was usually included to signal the dissociation of the image from its natural/human origins.[11] This would have amplified the perception of the image as inhabitable by divine agency and was accomplished through the symbolic amputation of the artisan's hands and declarations such as *anāku lā ēpu*[*šu* …], "(I swear) I did not make (the statue)" (Walker and Dick 2001, 94–95). An additional reason for this dissociation may have been to rhetorically undercut the criticism of attributing deity to the products of human industry—a criticism well-known from the Hebrew Bible (Dick 1999, 16–45; Smith 2004b).

A similar "opening the mouth" ritual is attested in texts from across the history of Egypt. Its full name was "Performing the Opening of the Mouth in the Workshop for the Statue of PN," but it could also be referred to as the "Opening of the Mouth and the Eyes," or just "Opening of the Mouth" (*wpt-r* or *wn-r*) (McDowell 2015, 85–109). As with the *pīt pî*, the *wpt-r* ceremony was a ritual of animation that could be used to cultically enliven a variety of inanimate objects (which included the mummies of certain deceased persons, demonstrating the similar conceptual and cultic overlap of the deceased and the divine in Egypt).[12] Similar to the rituals in Mesopotamia, the instruments and terminology of the *wpt-r* reflect its conceptual undergirding by the frameworks of both birth and manufacturing.[13] The materials used were also critical to the success of the endeavor—gold and silver again figure prominently, as well as lapis lazuli and other precious stones—but the role of the human artisan was not repudiated in Egypt.[14]

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[11] Note the following comments from Pongratz-Leisten and Sonik (2015, 8): "The Greek term *archeiropoieta* … identifies miraculous portraits or representations that were 'not made by any [human] hand,' encompassing in the Christian tradition such images as the Mandylion (Image of Edessa). The *archeiropoieta* are not limited to this context, however; ancient Greek sources include various accounts of divine images that had miraculously *appeared*, having fallen perhaps from the heavens or yielded by the seas, and that were understood as products of the divine rather than human agency."

[12] McDowell (2015, 87) notes that the majority of references to the ritual in ancient Egyptian literature are funerary in nature. "The earliest mortuary attestation comes from the tomb of Metjen, a prominent Old Kingdom official from Fourth Dynasty (ca. 2600 B.C.E.). The ritual is also mentioned in the earliest edition of the Pyramid Texts (PT), the PT of Unas (ca. 2375–2345 B.C.E.) from the Fifth Dynasty and in the PT from the Sixth Dynasty."

[13] For instance, funerary texts describe two blades being used to open the mouth of the mummy, which may reflect the use of two fingers to clear mucus from the mouth of newborns, enabling it to breath. Additionally, the enlivened entity is immediately breastfed. See McDowell 2015, 104–9, following Roth 1992.

[14] For a comparison of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian rituals, see McDowell 2015, 109–15.