewis 2005). The Shang organized their realm on the basis of towns settled by *zu*, or kin groups. Smaller *zu* were combined into larger ones, ruled from a central town subject to supervision by yet larger towns, which served as clan capitals. All were subject to the *wang* (king) in Anyang. This kinship structure, in which the king was patriarch of all, controlled economic as well as political life. Land in Bronze Age China was owned not by private farmers but by the king himself.

Kin and lineage groups were the basis for occupational units not only in growing wheat and raising livestock but in the trades as well. These *zu* had their own crests with names like 'pottery', 'flag', 'cooking pot', 'wine vessels', 'cordage', 'horse plume', 'fence', etc., and no doubt stone, wood, and leather-workers had their own as well.

Can we consider the *zu* crests of Anyang to be brands? Certainly the crests were able to convey basic information regarding origin and quality, no doubt regulated on some level by the king. We can assume that the clan structure of the kin groups would involve somewhat small-scale distribution of the *zu* products within the local community, so information for sorting, storage or distribution was probably limited, as would be imagery beyond the utilitarian imagery associated with the use of the product. As such, the *zu* crests are best representative of a proto-brand.

THE LATE BRONZE AGE: 1500-1000 BCE - CYPRUS

During the Late Bronze Age, beginning around 1500 BCE, the axis of most of world business shifted to the west. The Indus Valley civilization collapsed, while Shang China remained in isolation. No great Mesopotamian empire dominated the world during this time. Trade and commerce began to thrive and grow in the eastern Mediterranean, which became the new focus of economic activity.

Seaborne commerce, in the Late Bronze Age, began to emerge as a distinct business model in the hands of seafaring Canaanites (Phoenicians), Minoans, and Mycenaean Greeks. Trade was conducted by palace officials or temporary ventures of traders sometimes supported by the palace. The Hittite code recognized private ownership and transactions in real estate but combined them with obligations for public service imposed by the king. For example, the households of weavers living in several key towns as well as priests were exempt, as were bowmen, carpenters, and others involved in the royal chariot industry. (Roth 1997)

Coppersmiths; however, were not exempt from 'participating in ice procurement, construction of

fortresses and royal roads, or from harvesting vineyards.' (Roth 1997) While still a mixed model, market freedoms showed more evidence than in the Indus or Shang regions.

The island of Cyprus, which means 'copper', was destined to play a key role in the growing Late Bronze economy. In the days of Ramesses II, the mining of copper on the island began to boom with copper being smelted at Enkomi on the east coast and being refined on the southern part of the island. The copper was melted down into ingots and carried to both the Levant and the Aegean, primarily by the Phoenicians. Cyprus has always served as a link between the Near Eastern and Aegean business and cultural spheres. Not only was it strategically located and even visible from the Levantine shore, but it was also the first place Phoenician ships would reach sailing out into the Great Sea. The Phoenicians quickly seized the opportunity to become the key middlemen in the evolving Near Eastern trading system. Vast trading fleets built from the forests of Lebanon sailed between Egypt, Cyprus, Canaan and the Cilician coast of the Hittite empire. Grain grown in Egypt or Babylonia was traded to the Cypriots and Hittites in return for their precious copper and other metals which were processed in Phoenician workshops or shipped by caravan and Euphratean reed boat to Babylon, Sippar, Ashur, and points east. Kassite horses were sold to Egypt; Egyptian ivory to Mesopotamia, Elam and Hatti. Imported into Ugarit's harbors from the mines of Cilicia and Cyprus, copper and precious metals were distributed to guilds of merchants and traders by the harbor master. Both profits and royalties paid to the crown were then re-invested in the construction of even more seagoing vessels, organized into fleets which grew along with the volume of international trade now passing through the harbors and along the roads under Phoenician control. Within the cities and towns of Ugarit and the other Phoenician city-states guilds of highly-skilled craftsmen, most of them now self-employed, beat

and smelted the raw copper and tin, plus the gold and ivory of Egypt into finished products which could be shipped by caravan to Mesopotamia via Carchemish or even Hatti or Egypt. These enterprises had a specialized knowledge, which would lead them to enjoy high profits for a considerable period of history.

The copper of Cyprus provides a special example of a brand characteristic which is affiliated with raw materials as a symbol of status and inherent value. The interesting thing about a raw material such as copper is that the quality of the copper was inherent to the raw material itself and the origin of the copper was well known to be Cyprus.

THE IRON AGE REVOLUTION: 1000-500 BCE - TYRE

The greatest of all Phoenician cities, Tyre, beginning around 1000 BCE, adapted the model of temple/palace management to overseas and long-distance trade (Moore and Lewis, 1999b).

Tyrian state managers and independent merchants entered into joint ventures with other nations and erected permanent establishments as far west as Spain and as far east as Babylon. They operated sometimes in synergy and sometimes in rivalry with the Greeks, who were beginning also to trade and colonize in the Mediterranean.

The chief religious cult of Tyre, that of Baal-Melqart (King of the City), seems to have been unknown before the city rose to commercial power and established its enlarged kingdom on the Lebanese mainland. As Tyre under Prince Hiram, who likely created the cult, and Prince Itobaal, who promoted it abroad, became more powerful, so did the international reputation of Melqart, a Viking-like figure with a horned hat and a battle axe. Melqart pictured the ideal Tyrian king.

Legendary founder of Tyre, he was not only the god of rain and storm but of prosperity. Reputed inventor of the dye industry, Melqart was also its patron. As Tyrian sea power grew, Melqart would soon acquire the title of Patron of Westerly Navigation. Temples in his name would be erected in not only Samaria, but Syria, Cyprus, Malta, Cathage, Sicily, Malta and most importantly, Spain (Clifford 1990).

As Tyre's traders expanded north and east as well as south and west, Tyrian priests opened branch temples and colonies on the Gulf of Alexandra, in the region of Cilicia. Not only the ever-present Phoenician jugs, but Phoenician inscriptions in the heart of the Aramaic-Hittite territory affirm direct investment in the strategic territories of southern Turkey and northern Syria before and after 850 BCE. A monument in Aleppo by the famous King Ben-Hadad of Aram, dedicated to Melqart, implies not only the presence of a temple of the latter nearby, but of the introduction of both Tyrian political influence and technology.

The princes of Tyre and the priests of Melqart presided over a well-oiled multinational trading machine offering the advantages of internalization in the form of royal and temple support, contractual partnerships, feudal loyalties and family connections. The large-scale intercontinental seaborne trade now undertaken by Tyre's merchants could be profitable only for a solid and solvent organization of shippers with a huge fleet of vessels, underwritten by temple and palace, capable of transporting precious ores and finished goods in bulk sufficient to absorb any potential losses while reaping substantial gains (Moore and Lewis 1999b). The expansion to the west and the founding of the colonies in southern Spain could only be undertaken by Tyre when she was sure of attaining her objectives: guaranteed silver ore and plentiful food resources, and

the certainty of real economic rewards (Aubet 1987). Under Itobaal's successors, Balmazzer III (846-41B.C.) and Mattin (840-32 B.C.), the island city increased her production of goods and began to expand along a new east-west trading axis. With her traditional Israelite partner in civil turmoil under the rule of the anti-Baalist House of Jehu and her supplies of metal from Anatolia either threatened or now inadequate, Tyre herself now suffered food shortages and a need for fresh sources of metals for her workshops. The court, priests, sailors and merchants responded with an aggressive policy of colonization and investment in far distant strategic locations on the islands and coastlines of the Mediterranean hundreds of kilometers from home (Harden 1971; Aubet 1987).

Gades, now modern Cadiz in Spain, was the centerpiece of a coordinated strategy of foreign colonization and investment in the Iberian peninsula. The Tyrian colonies in the central and western Mediterranean all grew and prospered as a result of the success of the investment in Spain. Trading their luxury goods for Spanish silver, the merchants of Tyre transported the silver in bulk shipments to the east. The profit margins were so huge as to be able to finance further colonization and investment in the central Mediterranean. The temple of Melqart in Gades played a key part, according to leading Ibero-Phoenician scholar Maria Eugenia Aubet, in supervising the entire venture corresponding to that of the Phoenician branch-temples in Sulcis and Moyta: "the first Tyrian colonies in the west...started as sanctuaries administered by a priestly group directly linked to the interests of Tyre" (Aubet 1987, p. 235). The massive Gades shrine was, at the same time, itself subject to the Melqart temple in Tyre, from which it derived its architecture, decorative patterns, twin columns, three sacrificial altars and eternal flame. A huge administrative building housed a powerful Melqart priesthood destined to remain in the

hands of a handful of aristocratic families (Aubet 1987). As representatives of a deity worshipped as the supernatural King of Tyre, the Melqart- priests of Gades exercised an immeasurable control over Ibero-Phoenician business. The temple became the commercial as well as religious bond between Gades and Tyre as both guarantor of honest exchange and source of finance capital: In distant places where he [Melqart] possessed a temple, his function was a very concrete one: to ensure the tutelage of the temple of Tyre and the monarchy over the commercial enterprise, thus converting the colony into an extension of Tyre; and also to guarantee the right of asylum and hospitality which, in distant lands, was equivalent to endorsing contracts and commercial exchanges (Aubet 1987, p. 234).

The rise of the Tyrian multinational business empire produced an enormous social and economic revolution in Iberia and other countries where it had substantial investments. Mud huts gave way to stone houses, fortified defenses arose around Iberian cities and a thriving pottery industry arose, manufacturing jugs based upon Tyrian models. Bulk shipments of Spanish silver, copper and beef were traded for Phoenician ivory, pottery, wine, garments and tools of iron. Many of the finished Phoenician goods were likely value-added items produced locally from bronze, gold, glass and ivory in the shops of Gades and eventually Toscanos (Castro 1995). The coming of Melqart and his disciples inspired not only large-scale silver mining and iron working, but writing, building construction, pottery-making, and luxury items. Cemeteries at La Joya in Huelva, Setefilla (Seville) and Trayamar told a story of the death of a traditional tribal Spanish society and the emergence of a new urban elite of upwardly mobile aggressive entrepreneurs eager not only to acquire the chariots, ivory carvings and other status goods imported from Gades and Tyre but to flaunt them (Castro 1995). Where Iberian graves had once been

identical, those of the nouveau riche after 650 BCE became highly individual, vulgar and ostentatious, documenting the accumulation of wealth in the hands of native leaders (Aubert 1987).

The clearest example of technology transfer took place in the explosive growth of the Iberian pottery industry, which instead of a household skill, became a mass-production trade after 650 BCE. All over southern Spain workshops arose turning out large quantities of the popular grey and red Tyrian jugs stylishly decorated with bands of red, black and maroon paint (Harrison 1988). The colonies in the Malága region became self-sufficient on the basis of farming, cattle-raising, and the production of purple-dyed garments and Red Slip pottery with technology brought from Tyre itself. The famous Red Slip ceramics have been unearthed all over southern Spain, most strongly in the areas of Phoenician settlement, where they were produced locally in the Phoenician settlements rather than being directly imported from Levantine factories (Tsirkin 1978).

The brand of Melquart reflects the central informational qualities of brand (quality, origin), while also utilizing image in a powerful combination for the purpose of showing power or status and value. The rise of Iberian culture in direct proportion to the partaking of the Melquart brand shows evidence of that power and value.

THE IRON AGE: GREECE: 825-336 BCE

The Iron Age encouraged the growth of an alternative model of business organization, which would eventually begin to challenge the hierarchical model of temple and palace. Beginning in a

small way in ancient Israel and then in a more forceful manner in Archaic Greece, a more purely market-oriented entrepreneurial culture began to develop. Hand in hand with this development, branding became used more consciously as a way to distinguish between entrepreneurs and, as such, the use of imagery in branding began to thrive.

Greek pottery, very distinctive in terms of the times and places it came from, when cross-referenced with Egyptian and other artifacts as well as authors like Herodotus and Thucydides, has allowed archaeologists to reconstruct the Hellenic past. Tyrian and Cypriot traders voyaged across the Aegean, docking at the Euboean ports, bringing knowledge of iron-working, the phonetic alphabet, and, most importantly, continued knowledge of old Bronze Age trade routes to both east and west. Greeks, and particularly Euboeans, could not help but be inspired to fit out their own trading ventures along their old Mycenaean trade routes once they came into early contact with the much older and much wider Cypro-Levantine network of pan-Mediterranean commerce and communications (Ridgway 1973). A few enterprising Hellenes soon began selling their pottery and drinking-vessels to the Levantine market (Hawkes 1973). The trail of these entrepreneurs, or at least of their goods, was uncovered by Sir Leonard Woolley excavating on the Syrian shore in the 1930s. The pottery and iron artifacts of Syria, Cyprus, and Etruria revealed the existence of an eighth century BCE international Levant-Aegean-Tyrrhenian trading network. The Greek traders of this network operated as private individuals and enterprises operating on a small scale, not as organized firms.

The growth of agricultural prosperity, the coming of iron tools and weapons, and the transformation of warfare was reflected in the strengthening of the city-state as the basic unit of

Greek life in the late eighth and early seventh centuries BCE. The *polis* was the first community in history organized on a *civic* instead of a tribal or feudal basis. The center of the *polis* was a fortified town built around a main market square called the *agora*, or marketplace. Much of the territory, though, was made up of agrarian villages. The most important aspect of the *polis* was that it was subject to the coded rule of law (Osborne 1996; Martin 1996). Personal loyalty to a *basileus* (king or god) was replaced by a concept in which most of the inhabitants who were born in a community were considered citizens who enjoyed full equality before the law (Green 1979). With the evolution of the *polis*, the political landscape of Greece became the most fragmented in history. There were perhaps 1,300 of these units, each one totally independent and still largely self-sufficient, on the Greek mainland, with another 200 organized in the Aegean. Within them protection and rights were granted to traders and entrepreneurial craftsmen, whether citizens or, more often, the resident aliens known as *metics*. The new citizen-republics were well suited to a new market economy. The political situation of iron-age Greece allowed an entrepreneurial culture to flourish and was supportive of the efforts of entrepreneurs to distinguish themselves from one another using more modern branding tactics.

Though it did not employ many and occurred on a very small scale, the pottery industry of Corinth and later, Attica, may well symbolize the very birth of consumer capitalism in a society still largely agrarian. These craftsmen, according to historian Oswyn Murray were peculiarly open to economic pressures and incentives (Murray 1993). Athenian pottery was wheel-made and fired between 800 and 950 degrees Centigrade. “The characteristic black-gloss surface of many pieces was achieved by means of the addition of an agent (a ‘peptising agent’) to a solution of the clay from which the pot was made and which fired black when water vapour was added to

the kiln under ‘reducing conditions’ on a second firing...Much artistry went into the decoration of some pots, and much ingenuity has been spent on attributing pots to individual hands. Names were devised to fit the supposed artistic personalities, careers invented, and a whole folklore created, but recent research has shown that the shape and decoration of pots were largely dependent on the norms of other media, with designs, even ‘signatures’, coming through from the *graphides* that acknowledged artists made for silversmiths.” (Vickers 1999, p. 4)

Some vases carry painted (and scratched) inscriptions that indicate men who ‘made’ them. These are painted in black on a clay background, or in purple on a black background where the painting is in red-figure; occasionally black was used on black background, with a reserved outline round the lettering, or again inscriptions were incised on the black gloss, whether on black-figure or red-figure pottery. The inscription could be set on any part of the vase: body, neck, rim, foot, handle. A study of the handwriting reveals that the writer could be a ‘letterer’ charged with the task, not necessarily the man who ‘made’ the vase (Immerwahr 1999); in some cases the letterer may be the painter who will thus finish off the work he has done.” (Sparkes 1996, p. 65) “The names themselves tell us details about the men...With names on Attic pottery, some inscriptions show that some ‘makers’ were also painters, e.g. Nearchos, Exekias, Euphronios (first as painter, then as ‘maker’), Douris, Myson; some appear with the name of the painter, working in the same shop, e.g., Ergotimos the ‘maker’ and Kleitias the painter; Python the ‘maker’ and Douris the painter; Hieron the ‘maker’ and Makron the painter. Some names may reveal the origin of the men, e.g. Sikanos, from Sicily; Brygos, from Phrygia; Thrax, from Thace; Syriskos, from Syria; some of these may be slaves, as also Epiktetos meaning ‘Newly aquired’. Some add their ethnic origin, e.g. Teisias the Thenian, working in Boeotia, Xenophantes the Athenian and Nikias, son

of Hermkles, of Anaphylstos, Amasis, a name shared with an Egyptian Pharaoh, has caused some interest and discussion. Some, like Pyrrhos, advertise their family connections: in Attic black-figure there are Tleson and Ergoteles, sons of Nearchos, the sons ‘makers’, the father both a ‘maker’ and a painter, and Ergotimos had a son Eucheiros and a grandson, both ‘makers’; in Attic red-figure Kleophrades, who was the son of the ‘maker’ Amasis, was himself a ‘maker’. Very occasionally, two are given as makers of one cup.” (Sparkes 1996, p. 67) Thus the writers may be the painters of the pots, the potters or shop-owners, merchants, purchasers or passers-by who have picked up a piece of broken pottery in the street to scratch a message or impugn a rival (Sparkes 1996, p. 52)

One vase said “Sophilos painted”, another boasted “Exekias painted and made me” and one vase of Euthymides bragged that it was of “high quality as never (were those of) Euphronios” (Osborne 1998 p. 87, 90-91). A motto on a cup imported to Italy from Rhodes may be history's first recorded commercial advertisement: 'Nestor had a most drink-worthy cup, but whoever drinks of mine will straightaway be smitten with desire of fair-crowned Aphrodite' (Murray 1993 p. 223).

The pottery industry, in particular, shows strong evidence that by the sixth century BCE, potters in Corinth and elsewhere in Greece were producing pots targeted to specific markets stretching from Spain to the Black Sea. Market competition became a way of life. For once Corinthian potters produced an attractive brand of vessel, which both guaranteed contents and marketed an image. Other Greek potters, even if only targeting a local market, were challenged to produce even more persuasive packaging and even more attractive images (Osborne 1998).

Modern archaeologists have been able to trace different pots back to their respective makers and workshops by comparing the very individualistic decorations each potter used. As early as the seventh century BCE the potters of Euboea began to label their work, and the practice spread to Athens and Corinth in the following century. Sophilos was the first Athenian potter to thus identify his own work. Around the top of his vases Sophilos sometimes paraded the gods of Athens (Osborne 1998). His signature, as well as that of other potters, indicated both a pride in the product and a desire to attract future orders. Their scale and elaboration seem to justify the artist's self-promotion (Osborne 1998). Other Athenian potters went after a mass market, producing vessels of a lesser artistic quality to be exported abroad, especially to the Etruscans and no doubt also the Romans.

The free market revolution in Greece brought with it an entrepreneurial culture unparalleled in prior society. This change was reflected in branding practices, which built on the more traditional proto-brand strategy of portraying information regarding origin and quality. Not only were images used to invoke power and portray value, but we see through the Aphrodite example another foray into the use of image to sell using sex. While image was clearly used to connote personality characteristics of perhaps the maker, or manufacturer of a good in the pre-modern marketing era, the large scale growth of the development of brand personality is truly a phenomenon of the 20th century.

MODERN - THE 20th CENTURY

A central new concept in the marketing literature on brand involves brand personality. As noted by Aaker (1997): “Researchers have focused on how the personality of a brand enables a consumer to express his or her own self (Belk 1988), an ideal self (Malhotra 1981), or specific dimensions of the self (Kleine, Kleine and Kernan 1993) through the use of a brand. Practitioners view it as a key way to differentiate a brand in a product category (Halliday 1996), as a central driver of consumer preference and usage (Biel 1993), and as a common denominator that can be used to market a brand across cultures (Plummer 1985). Aaker goes on to define brand personality as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand.” Utilizing a sample of 114 possible personality traits and 37 well-known brands in various product categories, Aaker (1997) uncovered 5 basic dimensions that according to Keller (2003) appear to have captured the perceptual space of brands, and these include: sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. In other words, these personality traits, of people associated with the brand are transferred to the brand itself (McCracken 1986). This is largely, we believe, a phenomenon that could have only occurred starting at the end of the 19th century and into the 20th century, due to the media (TV, radio, print advertising, etc.), which allow for the bi-directionality of influence required for such a phenomenon to occur. It is interesting to note that in a 1923 book Hotchkiss and Franken suggest that “The remarkable increase in the use of national advertising during the past half century is perhaps sufficient evidence of its value...The good-will of certain well-advertised names and brands is valued in the millions of dollars (p.1).” Later they point to how things were different in the near past than in their day in the 1920s, “It should be remembered, however, that a few years ago consumers did not know men's clothing or flour or fruit or coffee by manufacturers' brands. The habit of brand discrimination was established by advertising in

these cases." (p. 34). As such, brand personality – the most recent addition to the characteristics of brands – could not have been a component prior to this period of time.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Through an investigation of the historical archeology literature, we have been able to unearth some clues, which point to both a definition for “proto-brand” and for “brand”. Table 2 provides a look at the development of brand characteristics through the periods of time investigated in this paper. What we see, is a gradual transition from more utilitarian provision of information regarding origin and quality in order to reduce risk and uncertainty during earlier periods of civilization (transactional), to the addition of more complex brand characteristics through time which are related to image building and include status/power, inherent value and finally, the development of brand personality (transformational). These brand characteristics connect well to the consumer side of the equation relating to consumers’ cognitive representation of a brand (i.e., brand knowledge – Peter and Olson 2001; Keller 2003) as follows: information (awareness, attributes, benefits) and image (images, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and experiences). As described by Keller (2003, p. 596): “Much of this earlier research concentrated on more tangible, product-related information for brands. One important thrust in recent branding research is an attempt to understand more of the abstract, intangible aspects of brand knowledge not related to the actual physical product or service specifications per se.” Interestingly, developments in brand knowledge then seem to have mimicked a similar progression to the actual development of brand characteristics through history, although obviously not on the same time scale.

Place Table 2 about here.

Generally speaking, “proto-brands” for ancient civilizations were information attached (either physically or inherently) to a product or product vessel (packaging) which carried out at least one of three functions. First, information regarding place of origin was connoted utilizing a known mark, signature or through the known physical properties of a given raw material. Second, this information was often elaborated in order to allow for some of the basic functions of marketing to take place (i.e., sorting, transportation and storage). Finally, information regarding quality was designated through the same vehicles – in other words, knowing the origin helped to remove uncertainty for consumers, thereby reducing risk in purchase decisions and thereby increasing perceived quality.

“Brands” for modern civilization involve both the informational characteristics of the ancient proto-brands, and the more complex image characteristics of modern brands including status/power, inherent value and finally, the development of brand personality. Further, as described by McCracken (1986), the significance of consumer goods rests largely in their ability to carry and communicate cultural meaning – and we believe that this is the ultimate role of brands – to carry and communicate cultural meaning that is both transactional (information-related) and transformational (image-related) in character.

Table 1

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF RESEARCH TOPICS ON BRANDING

Research Topics building understanding of “Brand” and “Branding” from the 3 Most Influential Consumer Behavior Journals: *Journal of Consumer Research* (1974–2004), *Journal of Marketing Research* (1965-2004) and *Journal of Marketing* (1936-2004).

Brand Switching

Ehrenberg (JMR 1965)
Massy (JMR 1966)
Morrison (JMR 1966)
Massy and Morrison (JMR 1968)
Chance and French (JMR 1972)
Lehmann (JMR 1972)
Bass (JMR 1973)
Dodson, Tybout and Sternthal (JMR 1978)
Carpenter and Lehmann (JMR 1985)
Vilcassim and Jain (JMR 1991)
Grover and Srinivasan (JMR 1992)
Novak (JMR 1993)
Deighton, Henderson and Neslin (JMR 1994)
Wedel et al. (JMR 1995)
Bucklin, Russell and Srinivasan (JMR 1998)
Sun, Neslin and Srinivasan (JMR 2003)
Van Heerde, Gupta and Wittlink (JMR 2003)

Brand Loyalty

Morrison (JMR 1966)
McConnell (JMR 1968)
Tucker (JMR 1964)
Farley (JMR 1964)
Sheth (JMR 1968)
Wind and Frank (JMR 1969)
Carman (JMR 1970)
Sheth (JMR 1970)
Cohen and Houston (JMR 1972)
Jacoby and Kyner (JMR 1973)
Newman and Werbel (JMR 1973)
Tarpey (JMR 1974)
Tarpey (JMR 1975)
Jacoby (JMR 1975)
Berkowitz (JMR 1978)
Kanetkar, Weinberg and Weiss (JMR 1986)
Bass and Leone (JMR 1986)
DuWors and Haines (JMR 1990)
Grover and Srinivasan (JMR 1992)
Fader and Schmittlein (JMR 1993)

Raj (JM 1985)
Chaudhuri and Holbrook (JM 2001)

Brand Attitude

Myers (JMR 1967)
Miller, Mazis and Wright (JMR 1971)
Mitchell and Olson (JMR 1981)
Gardner (JMR 1985)
Mittal (JMR 1990)
Miniard, Bhatla and Rose (JMR 1990)
Aaker and Jacobson (JMR 2001)
Lutz (JCR 1975)
Mitchell (JCR 1986)
Mackenzie and Spreng (JCR 1992)
Munn (JM 1959)

**Brand Choice/Preference/
Brand Purchase Behavior**

Stafford (JMR 1966)
Fry (JMR 1967)
Grubb and Hupp (JMR 1968)
Witt (JMR 1969)
Hawkins (JMR 1970)
Aaker (JMR 1970)
Jones (JMR 1970)
Jones (JMR 1970)
Thomas and Ehrenberg (JMR 1971)
Bass and Talarzyk (JMR 1972)
Weber and Hansen (JMR 1972)
Witt and Bruce (JMR 1972)
Bass (JMR 1972)
Charlton and Ehrenberg (JMR 1973)
Bass and Wilkie (JMR 1973)
Blattberg and Sen (JMR 1973)
Ginter (JMR 1974)
Stanton and Lowenhar (JMR 1974)
Chatfield and Goodhardt (JMR 1975)
Lawrence (JMR 1975)
Charlton and Ehrenberg (JMR 1976)
Shoemaker et al. (JMR 1977)
Tyebjee (JMR 1979)
Miller and Ginter (JMR 1979)
Moore, Pessemier and Little (JMR 1979)
Givon and Horsky (JMR 1979)
Givon (JMR 1980)
Ford and Ellis (JMR 1980)
Bass and Pilon (JMR 1989)
Palachek and Kerin (JMR 1982)
Kamakura and Srivastava (JMR 1984)

Magidson (JMR 1985)
Zufryden (JMR 1986)
Bawa and Shoemaker (JMR 1987)
Rao and Monroe (JMR 1989)
Lattin and Bucklin (JMR 1989)
Kahn and Louie (JMR 1990)
Kalwani et al. (JMR 1990)
Chintagunta, Jain and Vilcassim (JMR 1991)
Nowlis and Simonson (JMR 1996)
Gupta et al. (JMR 1996)
Mela, Gupta and Lehmann (JMR 1997)
Heilman, Bowman and Wright (JMR 2000)
Sengupta and Fitzsimons (JMR 2000)
Pauwels, Hanssens and Siddarth (JMR 2002)
Lee (JMR 2002)
Jacoby, Speller and Berning (JCR 1974)
Pan and Lehmann (JCR 1993)
Srinivasan and Kesavan (JCR 1976)
Reibstein (JCR 1978)
Lussier and Olshavsky (JCR 1979)
Tyebjee (JCR 1979)
Bearden and Etzel (JCR 1982)
Reingen et al. (JCR 1984)
Winer (JCR 1986)
Bahn (JCR 1986)
Rosen and Olshavsky (JCR 1987)
Glazer, Kahn and Moore (JCR 1991)
Miniard, Sirdeshmukh and Innis (JCR 1992)
Krishnamurthi, Mazumdar and Raj (JCR 1992)
Chernev (JCR 1997)
Chakravarti and Janiszewski (JCR 2004)
Wolfe (JM 1942)
Cassady (JM 1942)
Browne (JM 1950)
Banks (JM 1950)
Pessemier (JM 1964)
Twedt (JM 1967)
Seggev (JM 1970)
Teach (JM 1971)
Houston (JM 1972)
Sargent (JM 1976)
Jones (JM 1982)
D'Souza and Rao (JM 1995)

Brand Identification

Allison and Uhl (JMR 1964)

Brand Assortment	Seggev (JM 1970)
Branding	Marquardt, Makens and Larzelere (JMR 1965)
Channels & Brand (i.e., Distbr vs. Mnfr Brand)	Slater (JMR 1969) Corstjens and Lal (JMR 2000) Goodman (JM 1955) Makens (JM 1964) Schutte (JM 1969) Swan (JM 1974) Fein and Anderson (JM 1997)
Brand Categories (i.e., private, generics, national)	Rao (JMR 1969) Ehrenberg and Goodhardt (JMR 1970) Burger and Schott (JMR 1972) Leclerc, Schmitt and Dube (JMR 1994) Sethuraman (JMR 1996) Zhang and Schmitt (JMR 2001) Makens (JM 1964) McEnally (JM 1984) Ailawadi, Neslin and Gedenk (JM 2001)
Brand Image and Beliefs	Bird, Channon and Ehrenberg (JMR 1970) Fry and Claxton (JMR 1971) Barnard and Ehrenberg (JMR 1990) Park et al. (JM 1986) Loken and John (JM 1993)
Brand Perceptions	Rao (JMR 1972) Kinneer and Taylor (JMR 1973)
Brand Awareness/Familiarity	Day and Pratt (JMR 1970) Bogart and Lehman (JMR 1973) Monroe (JCR 1976) Hoyer and Brown (JCR 1990) Campbell and Keller (JCR 2003) Greenberg (JM 1958) Keller, Heckler and Houston (JM 1998) Kirmani (JCR 1990) Kent and Allen (JM 1994)
Brand Discrimination	Haley (JM 1979)
Brand Acceptance	Aaker (JMR 1972)

Brand Ambiguity	Miller, Mazis and Wright (JMR 1971)
Brand Information/ Understanding Brand	Woodruff (1972) Woodruff (JMR 1972) Jacoby, Speller and Kohn (JMR 1974) Park and Srinivasan (JMR 1994) Jacoby, Szybillo and Busato-Schach (JCR 1977) Rudd and Kohout (JCR 1983) Simonson, Huber and Payne (JCR 1988) Hastak and Olson (JCR 1989)
Brand Knowledge	Keller (JCR 2003)
Brand Evaluation	Kraft, Granbois and Summers (JMR 1973) Davis, Inman and McAlister (JMR 1992) Raghubir and Corfman (JMR 1999) Gardner (JCR 1983) Nedungadi (JCR 1990) Venkataramani Johar, Jedidi and Jacoby (JCR 1997) Gurhan-Canli (JCR 2003) Adaval (JCR 2003)
Brand Features	Green, Wind, Claycamp (JMR 1975)
Brand Segmentation/Positioning	Blattberg and Sen (JMR 1976) Starr and Rubinson (JMR 1978) Sujan and Bettman (JMR 1989) Waarts, Carree and Wierenga (JMR 1991) Bucklin and Gupta (JMR 1992) Chintagunta (JMR 1994) Bucklin, Gupta and Han (JMR 1995) Pham and Muthukrishnan (JMR 2002) Pechmann and Ratneshwar (JCR 1991) Blattberg (JM 1980) Alden, Steenkamp and Batra (JM 1999)
Brand Life Cycles	Simon (JMR 1979) Schoemaker (JMR 1986)
Brand Comparisons	Golden (JMR 1979)
Brand Recall/Memory	Alba and Chattopadhyay (JMR 1986) Unnava and Burnkrant (JMR 1991) Hutchinson, Raman and Mantrala (JMR 1994) Law (JMR 2002) Morrin and Ratneshwar (JMR 2003)

Meyers-Levy (JCR 1989)
Keller (JCR 1987)
Kardes et al. (JCR 1993)
Shapiro and Spence (JCR 2002)
Russell (JCR 2002)
Lynch, Marmorstein and Weigold (JCR 1988)

Brand (&Inter-) Substitutability Bucklin and Srinivasan (JMR 1991)
Bergen, Dutta and Shugan (JMR 1996)

Brand Extensions Boush and Loken (JMR 1991)
Keller and Aaker (JMR 1992)
Smith and Whan (JMR 1992)
Broniarczyk and Alba (JMR 1994)
Dacin and Smith (JMR 1994)
Gurhan-Canli and Maheswaran (JMR 1998)
Morrin (JMR 1999)
Klink and Smith (JMR 2001)
Bottomley and Holden (JMR 2001)
Park, Milberg and Lawson (JCR 1991)
Barone, Miniard and Romeo (JCR 2000)
Zhang and Sood (JCR 2002)
Van Osselaer and Alba (JCR 2003)
Aaker and Keller (JM 1990)
Lane and Jacobson (JM 1995)
John, Loken and Joiner (JM 1998)
Desai and Keller (JM 2002)
Kirmani, Sood and Bridges (JM 1999)
Swaminathan, Fox and Reddy (JM 2001)
Balachander and Ghose (JM 2003)

Brand Equity Shocker (JMR 1993)
Herr (JMR 1994)
Buchanan, Simmons and Bickart (JMR 1999)
Dawar and Pillutla (JMR 2000)
Dillon, Madden, Kirmani and Mukherjee (JMR 2001)
Martin and Stewart (JMR 2001)
Broniarczyk and Gershoff (JMR 2003)
Osselaer and Alba (JCR 2000)
Keller (JM 1993)
Moore, Wilkie and Lutz (2002)
Ailawadi, Lehmann and Neslin (2003)

Brand Interest Machleit, Allen and Madden (JM 1993)

Brand Commitment Coulter, Price and Feick (JCR 2003)

Brand Imitation	Zinkhan (JM 1997)
Brand Management	Schocker, Srivastava and Ruekert (JMR 1994) Low and Fullerton (JMR 1994)
Brand Strategy/Policy	Slate (JMR 1968) Myers (JMR 1969) Gatignon, Weitz and Bansal (JMR 1990)
Brand Alliances	Park, Jun and Shocker (JMR 1996) Simonin and Ruth (JMR 1998) Rao, Qu and Ruekert (JMR 1999)
Brand Personality	Malhotra (JMR 1981) Aaker, Jennifer (JMR 1997) Belk (JCR 1988)
Umbrella Branding	Erdem (JMR 1998) Erdem and Sun (JMR 2002)
Brand Dependencies	Bockenholt and Dillon (JMR 2000)
Brand Associations (i.e., brand-quality)	Janiszewski and Van Osselaer (JMR 2000) Lemon and Nowlis (JMR 2002) Van Osselaer and Janiszewski (JCR 2001) Richardson, Dick and Jain (JM 1994)
Brand Names	Friedman (JCR 1985) Janiszewski (JCR 1990) Macklin (JCR 1996) Ahluwalia and Gurhan-Canli (JCR 2000) Meyers-Levy (JCR 1989)
Brand Logos	Janiszewski and Meyvis (JCR 2001)
Brand Advantage	Muthukrishnan (JCR 1995)
Brand Meaning	Brown, Kazinets and Sherry (JM 2003)
Brand Community	Muniz and O'Guinn (JCR 2001) McAlexander, Schouten and Koenig (JM 2002)
Consumer Culture and Branding	McCracken (JCR 1986) Fournier (JCR 1998) Holt (JCR 2002)

Table 2

BRAND CHARACTERISTICS IN THE ANCIENT AND MODERN WORLDS

Period	Brand Characteristics				
	Information: Origin	Information: Quality	Image: Power	Image: Value	Image: Personality
Early Bronze IV 2250 – 2000 BCE The Indus Valley	X	X			
The Middle Bronze Age 2000 – 1500 BCE Shang China	X	X			
The Late Bronze Age 1500 – 1000 BCE Cyprus	X	X		X	
The Iron Age Revolution 1000 – 500 BCE Tyre	X	X	X	X	
The Iron Age 825 – 336 BCE Greece	X	X	X	X	
Modern	X	X	X	X	X

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