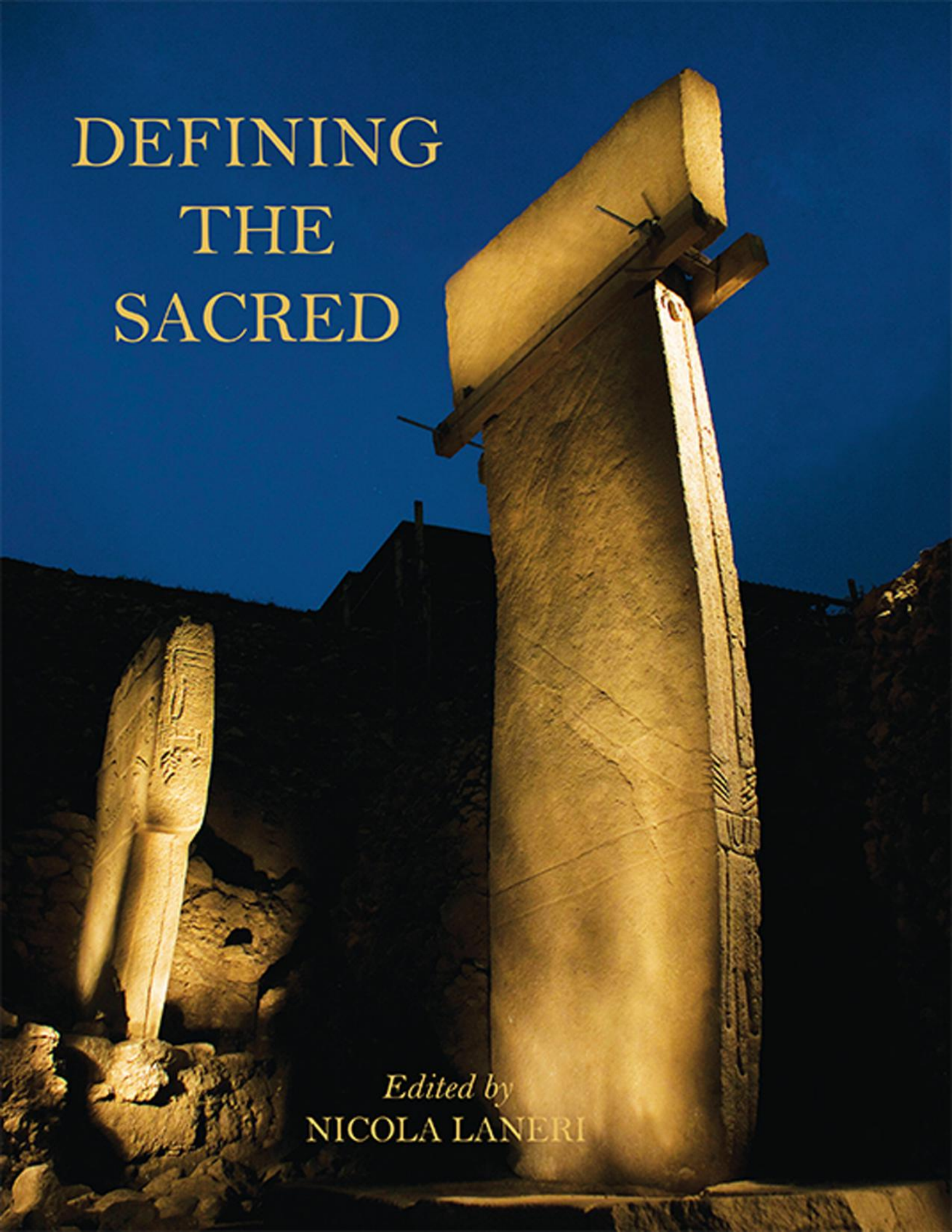
DEFINING THE SACRED



Edited by
NICOLA LANERI

Defining the Sacred

In memory of
Tino and Sheila

Defining the Sacred

Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion in the Near East

Edited by

Nicola Laneri

Oxbow Books
Oxford & Philadelphia

Published in the United Kingdom in 2015 by
OXBOW BOOKS
10 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford OX1 2EW

and in the United States by
OXBOW BOOKS
908 Darby Road, Havertown, PA 19083

Paperback Edition: ISBN 978-1-78297-679-0
Digital Edition: ISBN 978-1-78297-683-7

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Defining the sacred : approaches to the archaeology of religion in the Near East / edited by Nicola Laneri.
-- 1st [edition].
1 online resource.
Includes bibliographical references.
Description based on print version record and CIP data provided by publisher; resource not viewed.
ISBN 978-1-78297-849-7 (epub) -- ISBN 978-1-78297-850-3 (prc) -- ISBN 978-1-78297-851-0 (pdf)
-- ISBN 978-1-78297-679-0 1. Middle East--Religion. 2. Archaeology and religion--Middle East. 3.
Excavations (Archaeology)--Middle East. 4. Middle East--Antiquities. I. Laneri, Nicola, editor.
BL1060
200.9394--dc23
2015009796

Printed in the United Kingdom by Hobbs the Printers, Totton, Hampshire

For a complete list of Oxbow titles, please contact:

UNITED KINGDOM
Oxbow Books
Telephone (01865) 241249, Fax (01865) 794449
Email: oxbow@oxbowbooks.com
www.oxbowbooks.com

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Oxbow Books
Telephone (800) 791-9354, Fax (610) 853-9146
Email: queries@casemateacademic.com
www.casemateacademic.com/oxbow

Oxbow Books is part of the Casemate Group

Front cover: *Arms, hands and elements of clothing reveal the anthropomorphic character of Göbekli Tepe's pillars (Pillar 31 in the centre of Enclosure D) (photo: N. Becker, © DAI).*

Back cover: *Detail of Ur-Nammu's stele (Börker Klähn 1982, pl. 39)*

CONTENTS

Part III
The materialisation of religious beliefs and practices

CONTRIBUTORS

Ann Andersson
Department of Cross-cultural and Regional Studies,
University of Copenhagen,
Karen Blixens vej 4, building 10, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark

Laura Battini
CNRS, University of Lyon,
Maison de l'Orient, UMR 5133 Archéorient- 7,
rue Raulin F- 69365 LYON Cedex 07 France

Pascal Butterlin
University of Paris 1, Pantheon-Sorbonne,
Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie
3 rue Michelet, 75006 Paris

Amalia Catagnoti
Dipartimento di Storia, Archeologia, Geografia,
Arte e Spettacolo (S.A.G.A.S.),
Università di Firenze, Via San Gallo 10, 50129 Firenze, Italy

Oliver Dietrich
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut
Orient-Abteilung, Podbielskiallee 69-71
14195 Berlin, Germany

Nadezhda Dubova
Anthropology of Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS)
Institute of Ethnology and Anthropoly
RAS Leninski prospect 32A,
119991, Moscow, Russia

Isaac Gilead
Archaeological Division,
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, POB. 653,
Beer Sheva, 410501, Israel

Milena Gošić
Archaeological Division,
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, POB. 653,
Beer Sheva, 8410501, Israel

Nicola Laneri
Dipartimento di Scienze Umanistiche,
University of Catania, Piazza Dante 32,
95100, Catania, Italy

Stefania Mazzoni
Dipartimento di Storia, Archeologia, Geografia,
Arte e Spettacolo (S.A.G.A.S.),
Università di Firenze, Via San Gallo 10, 50129 Firenze, Italy

Beth Alpert Nakhai
Arizona Centre for Judaic Studies,
The University of Arizona, 845 N. Park Ave, Suite 420,
Tucson, AZ 85721-0158, USA

Jens Notroff
Deutsches Archäologisches Institut,
Orient-Abteilung, Podbielskiallee 69–71,
14195 Berlin, Germany

Laerke Recht
International Institute for Mesopotamian Area Studies,
1028 18th Street, #4,
Santa Monica CA 90403, USA

Licia Romano
University of Rome La Sapienza,
Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità
Ex Vetrerie Sciarra, Studio 121
Via dei Volsci, 122, 00185 Roma (Italia)

Steven A. Rosen
Archaeological Division,
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, POB 653,
Beer Sheva 84105, Israel

Daniel Snell
University of Oklahoma, Department of History
455 West Lindsey Street, DAHT 403A Norman,
OK 73019-2004

Stefano Valentini
CAMNES (Center for Ancient Mediterranean
and Near Eastern Studies),
Via del Giglio 15, 50123 Firenze, Italy

Trevor Watkins
University of Edinburgh,
School of History, Classics and Archaeology,
William Robertson Wing, Old Medical School,
Teviot Place, Edinburgh, Scotland EH8 9AG
United Kingdom

PREFACE

Nicola Laneri

This volume represents the partial outcome of a workshop organized by the author at the 8th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East held in Warsaw in 2012, and my warmest acknowledgments goes to all the organizers, especially Piotr Bielinski and Zuzanna Wygnanska. In order to broaden the chronological and geographical topics covered at the initial workshop and to make the whole volume more coherent, a few other contributions have been included along the way. I would also like to dedicate this volume to the memory of three authors (Jean Daniel Forest, Sharon Zuckerman and Klaus Schmidt) who were invited to participate in the workshop as leading figures in the investigation of ancient religions in the ancient Near East and have since passed away. In particular, the front cover of the volume appears in honour of the great work done by Klaus Schmidt at Göbekli Tepe.

I would also like to thank Oxbow Books and its editorial board (Julie Gardiner, Clare Litt, Lizzie Holiday, and Samantha McLeod) for their great work of assembling the volume, the Fuller Theological Seminar of Pasadena and Christopher Hays for having hosted me as visiting scholar and allowed me to use their facilities while working on the introduction to the volume as well as Ernestine Elster and Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati for their support in allowing me to use the UCLA library.

Also, I would like to thank Sharon Steadman for her suggestions and my wife Karen for her support.

1

Introduction: Investigating archaeological approaches to the study of religious practices and beliefs

Nicola Laneri

> 'The unfalsifiable supported by the undeniable yields the unquestionable, which transforms the dubious, the arbitrary, and the conventional into the apparently correct, the necessary, and the natural. This is the heart of religion and the foundation on which stand the rules, understandings, and institutions constituting human communities' (Rappaport 1994, 342).

Introduction

Introducing a volume dedicated to the study of ancient religious practices and beliefs can be a difficult task because it needs to briefly introduce the reader to religion (i.e. how it functioned, what was is structure, how it has been studied so far, in which directions archaeological approaches can lead to its investigation with) without being repetitive, but, at the same time, trying to summarise all the previous studies on this immense topic.

To start with, religion is a phenomenon that is inseparable from human society and brings about a set of emotional, ideological and practical elements that are pervasive in the social fabric of any society and characterisable by the following features: the establishment of intermediaries in the relationship between humans and the divine (i.e. religious specialists); the construction of ceremonial places for worshipping the gods and practicing ritual performances (e.g. religious buildings); the incorporation of non-human elements into a sacred sphere (e.g. sacred landscapes); the creation of material culture used as a means for materialising religious beliefs and human devotion (i.e. ritual paraphernalia); and, finally, the transmission of cosmological stories through the use of oral/written as well as practical means (i.e. mythological stories and ritual practices).

When investigating the religious dimensions of ancient societies, however, it is quite difficult to define all these elements. In fact, confronting ancient religion has been a difficult exercise for modern scholars, especially when dealing with societies that lack textual evidences. In addition, ancient religiosity implies a complex network of cognitive and material correlates that cannot be compared to our modern religious systems, because, as pointed out by Trigger (2003, 411): 'early civilisations do not appear to have distinguished between what we perceive as the natural, supernatural, and social realms'. In fact, if we apply a classic Cartesian-type dualism to the study of ancient religions we would end up differentiating between a mental dimension, related to religious beliefs, and a material one that is instead associated with religious practices (Droogan 2012, chap. 1). Such a distinction between religious beliefs and practices has created a strict separation between scholars able to investigate, and possibly reconstruct, ritual practices (i.e. archaeologists), and those instead interested in defining the realm of ancient beliefs (i.e. philologists and religious historians).

Thus, the aim of this book is to attempt to bridge these two dimensions (mental, on the one side, and, matter, on the other), by breaking down the existing boundaries in order to form a more comprehensive vision of religion among ancient Near Eastern societies. This approach requires that a higher consideration be given to those elements (either artificial – buildings, objects, texts, etc. – or natural – landscapes, animals, trees, etc.) that are created through a materialisation of religious beliefs and practices enacted by the members of the communities. The contributors to this volume address some of these issues by presenting data based on specific case-studies from within the Near East, covering a very broad chronological framework that dates from the Pre-pottery Neolithic to the Iron age period.

What is religion?

A philosophical interest in describing religion, as well as attempts to define religious beliefs and practices, have been known since classical times (Malefijt 1968, 16–41). However, the middle of the 19th century marks the start of a more coherent and scientific study of religion, from both an historical and anthropological perspective. In fact, it is during the last 150 years that numerous attempts to generally define

these subjects have been made by anthropologists, historians, philosophers and so forth. This has been done following many theoretical approaches (evolutionary, sociological, comparative, diffusionist, psychological, phenomenological, cultural) that have characterised anthropological and religious studies over the last centuries (Doorgan 2012; Malefijt 1968). From this scenario, Edward B. Tylor emerges as one of the first modern anthropologists who, through his interest in studying 'primitive' societies, envisioned a social evolutionary process in types of religious behaviors (i.e. from 'animistic' – primitive beliefs – to 'monotheistic' – civilised ones: Bowie 2000, 13). Tylor also attempted a 'minimum definition of religion' (i.e. animism) that corresponds to the 'belief in Spiritual Beings' (1871, 2, 8). Since then, numerous additional efforts have been made to define religion and explain how humans relate to their religious dimensions (Bowie 2000, 18–22). In fact, almost every single scholar interested in the study of ancient and/or modern religions has tried to give a more elaborate, complex definition and explanation of religion that 'emphasises certain aspects of the phenomenon or betrays the theoretical orientations of the authors' (Eller 2007, 7). Theories that appear as particularly influential include the experiential theory of the holy (*numinous*) described by Rudolf Otto (1923), the functional aspects of religion (i.e. a means for social control) envisioned by numerous Anglo-American anthropologists, and the importance of the manifestation of the sacred through the creation of religious symbols (Bowie 2000; Eller 2007; Livingston 1993; Malefijit 1968; Morris 1987; Wallace 1966). However, two scholars in particular stand out in their efforts at framing a more comprehensive vision of human religiosity. The first is the founder of modern sociology, Emile Durkheim, who in his ground-breaking book, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1965, 62) that approaches the subject from a sociological perspective, writes that religion is 'a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set aside and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called Church, all those who adhere to them'. The second is one of the leading figures of modern anthropology, Clifford Geertz (1966, 4), for whom religion is:

> '(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely unrealistic'.

In both cases, religion is considered as a system composed of different rules and behaviors to be followed by the participants.

For the archaeologist interested in the study of ancient religious practices and beliefs, Durkheim's statement is very useful because it emphasises the role of practice in the construction of religious beliefs following previous studies made by Robertson Smith on the ritual practices among Semitic religions (Bowie 2000, 126–127); however, both descriptions seem very vague and too generalising, and, therefore cannot be entirely useful for scholars interested in studying ancient societies and relics associated with religious practices and beliefs. Thus, it seems more fitting for the purpose of this volume to follow a different definition that has been recently stated by Sharon Steadman and that summarises some of the elements previously considered with a specific interest in the intermingling of mental and practical aspects of the religious dimension of societies. For her (2009, 23), religion is:

> 'a system of beliefs that posits supernatural beings and resolves mysterious or unexplainable phenomena; it is a set of practices and associated trappings that allows believers not only to engage the supernatural world but also to demonstrate their devotion and faith in it. It is intricately intertwined with every aspect of culture that shapes social structure, while it also in turn is shaped by it'.

When looking closely at Steadman's definition of religion, it is possible to find numerous similarities with the three dimensions of human religiosity that Jean Bottéro (1992, 203; 2001, 1–6) has highlighted in his study of ancient Mesopotamian religions. In so doing, he defined three fundamental components comprising all religions: *religious sentiment* – representing the emotional reaction of humans towards the unknown (either fear or attraction); *religious ideology* – how humans represent the numinous in the real world (i.e. *religious representations*); and, *religious behaviour* – the practical manifestation and translation of how humans interact with the numinous. These three dimensions have also been brilliantly identified by David Lewis-Williams and David Pearce (2005) in their book, *Inside the Neolithic Mind,* which for them are: *religious experience* that is a set of mental states created by the functioning of the human brain in both natural and induced conditions in the process of positing the existence of supernatural things;[1] *religious belief* that derives from attempts to codify religious experiences in specific social circumstances; and, *religious practice* that includes rituals that are designed to plug into religious experience and to manifest religious beliefs.

Such an approach allows for the creation of a synergetic relationship between the mental, the social and the practical dimension of human religiosity because as stated by the two authors, the social practice of a religion is inseparable from its systemised beliefs and, thus, experience, belief and practice are an integrated whole. These three elements are also strongly embedded in the social, economic and political life of the society and, as a consequence, it is very difficult to analyse each dimension in a separate manner and without considering them as part of the whole society.

The dimensional approach to the study of religion is also a grounding aspect of Smart's (1996) volume, *Dimensions of the Sacred,* in which the author defines a series of dimensions that are recognisable in most religions (i.e. ritual/practical; doctrinal/philosophical; mythic/narrative; experiential/

emotional; ethic/legal; organisational/social; material/artistic; political/economic). Using this approach religion is thus envisioned 'as a multifaceted phenomenon with overlapping spheres, rather than a single 'thing' that can be readily identified and studied in isolation' (Bowie 2000, 22).

Along this path, we also encounter the famous distinction of modes of religiosity proposed by Whitehouse (2000; 2004) between *imagistic* and *doctrinal* modes of human religiosity. According to Whitehouse (2000, 1–18), a doctrinal mode of religiosity is based on 'verbal and textual codification linked to routinisation and the establishment of large-scale, hierarchical, centralised, anonymous communities'; whereas, for the imagistic one 'we have climatic and revelatory ritual episodes linked to sporadic transmission, intense cohesion, localism, and particularism'. This division is based on the level of emotional arousal experienced by the participants in a ritual and the frequency of ritual performances. In fact, a highly routinised ritual will slowly become a norm and/or a dogma having less effect on the participants' emotional levels, whereas a rare and climatic ritual, such as, for example, the one performed at the Royal Cemetery of Ur during the mid-third millennium BCE (i.e. the Early Dynastic III period), will trigger and reinforce the level of episodic memory in the individual and will stimulate a 'long-term rumination on the mystical significance of the acts and artifacts involved' (Whitehouse and Hodder 2010, 123). Obviously, some religions based on strict dogmas and with high frequency of routinised ritual performances will also need the enactment of occasional and unique ritual performances that will enhance the emotional level and avoid the risk of boredom that is implicit in a doctrinal mode of religiosity.

In all, these perspectives emphasise the impossibility of separating the mental dimension of human religiosity from the practical one because it is through a continuous intermingling of ritual practices and beliefs in the sacred that religiosity is constructed in the cognitive schemata of the members of a given society.

For an archaeology of religion

During the last 30 years, an initial effort to define an archaeology of religion through the recognition of archaeological correlates helpful for reconstructing ancient beliefs (Renfrew 1985; 1994) has developed into a more coherent process that evinces the inner meaning of religious beliefs by identifying the relationship between the practical and cognitive dimensions of ritual practices in ancient societies (Doorgan 2012).

Within this perspective, the identification of archaeological correlates (i.e. religious architecture, votive objects, ritual deposits, icons and symbols, etc.) that can be used to define ancient ritual practices and help in the process of reconstructing modes of religiosity is of fundamental importance.[2] Specific attention has to be given to the relationship between material culture, human perception, and the conceiving of divine or supernatural beings by the involved participants. Scholars have already started to work on defining elements that can help support a more coherent understanding of the relationship between religious beliefs and practices.

Initially, these two domains were carefully separated in the archaeological investigation of ancient societies because archaeologists believed that it was only the religious practice (i.e. ritual activities) that left traces that could then be excavated and interpreted; because, as highlighted by Fogelin (2007) in the brief introduction of his review of *The Archaeology of Religious Ritual*:

> 'there is a widespread archaeological understanding that ritual is a form of human action that leaves material traces, whereas religion is a more abstract symbolic system consisting of beliefs, myths, and doctrines'.

In fact, since Hawkes's liminal article (1954), *Archeological Theory and Method: Some Suggestions from the Old World*, the archaeology of religion has become a daunting and, at the same time, intriguing exercise for manipulating the data at the archaeologists' disposal. In that study, Hawkes established a rank of inferences classified according to the ease of association between archaeological evidences and related social systems. At the bottom of this ladder are technological processes, followed by economic subsistence, social and political organisation, and finally at the top, the most complex of all, that of 'religious institutions and spiritual life'. Thus, whenever archaeologists are confronted with archaeological records (i.e. artefacts, features, architecture) that cannot be clearly assigned to a specific domain or 'have no functional value', they usually claim that they were part of an inexplicable religious or ritual domain (Aldenderfer 2012, 28). In fact, the new wave of scholars that have envisioned archaeology as a social science (i.e. new or processual archaeologists) have considered religion as 'a cultural epiphenomenon' that is 'materially unidentifiable' (Droogan 2012, chap. 3). However, interesting attempts to respond to the need to interpret correlates of ancient religious practices and beliefs have been made in directions similar to those traced by both Durkheim and Geertz, who envisioned religion as a system of practices and beliefs. This is the case of Flannery and Drennan, who in the study of Formative Oaxaca villages applied a model elaborated by Roy Rappaport (1968; 1971a; 1971b) in his ethnographic study of the Tsembaga Maring of highland New Guinea, that was found useful because it:

> 'ties religion to social organization, politics, and subsistence, rather than leaving it on the ephemeral plane of mental activity ... [and] it breaks down religious phenomena into classes that are functionally different and have different contexts' (Flannery 2009, 331).

According to this cognised model based on systems theory,[3] religion can be envisioned as being composed of three elements connected by a circular relationship that are as follows: 1) *ultimate sacred proposition* (i.e. 'a set of completely

unverifiable beliefs that are held as unquestionable truths by the faithful'); 2) *rituals* (i.e. religious acts); and 3) *religious experience* induced by the performance of rituals (Drennan in Flannery 2009, 347, fig. 11.8).[4]

In the year 1985, the entire perspective on the archaeology of religion underwent a change. This date corresponds to the publication of Renfrew's volume, *The Archaeology of Cult: The Sanctuary at Phylakopi* (1985) that is dedicated to the study of the Mycenaean sanctuary of Phylakopi (14th century BCE) on the island of Melos in the Aegean. Beginning with this study, Renfrew began developing a system for defining criteria that could lead archaeologists towards the interpretation of archaeological remains as traces of ritual activities and thereby define locales that were used in ancient times as places for religious purposes – i.e. the 'archaeological indicators of ritual' defined by Renfrew (1994, 51–52) in his later work on the archaeology of religion. Even though this is a fundamental move towards an archaeology of religion and an attempt to identify a cognitive relationship between the mind and the material in the construction of ancient religious belief systems, the main focus of investigation of the 'cognitive approach' still separates the mental (i.e. the religious mind) from the material (i.e. ritual practices) in reconstructing the religious dimension of ancient societies (Doorgan 2012, chap. 3).

In the same period, a few edited volumes (Carmichael *et al.* 1994; Garwood *et al.* 1991) based on conference proceedings, focused their attention on identifying correlates of religious beliefs and practices in the archaeological record. Among the contributions to these volumes, Barrett's article was probably one of the most interesting for future research in this field, because it primarily focused on the multivocality of ritual practices and, particularly, on the 'active and primary nature of material culture as an agent in religious life' (Doorgan 2012: chap. 3), a subject that becomes fundamental in the more recent studies on the materiality of religion.

Since then, the literature on this topic has seen an increase with an enormous amount of volumes published during the last 10–15 years (Barrowclough and Malone 2007; Biehl and Bertemes 2001; Doorgan 2012; Fogelin 2007; 2008; Hodder 2010; Insoll 2001; 2004a; 2004b; 2011; Moser and Feldman 2014; Pauketat 2013; Rowan 2012; Steadman 2008; Wesler 2012; Whitley and Hays-Gilpin 2007). During these recent years, the theoretical approaches used in analysing religious practices among ancient societies have been different and range from a traditional functional perspective that, following a classical Durkheimian model, clearly distinguish between 'sacred' and 'profane' domains, focusing mainly on ritual and ceremonial practices (leaving the spiritual domain to the 'historians' who can interpret beliefs, myths, and dogmas drawing from written texts); to others, employing either phenomenological, practice-based or cognitive theoretical frameworks (Fogelin 2007; Pauketat 2013, 15–34), that have been more prone to identifying the importance of the agency of religious objects in framing the religiosity of ancient people, since, as seen before, religion does not belong only to a mental dimension, but is also constructed through a continuous interaction and intertwining of ideal dogmas and actual practices that are recognisable in the materiality of religion (Doorgan 2012, chap. 4). Thus, the most recent works in the sub-field of the archaeology of religion have moved away from a mere categorisation of religious beliefs and practices (e.g. the identification of canons to distinguish the different types of religion, Insoll 2004c)[5] into a more coherent approach that focuses on what religion does in the overall society (Aldfenderfer 2012).

Within this perspective, it is of great importance to see ancient religions as phenomena built upon a complex network of connected elements (e.g. ritual paraphernalia, remains of ritual practices, built environments, sacred landscapes, sacred animals, and, when available, written texts) that shaped the cognitive dimension of the involved individuals through sensorial experiences of the numinous (Biehl 2012; Laneri 2011; Pauketat 2013). In support of such a holistic vision of the archaeological correlates of religiosity, it is also important to highlight the practical aspects of religious dogmas, myths, and beliefs in the broader contexts of the investigated societies (Aldfenderfer 2012). In other words, religion is an active element in the life of every single social group because it has to function in the real world and, as Rappaport has strongly emphasised in most of his scholarly works (e.g. 1968; 1971a; 1971b; 1999), the sacred domain (i.e. the combination of ritual practices and religious beliefs) cannot be separated from the environmental, economic, political and social dimensions of a given social group. Following this view, the sacred has to be viewed as being embedded in the social dimension of a society and composed of material (e.g. ritual practices) and nonmaterial (e.g. holy utterances) aspects that cannot be separated in the process of investigating the religious dimension of a given community, because, as correctly posed by Aldenderfer (2012, 33), 'ritual is usually embedded *within* religion'.[6]

In fact, the truth that stays behind the sacred discourse of faith (e.g. 'the Lord our God the Lord is one' or 'There Is no god but God', Rappaport 1999, 277–281) needs to be socially validated by tangible elements (e.g. the construction of religious buildings and paraphernalia) that serve the purpose of affirming and conveying 'the religious experience of the faithful' in ways that 'sanctity' itself becomes an 'instrument of authority' (i.e. the sacred power) and, as a consequence, it can be used as a source of political power by the governing elites (Rappaport 1971b, 41).[7]

Thus, archaeology cannot separate the two aspects (i.e. the mental and the material) of human religiosity in the investigation of religious beliefs and practices among ancient societies; they are the heart and the brain of human religiosity and, consequently, the archaeologists' aim is to connect the different material relics that served as 'vehicles and bearers of sacred power' (Livingston 1993, 54) into a broader discourse that reconstructs ancient religious dimensions as well as their role in structuring the social practices of ancient societies.

Archaeology and religion in the ancient Near East

Although recent theoretical approaches to the archaeology of religion have changed the way archaeologists are now confronting material culture, features, landscape and architecture related to religious practices and beliefs, only rarely have these studies attempted a coherent analysis of how to face theoretically and methodologically archaeological correlates of religiosity among ancient Near Eastern societies. This is even more evident when confronting the importance attributed to the study of ancient Near Eastern religions between the end of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century as is demonstrated by both Emile Durkheim's interest in the study of ancient Semitic rituals by Robertson Smith and the literature published by Henri Frankfort on the religion of Mesopotamian and Egyptian societies.

Moreover, the trend noticeable during the second half of the 20th century has been marked by a strict separation of the analysis of ancient written sources from those dedicated to archaeological materials as demonstrated by the studies of Jacobsen, Kramer, Bottéro, Oppenheim and others on the cuneiform texts (Foster 2007; Mander 2009) and those by Hienrich, Tunca, Forest, Margueron, Lundquist and others concerned with the religious architecture of ancient Mesopotamia (Forest 1999). Regarding these latter studies, they have mostly focused on typological aspects related to archaeological discoveries rather than an attempt to combine the two elements into a more coherent work on reconstructing the relationship between remains of ritual practices and religious beliefs.

Only recently, an increasing number of studies have emphasised theoretical and methodological approaches in analysing ancient religions with perspectives different from a mere categorisation of the archaeological features (e.g. Cauvin 2000; Evans 2012; Hodder 2010; Kaniuth *et al.* 2013; Katz 2009; Nakhai 2001; Rowan 2012; Schmidt 2006). However, only rarely studies on Near Eastern contexts have been included in volumes dedicated to theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of ancient religions through archaeological research (see the texts mentioned in the previous paragraph); especially considering that it is in the Near East that ritual practices and religious beliefs showed pristine elements that appeared for the first time in human history, such as: the earliest examples of religious architecture in south-eastern Anatolia during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (Cauvin 2000); the first forms of organised religious authorities in Mesopotamia starting from the fifth and fourth millennia BCE (Roaf 2013); and the beginning of a monotheistic religious belief that still characterises our modern world in southern Levant during the Iron Age (Nakhai 2001).

The contributions to this edited volume will thus try to fill this gap focusing their attention on the interpretation of material culture that can lead to a reconstruction of ancient religious practices within Near Eastern societies from the Neolithic until the Iron age through the investigation of specific archaeological case-studies. In addition, when available, the importance of intertwining archaeological data and written sources dedicated to religious subjects has been taken into consideration for a better understanding of the development of religiosity among ancient Near Eastern societies.

One of the most relevant topics touched on by the contributors is the complex exercise of defining the archaeological correlates that can help scholars link ritual practices to religious beliefs. Another important aspect, especially highlighted by scholars investigating contexts with written data, is the distinction between the official/public and familial/private dimensions of religious belief systems. Based on the specific subjects considered by the authors, the book has been divided into three different sections in order to facilitate future discussions on the archaeological correlates of ancient religions:

1. *Sacred nature*, i.e. the role of nature in creating the religious dimension of ancient societies.
2. *Housing the god*, i.e. the creation of architecture and/or place within the urban fabric for worshipping deities.
3. *The materialisation of religious practices and beliefs*, i.e. the use of material culture in the expression of religious beliefs and practices.

Sacred nature

When interpreting why ancient societies created gods, there is an axiomatic assumption that it was necessary in order to control natural events through the anthropomorphisation of the divine world, thereby giving gods a role that, as implied by the term supernatural, is above nature. The creation of supernatural creatures that controlled fundamental natural elements (water, mountains, sky, etc.) would have made humans believe that there was a way of controlling nature through the worship of these supernatural creatures. Using this perspective, it is necessary to envision a direct relationship between the religious system and the landscape in which it developed (Burkert 1996, 21), in which the relationship between the cosmic, natural and human worlds was conceived and communicated through mythological stories and ritual practices.

This element is clearly visible in the creation of the religious system of ancient Mesopotamia that envisions an attempt to control natural events as is noticeable in the ancient literature in which gods are described as 'the motors driving the natural world' (Trigger 2003, 419). To this we should also add that in Mesopotamia 'the principal changes in nature' must be accompanied by 'appropriate rituals' (Frankfort and Frankfort 1948, 25). Such a perspective is based on a traditional interpretation of an antagonistic relationship between nature and humans that sees humans attempting to control nature through a process of civilisation or acculturation of the wild world, as is expressed in the relationship between the 'civilised' Gilgamesh and the 'wild' Enkidu recognisable in the Sumerian tradition.

In this process of humans controlling nature through the means of the supernatural, Ingold's vision of the history of

human-animal relations is both inspiring and helpful for the purpose of this section. According to him, 'the transition from hunting to pastoralism is marked not by the replacement of wild animals by domesticated ones, but by the movement from trust to domination in the principles of human beings' relations with them' (2000, 10).

In the Near East this long transitional phase linked to the domestication of plants and animals characterised prehistoric communities of the Levant, Turkey, Syria and northern Iraq and, as stated by scholars like Cauvin, Watkins, Hodder, and Verhoven, represent a period of major cognitive and symbolic transformations that Cauvin (2000) named as 'a revolution of symbols which resulted in the invention of religion' (Verhoven 2011, 801).

Even though this long process of transformation in human–animal relations in Near Eastern prehistory has been interpreted as a change in the way people interacted with ancestors and animal spirits and in the way human agency became central in the process of animal and plant domestication, I believe we should also emphasise how the relations between humans, nature and the numinous should be envisioned as part of a spiritual symbiosis in which preeminence is given to the agency embodied by the natural elements (Pauketat 2013, 27–42). Following this perspective, humans show respect to non-human elements by primarily embracing forms of trust and sharing and not through acts of domination and control over the environment. Again, it is in Ingold's words (2000, 57) that we can find a clear vision of the importance of a symbiotic relationship between humans and the surrounding environment; in fact, it is:

> 'through the practical activities of hunting and gathering [that] the environment – including the landscape with its fauna and flora – enters directly into the constitution of persons, not only as a source of nourishment but also as a source of knowledge'.

For example the pivotal role played by natural elements in constructing human religiosity is clearly visible in Anatolia during the Hittite period where domesticated animals are used to supplement the human diet, whereas wild animals are perceived as living in harmony with the nature. In this context, deities are usually escorted by animals and, as stated by Archi (1988, 29), 'the archaic rituals wish the king to have those animal properties that represent symbols of power and kingship'.

Elements of symbiosis between animals and divinities can also been seen in the numerous animal representations and manifestations of ancient divinities as well as in the combination of human and animal attributes in creating fantastic figures in the iconographic and written religious traditions of numerous ancient Near Eastern societies.

As we will notice in some of the papers here presented, further elements confirming the agency embodied by animals in the religious dimension of ancient Near Eastern societies are represented by the presence of animals in funerary deposits. This is the case of Gonur Depe during the end of the third and the first half of the second millennium BCE (see Dubova) where the presence of specific animals (i.e. dogs, equids, rams) in funerary contexts can be interpreted as the result of sacrifices associated with the enactment of post-mortem rituals, but it can also be viewed as a form of connection between humans, nature and the supernatural in constructing the religious dimension of the people inhabiting the region of Margiana in Turkmenistan. The importance of animal sacrifices in the performance of religious practices is further analysed by Larke Recht who, in her analysis of role played by animal sacrifice in the creation of human religiosity among Mesopotamian societies, uses an iconographic analysis of 'images as depicting elements of sacrificial practices' and reinforces the importance of iconography for identifying 'symbolic systems' associated with ancient religious dimensions (Renfrew 1994, 53–54).

Another element that needs to be emphasised in this section is the importance of the location of religious architecture in relationship to natural elements as representations of the numinous. Thus, as pointed out by Rosen, in the Levant the creation of cult sites in the desert represent a will to artificially embed a ritual building in a landscape linking it to a cosmic event, as is the case of the summer solstice, to support the process of socioeconomic transformation that occurred during the Neolithic period. In addition, the placement of specific artificial elements within the landscape, as is the case of the Early Bronze Age Standing Stones at Dhra' (see Andersson) could have created a 'cognitive connection' between sacred elements located within the settlements and 'cultic way stations' along important trade networks.

Housing the god

The creation of locales dedicated to the worship of the numinous is pivotal for every religion (Wesler 2012, 98–158). This place can be a natural sacred place, a building, or a combination of the two. However, the idea of housing the god in a specific enclosure can produce a stronger emphasis on the ideological control over the numinous by the elite members of a given society and thus constitute a tool for social control in societies that are leading towards higher forms of social complexity, as clearly represented by the late fourth millennium BCE Eanna complex of Uruk in southern Mesopotamia. In other contexts, ceremonial centers could have functioned as places necessary for strengthening social cooperation when cooperation was needed, for example in the case of ritual hunting.

In the case of Çatalhöyük during the Neolithic period, the presence of the numinous was entangled with the house, the *domus*, and the activities enacted in it. Among the Sumerians, the temple was also conceived as the 'House of the god'. The temple was the place physically inhabited by the god and where the god was fed by worshippers. Within this landscape, the house of the god was probably conceived as part of a larger process of emerging households seeking to strengthen

their power during the fourth and third millennia BCE in Mesopotamia and, thus, served the purpose of representing the centrality of the house and familial ties in the cosmic world, too.[8] The anthropomorphisation of the cosmic world, in which the family is central at both the human and divine levels, is fundamental to most ancient Near Eastern societies. Therefore, it is important to investigate how the house of the god was conceived and functioned during the different chronological periods and geographical areas for the purpose of finding common grounds in defining how religious architecture served the purpose of framing the cognitive schemata of the members of ancient communities.

In most of the cases, the temple was a secluded place accessible only by the religious elites. Very useful to this perspective is the relationship between 'sacral hierarchies' and access to religious spaces carried out by Wightman (2007) who divides religious areas into:

1. A primary space in which the divinity is represented by the presence of the cultic statue;
2. A secondary space that is the cella and is accessible by the high clericals;
3. A tertiary space represented by chapels, porches, and religious storerooms accessed by the low clericals;
4. A quaternary space represented by the outdoor areas where the general public convened.

According to Wightman (2007, 350), the fourth and 'lower echelon' is the place in which ritual activities are performed and where the public is invited to 'interact with the divine through the intermediation of a representative of the clergy'. In these outer spaces the presence of altars or libation basins might have been used for acts of ritual cleansing or purification, for votive offerings, and for the sacrificial slaughtering of animals. In addition to this, 'ceremonial paths' dedicated to worshippers might have been created for their participation in and observation of the ceremonies. Spaces located directly outside of the temples are pivotal in directing the experiential dimension of the participants towards the ritual activities and it is in these open spaces that ideological powers are usually materialised. Thus, these locales are the key elements in framing the cognitive schemata of the devotees and empowering their religious beliefs.

In fact, the unmistakable separation between an outdoor space where the public is invited to jointly interact with the numinous in a shared event, and a more secluded ceremonial building in which ritual activities were probably conducted only by religious specialists, creates a dichotomy between a continuous secrecy and the occasional public perception of the numinous, thereby reinforcing the strength and power of the message delivered by the specialists during the enactment of ritual performances in the outdoor space. Strangely, only rarely these spaces have been thoroughly investigated by archaeologists, who instead have focused their research on the *sancta sanctorum* of the religious structure.

The relationship between inside and outside spaces in the construction of ceremonial environments appears pivotal in the creation of the famous circular buildings discovered at the Pre-pottery Neolithic site of Göbekli Tepe. Dietrich and Notroff debate the important theme of the 'sacred nature' of these buildings being supported by Renfrew's famous archaeological indicators. In addition, they claim that there is a great need to separate the sacred from the profane in the lives of ancient people. This problematic separation of utilitarian versus ritual aspects is widely analysed in numerous contributions to this volume, calling for further investigation into the boundaries between the private (or familial) and the more public (official) religious dimensions. This theme is widely debated by Nakhai in her discussion of the role played by the Jerusalem Temple during the Iron Age, a place that was viewed as having a centralising role in constructing the Israelite identity becoming the 'emblem of morality and priesthood'.

In order to confront this complex subject, archaeologists should implement a thorough analysis of the built environment in order to identify elements (i.e. fixed features, semi-fixed features, and informal non-fixed features) that enhanced the importance of perceptual (by the constructor) and associational (by the users) religious aspects of the built environment either in an official/public or domestic/familial environment (Moser and Feldman 2014). This type of analysis is brought about by Valentini's contribution to this volume in his attempt to distinguish between large and visible public religious buildings and the more secluded sanctuaries (and probably linked to familial cults) in northern Mesopotamia during the third millennium BCE.

However, the location of the sacred building in relation to the settlements also needs to be taken into consideration when these kinds of religious buildings are investigated. In Mesopotamia the tradition of the 'High Terrace' is meant to enhance 'public visibility' of the natural place as well as to increase the purity of the sacred space and to further connect humans to the cosmological numinous located in the sky (see Butterlin). In a similar way, texts and archaeological data highlight the important role played by 'external spaces adjoining the temples' and the circumambulation around sacred precincts in enhancing the religious experience of the devotees in the Near East between the Bronze and Iron Age (see Mazzoni and Catagnoti).

Because of the extreme power embodied by religious buildings in the social environment in which they are built, at the end of their use they need to be visually and functionally eliminated through 'termination rituals' that can consist of votive fillings of the rooms and the detachment of all the semi-fixed and non-fixed features from their original place in the temples. The actual evidences of termination rituals have been only rarely investigated by archaeologists and, as demonstrated by the article here presented by Romano, a biographical approach to religious buildings should be further considered when excavating this type of architecture.

The materialisation of religious practices and beliefs

Since the publication of the pivotal article on the materialisation of ideology by DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle in 1996, the interest in the social engagement between people and material culture in ancient societies has resulted in numerous publications that spark a renewed interest in the relationship between objects, social practice, and human and non-human agency. Of particular note are more recent attempts to understand how archaeology can define the materialisation of ideological frameworks referring to religious practices (Droogan 2012). In order to reach this target, interested scholars should seek to establish a broader network of elements that can help define a common ground for the identification of a system of religious beliefs among ancient societies. Thus, specific sets of objects and semi-fixed features, distinctive built environments, unique landscapes, traces of sacrificed animals and votive offerings, should all be envisioned as part of cues that stimulated the cognitive schemata of the participants in the creation of a common notion of the sacred. This theoretical framework is based on a complex system of communication in which all involved elements can be envisioned as nodes; through the use of connecting ties, the nodes form a network that establishes the meanings of the material culture concerned with religious practices (Laneri 2011, fig. 10).

Thus, the ideological power of ritual acts is produced by the creation of networks of elements that gain their meaning only when part of a performance context and through their engagement with human beings. Moreover, it is through a process of enchainment between material culture, human and non-human entities that social ties are formed and established. These ties can be further reinforced (or erased) through the purposeful breakage and destruction of the involved material culture and architecture that become available to archaeologists in the form of fragments that need to be connected to give meaning to the material remains of religious beliefs.

It was also fundamental for ancient Near Eastern societies to normalise and structure religious beliefs through the creation of dogmas that can be easily traced through the reading of numerous written texts that, starting from the mid-third millennium BCE, enlighten our knowledge of Near Eastern religions. These norms give us a clear idea of how religious beliefs were conceived, but they also provide clues about the importance of intermingling religious utterances (either written or spoken) and religious practices in creating a common language for connecting with the numinous. This is, for example, the case of the ancient Mesopotamian ritual of the 'opening of the mouth' that was necessary to give life to cult statues and that represent the perfect combination of religious utterances and practices in giving meaning to a religious belief (Winter 1992).

The aim of this last section is therefore to investigate different forms of religious representation (iconographical, architectural, ritualistic, productive) viewed as part of a broader network of materialisation of religious beliefs in a given society. In this sense, I have found Watkin's use of the term 'material anchors' for specific archaeological correlates of ritual practices as a step towards linking religious experiences to the collective memories of Pre-pottery Neolithic communities. However, as Gošić and Gilead have brilliantly highlighted in their analysis of metal production during the Late Ghassulian period in the Levant, it is difficult to distinguish a clear line in differentiating sacred/ritualistic vs. profane/mundane material culture. In fact, certain aspects of technological innovation should be interpreted as part of a process of materialisation of religious beliefs and practices. This is the case of copper production in the Levant during the fifth millennium BCE when the ritual significance of making metal objects was used as a means to demonstrate new technological expertise and control by the coppersmiths. A similar complexity in combining archaeological and textual data is recognisable when scholars aim at distinguishing domestic religious belief systems from public ones. This is a common theme that links the work of Battini and Snell in their attempts to interpret Mesopotamian case-studies.

In conclusion, I hope that the range of topics covered by the papers presented in this final section to this edited volume will represent a door for entering a broader discussion on how to create patterns for investigating the synergetic relationship between the mental, the social and the practical dimensions of human religiosity among ancient Near Eastern societies that are hidden in the archaeological data, in the iconographic representations and in the written sources.

Notes

1 Religious experience (as opposed to mental and interior aspects of human religiosity) appeared as a grounding element for numerous scholars interested in religious studies (e.g. Durkheim, Otto, James, Turner, Rappaport). This element appears clear in William James' words who, as clearly summarized by Rappaport (1999, 375), envisioned religion 'as based upon *experience* … that refers to an immediate grasp of things'; in other words, it 'is non-discursive, a continuous "stream of consciousness" that cannot be communicated in words'. Following Rappaport, religious experience is also pivotal for Renfrew (1994, 48) in his approach to the archaeology of religion.

2 According to Aldenderfer (2012, 23), 'for the archaeologist, religion ... is only perceived when it is expressed through some act that has material consequences.'

3 In his analysis of the relationship between human beings and the environment, Rappaport envisioned two models: 'the *operational model* is that which anthropologists constructs through observation and measurement of empirical entities, events, and material relations'; whereas, 'the *cognized model* is the model of the environment conceived by the people who act in it' (Rappaport 1968, 237–238).

4 It is important to emphasis that according to this model 'ritual serves as a point of articulation between religion and socioenvironmental processes' (Drennan in Flannery 2009, caption of Fig. 11.8).

5 As previously mentioned, in the history of religious studies

there has been a particular emphasis on classifying types of religious dimensions based on the levels of social complexity (Wesler 2012, 16–29). As a consequence, we faced an initial evolutionary approach that stated clear stages of transformation (i.e. spiritualism > animism > totemism > polytheism > monotheism) or 'types of cult institutions' (i.e. individualistic, shamanic, communal, ecclesiastic, Wallace, 1966, 86–88), then an attempt to distinguish between traditional/primal and world/historic religions (Bowie 2000, 22–25), or between polytheism (or cosmotheism for early Near Eastern religions) and monotheism (Morris 1987; Mander 2009), or between 'imagistic' (related to small-scale societies) and 'doctrinal' (of more complex societies) modes of religiosity (Whitehouse 2000). The risk of these categorizations is to focus on the 'container' (what religion *is*) and lose track of the content, and its consequences (what religion *does*), of the religious dimension of a given community, because, as pointed out by Renfrew (1994, 47) 'classifications are of value if they are put to some use once they are established.'

6 To add more to this tight relationship between 'ritual practices' and 'religious beliefs', almost 50 years ago Wallace (1966, 243) warned us that 'ritual is determined by the beliefs with which it is associated.'

7 In fact, as correctly pointed out by Rappaport (1971b, 41), 'coercion is expensive and difficult, and compliance and docility are achieved more easily and inexpensively through first the encouragement of religious experiences inspired by hopes of salvation in another life and, second, inculcation of the belief that the world's evils are a result of the worshipper's own sinfulness rather than matter of external exploitation or oppression which the worshipper could possibly resist.'

8 As correctly posed by Wesler (2012, 99) following an earlier study by John Lundquist (1982) on the role of temples in legitimizing the state and royal power among Near Eastern societies, the 'institutionalization of the temple proceeds hand-in-hand with the institutionalization of the state'.

Bibliography

Aldenderfer, M. (2012) Envisioning a Pragmatic Approach to the Archaeology of Religion. In Y. M. Rowan (ed.) *Beyond Belief: The Archaeology of Religion and Ritual*, 23–36, Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 21. New York, Wiley.

Archi, A. (1988) Société des hommes et société des animaux. In F. Imparati (ed.) *Studi di Storia e di Filologia Anatolica dedicati a Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli*, 25–37, Eothen 1. Florence, LoGisma.

Barrett, J. C. (1991) Towards an Archaeology of Ritual. In P. Garwood, D. Jennings, R. Skeates and J. Toms (eds) *Sacred and Profane: Proceedings of a Conference on Archaeology, Ritual and Religion, Oxford, 1989*, 1–9. Oxford, Oxford University Committee for Archaeology.

Barrowclough, D. A. and Malone, C. (eds) (2007). *Cult in Context: Reconsidering Ritual in Archaeology*. Oxford, Oxbow Books.

Biehl, P. F. and F. Bertemes, F. (eds) (2001) *The Archaeology of Cult and Religion*. Budapest, Archaeolingua Alapítvány.

Biehl, P. F. (2012) Meanings and Functions of Enclosed Spaces in the European Neolithic: A Contextual Approach to Cult, Ritual, and Religion. In Y. M. Rowan (ed.) *Beyond Belief: The Archaeology of Religion and Ritual*, 130–146, Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 21. New York, Wiley.

Bottéro, J. (1992) *Mesopotamia. Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Bottéro, J. (2001) *Religion in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Bowie, F. (2000) *The Anthropology of Religion*. Oxford, Blackwell

Burkert, W. (1996) *Creation of the Sacred: Tracks of Biology in Early Religions*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Cohen, A. C. (2005) *Death Rituals, Ideology, and the Development of Early Mesopotamian Kingship: Toward a New Understanding of Iraq's Royal Cemetery of Ur*. Leiden, Brill.

Carmichael, D. L., Hubert, J., Reeves B. and Schanche, A. (eds) (1994) *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places*. London, Routledge.

Cauvin, J. (2000) *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

DeMarrais, E., Castillo, L. J. and Earle, T. (1996) Ideology, Materialization, and Power Strategies. *Current Anthropology* 37, 15–31.

Dornan, J. L. (2004) Beyond Belief: Religious Experience, Ritual, and Cultural Neuro-phenomenology in the Interpretation of Past Religious Systems. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 14/1, 25–36.

Droogan, J. (2012) *Religion, Material Culture and Archaeology*. London, Bloomsbury.

Durkheim, E. (1965) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. New York, Free Press.

Eller, J. D. (2007) *Introducing Anthropology of Religion*. New York, Routledge.

Evans, J. M. (2012) *The Lives of Sumerian Sculpture: An Archaeology of the Early Dynastic Temple*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Flannery, K. (ed.) (2009) *The Early Mesoamerican Village*. Updated edition. Walnut Creek, Ca, Left Coast Press.

Fogelin, L. (2007) The Archaeology of Religious Ritual. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 36, 55–71.

Fogelin, L. (ed.) (2008) *Religion, Archaeology, and the Material World,* Occasional Papers 36. Carbondale, IL, Center for Archaeological Investigations.

Forest, J.-D. (1999) *Les premiers temples de Mésapotamie: 4e et 3e millénairies*. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Foster, B. R. (2007) Mesopotamia. In J. R. Hinnels (ed.) *The Handbook of Ancient Religions*, 161–213. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Frankfort, H. (1948). *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Garwood, P., Jennings, D., Skeates, R. and Toms, J. (eds) (1991) *Sacred and Profane: Proceedings of a Conference on Archaeology, Ritual and Religion, Oxford, 1989*. Oxford: Oxford Committee for Archaeology

Geertz, C. (1966) Religion as a Cultural System. In M. Banthon, *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 1–44. London, Tavistock Publications.

Hawkes, C. (1954) Archeological Theory and Method: Some Suggestions from the Old World. *American Anthropologist* 56/2, 155–168.

Hodder, I. (ed.) (2010) *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Kaniuth, K., Löhnert, A., Miller, J. L., Otto, A., Roaf, M. and Sallaberger, W. (eds) (2013) *Tempel im Alten Orient: 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 11.–13. Oktober 2009*. Weisbaden, Harrasowitz Verlag.

Ingold, T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment. Essays in the Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London, Routledge.

Katz, J. (2009) *The Archaeology of Cult in the Middle Bronze Age Canaan. The Sacred Area at Tel Haror, Isreal*. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press.

Insoll, T. (2001) *Archaeology and World Religion*. London, Routledge.

Insoll, T. (2004a) *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion*. London, Routledge.

Insoll, T. (ed.) (2004b) *Belief in the Past: The Proceedings of the 2002 Manchester Conference on Archaeology and Religion,* British Archaeological Reports International Series 1212. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Insoll, T. (2004c) Are Archaeologists Afraid of Gods? Some thoughts on archaeology and religion. In T. Insoll (ed.) *Belief in the Past. The Proceedings of the 2002 Manchester Conference on Archaeology and Religion*, 1–6, British Archaeological Reports International Series 1212. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Insoll, T. (ed.) (2011) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Jacobsen, T. (1976) *The Treasures of Darkness. A History of Mesopotamian Religion*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Laneri, N. (2011) Connecting Fragments: A Sensorial Approach to the Materialization of Religious Beliefs in Rural Mesopotamia at the Beginning of the Second Millennium BC. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 21/1, 77–94.

Lewis-Williams, J. D. and Pearce, D. G. (2005) *Inside the Neolithic Mind: Consciousness, Cosmos, and the Realm of the Gods*. London, Thames & Hudson.

Livingston, J. C. (1993) *Anatomy of the Sacred. An Introduction to Religion*. Englewood Cliff, Prentice-Hall

Lundquist, J. M. (1982). The Legitimizing Role of the Temple in the Origin of the State. *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 21, 271–97.

Malefijit de Waal, A. (1968) *Religion and Culture. An Introduction to Anthropology of Religion*. London, Macmillan.

Mander, P. (2009) *La religione dell'antica Mesopotamia*. Roma, Carocci.

Morris, B. (1987) *Anthropological Studies of Religion: An Introductory Text*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Moser, C. and Feldman, C. (eds) (2014). *Locating the Sacred. Theoretical Approaches to the Emplacement of Religion*. Oxford, Oxbow Books.

Nakhai, B. A. (2001) *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel*. Boston, MA, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Otto, R. (1923) *The Idea of the Holy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Pauketat, T. R. (2013) *An Archaeology of the Cosmos: Rethinking Agency and Religion in Ancient America*. New York, Routledge.

Rappaport, R. A. (1968) *Pigs for the Ancestors: Ritual in the Ecology of a New Guinea People*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Rappaport R. A. (1971a) Ritual, Sanctity, and Cybernatics. *American Anthropologist* 73, 59–76.

Rappaport R. (1971b) The Sacred in Human Evolution. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 2, 23–44.

Rappaport, R. A. (1994) On the Evolution of Morality and Religion: A Response to Lee Cronk. *Zygon* 29/3, 331–349.

Rappaport, R. A. (1999) *Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Renfrew, C. (1985) *The Archaeology of Cult. The Sanctuary at Phylakopi*. London, Thames and Hudson.

Renfrew, C. (1994) Archaeology of Religion. In C. Renfrew and E. B. W. Zubrow (eds) *The Ancient Mind: Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*, 47–54, New Directions in Archaeology. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Roaf, M. (2013) Temples and the Origin of Civilizations. In K. Kaniuth, A. Löhnert, J. L. Miller, A. Otto, M. Roaf and W. Sallaberger (eds) *Tempel im Alten Orient: 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, 11.–13. Oktober 2009*, 427–445. Weisbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag.

Rowan, Y. M. (ed.) (2012) *Beyond Belief: The Archaeology of Religion and Ritual*, Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association 21. New York, Wiley.

Schmidt, K. (2006) *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel: Das rätselhafte Heiligtum der Steinzeitjäger: die archäologische Entdeckung am Göbekli Tepe*. München, Beck.

Smart, N. (1996) *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs*. Berkeley, University of California Press.

Steadman, S. R. (2009) *The Archaeology of Religion: Cultures and Their Beliefs in Worldwide Context*. Walnut Creek CA, Left Coast Press.

Trigger, B. (2003) *Understanding Early Civilizations. A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Tylor, E. B. (1871) *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*. 2 Vols. London, J. Murray.

Verhoeven, M. (2011) Retrieving the Supernatural: Ritual and Religion in the Prehistoric Levant. In T. Insoll (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, 795–810. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wallace, A. F. (1966) *Religion. An Anthropological View*. New York, Random House.

Wesler K. W. (2012). An Archaeology of Religion. Lanham, MD, University of America Press.

Wightman, G. J. (2007) *Sacred Spaces. Religious Architecture in the Ancient World*, Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement 22. Leuven, Peeters.

Whitehouse, H. (2000) *Arguments and Icons: The Cognitive, Social, and Historical Implications of Divergent Modes of Religiosity*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Whitehouse, H. (2004) *Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission*. Walnut Creek CA, AltaMira Press.

Whitehouse, H. and Hodder, I. (2010) Modes of Religiosity at Çatalhöyük. In I. Hodder (ed.) *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study*, 122–145. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Whitley, D. S. and Hays-Gilpin, K. (eds) (2008) *Belief in the Past: Theoretical Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion*. Walnut Creek CA, Left Coast Press.

Winter, I. J. (1992) Idols of the King: Royal Images as the Recipients of Ritual Action in Ancient Mesopotamia. *Journal of Ritual Studies* 6, 13–42.

PART I

SACRED NATURE

2

Animal burials and their cults in Margiana

Nadezhda Dubova

Gonur Depe site is situated in South-eastern Turkmenistan in the Kara Kum desert, 85 km to the north of Bairamali city (Fig. 2.1). It was discovered by Prof. Victor Sarianidi in 1972 along with more than 200 sites in the ancient delta of the Murghab river (Sarianidi 1990; 1998; 2001; 2002; 2005; 2008). The site is still being excavated by the expedition of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Russian Academy of sciences (Moscow, Russia) under the leadership of V. Sarianidi in collaboration with the National Department of Turkmenistan for Protection, Research and Restoration of Historical and Cultural Sites (Ashgabat).

Gonur Depe is a ritual center of the ancient province of Margush (Fig. 2.2). It comprises a palace with a citadel in the center which is surrounded by temples on all four sides: the Temple of Fire in the east, the Complex of Communal Eating in the north and the Temples of Sacrifice in the west and south. The temples are surrounded by a second wall with rectangular towers. Out of that second wall there are basins in front of all four entrances to the complex orientated in the four directions. There are three water pools, including the largest one in the south. On the east bank of the main southern pool is the royal cemetery which is dated to the end of the 3rd millennium BC. This central part, exclusively comprising a sacred site, is surrounded by a third wall. It has no defensive value, because it is only half a metre wide but it separates the sacred precinct from the ordinary world.

Three to four hundred metres to the west of the central part of the complex, on the left bank of ancient Murghab river, is the Great (or Main) cemetery. In front of it, on the right bank of the river, a special ritual complex (P 16) was built. This site has been fully excavated and is a well-presented monument of the Bactria-Margiana archaeological complex (BMAC). More than 60 radiocarbon dates show that Gonur Depe was inhabited between 2300 and 1500 cal BC (Zaytseva *et al.* 2008).

One of the most interesting features of the site is the 74 real animal burials and places with partial remains of their skeletons (Table 2.1). The most frequent burials are of rams/goats (37 burials with the remains of 58 individuals), and also dogs (33 burials, 57 individuals) (Fig. 2.3). Special tombs for the animals with funeral gifts comprise a little more than half of all the burials (food offerings for the dead are not discussed here).

Different types of animal burials are met at Gonur: burials of animals in the immediate proximity to the tombs of humans or in them (a variant of such burial places is the great number of different animals in the "yards" of the royal tombs); burials having a most likely ritual character – burial places of different animals in special tombs and also the placement of parts of an animal's carcass in special small cists or pits (Fig. 2.4). The greatest number of sites with animal remains (23 of a total of 74) is found out in the royal cemetery. Here all kinds of animals (one horse, six donkeys, six cows/bulls, 15 dogs, four rams, three pigs and eight camels) were found whereas at others areas of Gonur the overwhelming majority consisted of burials of rams. Six of the seven donkey burials were found in the royal cemetery. Only one, known as the "foal burial", was found in the Large Gonur cemetery. It must be mentioned that all camel remains were found in the yards near the "houses of the dead" of the royal graves and in the huge pits (ditches) close to the graves that have no yards. Most likely the camels' corpses were used only to serve the needs of the deceased in the other life.

Of the four locations with pig remains three are from the royal cemetery. Only one (a fragment of the lower jaw) was found together with the bones of a camel and cow in P 10 (tomb 3281) – on the north-west of the complex. As already mentioned, six tombs at the royal cemetery contain the remains of cows and bulls. But two of them have a special interest. One is a large pit-tomb with the entire skeleton of a bull, accompanied by only one ceramic vessel. In the second pit the cow's carcass was so carefully dismembered that there was no evidence of damage found on any of the bones: even the vertebrae and ribs were accurately separated one from the other. All parts were deposited in a small pit in special order, with the right and left sides of the chest and legs lying one upon another and the skull placed on top.

One more important custom is connected with the royal cemetery. Half of the dog burials (15 from a total of 33) were found there. Some dogs were lying in the yards of their graves

Fig. 2.1: Position of Gonur-Depe on the Turkmenistan map.

(four tombs: one of which comprised a small house-dog covered with a small piece of cloth decorated with small gypsum beads); two were placed in one ditch; seven dogs were deposited in a richly filled ditch with a wagon, seven men, two camels and two donkeys. Most interesting is the seven tombs of dogs that were situated on the east border of the royal cemetery. In one of tombs seven dogs were buried. They were lying one behind another forming a spiral in a small pit without any funeral gifts. These dog tombs are located in three areas (Fig. 2.5) – in front of the groups of royal graves. In two of them (three skeletons in 4077 and two in 4099) only the remains of puppies were found.

The remains of animals found in different areas of Gonur Depe show that the ancient Margush people had several breeds of dogs. One of them, whose burials were the most numerous (tombs 2872, 3200, 3280, 3600, 3813, 3900, 3905, 3915), resembled a Great Dane, Mastiff or Central Asian Shepherd Dog which is related to the modern Turkmen Alabai. The second, much smaller in terms of the number of known burials, is a breed that is close to a Beagle (Turkmen pots) (tombs 3280, 4075). The third one is a small "domestic dog", which was found in the courtyard of royal tomb 3210. In the graves found on the eastern edge of the royal cemetery there were dogs that do not belong to those listed above, i.e. they constitute yet another breed (R. Sataev made all definitions).

The role of the dog as the one who conducts the deceased in the afterlife is reflected in the ritual burial of sacrificial dogs for peoples living far from Central Asia – Xianbi and Uhuan (Viktorova 1974, 264) and possibly the Hunnu (Danilov 1983). The literature concerning the cultural place of the dog is enormous and, of course, requires systematisation and analysis. The relationship of the dog to the Margush population reflected in the Gonur burials remains to be understood.

The second territory after the royal cemetery in terms of the number of animal burials is P 16 (the distinct area on the south-west of the complex, outside of its surrounding wall): of

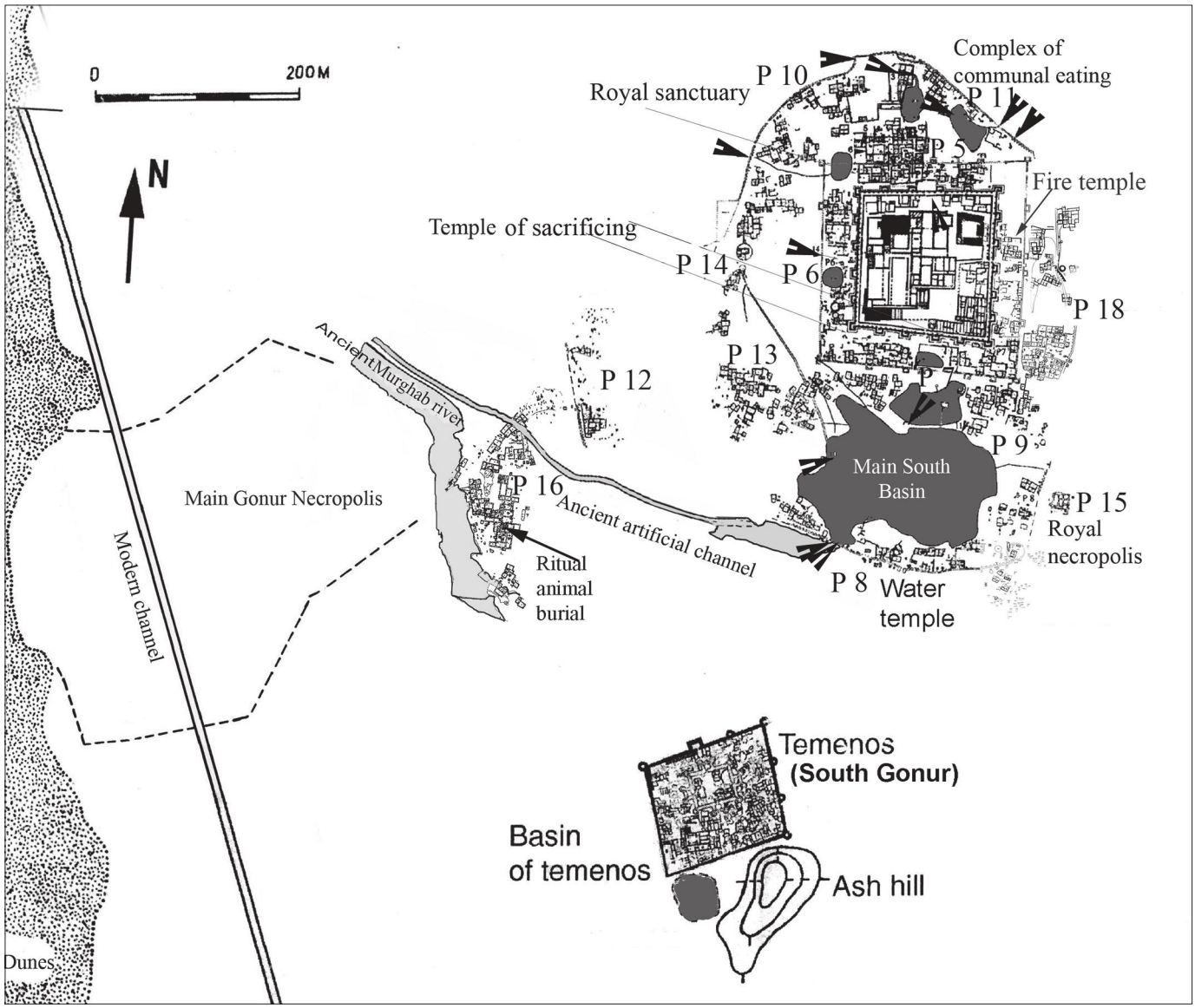


Fig. 2.2: General scheme of Gonur-Depe, 2011.

the total find locations of animals only 16% (12 of 74) were uncovered in this area. It's not by chance that the ritual burial of animals was found in this area (Sarianidi and Dubova 2008) as it is situated on the right bank of the ancient course of the Murgab, just in front of the main (or large) Gonur necropolis. The great majority of animal tombs there (9 of 12) belong to sheep. Dogs are present in three tombs, donkey and cow in one each.

Of formal ritual burials three tombs contained rams and one contained a donkey. All three rams were lying on the right side, their heads facing to the north. There were many (more than 20) ceramic vessels. The central ram has no head, which was severed from the neck by a sharp tool. A bronze plate was put in the lumbar part of the vertebrae so deep that it shows that the animal was first immobilised and then beheaded. All three ram have a miniature column, knives, bronze vessels and various pins as their funeral gifts. The rams to the right and to the left from the central burial have sets of small stone artifacts – balls, pyramids and cones, probably employed in some ritual. The donkey's tomb was built perpendicular to the other three. The animal lies on the right side. Its head is turned back to the tail. A bronze cylinder vessel was put between the head and the wall of the tomb. Near the hind legs of the donkey lay three small lambs (less than one month). This unique burial was constructed before the walls at that part of the complex. All four tombs have roofs which were made with reed and willow mats and then plastered with a thick layer of clay. After the pit was filled with earth the walls of the premises were built up and the clay

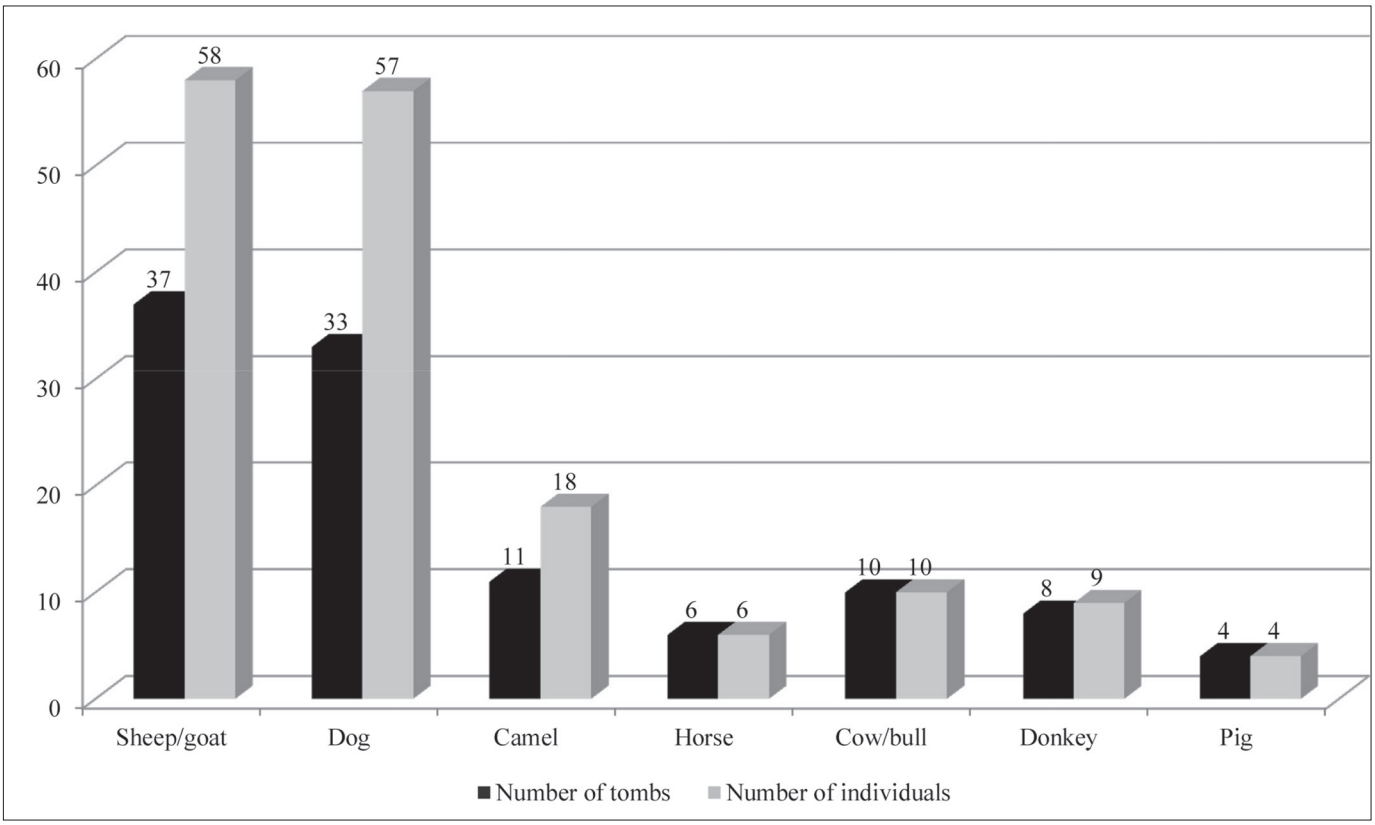


Fig. 2.3: Frequency of the animal burials and different species at Gonur Depe.

floor was made. Just in front of each of the three ram burials near the north wall of the new room, remembrance pits which included 2–3 ceramic vessels and large fragments of the cattle bones were made. The tops of the pits were carefully plastered over on the same level with the floor of room.

Tombs where rams are the main burials are met in different areas of Gonur Depe except the large and royal cemeteries. Different species were buried in different types of tombs. Thus, two of the three donkeys and 12 of the 19 rams were buried in cists. Five rams were treated like aristocrats and provided with chamber tombs and only one was buried in a shaft tomb. Eleven of the 16 dogs were placed in ground pits, but their walls were carefully plastered. Four dogs were found in pits with burnt walls. It must be noted that only 47 burnt pits of the 196 from the large Gonur cemetery contain any remains. All human remains from such burnt pits show that the people were seriously ill during their life.

Some words need to be said about the discovery of horse remains. It has become clear now that we can talk only about one whole horse burial at Gonur: this was a young animal, leaning against the east wall of the courtyard of royal tomb 3200 and fixed against the side of a four-wheel cart. Only one tooth preserved from it which R. Sataev identified as belonging to a horse (Sataev 2008a 2008b). Other horse remains shown in Table 2.1 are represented only by fragments. The largest of them is the poorly preserved skull and humerus of an animal (tomb 3766) in P 9 (room 149), which was accompanied by a dog skull and a fragmented sheep skull. At P 13 (room 31) a horse forelimb was found (tomb 3479) and in the group of animals around cist 2900 was a lower jaw. The distal joint of the humerus of a horse was excavated in the ash-carbonaceous layer of the "hill of ashes" in South Gonur (place 3473) while a single tooth was recovered in the north-western corner of the encircling wall (place 3405).

In addition to these data there has been great interest regarding a number of separate horse teeth, found in the upper layer of the fill at P 16. These comprise two shaft tombs. In both cases, the horse teeth were clearly not randomly placed 10–15 cm higher than the funerary offerings deposited in the shaft. In tomb 3795 one horse tooth was found, and in 3798 – two of them. No further fragments of horse bones were found.

So we have every reason to disagree with the statement of K. Moore (Moore 1993, 167–168), and, more cautiously R. Meadow (1993, 73; see also Parpola and Janhunen 2010, 425–426) about the absence of the horse remains at Gonur. It can be said with confidence that there was a domestic horse in Margiana. Now we can only await the publication of the description of the remains by the specialists.

So all the above information reasonably indicates that in addition to ancient agriculture cattle breeding played an

Table 2.1: Full skeletons of animals and their fragments in the Gonur Depe tombs.

№	Number of a tomb	Area at Gonur Depe	**Animal species**							**Human remains** (full or fragmented skeleton)
			Sheep/ Goats	**Camels**	**Horses**	**Dogs**	**Cow/ Bulls**	**Donkeys**	**Pigs**	
1	"Foal burial"*	Main necropolis						1 (o) (without head and tail)		
2	18/Palace ("Lamb burial")	Palace	1 (o) (lamb)	2						
3	158/Palace	Palace				1 Lower jaw				1 (Only a scull)
4	258 (burnt pit)	Main necropolis				1(o)				
5	1172 (burnt pit)	Main necropolis				1				1
6	1315	Main necropolis	1							1
7	1939 (burnt pit)	Main necropolis				1(o)				
8	2087 (burnt pit)	Main necropolis				1(o)				
9	87/2002 (burnt pit)	Main necropolis				1(o)				
10	1800 (burnt pit)	Main necropolis				1 (only one canine tooth)				
11	2845	West (P 6)	1(o)							
12	2872	North (P 11)				1(o)				
13	2900	North (P 5)	4+1**		lower jaw	2				2
14	3038	West (P 11)	1(o)							
15	3124	South (P 8)	3(o)							
16	3130	South (P 8)	3(o)							
17	3149	South (P 8)	2							1
18	3155	South (P 8)	1							2
19	3200	South-East (Royal necropolis)		2	1	1				7
20	3206	South-East (Royal necropolis)							1 (extremity bones)	
21	3210	South-East (Royal necropolis)	2	1		1	1 (calf)			11
22	3225	South-East (Royal necropolis)		2						10
23	3240	South-East (Royal necropolis)	2	2		2	1 (calf)			17
24	3265	South (P 8)	1							1

№	Number of a tomb	Area at Gonur Depe	**Animal species**							**Human remains** (full or fragmented skeleton)
			Sheep/ Goats	**Camels**	**Horses**	**Dogs**	**Cow/ Bulls**	**Donkeys**	**Pigs**	
25	3280	South (P 8)	1			2				2
26	3281	North-west (P 10)		1 (Scapula, humerus and radius)			1 (Fragmenof the extremity)		1 (fragment of the lower jaw)	
27	3282	North-west (P 10)	2? (fragments of sculls)							
28	3310	South-east (P 9)	2 (o)		1	1	1 (calf)			1
29	3330	South-East (Royal necropolis)						1 (extremity bones)		
30	3331	South-East (Royal necropolis)						1 (extremity bones)		
31	3340	South-East (Royal necropolis)						1(o)		
32	3377	South-west (P 12)	1(o)							
33	3398	South-west (P 12)	1(o)							
34	3405	North-west (P 10)			1 tooth					
35	3478	North-east (P 11)		1 (scupula)						
36	3479	South-west (P 13)			1 (forelimb)					
37	3547	South-east (P 15)	1(o)							
38	3548	South-east (P 15)	1(o)							
39	3597	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	3***					1(o)		
40	3600	South-west (P 13)				1(o)				
41	3612 (burnt pit-cista)	South-west (P 13)	1							
42	3614	South west (P 13)	1 (extremities)				1 (lower jaw)			
43	3621	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	1(o)							
44	3622	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	1(o) (without a head)							
45	3623	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	1(o)							
46	3710 (burnt pit)	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	3 (fragments of skeletons)							

№	Number of a tomb	Area at Gonur Depe	Animal species							Human **remains** (full or fragmented skeleton)
			Sheep/ Goats	**Camels**	**Horses**	**Dogs**	**Cow/ Bulls**	**Donkeys**	**Pigs**	
47	3711	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	4 (fragments of skeletons of 3 sheep and 1 goat)							
48	3739	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	1(o)							
49	3766	South-west (P 9)	1 (fragmented skeleton)		1 (scull and scapula)	1 (scull)				
50	3790	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	1(o) (goatling)							
51	3813	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)				2(o) (in the position of copulation)				
52	3829	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	1 (only horn)			2(o)	1 (extremities)			
53	3830	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)	2(o)							
54	3855	West (P 14)	1(o)							
55	3865	South-east (Separated complex, P 16)				4 (3 adult and 1 puppy)				1
56	3880	South-east (Royal necropolis)		1		1				3
57	3890	South-east (Royal necropolis)					1(o) (cow) (carefully defragmented)			
58	3895	South-east (Royal necropolis)					1(o) (bull) (full skeleton)			
59	3900	South-east (Royal necropolis)		2		8 (7 in the burial, 1 – near the upper side of the tomb)		2		7
60	3905	South-east (Royal necropolis)		1						4
61	3915	South-east (Royal necropolis)		3		1				5
62	3925	North (P 17)	1(o)							
63	3955	South-west (P 9)				1(o)				
64	3959	South-west (P 9)				1(o)				
65	4065	South-east (Royal necropolis)	1 (part of the lower jaw)			7(o)		1 (only vertebrae column with pelvis; without a head, extremities and thorax)		

№	Number of a tomb	Area at Gonur Depe	**Animal species**							**Human remains** (full or fragmented skeleton)
			Sheep/ Goats	**Camels**	**Horses**	**Dogs**	**Cow/ Bulls**	**Donkeys**	**Pigs**	
66	4069	South-east (Royal necropolis)				1(o)			1 (lower jaw)	
67	4073	South-east (Royal necropolis)				1(o)			1 (only scull)	
68	4075	South-east (Royal necropolis)				1(o)				
69	4076	South-east (Royal necropolis)				1 (only scull)				
70	4077	South-east (Royal necropolis)				3(o) (puppies)				
71	4095	South-east (Royal necropolis)				1(o)	1 (lower jaw)			
72	4099	South-east (Royal necropolis)				2 (1 puppy) (o)				
73	4110	South-east (Royal necropolis)	1 fragment of the lower jaw			1 puppy	1 (horn and one fragment of extremity)	1 one fragment of extremity		8 (1 female, 1 girl и 6 children 6–12 years); 1 lower jaw of adolescent
74	4140	South (P 9/ P 18)	1(o)							
Total number of individuals			58	18	6	57	10	9	4	84
Total number of burials with the remains of the species			37	11	6	33	10	8	4	17

(o) Animal is the main species buried in that tomb.

* The species of the animal buried in that tomb was defined just after the discovery as a young horse. R. Sataev who investigated the remains considers that they belong to a donkey. American archaeozoologist R. Meadow studied some animals remains from Gonur in the middle of the '90s, and, being aware of the remains from this tomb only by photos, also tends to this hypothesis (see: Parpola, Janhunen, 2010, c, 425–426).Taken into consideration all these hypotheses, here we use the generic term "donkeys" .

** Full skeletons of four sheep (two adults and two lambs) were placed near the eastern wall of the cist-grave. One skeleton of lamb was lying under the skeleton of an old man.

*** Three full skeletons of lambs are lying near the hind legs of a donkey.

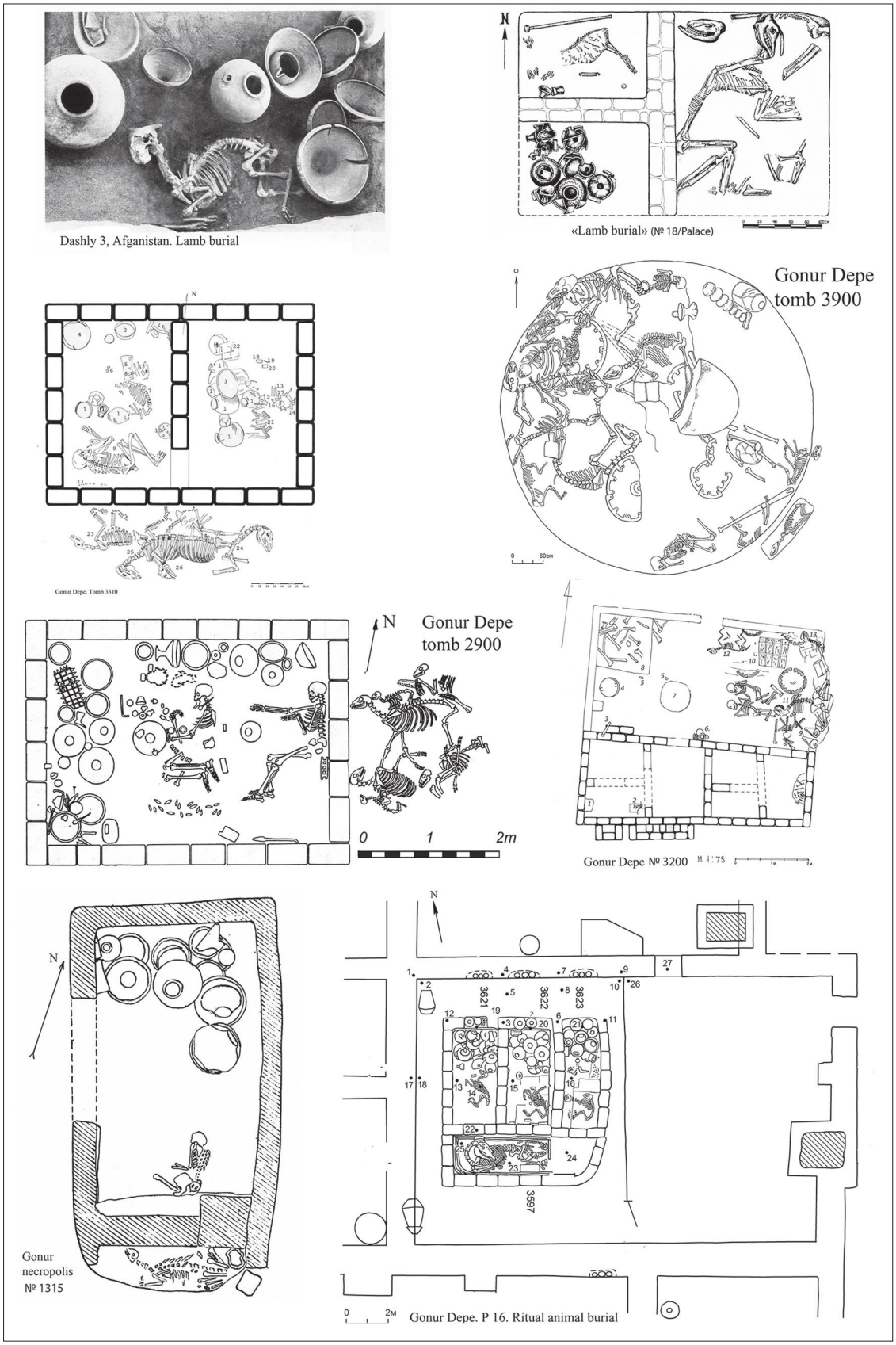


Fig. 2.4: Some examples of the animal burials at Gonur Depe.

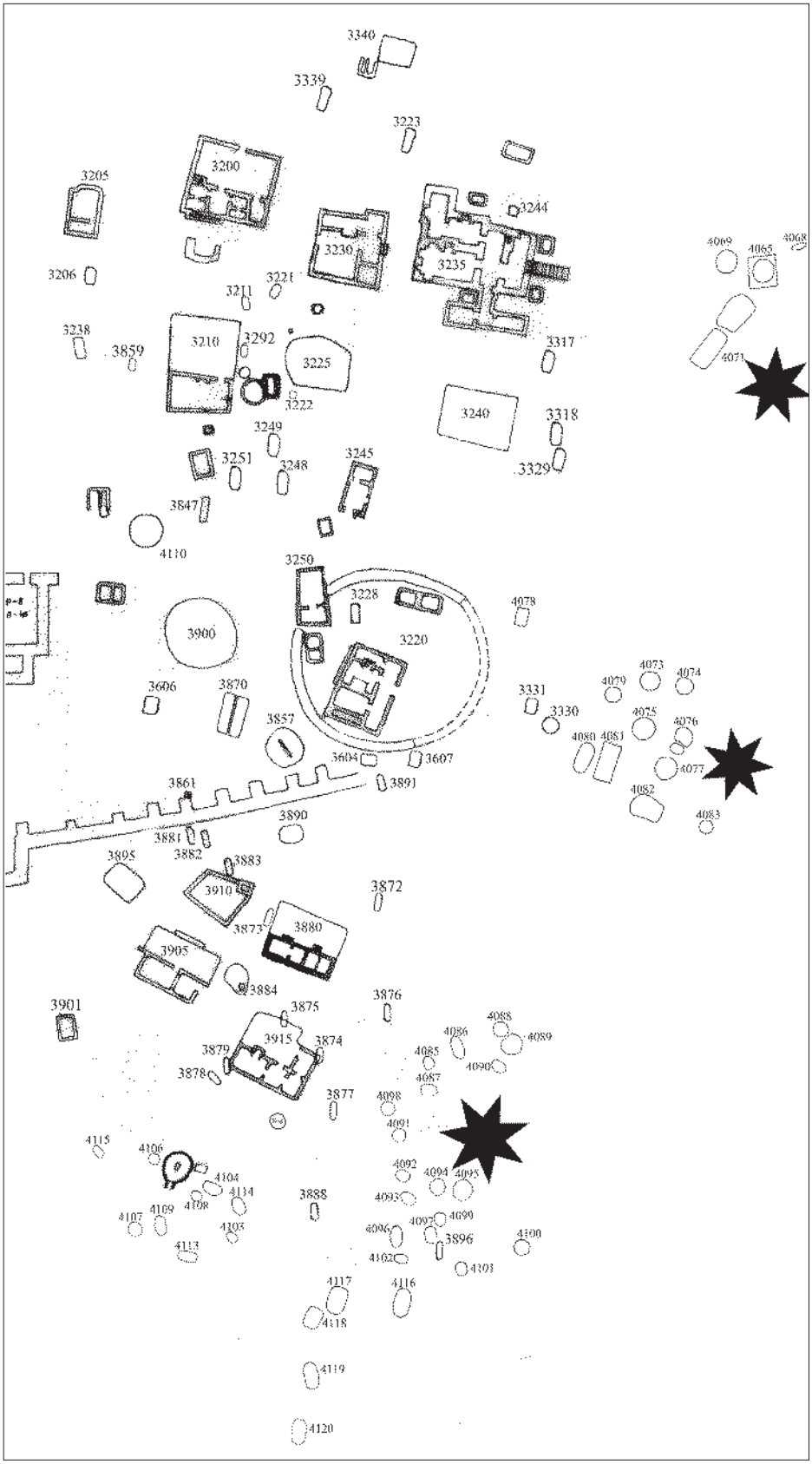


Fig. 2.5: General scheme of Royal Gonur necropolis. The groups of dogs' tombs are marked by stars.

important role in the daily life of the Margush population. Since there are special burials of sheep, dogs, and donkeys which have rich funerary offerings (sometimes much richer than those present in the surrounding human graves) and there is evidence of the presence of human sacrifice of lambs (tomb 3310) there is every reason to believe that such ceremonies were neither isolated or random but on the contrary they were typical rituals of local tribes. The presence of the symbols of high military and apparently administrative authority (scepters, miniature columns) in the tombs of sheep and goats may indicate what a large role they played in Margiana.

The numerical ratio of burials of different animal species at Gonur suggests that sheep and dogs took the most prominent place in this ancient population. It's significant however that the largest number of burials of sheep were made in chamber tombs and in the cists, and the dogs in pits (only one is in a cist). Moreover, all dog burials at the large Gonur cemetery were made in burned pits. That shows that these animals occupied different places in the ideology of the Margush population. Perhaps some part of the sheep burials can be interpreted as "vicarious". It is also possible that the animals were buried, to carry away disease from human being (the disease was "passed" to the sacrificed animal) or protect him from a curse (Danilov 1982). But it seems that there is no single explanation of the diversity of sheep tombs. The fact that among the excavated rich burials (with a large number of bronzes artifacts, including scepter-"harpoons", "game boards", fine products) the burials of three rams (male, female and lamb) (tombs 3224, 3230) contradicts such a conclusion. A special relationship with sheep is also seen in the decapitated animals ("lamb burial" No. 18; tomb 3622) with rich funeral offerings. There are also several cases where the heads of sheep were buried separately or together with fragments of the skeletons of other animals (e.g. in tomb 3766 at P 9 the badly damaged skull of a sheep was placed with horses and dogs; in tomb 3282 at P 10 there are two highly fragmented sheep skulls. In tomb 3614 at P 13 sheep limbs were accompanied with the jaw of a cow. In heavily destroyed tomb 3829 at P 16 where the primary burial was of a dog, there are fragments of cow limbs and sheep horn-cores.

If we add to the above the information about the placement of the animal burials through Gonur Depe, it seems possible to speak about the fact that the 2nd millennium BC inhabitants of Margush country had complicated ideas and rituals associated with sheep, horses, camels, dogs, or deities embodied by them which we cannot interpret now, but they had their own picture of the world and the afterlife.

It is important to mention that the first material confirming the existence of the Margush country was uncovered less than half a century ago. Therefore, nowadays we are only at the beginning of our understanding of the religion and the world of the Margush people. But the results of excavation confirms that different animals and the parts of their body played an important role in rituals.

Bibliography

Danilov S. V. (1982) Ritual Rams' Burials in Transbaikalia. *Soviet archaeology*, [Ritualnye zahoroneniya baranov v Zabaikalie. *Sovetskaya archeologiya*] (in Russian) 1, 229–233.

Meadow, R. (1993) Continuity and Change in the Agriculture of the Greater Indus Valley. *International Association for the Study of the Cultures of Central Asia Information Bulletin* 19, 63–77.

Moore, K. M. (1993) Animal use at Bronze Age Gonur Depe. *International Association for the Study of the Cultures of Central Asia Information Bulletin* 19, 164–176.

Parpola, A. and Janhunen, J. (2010) On the Asiatic Wild Asses (*Equus hemionus* & *Equus kiang*) and their Vernacular Names. In *On the Track of Uncovering a Civilization. A volume in honor of the 80th-anniversary of Victor Sarianidi. Transactions of the Margiana archaeological expedition.* Vol. 3, 423–466. Sankt-Petersburg, Aletheia.

Sarianidi, V. I. (1990) *Antiquity of Margush country.* [Drevnosti strany Margush] (in Russian) Ashgabad, Ylym.

Sarianidi, V. (1998) *Margiana and Protozoroastrizm.* Athens, Kapon edition.

Sarianidi, V. I. (2001) *Necropolis of Gonur and Iranian Paganizm.* Moscow, Mir-media.

Sarianidi, V. I. (2002) *Margush Ancient Oriental Kingdom in the ancient delta of Murghab.* Ashgabat: Turkmendowlethabarlary.

Sarianidi, V. I. (2005) *Gonur-Depe. City of Kings and Gods.* Ashgabad, Turkmendowlethabarlary.

Sarianidi, V. I. (2008) *Margush. The Mystery and the Truth of a Great Culture.* Ashgabad, Turkmendowlethabarlary.

Sarianidi, V. I. and Dubova, N. A. (2008) Archaeological Work on the South-western Hill of Gonur Depe (Area 16) [Archeologicheskie raboty na yugo-zapade Gonur-Depe] (in Russian). *Transactions of the Margiana archaeological expedition.* Vol. 2, 28–49. Moscow, Staryi sad.

Sataev, R. M. (2008a) Animals from Gonur-Depe Excavations [Zhivotnye iz raskopok gorodisha Gonur-Depe] (in Russian). *Transactions of the Margiana archaeological expedition*. Vol. 2. Moscow, Staryi sad, 138–142.

Sataev, R. M. (2008b) Animals in the household and spiritual life of the ancient population of Gonur Depe. [Zhivotnye v khozyaistve i dukhovnoi zhizni drevnego naseleniya Gonur-Depe] (in Russian). In *Transactions of the Margiana archaeological expedition.* Vol. 2, 143–160. Moscow, Staryi sad.

Viktorova L. L. (1974) Main Stages of the Ethnic History of the Mongol People [Osnovnye etapy etnicheskoy istorii mongolskih narodov]. *Problems of Altaic and Mongolian studies [Problemy altaistiki and mongolovedeniya]* 1. Elista (in Russian).

Zaytseva, H. I., Dubova, N. A., Sementsov, A. A., Reimer, P., Mallory, J. and Jungner, H. (2008) Radiocarbon Chronology of the Gonur Depe Site [Radiouglerodnaya khronologiya pamyatnika Gonur-Depe] (in Russian). *Transactions of the Margiana Archaeological Expedition.* Vol. 2, 166–179. Moscow, Staryi sad.

3

Identifying sacrifice in Bronze Age Near Eastern iconography

Laerke Recht

Written sources and archaeological contexts provide us with ample examples of events that involve sacrificial practices: sacrifice took place in connection with treaties, with divination, with religious festivals, with funerals, with processions, and were offered to deities in temples and other sacred structures, as well as to deceased ancestors.[1] The sources hint that kings and other royal individuals played a key role in the contribution of the sacrifices, that priests and diviners were central to the action, and that various groups of the populace took part in the rituals. But how are we to securely identify and possibly correlate these practices to images from the iconographic record? I here propose some preliminary ideas of how to approach this topic, suggesting a means to make not only secure identifications, but to use these along with other types of material and more theoretical works to open up new possibilities of seeing other images as depicting elements of sacrificial practices.

In order to arrive at a sound methodology for identifying sacrifice in iconography, it is necessary to provide some background of how the concept of sacrifice is and has been used. The concept of 'sacrifice' has been a favourite topic of modern scholars since the beginning of the study of religion, and is often seen as a most basic religious act. Given the popularity of the subject, a complete review of ideas concerning sacrifice is not possible here, so I will only mention a few of the more influential and well-known thinkers (Fig. 3.1): Edward Burnett Tylor, William Robertson Smith, Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, and Walter Burkert.[2] I will begin with a short look at some of the ideas presented in modern studies of the definition, function and meaning of sacrifice, then move on to suggest a definition that is both useful in identifying sacrifice in our material and covers the entire span of what might be considered sacrifice in the ancient Near East. Although I am in this paper focusing on iconography, the definition and method proposed can be extended and refined for use in other contexts as well.

In his *Primitive culture* (1871), Edward Burnett Tylor saw sacrifice as having three stages. In the first stage, sacrifice is understood as a simple 'gift', supposedly with no implication of obligations on either the side of the receiver or the donor. In the second stage, sacrifice is a 'homage', and here, the offering becomes an expression of devotion or expiation of sin. In the third stage is what Tylor calls 'abnegation', and here the value of the gift to the donor rather than to the receiver is what is important, and the more valuable the sacrifice, the more efficient it is, and the more acceptable to the deity it is. William Robertson Smith (*Religion of the Semites* 2002, first published as *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* in 1894), on the other hand, did not see sacrifice as a gift, because he did not believe that the concept of property applied to sacred things. Instead, sacrifice is seen as an important event where a communion takes place, where worshippers and deities both eat the meat of the sacrificed animal, thus creating a shared space and experience between humans and deities. In his view, these are always joyous occasions, and any violence or negative connotations are ignored.

Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss highlight the importance of the sacrificial victim, and see it as an intermediary between human and divine (*Sacrifice: its Nature and Functions*, translated from the 1899 French version to English in 1964). They maintain a strong divide between sacred and profane, and believe that the victim is the means through which communication can occur between the two spheres.

Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917)	Gift Homage Abnegation
William Robertson Smith (1846–1894)	Communion
Henri Hubert (1872–1927) Marcel Mauss (1872–1950)	Mediation
Walter Burkert (1931–)	Hunting Guilt

Fig. 3.1: Table of selected authors writing about sacrifice and their main ideas.

This intermediary is seen as necessary because the sacred is considered too forceful and dangerous for humans to access directly. Finally, Walter Burkert sees sacrificial killing as the basic experience of the sacred, and the origin of sacrifice in the hunt for and killing of prey (Burkert 1983; 1987). The killing leads to guilt, which in turn leads to the ritualisation of hunting and killing, including illusions of willingness on the part of the victim. Violence is thus placed at the core of sacrificial practice.

Each of these theories carries certain assumptions. For example, Tylor places his three stages in chronological and hierarchical order, Robertson Smith believes that sacrifice must take place on an altar, and that it is always communal and positive, Hubert and Mauss maintain a strict division between profane and sacred, and Burkert thinks that the high point of the ritual is the actual killing of the victim, and has a tendency to exclude women from the ritual. These ideas may be pertinent and insightful in some cases, as will be seen later, but in other cases, their singular application can exclude practices that may otherwise be considered part of the sacrificial repertoire and can also lead to misunderstandings concerning the content and process of the ritual.

The theories presented all deal with the meaning or function of sacrifice, and in that sense, they are concerned with the mental processes or intentions of people partaking in the ritual – what might in more traditional terms be referred to as 'beliefs' (on experience, belief and practice as the main, inseparable components of religion, see Renfrew 1994 and Lewis Williams 2008). We may in some instances be able to infer intentions or beliefs of participants, but they are not immediately accessible to us. Therefore, a broader definition based more on practice than belief in the first instance would be more useful. That is not to say that beliefs and especially experience are not important factors, but it may be more useful to focus on the aspect that is identifiable in the material, and, when and where possible, to move from this to suggest or identify beliefs. To this end, I will use a simple dictionary definition as a basis for a further refinement. This is taken from the *OED*, which defines sacrifice as: "the killing of an animal or person or the giving up of a possession as an offering to a god or goddess".[3]

This should be subject to a few reservations. First of all, in this paper, I only discuss sacrifice of living beings, and although inanimate objects may also be seen as sacrificed, they are not included here.[4] Second, although the death of the sacrificial victim is a condition, it must not necessarily be seen as the most important moment, as can be learned from the theoretical and anthropological sources, as well as gleaned from written sources. Third, 'god and goddess' should be extended to include any kind of entity that might be considered supernatural, so that sacrifices to beings such as demons or dead ancestors can also be part of the discussion. Finally, I include human beings in the category of 'animal', making the doubling of 'human or animal' unnecessary. The definition that follows is a simple but useful base for discovering all variations of a highly eclectic practice: "ritual that includes the death of an animal as an offering to one or several supernatural entities".

This definition can then be used to set up criteria for identifying sacrifice – here in relation to imagery. We can say that some form of two main elements should be present to securely identify a scene as sacrificial:

- *the deliberate death of an animal* (i.e. not a death by natural causes).

It is not possible to say a priori exactly how this may occur, but must be seen in the full composition of an image. It could, for example, include a weapon or deadly implement being moved towards an animal, only part of an animal depicted, e.g. head or legs missing, or an animal in a 'limp' position, appearing dead.

- *reference to religious or sacred element or indications of a supernatural presence, and that the animal is being given to this element or presence*

As above, this cannot be determined a priori, but may include deities, sacred structures or symbols related to the divine.[5]

Let us then see how the criteria are applied. I will do this by first examining two compositions where the identification of sacrifice is relatively secure, and from these, suggest comparative examples that may by analogy depict other parts of sacrificial rituals.

The first scene comes from an Akkadian seal recently found at Tell Mozan/Urkesh in northeastern Syria (Fig. 3.2). It was discovered in 2003, in a deposit immediately above a floor accumulation in the palace, dated to Phase 3 (Ta'ram-Agade, *c.* 2200 BC), but it could also be from Phase 2 (the Tupkish palace, *c*. 2300 BC) (Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 36). The seal depicts a seated figure, probably female, with her arm stretched out holding onto an object with a vessel placed below. I have not been able to identify the object she holds, as it does not occur in the glyptics otherwise; given the complete composition and comparison with other seals, it may be an object in some way related to libation. To the right of the seated female are two figures holding a decapitated bull upside down. They wear knee-length kilts with a vertical fringe running down the front and a small belt; their upper bodies appear to be bare. They wear headdresses with a strap below the chin, and the figure on the left holds a dagger.[6] Their attire and actions suggest they are priests. Between the priest on the right and the seated figure is a horned animal head, presumably from the bull. It is topped by a palm column and a large necked jar. Between the seated figure and the priest on the left are placed an eight-pointed star, a crescent moon and perhaps a disc in the field (this part of the seal is damaged).

The criteria can fairly easily be detected here: the bull has clearly recently been slain, and special attention is given to its head (a situation comparable to how cattle may be slaughtered even today, held upside down by the hind legs with a machine, and the head being cut off first). No deities or other supernatural beings are directly depicted, but the sacred content of the scene

Fig. 3.2: Seal from Tell Mozan/Urkesh (Dark grey stone, 0.7 × 0.5 cm). Deposit immediately above floor accumulation of palace, Akkadian. (Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 36–40). Image by kind permisson of IIMAS. Drawing by the author (after Kelly-Buccellati 2005, figs 6–7).

is indicated by the crescent moon and star symbols, and by the likely role of the two standing figures as priests. The scene is unique, and has components that appear to be specific to Urkesh glyptics (such as the headdress with a strap below the chin worn by the 'priests' – Kelly-Buccellati 2005, 38, see also Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1995 for other elements characteristic of Urkesh glyptics), and as a result, it is difficult to find precise analogies.

However, some components are familiar, for example the seated figure from presentation and banquet scenes and the upside-down animal between other figures from contest scenes. The closest parallels may come from Kültepe in Anatolia.[7] Figures 3.3–3.6 show drawings of four seal impressions from Kültepe (Garelli and Collon 1975; Teissier 1994). In all four, the seated figure is present, and astral symbols are placed in front of this figure. The seated figure as depicted here and commonly in presentation scenes wears some kind of headdress, often a horned crown to denote them as a deity, whereas the figure on the Urkesh seal does not seem to wear a headdress, but has a tuft of hair pointed upwards at the neck. This is more in line with commonly occurring seated females in banquet scenes, who also do not wear anything on their head (see Figs 3.11 and 3.12), but frequently do wear a similarly pleated dress. Seated figures are also commonly depicted with one arm extended, often holding an object, such as a cup or a divine attribute, as Figures 3.4–3.6. The arm is diagonally pointing upwards or, in rare cases, horizontal. But in the Urkesh seal, the figure's arm points downward, holding onto her enigmatic object. This action gives the impression of the figure very actively partaking in the ritual in front of her.

The two men killing the bull mostly resemble combat scenes where animals fight each other, hybrid or human figures. We see a small section of this in the first three examples given here, which includes the dagger on Figure 3.3. Again, there are significant deviations from the Urkesh seal – the figure fighting the bull is more commonly a bull-man hybrid, not the human figures in the Urkesh seal, and the animal is never shown as decapitated.[8] However, although the bull is never shown as decapitated, the images do have separate animal heads, in some cases closely resembling the one on the Urkesh seal:

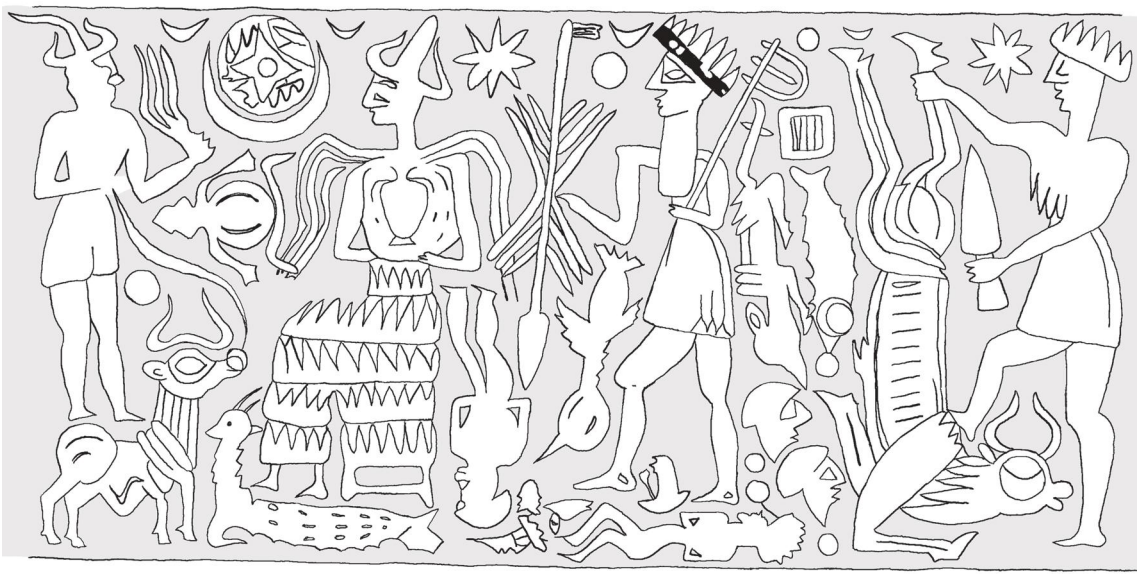


Fig. 3.3: Seal impression from Kültepe. Early 2nd millennium. Drawing by the author (after Garelli and Collon 1975, pl. 48.4).

Fig. 3.4: Seal impression from Kültepe. kārum *2, early 2nd millennium. Drawing by the author (after Teissier 1994, 224, no. 304).*

we can see examples of this on Figures 3.4–3.6. Interestingly, such animal heads could by analogy with the Urkesh seal be suggested to be a shorthand for sacrifice, or even an animal head kept as a mnemonic device.[9] The last two examples are particularly intriguing in this connection; Figure 3.5 shows a head very similar to the Urkesh one, placed in a similar position, at the base line with several objects on top; in Figure 3.6, it is shown on top of what may be an on offering table, in front of the deity.

A much later impression from Hurrian Nuzi may represent a continuation of a similar ritual (Porada 1944–1945, no. 642). It does not have the complete scene as on the Urkesh seal, but between a deity, facing left, and another figure holding its arm up in the typical gesture of those approaching a deity in presentation scenes, is an animal head exactly like the one on our seal. It is placed low, at their lower legs. What is more, the deity holds an object which is shaped much like the palm column on the Urkesh seal, and perhaps even with a similar vessel placed on top.

The Urkesh seal provides us with a unique view into a practice that we know existed in the ancient Near East, but is rarely depicted so explicitly. In a way, its very special features make it difficult to compare directly with other glyptic material, but at the same time, it has subtle hints of possible

Fig. 3.5: Seal impression from Kültepe. kārum *2, early 2nd millennium. Drawing by the author (after Teissier 1994, 226, no. 338).*

Fig. 3.6: Seal impression from Kültepe. kārum *2, early 2nd millennium. Drawing by the author (after Teissier 1994, 225, no. 321).*

interpretations of certain elements, for example the separate animal heads.

One of the other few instances of explicit scenes of sacrifice in Near Eastern art is that of an animal placed on its back, usually directly on the ground, but in some instances on a low platform, with one or several human figures stretching and holding its legs and head, perhaps in the process of skinning or dividing the animal into parts, or removing organs for use in divination. The first example is a section from the stele of Ur-Namma from Ur (only the right half of the register is preserved) (Fig. 3.7). The part of interest here is a small section on one side of the stele which depicts an animal on its back on the ground, being held down by a male figure on the right, while another male figure on the left has his arms inside the animal's stomach. The figures wear garments similar to those on the Urkesh seal; knee-length kilts with a vertical fringe and bare upper bodies, except for a strap going over one shoulder. However, their heads are bare, perhaps even shaved. They have daggers in their belts, similar to, though perhaps less pointed than the one on the Urkesh seal. The section is not well enough preserved to make a secure identification of the animal killed, but Canby's suggestion of it being a bovine (Canby 2001, 22)[10] may be supported by the similarity of the hooves to those on the Urkesh seal, and the size of the animal

Fig. 3.7: "Stele of Ur-Nammu" from Ur (Limestone, 320 × 152 cm). Sacred Area, near temple of Enunmakh, Ur III. Drawing by the author (after Woolley 1974, 75–81, pl. 41 and 44a, and Canby 2001, pl. 2, 11, 28 and 29).

compared to the one to the right.

To their right is another male figure in the same attire, apparently making a libation in front of a figure on a small base, holding an elongated object, perhaps a flute. The male figure is pouring the libation from something shaped like an animal – either blood from an animal just sacrificed or, less likely, an unidentified liquid from an animal skin-bag.[11] Given its slender build, lack of indication of coat, short tail and cloven hooves, this is most likely a deer or antelope, or possibly a goat, as suggested by both Woolley (1974, 78) and Canby (2001, 22). If it is indeed an actual animal, the similarity to the decapitated animal on the Urkesh seal is striking, and may indicate different stages in the same kind of ritual. The stele is here quite fragmentary, but the figure may be carrying a dagger in his belt like the other two, which would support the idea of this also being related to sacrifice. We can identify this as part of a sacrificial ritual, because the killing of at least one animal is clear, and the sacred setting is marked by the libation and the standards on the right-hand side of the fragment. The rest of the stele reinforces this impression on both sides, with several other scenes of libations and deities (see Canby 2001 for good images and restorations of all the registers on both sides of the stele; Woolley provides his complete description in Woolley 1974, 74–81, pl. 41 and 44a).

Similar scenes also appear on plaques and seals (Figs 3.8–3.10). Figures 3.8a–c are ivory inlays from plaques from the Shamash Temple at Mari, dated to the ED III period (Parrot 1954, pl. xviii). They depict male figures, again probably priests, holding down a ram on the ground on its back. As with the stele, it appears particularly important that the animal is kept in an outstretched position, and especially that its head is kept down. The 'priests' wear knee-length kilts, with a belt around the waist, and a tassel running down the back; judging from Figure 3.8c, they have bare upper bodies and shaved heads. The two seals are from Early Dynastic Tell Asmar and Kish (Collon 1987, no. 830 and Mackay 1929, pl. xli, 6). In both of these, we see that the animal is now placed on a ladder-patterned platform, again on its back and with figures holding it on either side. The scenes are less detailed than the other examples, but it also appears that these figures have bare upper bodies and wear knee-length kilts, perhaps with fringes at the bottom; in line with all but the Urkesh seal, their heads are bare. The dagger is held above the animal's neck by the figure on the left on the Tell Asmar seal, while its presence is less clear on the Kish seal, but may be what looks like the extended arm of the figure on the right. The short, upturned tails, cloven hooves on Figure 3.10 and indication of coat on Figure 3.9 suggest that the animals are goats, or possibly sheep.[12] The animals and associated figures are part of more extensive compositions which include a boat scene and perhaps people at a temple structure.

A final example showing an ox on its back on the ground, but lacking the human figures on either side, is depicted on the so-called 'Stele of the Vultures', found at Tello/Girsu,

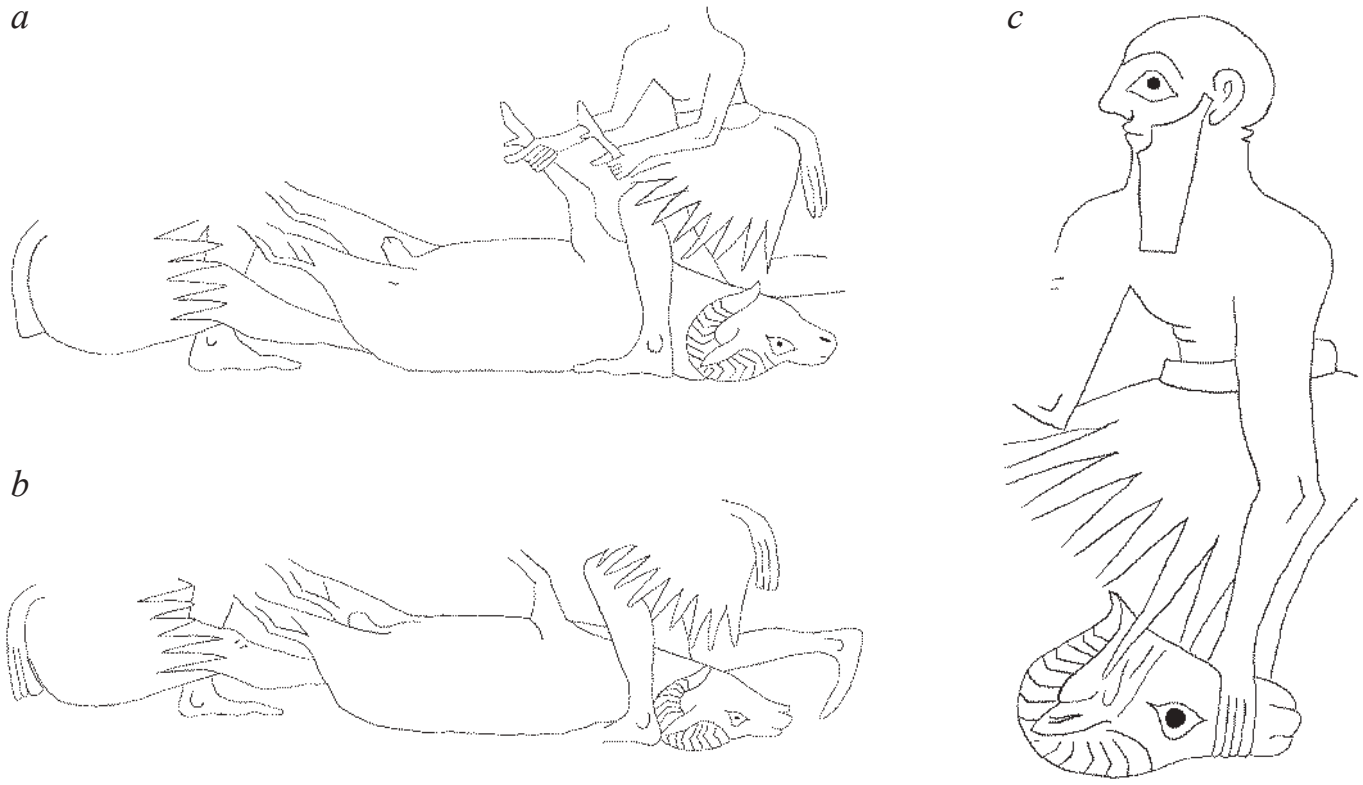


Fig. 3.8: a–c. Plaque inlays from Mari (Ivory, c. *12.5 × 5.5 cm,* c. *13.5 × 4.0 cm,* c. *4.0 × 8.0 cm). Shamash Temple, ED III. Drawing by the author (after Parrot 1954, 163, pl. xviii and Aruz 2003, no. 96).*

Fig. 3.9: Seal from Tell Asmar/Eshnunna (Shell, 2.9 × 2.0 cm). Late ED III. Drawing by the author (after Amiet 1961, pl. 108, no. 1438 and Collon 1987, 176, no. 830).

commemorating a victory of Lagash led by the ensi Eannatum over Umma, *c*. 2460 BC (Parrot 1948, 95–101, fig. 23, pl. vi). This scene is clearly part of a broader ritual (which in turn is part of an extensive battle), with other animals piled on top of the ox towards its back, and a naked male, probably also a priest, making a libation on plants – all by now familiar elements of ritual and sacrificial compositions. If Winter's suggestion is correct that this whole register relates Eannatum's visit to a temple for divine instruction before battle (Winter 2010, 16), the sacrificial element may well support the idea

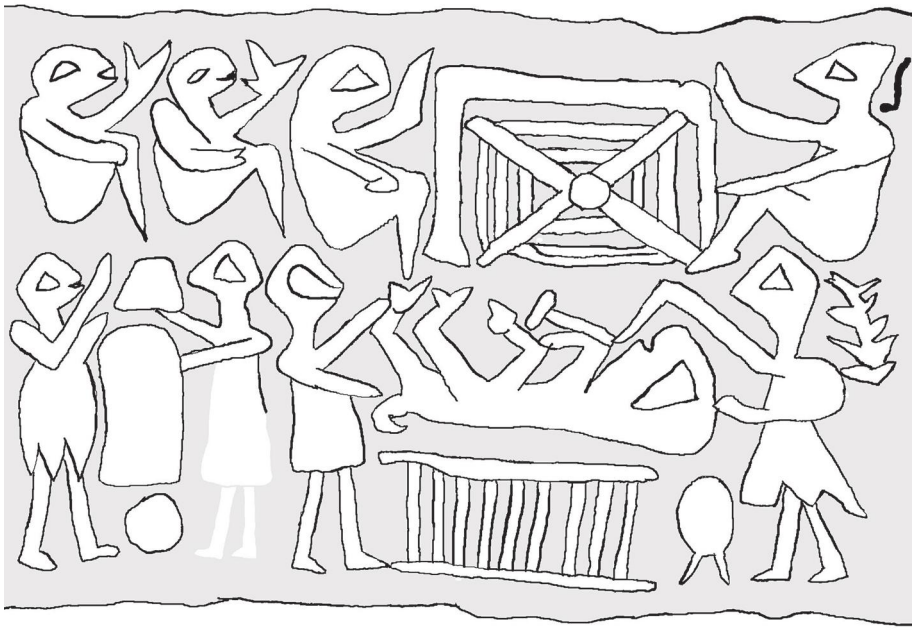


Fig. 3.10: Seal from Kish (Shell, 3.0 × 1.60 cm). Grave 7, ED. Drawing by the author (after Mackay 1929, 194, pl. xli, 6 and Amiet 1961, pl. 110, no. 1465).

that this type of scene, with animals on their back, is linked to divination; if the pile of human bodies on the left refers to a dream oracle, the sacrificed animals may logically refer to prophecy by extispicy.[13]

I have in these examples focused on one specific part of the sacrificial ritual: that of the moment of death of the animal, or shortly thereafter. That is simply because it is the moment most easily identified. However, sacrifice is a process and often involves much more than the actual killing of the animal – in fact, in some cases, other parts may have been considered more important, and these may include both the period before and after the animal dies – and this is where the theories presented at the beginning may prove insightful. Adding to the initial criteria of the deliberate death of an animal and a reference to a religious or sacred element, those theories can be used to suggest sacrificial elements outside the very moment of death, including:

- feasting, festivals or other celebrations (Robertson Smith)
- processions, display or presentation (Robertson Smith, Burkert)
- mediation (Hubert and Mauss)
- hunting (Burkert)
- substitution (Tylor, Burkert)

These are merely a selection: more may be gained from including work from further writers on theories or anthropological studies of sacrifice. The brackets indicate the main thinkers whose studies suggest these elements. At present, if any of the elements are found in an image, they only constitute *possible* indicators of sacrifice, since they usually lack the combination of the first two criteria. The first three are also recorded in written records of the Near East, where festivals often included a multitude of sacrifices, as well as processions (as is for example recorded in the Emar texts – see Fleming 2000, esp. nos 373, VI/3 375, 446 and 452). The most obvious type of mediation in sacrifice is known from divination, in particular the practice of extispicy, in which the animal's (usually a sheep) liver is inspected for signs of future events (e.g. Goetze 1957; Jeyes 1989). A strict relation between hunting and sacrifice has not yet been established for the Bronze Age Near East, but some connection can be suggested elsewhere,[14] so the possibility remains. Substitution can occur at a variety of levels – as part for the whole, one animal for many, one animal for another, or an object for an animal. Although all or any of these may have taken place, most of them are virtually impossible to prove definitively without written records of such practices. Only in objects substituting animals do we have a possible hint – model animals, on their own, or being carried by humans (examples can be seen in Frankfort *et al.* 1940, figs 116–117 and 119e), especially when found in sacred structures *could* be suggested to be sacrificial substitutes for real animals.

The broader processes of sacrificial ritual can even be glimpsed in many of the examples seen so far: in the Urkesh seal, the dead animal is central, but of equal importance is the seated figure and the action she performs. The stele, plaques and seals with an animal on its back all only represent one small section of their composition, being part of various other activities and events.

Two further well-known compositional examples will briefly

serve to illustrate the case. So-called 'banquet scenes' depict feasting (perhaps religious festivals?), usually with seated figures drinking from cups and straws, and attended by servants and musicians. These scenes can with benefit be interpreted in light of Robertson Smith's emphasis on feasting and festivals in sacrifice. In some instances, the scenes include food, and in particular, meat, placed on a kind of board or high table. An example of this can be seen on the lower register of Figure 3.11, where an animal leg is placed on the table all the way to the left.[15] In another example, Figure 3.12, a sheep is being brought to the feast (shown in the second register),[16] along with other provisions, and musicians. The sheep is likely to be killed and eaten by the participants. In these cases, the death of the animal is undisputed (in the form of joints of meat), but the divine element is not obviously identifiable, as no divine elements are directly present. What is present in some of the images, however, is the vessel carried by the figure on the right in the lower register of Figure 3.11. This vessel is referred to as 'spouted vessel', 'libation jug' or 'Röhrenkanne' (Winter 2010, 239; Müller-Karpe 1993, 13).[17] Its frequent unambiguous depiction as used for libations (as can be seen in Fig. 3.14) makes its ritual connotations clear,[18] and by extension suggests the ritual and religious content of the banquet scenes.

That the banquet scenes do in fact depict religious feasts or festivals can also be supported by their archaeological contexts and ownership: the seal on Figure 3.11 was owned by a priestess, as indicated by the inscription (Woolley 1934, 343, no. 98), and presumably the grave it was found in belonged to her. The main figure depicted on the seal is likely the priestess (in the upper register, on the right), and the event she is partaking in part of her sacerdotal duties. The votive plaques, including Figure 3.12, have mostly been found in temples, and are therefore also likely to be related to temple events like religious festivals for various occasions (Frankfort makes a similar observation – Frankfort 1939, 77, and in her systematic study of banquet scenes, Selz also notes the 'ritual situation' of the scenes, connected with sacred areas – Selz 1983, 456–460, 479). Finally, it can be noted that although festivals are abundantly recorded in written records, there are no examples of strictly secular feasts. This may not exclude their existence, but apparently they were not deemed worthy of mention, and the same is likely to be the case for iconographic representations. If this interpretation of banquet scenes as depicting religious events is correct, we are here dealing with a period *after* the actual killing of the animal, but nevertheless an important part of the ritual. Communion, and the sharing of food and drink, perhaps also including elements like music and dancing, can be extremely potent experiences. These events may also be powerful tools of manipulation for political or ideological purposes (e.g. the legitimation of power or authority), with careful *inclusion* and *exclusion* of certain groups (see e.g. papers in Dietler and Hayden 2001; Bray 2003).

Another well-known composition, that of the 'presentation

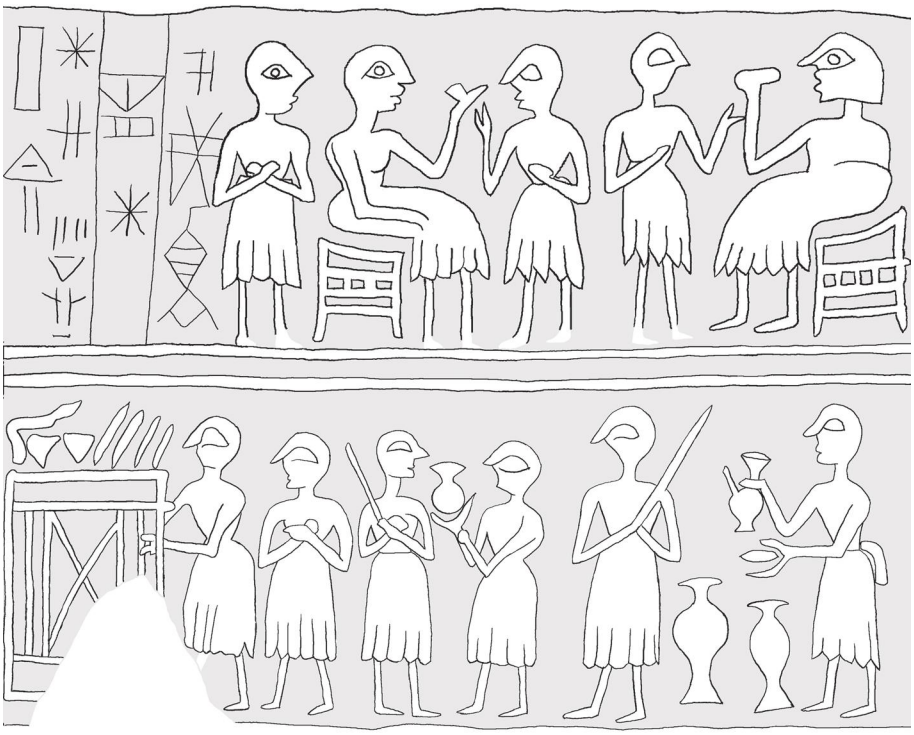


Fig. 3.11: Seal from Ur (Lapis lazuli, h: 3.9 cm). PG 580, ED III? Inscribed "The seal of he-kun-sig nin-dingir dpa-[gi]bil-gis-sag*, priestess of the divine Gilgamesh". Drawing by the author (after Woolley 1934, 343, pl. 200, no. 98 and Amiet 1961, pl. 90, no. 1184).*

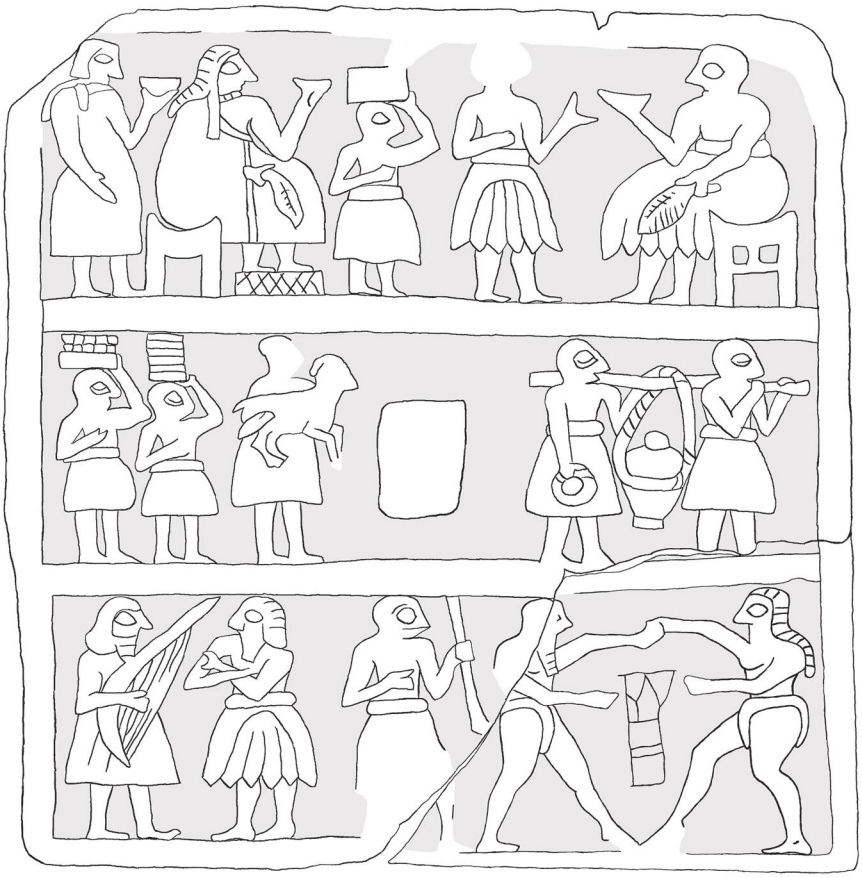


Fig. 3.12: Votive plaque from Khafajeh (Limestone, 20 × 20 cm). Sin Temple, Level IX, ED IIIA (Frankfort 1939, pl. 105, no. 185). Drawing by the author (after Aruz 2003, no. 32; Amiet 1961, pl. 93, no. 1222; Strommenger 1962, pl. 42 for lower right-hand corner).

scene', could be suggested in some cases to illustrate events *before* the animal is killed (Figs 3.13–3.15).[19] In these scenes, a seated or standing deity (more rarely, the king) is approached by one or several human worshippers, sometimes attended by 'intermediary' deities. The human worshipper sometimes carries an animal (mostly goat or sheep) in their arms to the deity. It is clear from the compositions that the animal is to be given to the deity, and the emphasis is on *display*. The divine element is thus undisputed, but what is not certain is whether the animal is consequently killed. The context and way the animal is handled in some images hint that this is the case, however. On a votive plaque from the Ur *giparu*, two registers depict offerings and libations being made in front of a deity in the upper register and a temple facade in the lower one (Fig. 3.14). The lower register includes a male figure bringing a sheep,[20] carried in the common 'stiff' manner of a presentation scene. To his right is a female thought to be the priestess Enheduana (Woolley 1955, 45; Collon 1995, 74; Aruz 2003, 74). She is depicted with a frontal face: this is a feature often associated with liminality and death, and is in some cases strongly linked to sacrifice (Asher-Greve 2003; Morgan 1995) – here it is likely used to designate the liminal character of the priestess as mediating between humans and deities. In fact, the whole scene is focused towards the liminal space where the action is taking place, which is immediately before the temple and the deity, with the stands/vases and accompanying libations working as thresholds. The palm column on the Urkesh seal and the dais/libation on the Ur-Nammu stele may similarly be interpreted as thresholds marking liminal spaces.

The animal carried by the human worshipper in presentation scenes is occasionally depicted as hanging limp, and held by a leg, the ears/horns, or as in the example here, by the neck (Fig. 3.15). At the least, it transmits total submission, and may in fact be a reference to its death. We have then possible depictions of events that were part of the sacrificial process from both *before* and *after* the actual killing of the animal, related to *display* and *feasting*. If these scenes – or even some of them – are to be understood in this manner, the importance of these events and the human experience that accompanied them cannot be denied, and the sheer number of seals and other objects depicting these actions illustrate that significance.[21] They show that sacrifice

Fig. 3.13: Seal from Tell Suleimeh (Serpentine, 3.2 × 1.8 cm). Room 3, L.IV. Drawing by the author (after Werr 1992, 37, no. 66).

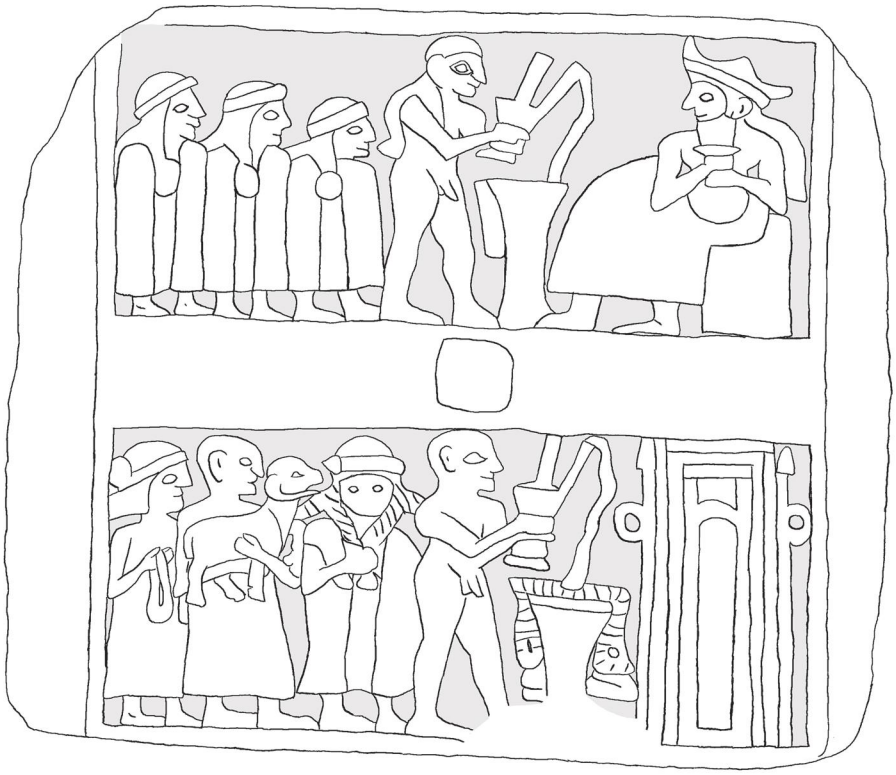


Fig. 3.14: Votive plaque from Ur (Limestone, 22 × 26 cm). The giparu*, ED III. Drawing by the author (after Woolley 1955, 45–46, pl. 39c; Aruz 2003, no. 33; Amiet 1961, pl. 102, no. 1355).*

was an integral, but not necessarily central, part of many rituals and activities, and theories suggested by imminent scholars of the last centuries alert us to the importance of elements of sacrifice which we may otherwise have missed or marginalised.

In conclusion, careful criteria sensitive to the wide array of religious practices in the ancient Near East can be set up to identify sacrifice in the iconography, and combined with other ancient material such as written sources and archaeological contexts, and theories proposed by modern scholars, these can be used to suggest further depictions and references to sacrificial rituals and their individual elements. Once carefully identified, we can begin to make inferences about the content of the practices of sacrifice in the ancient Near East – occasions, manner of killing, equipment used, participants (both animal and human), functions and locations.[22]

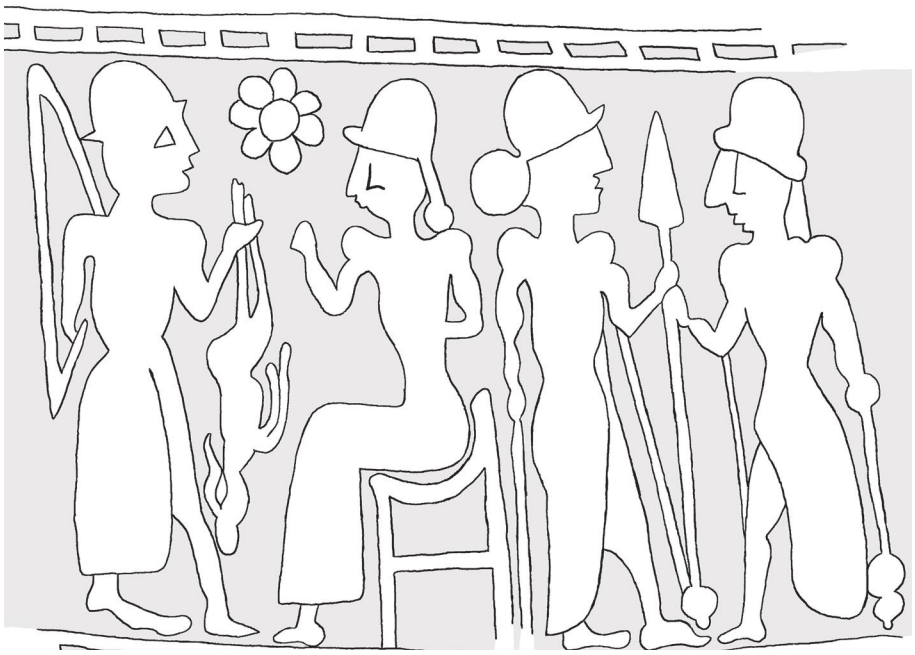


Fig. 3.15: Seal impression from Emar/Tell Meskene. Tablet ME 118, Mitanni. Drawing by the author (after Beyer 2001, 219, pl. I, E24).

Notes

1 I am grateful to Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati and Giorgio Buccellati for first introducing me to the seal from Tell Mozan/Urkesh discussed below, and for suggestions to this paper, and to Glenn Schwartz and Emma Saunders for reading and commenting on earlier drafts.

2 Good introductory overviews and selected readings on the topic can be found in Mizruchi 1998 and Carter 2003.

3 This is the first option given, which is the one of relevance here. The second and third options are: "an animal, person, or object offered in this way" and "an act of giving up something one values for the sake of something that is more important".

4 In fact, many authors do include inanimate objects in their understanding of sacrifice – e.g. Edward Burnett Tylor (1871, ch. xviii, e.g. 342), Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1964, 12), Valerio Valeri (1985, 37) and Bruce Lincoln (1991, 204). Written sources relating to sacrifice also do not always make a distinction between the sacrifice of animate and inanimate objects (e.g. the Sumerian *siskur* and Akkadian *niqû*, usually translated as either 'sacrifice' or 'offering' – *CAD, RIA* 10, 100 and Limet 1993), and in archaeological contexts, the two could be interpreted as found together (as is often the case when animal bones are found in graves, the Royal Cemetery at Ur being a prime example of humans, animals and a multitude of inanimate objects being found together – Woolley 1934). In iconography, the sacrifice of inanimate objects also occurs, and libations are common (see e.g. Figs 3.4, 3.7, 3.12–3.14 depicted here). Here, the distinction is maintained for the purposes of limiting the scope of investigation, and facilitating identification, which would otherwise become more problematic. I prefer to use the broader term 'offering' for the sacrifice of inanimate objects.

5 The term 'ritual killing' may also be used when specifically referring to the moment of death, *if* by ritual is meant an ordered sequence of actions that have religious or sacred significance, including a sense in which the animal dies in honour of a supernatural being.

6 The instrument on this seal, as well as on all the other examples referred to in this study are daggers, rather than knives. In the archaeological records, metal objects of this shape are called daggers, and one has even been found at Tell Mozan/Urkesh, dated to the 3rd millennium, along with many other examples (Bianchi and Franke 2011, 214–216, pl. 5). In iconographic studies of weapons, the same nomenclature is confirmed (Solyman 1968, 58–59, 110–111, nos 170–177, 462–468). It is of great interest to note that a weapon whose main function is to stab, rather than cut, is what is most commonly depicted in images of sacrifice, reflecting the manner in which the animal was likely killed.

7 Other sites closer in time or space to the Urkesh seal only display similarities in certain individual elements, but not enough to shed light on or link closely with it. For analogies to the 'palm column'/vessel see Matthews 1997, no. 96 (Tell Brak) and Parker 1975, no. 49 (Tell al Rimah), for the animal-human composition, see Matthews 1997, nos 138, 142, 168, 171, 196 and 322 (Tell Brak), Porada 1944–1945, nos 465 and 466 (Nuzi), and Beyer 2001, nos E45 and E54 (Tell Meskene/Emar).

8 The only other glyptic material possibly showing a decapitated animal in a ritual context is found on impressions from Uruk, dated much earlier, to the Uruk period (Brandes 1979, pl. 30). It shows an animal being held upside down against a pole by a naked human figure, who holds a dagger against the animal's back. The animal itself cannot be identified beyond quadruped,

but it has had its front hooves cut off, and possibly also its head (Brandes 1979, 216–217). The religious setting is marked by a temple structure on the right.

9 In the glyptic of the Bronze Age Aegean, separate animal heads (especially frontal ones) have been interpreted as being associated with sacrifice (Morgan 1995).

10 Woolley calls it a bull, but there is in fact no indication of genitals (Woolley 1974, 78).

11 Canby notes the possibility of it being an animal skin-bag, arguing that silver imitations with legs still attached have been found (Canby 2001, 22, n. 46). However, the two silver vessels that have been found at Ur with 'legs' still attached only have two very stumpy 'forelegs' (Müller-Karpe 1993, 222–223 and nos 1487 and 1488) and hardly resemble a complete animal, and I see nothing to suggest that the one represented here is a skin-bag.

12 Only goats have the upturned tail, but since the animals are on their back, it is not clear if the upturned tail is a feature of the animal depicted or simply due to gravity, and no horns are visible to aid identification.

13 Alternatively, the animals could be read as part of the 'dream', meaning that the sacrifice took place in connection with the burial of the defeated enemies.

14 This is strongly argued for in the Bronze Age Aegean by Nannó Marinatos (Marinatos 2005). Although the two are far from always found together, there does in some instances appear to be a link, and the presence of bones from wild animals both in the Aegean and Near East in sacrificial contexts would support this idea, although it is rare that *only* bones from wild animals are found. For the Near East bones of gazelles have been found e.g. in graves at Halawa (Orthmann 1981, H-30, H-31, H-35 and H-37), Abu Salabikh (Postgate 1985, Graves 20 and 34), Tell Arbid (Lasota-Moskalewska *et al.* 2006, 101) and Ur (Woolley 1934, PG 1850), and in a foundation deposit in the palace of Mari (Parrot 1959, 260, Rooms 3 and 62).

15 Other examples from Ur can be found in Woolley 1934, nos 16, 27, 29, 38 and 138.

16 Karen L. Wilson suggests that the small standing figure in the middle of the first register also carries a reclining animal on his head (Aruz 2003, 73); if it is a live animal, this manner of holding it is unparalleled in the iconography.

17 The vessel is not only known in iconography: metal examples have been found at Ur, Khafajeh and Tell al Uqair (Müller-Karpe 1993, pl. 1–5).

18 Irene Winter has carefully studied the distribution and context of this type of vessel in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, noting their possible multifunctionality – meaning that although they were definitely used for libations, they may also have been used for other purposes, including those that might be perceived more secular: for the banquet scenes, she suggests a ritual associated with hand-washing (Winter 2010, 227). Whatever the event of its usage, it was certainly a vessel meant for pouring liquids.

19 A typological study of this type of composition can be found in Haussperger 1991.

20 Not a goat, as suggested by Woolley and van Buren (Woolley 1955, 45 and van Buren 1951, 29): although not all features are always clearly depicted in Near Eastern iconography, goats have short, upturned tails, beards and usually fairly straight horns pointing upwards – sheep have tails directed downwards (short or medium-length), no beards, and horns curled backwards and down, as in the example shown here.

21 Two other examples are even more illuminating: 1. a seal from the Diyala region depicts a presentation scene with a seated deity, in front of which is a human making a libation. Between them is an offering table (on which the libation is poured, like in the *giparu* plaque), with an animal head placed on it and perhaps incense burning next to it (Frankfort 1939, pl. xxivf and 1955, no. 987). 2. a seal formerly in the Francis Berry Collection depicts the usual presentation scene, but directly in front of the seated deity is placed an animal on its back, with a bareheaded figure in knee-length kilt holding on to one leg and holding a dagger to its neck, very similar to the compositions presented above with animals on their back, and leaving no doubt as to the fate of the animal (Collon 1987, no. 831). Unfortunately, although both of these seals are Akkadian in style, their exact provenance is unknown.

22 Such a final study should not isolate iconographic material, but integrate all possible data concerning sacrifice. The Urkesh seal suggests bulls to be important in the sacrificial cult. This, however, should be understood in the full context of the site and period. The importance of this can be illustrated by famous contemporary *abî* pit at Urkesh, which contained a large amount of bones from sacrificial animals, including puppies, donkeys, sheep/goats, piglets and birds, but no cattle (Kelly-Buccellati 2002, 136).

Bibliography

Amiet, P. (1961) *La glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque*. Paris, Centre national de la recherche scientofique.

Aruz, J. (ed.) (2003) *Art of the First Cities: the Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus*. New York, New Haven and London, Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press.

Asher-Greve, J. (2003) The gaze of Goddesses: on Divinity, Gender, and Frontality in the Late Early Dynastic, Akkadian and Neo-Sumerian Periods. *NIN: Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity* 4/1, 1–59.

Beyer, D. (2001) *Emar IV: les sceaux*. Orbis biblicus et Orientalis 20. Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Bianchi, A. and Franke, K. A. (2011) Metal. In M. Lebeau (ed.) *Jezirah*, 201–238, ARCANE I. Turnout, Brepols.

Brandes, M. A. (1979) *Siegelabrollungen aus den archaischen Bauschichten in Uruk-Warka*. 2 vols. Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag.

Bray, T. L. (ed.) (2003) *The Archaeology and Politics of Food and Feasting in Early States and Empires*. New York, Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

Buccellati, G. and Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1995) The Royal Storehouse of Urkesh: the Glyptic Evidence from the Southwestern Wing. *Archiv für Orientforschung* XLII, 1–32.

Burkert, W. (1983) *Homo Necans: the Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*. Berkeley, University of California Press. [Original German version: Burkert, W. (1972) *Homo necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen*. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter].

Burkert, W. (1987) The Problem of Ritual Killing. In R. G. Hamerton-Kelly (ed.) *Violent Origins: Ritual Killing and Cultural Formation*, 149–188. Stanford, Stanford University Press.

Canby, J. V. (2001) *The "Ur-Nammu" Stela*, University Museum Monograph 110. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

Carter, J. (ed.) (2003) *Understanding Religious Sacrifice: A Reader*. London and New York, Continuum.

Collon, D. (1987) *First Impressions*. London, British Museum.

Collon, D. (1995) *Ancient Near Eastern Art*. London, British Museum.

Dietler, M. and Hayden, B. (eds) (2001) *Feasts: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on Food, Politics, and Power*. Washington and London, Smithsonian Institution Press.

Fleming, D. E. (2000) *Time at Emar: the Cultic Calendar and the Rituals from the Diviner's Archive.* Winona Lake IN, Eisenbrauns.

Frankfort, H. (1939) *Cylinder Seals*. London, Macmillan.

Frankfort, H. (1955) *Stratified Cylinder Seals from the Diyala Region*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Frankfort, H., Lloyd, S. and Jacobsen, T. (1940) *The Gimilsin Temple and the Palace at Tell Asmar*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Garelli, P. and Collon, D. (1975) *Cuneiform Texts from Cappadocian Tablets in the British Museum VI*. London, British Museum.

Goetze, A. (1957) Reports on acts of extispicy from Old Babylonian and Kassite times. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 11/4, 89–105.

Haussperger, M. (1991) *Die Einführungsszene: Entwicklung eines mesopotamischen Motivs von der akkadischen bis zum Ende der altbabylonischen Zeit*. Munich and Vienna, Profil Verlag.

Hubert, H. and Mauss, M. (1964) *Sacrifice: its Nature and Functions*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. [Original French version: Mauss, M. and Hubert, H. (1899) Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice. *Année Sociologique* 2, 29–138].

Jeyes, U. (1989) *Old Babylonian Extispicy Omen Texts in the British Museum*. Istanbul, Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul.

Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2002) Ein hurritischer Gang in die Unterwelt. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 134, 131–148.

Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2005) Urkesh and the North: recent discoveries. In D. I. Owen and G. Wilhelm (eds) *General studies and excavations at Nuzi 11/1*, 29–40, Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians 15. Maryland, CDL Press.

Lasota-Moskalewska, A., Gręzak, A. and Tomek, T. (2006) Animal Remains from the Mitanni Grave at Tell Arbid. *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 15, 101–104.

Lewis-Williams, J. D. (2008) Religion and Archaeology: an Analytical, Materialist Account. In D. S. Whitley and K. Hays-Gilpin (eds) *Belief in the Past: Theoretical Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion*, 23–42. Walnut Creek CA, Left Coast Press.

Limet, H. (1993) Le sacrifice *siskur.* In J. Quaegebeur (ed.) *Ritual and Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East*, 243–255. Leuven, Peeters.

Lincoln, B. (1991) *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice*. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press.

Mackay, E. (1929) *A Sumerian Palace and the 'A' Cemetery at Kish, Mesopotamia*. Part II. Chicago, Field Museum Press.

Marinatos, N. (2005) Symbolic Forms of Sacrificial Imagery in the Eastern Mediterranean. In R. Hägg and B. Alroth (eds) *Greek Sacrificial Ritual, Olympian and Chthonian*, 201–210. Stockholm, Paul Åströms Förlag.

Matthews, D. M. (1997) *The Early Glyptic Of Tell Brak: Cylinder Seals of Third Millennium Syria*, Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 15. Fribourg and Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Mizruchi, S. L. (1998) *The Science of Sacrifice: American Literature and Modern Social Theory*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Morgan, L. (1995) Frontal Face and the Symbolism of Death in Aegean Glyptic. In W. Müller (ed.) *Sceaux minoens et mycénien*, 135–149, CMS Beiheft 5. Berlin, Gebr. Mann Verlag.

Müller-Karpe, M. (1993) *Metallgefäße im Iraq I (von den Anfängen bis zur Akkad-Zeit)*, Prähistorische Bronzefunde II, 14. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.

Orthmann, W. (1981) *Halawa 1977 bis 1979: vorläufiger Bericht* über *die 1. bis 3. Grabungskampagne*. Bonn: Habelt.

Parker, B. (1975) Cylinder Seals from Tell al Rimah. *Iraq* 37/1, 21–38.

Parrot, A. (1948) *Tello: vingt campagnes de fouilles (1877–1933)*. Paris, Albin Michel.

Parrot, A. (1954) Les fouilles de Mari. *Syria* 31/3, 151–171.

Parrot, A. (1959) *Mission archéologique de Mari. Vol. 2: le palais: documents et monuments*. Paris, P. Geuthner.

Porada, E. (1944–1945) Seal impressions of Nuzi. *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 24, 1–138.

Postgate, J. N. (ed.) (1985) *Abu Salabikh Excavations, Vol. 2: Graves 1 to 99*. London, British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

Renfrew, C. (1994) The Archaeology of religion. In C. Renfrew and E. B. W. Zubrow (eds) *The Ancient Mind: Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*, 47–54. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Robertson Smith, W. (2002) [1894] *Religion of the Semites*. New Brunswick and London, Transaction Publishers.

Selz, G. (1983) *Die Bankettszene: Entwicklung eines* 'überzeitlichen' *Bildmotivs in Mesopotamien von der frühdynastischen bis zur akkad-Zeit*. Wiesbaden, Franz Steiner Verlag.

Solyman, T. (1968) *Die Entstehung und Entwicklung der Götterwaffen im alten Mesopotamien und ihre Bedeutung*. Beirut, Rudolf Habelt Verlag.

Strommenger, E. (1962) *Fünf Jahrtausende Mesopotamien: die Kunst von den Anfängen um 5000 v. Chr. bis zu Alexander dem Großen*. Munich, Hirmer Verlag.

Teissier, B. (1994) *Sealings and seals on texts from Kültepe* kārum *level 2*. Leiden, Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul.

Tylor, E. B. (1871) *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom*. Vol. II. London, John Murray.

Valeri, V. (1985) *Kingship and Sacrifice: Ritual and Society in Ancient Hawaii*. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press.

van Buren, E. D. (1951) An Enlargement on a Given Theme. In *Orientalia* 20, 15–69.

Werr, L. Al-G. (1992) *Old Babylonian Cylinder Seals from the Hamrin.* London, Nabu Publications.

Winter, I. J. (2010) *On Art in the Ancient Near East: Vol. II, from the Third Millennium B.C.E.* Leiden and Boston, Brill.

Woolley, L. (1934) *Ur Excavations II: the Royal Cemetery*. Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press.

Woolley, L. (1955) *Ur Excavations IV: the Early Periods*. London and Philadelphia, British Museum and the University Museum Philadelphia.

Woolley, L. (1974) *Ur Excavations VI: the buildings of the Third Dynasty*. London and Philadelphia, Trustees of the two museums.

4

Cult and the rise of desert pastoralism: a case study from the Negev

Steven A. Rosen

Background to the Revolution

The Neolithic revolution was initially conceived by V. G. Childe (e.g. Childe 1936, 59ff.) as the set of social and economic transformations engendered by the domestication of animals and plants and the transition from hunting-gathering to food production. For Childe, adopting the standard Marxist perspectives of his time, formal cult practices arose consequent to this economic revolution, a tool for grappling with social and economic transformation.

If in the decades following Childe's early synthesis his conclusions concerning the mechanisms behind the origins of agriculture were disputed, and indeed disproven (Braidwood 1948, 86ff.), the basic paradigm that the revolution was based on the rise of domesticate economies remained the foundation for the next generation of studies of the Neolithic and research continued to focus on the explanation of that transition (e.g. Binford 1968; Coe and Flannery 1971; Struever 1971; Cohen 1977).

Recent decades have seen a major revision of the Childean perspective on both the origins of Neolithic society and the rise of religion. Most especially Cauvin (2000; also e.g. Hodder 2006; Mithen 2007) have suggested that the economic revolution was necessarily preceded by a cognitive revolution, a change in perceptions and ideologies that was in fact the basis for the new economic behaviors. Research emphasis shifted from the Neolithic as revolution to the Neolithic as process, that is neolithisation, the complex set of processes which brought about the transformation from Paleolithic to Neolithic society (also Simmons 2007). Research foci expanded beyond emphasis on the origins of agriculture to focus on the social transformations evident in the transition to Neolithic societies. To be fair, earlier studies of the origins of the Neolithic also addressed social transformation. Such factors as population growth, sedentarisation, competition, and changes in social organisation are well evident in most analyses of the origins of agriculture from an earlier generation of scholarship, including the work of Childe himself. Nevertheless, research focused on factors perceived as initiating the revolution, rather than the continuing transformation itself. The emphasis on cognitive changes, ideology, cult and religion in recent scholarship is well evident, and is something new. Without attempting rigorous analysis, this apparent paradigm shift (cf. Kuhn 1962) can probably be attributed to a combination of reaction to the perceived strictures of the New Archaeology (e.g. Hodder 1991), and not less important, to a literal explosion in data reflecting the rise of cult, religion and ideology in the Near Eastern Neolithic in recent years.

Revolution in the desert

If the rise of agricultural societies and the processes implicit in their evolution comprise the Neolithic revolution and neolithisation in the fertile regions of the Near East, a conceptually (if not chronologically) parallel set of processes can be traced in the adjacent arid zones in the rise of desert herding societies. The penetration of domestic goats from the Mediterranean zone into the deserts of the southern Levant (Fig. 4.1) was a patchwork affair (Rosen 1988), occurring at different times in different areas, presumably depending on the specifics of the donor and recipient groups, and geographical parameters such as proximity to water, grazing, and other resources. Thus, in eastern Jordan, domestic goats are evident as early as the PPNC (*c.* 6700 cal BC), in contexts suggesting mixed farming and herding adjacent to seasonal lakes (Martin 1999; Garrard *et al*. 1996). Notably, claims for PPNB goats in the eastern desert of Jordan (Kohler-Rollefson 1992) have been effectively refuted (Martin 1999). Similarly, in the Negev and Sinai, there is no evidence for the presence of domestic goats in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B horizon (e.g. Dayan *et al*. 1986; Horwitz *et al*. 1999), and the earliest direct evidence for goats is to be found in a well preserved goat dung horizon in the Ramon I rock shelter in the central Negev, *c*. 6000–6200 cal BC (Rosen *et al*. 2005). In hyperarid southern Jordan, at the site of Abu Nukhayla, Henry and his coworkers (Henry *et al*. 2003; Albert and Henry 2005) have made a case for the presence of domestic goats in the late PPNB, but the case is based at best on circumstantial evidence (e.g. the presence of spherulites, phytolith analyses suggesting the

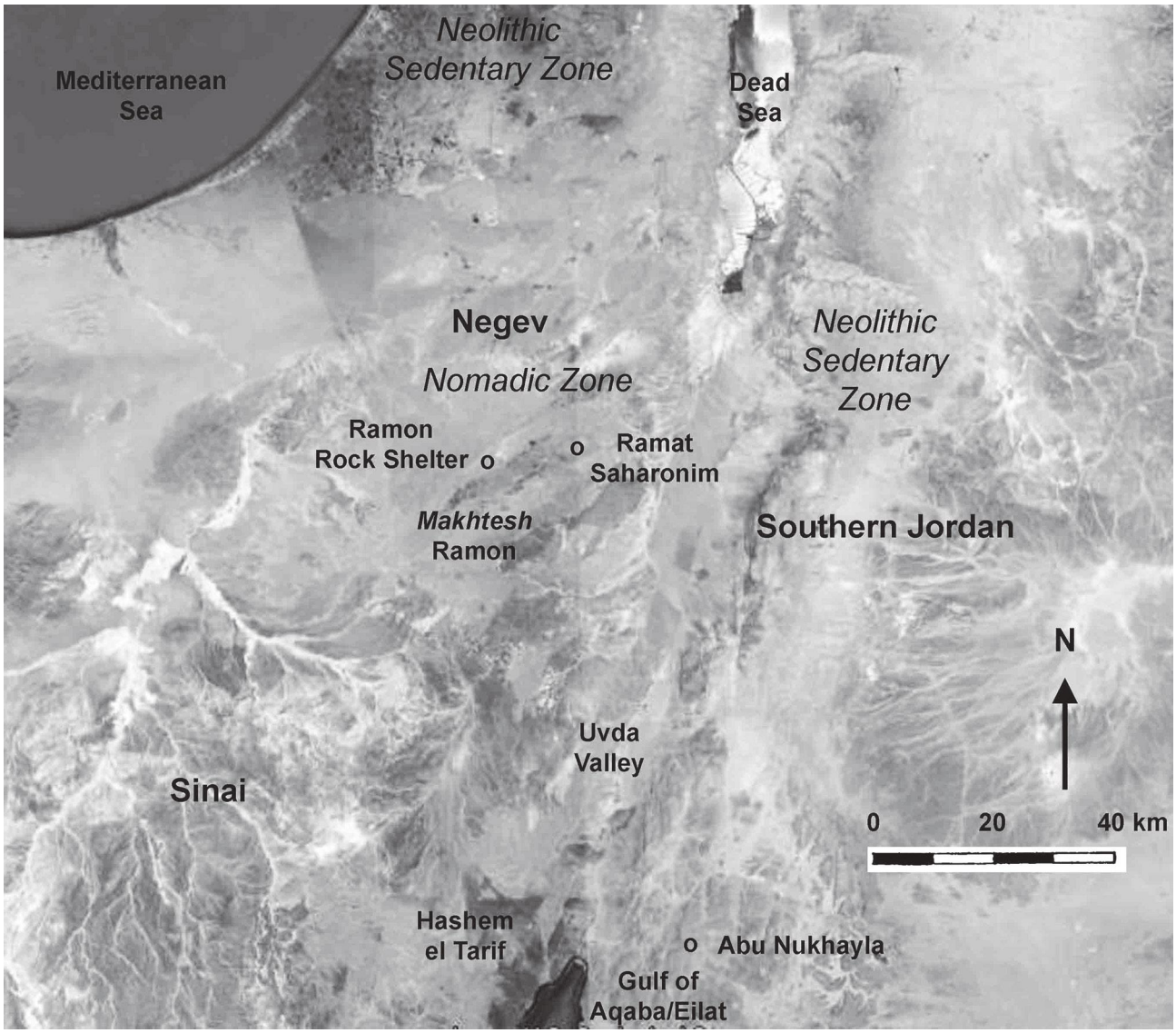


Fig. 4.1: Location map of sites in the southern Levant mentioned in the text.

possibility of dung accumulations) which may have alternative interpretations. However, the evidence for agriculture based on wadi run-off, and the intensive construction evident at the site, also suggest that it be seen as an extension of the PPNB sites of the Jordanian Plateau removed south, rather than some expression of an autonomous mobile pastoral society in the desert.

In terms of process, a key point for understanding the introduction of goats into the desert is the lag time between the transition from gazelle to goat in the Mediterranean zone, *c.* 7600 cal BC at the latest (mid-late PPNB), and perhaps a couple of hundred years earlier, and minimally 500 years later in eastern Jordan, in the PPNC, and perhaps a millennium later in the Negev, in the early Pottery Neolithic. In this context, the relative rapidity of the spread of goat herding as an adaptation attached to village pastoralism throughout the Near East is notable. For the sake of the argument, if the earliest evidence for goat herding, at Tepe Ganj Dareh (Zeder and Hesse 2000) indeed indicates an origin for the phenomenon in the Zagros, then within a few hundred years village pastoralism spread throughout the village matrix of the Near Eastern Pre-Pottery Neolithic, distances on the order of 500–1000 km, depending on where one places the origin point. Of course, one cannot rule out local autonomous domestication processes (Horwitz *et al*. 1999; Martin 1999), although the scarcity of goats in faunal assemblages in the early phases of the PPN in the Levant, suggests that hunting did not evolve into herding there as it did in the Zagros. Regardless, once village pastoralism is established, it then took from 500 to 1000 years to move the domestic goats the 100–300 km from the Mediterranean zone into the desert. That is, the adoption of domestic herds into hunter-gatherer

societies is very different from their adoption into farmer-herder societies, was not a simple nor direct outcome of the proximity of domesticates, and seems to have demanded an entirely new social and human ecological configuration (cf. Ingold 1980).

In this context, the mechanism of the adoption also demands explication and three basic alternatives offer themselves (Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992):

1) The expansion of village herders, specialists, into the desert and the ultimate fission of herding societies from their parent village societies,
2) The adoption of domestic animals by hunter-gatherer groups, and
3) Some combination of the two.

The absence of any evidence for specialized herding camps in the PPNB, and the great contrast in material culture and associated symbols between the desert societies and their sedentary cousins (e.g. the absence of ceramics, the absence of art, contrasts in ritual structure, architecture) in the PPNB and later Neolithic cultures (Rosen 2011), argues against fission as the primary source for desert pastoral societies. The diverging material and symbolic cultural trajectories, beginning prior to the advent of domesticates, are evidence for adoption of herds into hunter-gatherer society. As for option 3, ethnography demonstrates constant shifting between the sedentary and mobile (e.g. Barth 1961; Marx 1992), and interaction between the groups can be demonstrated at many levels (Rosen 2011), perhaps even at the level of movements of individuals and small groups.

The implications of this revolution also parallel those of the sedentary zone, and the evolution of new cult practices appears to be one of those implications.

Cult sites in the desert

As reviewed above, the Neolithic, with Natufian precursors, saw an explosion of material correlates (e.g. art, special architecture, elaborate mortuary remains) and inferred behaviors (e.g. feasting, pilgrimage) indicating the increasingly large role of material and monumental ritual behavior in social life (Hodder 2012; Dietrich *et al*. 2012). In spite of clear linkages between desert hunter-gatherers and their sedentary neighbors, in form of the trinket trade, diffusion of lithic paradigms, and even movement of raw materials such as obsidian, in all the period preceding the 6th millennium BC (the Natufian, the PPN, and early stages of the Pottery Neolithic in northern terminology), evidence for similar public or group ritual behaviors in the desert, paralleling those found in the contemporary sedentary societies, is virtually absent.

In pioneering work in the southern Negev and Sinai, Avner (1984; 1990; 2003; Avner *et al*. 1994) has documented dozens of shrines and tumulus fields reflecting elaborate desert cult systems. Chronologically, virtually all of the shrines and most of the tumuli can be dated to the 6th millennium BC, none earlier. A few shrines may date somewhat later, and tumuli continue several millennia forward in time. Dates from other sites and areas (Porat *et al*. 2006; Eddy and Wendorf 1999) confirm these trends. There was an explosion in the number of cult sites in the desert in the 6th millennium BC.

Few of these sites have been systematically excavated or published. The shrines generally consist of an open courtyard, rectangular or quadrilateral in shape (Fig. 4.2), demarcated by small stones or slabs. The rectangular shrines show a larger, more massive back (western) wall. Often some kind of central installation was set in the center of the back wall. Avner (1984) noted generally consistent alignments among the shrines, and Rosen and Rosen (2003) demonstrated the solstice orientation of the shrines at Ramat Saharonim, and by extension, the typologically similar shrines surveyed by Avner. Most of the shrines surveyed by Avner (2002) as well as those excavated by Rothenberg (1979, 125, fig. 28, misattributed to the PPNB), Eddy and Wendorf (1999), and Rosen *et al.* (2007), are variants of this type.

Excavations at the shrine site of ‘Uvda Valley 6 (Yogev 1983) revealed somewhat different features. Instead of a central installation along the back wall, a small filled platform was constructed in the northwest corner of the quadrilateral courtyard. Within the platform, a small cist with small upright stone stelae was uncovered. Several meters south of the shrine, animal figure outlines apparently representing leopards and one gazelle. Constructed of small stones placed one against the other, each about a meter long, were uncovered (Yogev 1983). Similar stone figure outlines have also been found associated with the rectangular shrines at Hashem el-Tarif in Sinai (Avner 2002).

The shrines are marked by a scarcity and even absence of material culture, in marked contrast to the abundance of material culture remains, especially lithics, found at desert Neolithic occupation sites (e.g. Goring-Morris and Gopher 1983; Gopher *et al.* 1995; Bar-Yosef 1984; Rosen 1984). The rare associated finds have been primarily tabular scrapers, for example the single such piece at ‘Uvda Valley 6.

Systematic survey and excavations of the shrines and tumulus field at Ramat Saharonim, in the *Makhtesh* Ramon, in the central Negev, offer the most detailed look at one of these complexes (Rosen and Rosen 2003; Porat and *et al*. 2005; Rosen *et al*. 2007). A review of this site, as an example of the phenomenon, suggests more detailed conclusions concerning the origins and nature of early desert cult.

The shrine complex at Ramat Saharonim consists of a set of four rectangular shrines set at the western end of a cuesta valley and 30 large round burial cairns (tumuli) aligned along the two cuesta cliffs (Fig. 4.3). The shrines are rectangular, consisting of a massive western wall and an enclosure of smaller slabs on the eastern side (Fig. 4.2). The massive western walls are 20–22 m long, half a meter wide, preserved to a height of *c*. 0.75 m (mostly covered by post-abandonment accumulation

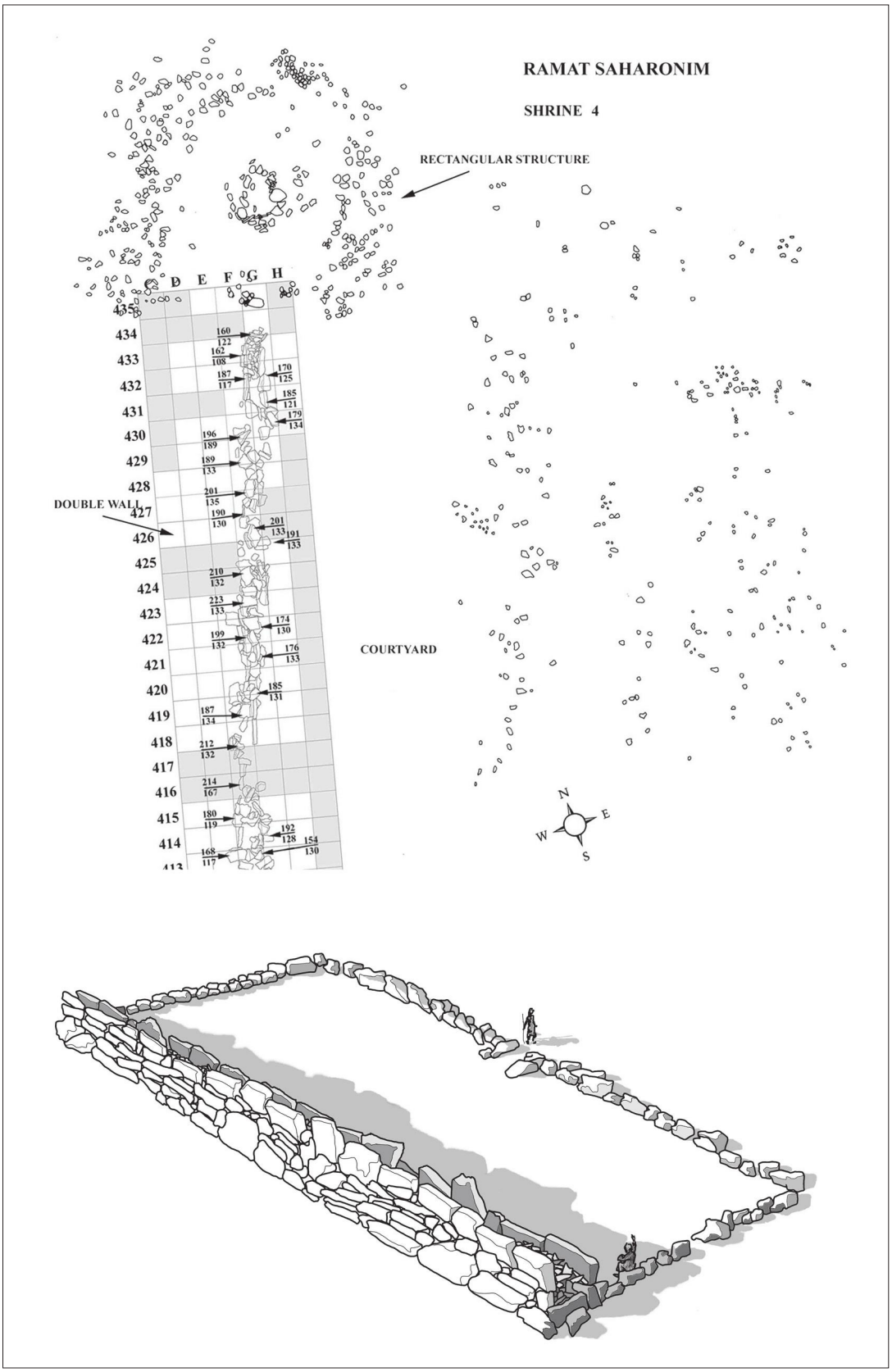


Fig. 4.2: Plan of Ramat Saharonim Shrine 4 (upper) after excavation and reconstruction (lower). Note that shaded areas were unexcavated, to allow for section documentation.

of aeolian sediments) and were probably originally on the order of 1.5 m high to judge by the in situ fallen slabs and other stone fall (Fig. 4.4). These walls were constructed of two parallel rows of massive limestone blocks, weighing up to 450 kg, with an intentional fill of smaller stones between the rows. The total mass of each structure is estimated to be well over 30 tons. Evidence for quarrying from exposed limestone strata is present 200–400 m distant.

The adjacent rectangular enclosures or courtyards, about 8 meters wide, are demarcated by fallen stone slabs, probably originally upright. The state of preservation varies, but in the preserved (and unexcavated) Shrine 1, a portal into the courtyard is evident in two still upright slabs embedded in the eastern wall of the courtyard, but perpendicular to it. In at least two cases a platform or other kind of installation is attached to the massive wall, jutting into the courtyard.

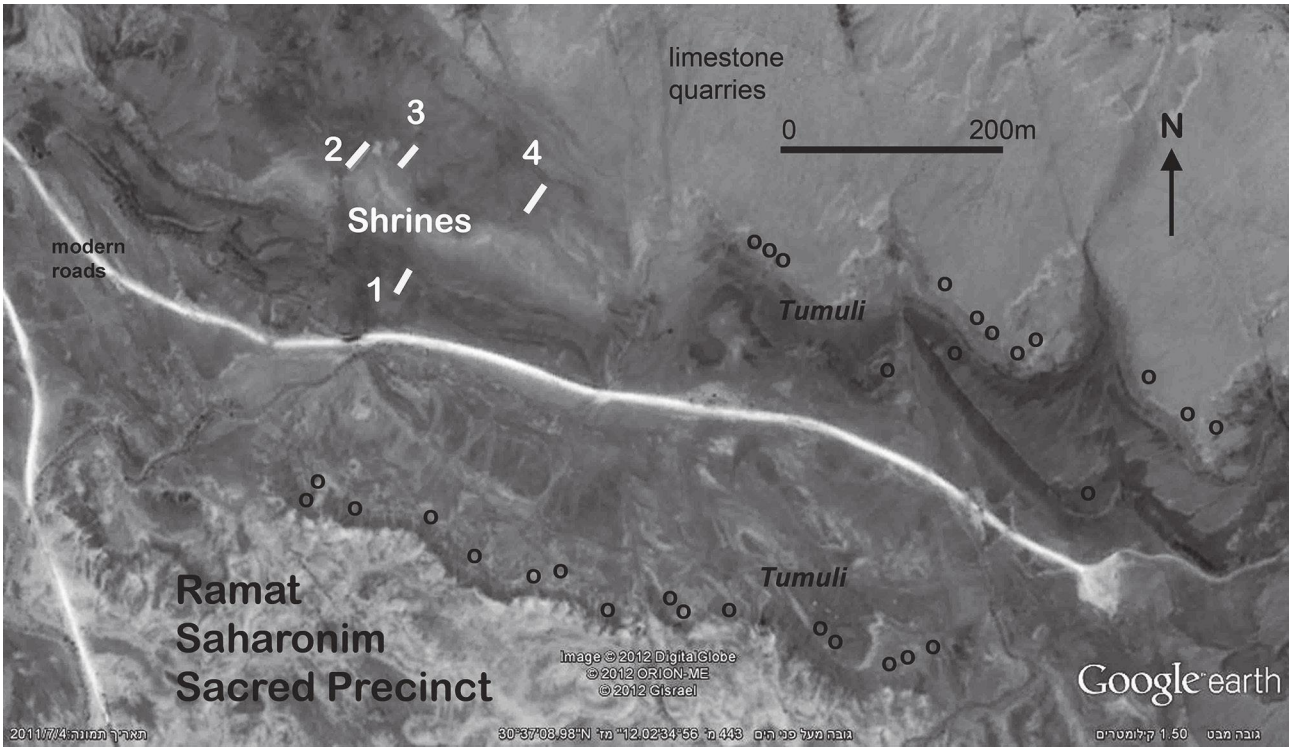


Fig. 4.3: Plan of the Ramat Saharonim shrine and tumulus complex. The white lines are modern roads. Note the location of the quarry for the construction of the shrines.

Fig. 4.4: Views of a central segment wall of Shrine 4 after excavation, looking south (left) and east (right). Scale is two meters in length.

All four shrines are oriented to align with the setting sun of the summer solstice. Minor deviations seem to have been introduced to integrate natural landscape features into the orientations. Thus, the view of the summer solstice sunset from Shrines 2, 3 and 4 lies between two small hills and is directed toward a large black extinct volcano as well as toward the setting sun. All shrines are set to view the solstice sun impressively setting over the northern cliff of the *Makhtesh* Ramon. The geographical attributes indicate clearly that the intended alignment was to the setting sun of the summer solstice, to the west, and not to the rising sun of the winter solstice (as at Stonehenge, for example) in the east. Micro-location of the shrines seems to have integrated small scale watersheds and geological formations such that the shrines were situated on color cusps in the land surface (Rosen *et al.* 2007, fig. 4). No clearly associated artifacts were found either during survey or excavation of the shrines, and no habitation structures or sites from this period were found in the vicinity.

Subsidiary square structures, built of a single course and single row of wadi cobbles (Rosen *et al.* 2007, figs 4, 7), are located 2–3 m north of three of the four shrines (and Shrine 3 shows evidence of some kind of poorly preserved undefinable feature). Although these structures were clearly intentionally associated with the rectangular shrines and were undoubtedly also ritual in function, stratigraphic excavation of shrine 4 demonstrates that these structures considerably post-date the massive shrines, probably on the order of millennia, and are not relevant to the discussion at hand.

The cairn field at Ramat Saharonim was constructed along two parallel cuesta cliffs, diverging in the west such that 'corridor' between the cairn lines is closed by the four shrines. The cairns themselves are located on the cliff edges, silhouetted and visible from some distance (Fig. 4.5). The cairns themselves were constructed around a central cist built on exposed bedrock or excavated no more than 10 cm into a shallow loess accumulation. Cairn circumference was demarcated by large margin stones placed in a circle 4–8 m in diameter. A crude corbel superstructure was built around the cist, leaving access at the top, and more haphazard fill set between the margin stones and the cist structure. Interment was essentially a form of exposure since no real burial occurred. The loess fill present today in the cairns is clearly the accumulation of millennia.

Three cairns were excavated and remains of seven individuals were recovered, including one attributable to a classical period (*c.* 200 BC) secondary use of Tumulus 29. The Neolithic remains were in a poor state of preservation; nevertheless, three interment states could be reconstructed, primary interments, secondary interments, and interments showing deliberate bone re-organization and manipulation (especially evident in the placement of a skull between long bones). The cairns were clearly occasionally re-accessed. A single metacarpal of *Equus* sp. was also found in Tumulus 29, perhaps a burial offering (Horwitz *et al.* 2011). Beyond the *Equus* bone, the only artifacts associated with the early interments were four *Conus* beads, probably an anklet, found in tumulus 30.

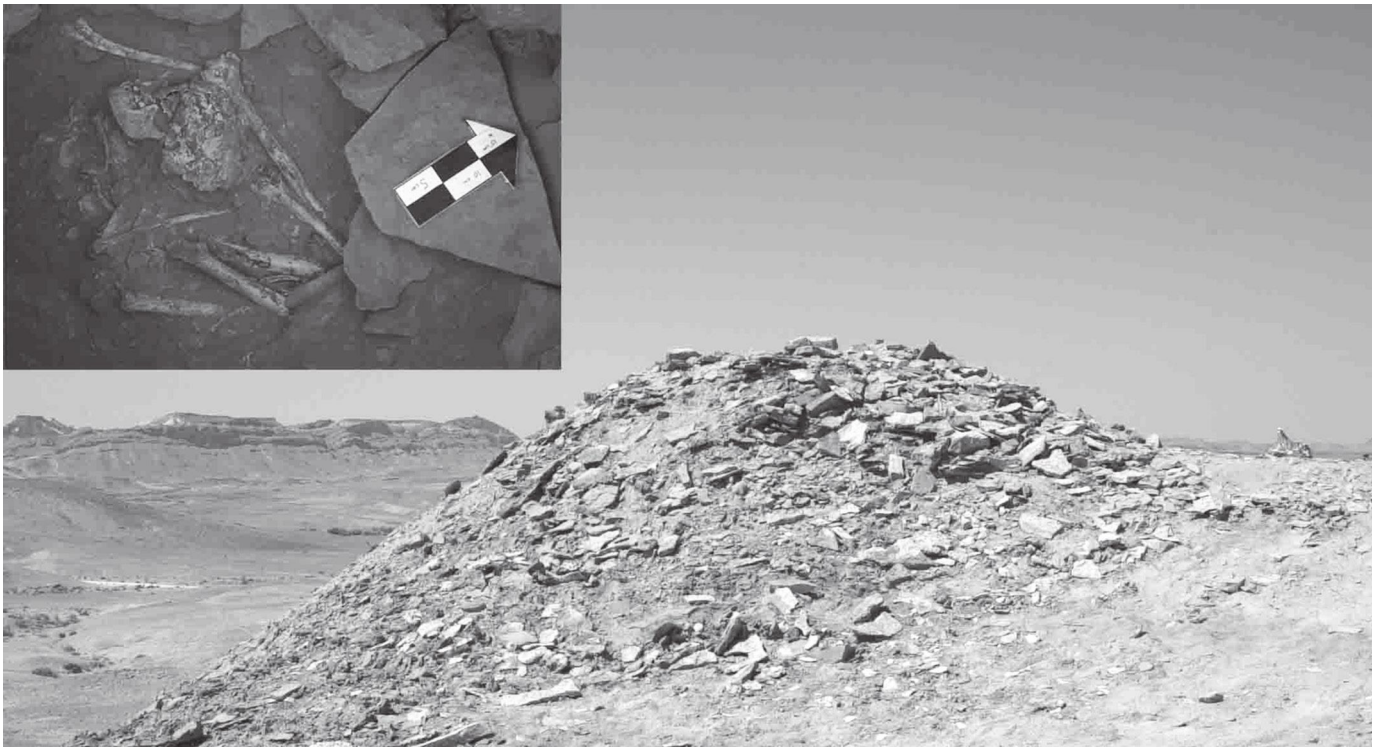


Fig. 4.5: Tumulus 30 and interior, with skull arranged between long bones.

With the exception of the classical period interment, stratigraphically later and dated by radiocarbon, OSL dates indicate rough contemporaneity between the cairns and the shrine system.

The significance of desert cult

It should be clear that the complex at Ramat Saharonim and other similar complexes are indeed cultic. The absence of domestic debris, the architectural contrasts with known habitation sites, the special alignments, and the clear mortuary contexts all point to ritual function. However, beyond merely establishing ritual function, two basic approaches can be adopted in interpretation. The emic attempts to enter the symbolic world of the shrine culture, offering meaning from within the culture itself. The etic views the shrines from the outside, attempting to understand the sociological implications of different aspects and features of the shrines.

Adopting first an emic perspective, it is clear that in the absence of texts and informants, interpretations are limited to those derived from specific ethnographic or historical analogies, or cultural universals, and the specific contexts of the cultural features themselves. The farther removed in time, space, and social and cultural proximity, the less reliable the interpretation based on analogy (cf. Ascher 1961; Wylie 1985; Wason 1994, 26–30). The setting sun of the summer solstice, marking the beginning of summer, is a powerful symbol in ancient Near Eastern mythology (e.g. Yamauchu 1965, also for the death of Dumuzi at the beginning of the summer see Nemat-Nejat 1998, 143–44; Wiggerman 2011, 678), and summer is the season of death in the ancient Near East (in contrast to Europe, where winter takes that role). It thus is unlikely to be an accident that shrines aligned with the summer solstice are associated with mortuary practices. The west, in Egypt, denotes the land of death (e.g. Erman 1894, 310; Műller 2001; Montet 1958, 321). The color contrasts associated with the east and west sides of some of the shrines may also link up to this seasonal transition, and the absence of habitation sites in the vicinity of the shrines also suggests a distinction between sacred and profane, the shrine precinct functional as some kind of liminal zone, between seasons and between states. Of course, the corridor between the two cliffs, leading to the shrines, would also seem to indicate passage. It is tempting to link these symbols to later Near Eastern mythologies, for example the dying Tammuz (Yamauchi 1965; Nemat-Nejat 1998, 143–44; Wiggerman 2011, 678) or Osiris (Műller 2001), but without more specific iconography, the details of the mythologies behind the desert solstice shrines are not knowable.

An etic perspective on these sites offers interpretations based on external analytic frameworks.

1) The construction of large structures, really megalithic in conception (again, a single shrine is estimated to weigh greater than *c.* 30 tons, and single blocks have been estimated to weight as much as 450 kg), suggests power and hierarchy, and the presence of corporate structures of a scale larger than the nuclear family or band (cf. Kristiansen 1984). These structures are both a reflection of power and of the need to demonstrate power (cf. Wason 1994, 146–149). In their very construction they reflect a new trophic level in human organisation and management, one which did not exist earlier in the desert; they also reflect the need to legitimise that power through public works. In addition, the mere size of the complex indicates a larger corporate group size than previously evident in the archaeological record in these regions.
2) The solstice alignment, and the symbolism evoked in the special utilisation of the landscape (e.g. Tilley 1994), indicates a complex cosmology specifically connected to the social hierarchy and structure reflected in the cult complex. That is, ethnographically even the smallest scale societies have complex mythologies and cosmologies, but they are not linked directly to the symbols of power, structure or hierarchy. Thus, beyond the physical demonstration of power and structure evident in the megaliths (cf. Fritz 1978), the system is also legitimised and maintained in the linkage to myth, even if we lack access to the specific content of the myth itself.
3) The linkage between mortuary behaviour and megaliths suggests corporate territorial signing and territorial anchors (e.g. Renfrew 1984; Kinnes 1982; Kristiansen 1984; also see Marx 1977 for relationship between tribal organisation and territoriality). Monumental burials connect ancestors with burial grounds, and tumuli can be seen for great distances, especially when placed on cliffs and ridges, thus acting as territorial indicators. It is not especially important here whether they reflect edges or centers. Cemeteries are clear markers of territory amongst modern Bedouin groups in the region (e.g. Meriaot 2011; Bailey 1990, map 11.3).

Given the absence of shrines and elaborate mortuary complexes in the preceding stages of the Neolithic in the region, together these features reflect a new concept of social organisation (cf. Parker Pearson 1984), which for all practical purposes can be called tribal society – a new level of social hierarchy coming equipped with territoriality, and with social accoutrements necessary for maintaining and legitimising the new structure. This shift in basic structure is reflected in other features of desert societies in this period, for example in the rise of collective hunting, architectural changes, and ultimately major changes in population and external relations.

The pastoral revolution and the rise of desert cult

If the transition from hunting to herding in the desert comprises an arid zone equivalent to the Neolithic Revolution, then an expected concomitant is some kind of associated ideological or symbolic revolution in the desert. As is clearly evident in the archaeological record, that ideological revolution did indeed

occur, but on the order of 500–1000 years after the earliest adoption of domesticates. That is, if these two revolutions are at some level structurally equivalent, they nevertheless seem to contrast significantly in the role played by ideology and conceptual systems[1] which seems to have been integral to the neolithisation process in the settled zone, but is evident only very later in the process in the desert.

Two chronological issues are key. First, as above, there is a clear lag time between the adoption or evolution of domestic goats in the settled zone, in the mid/late PPNB, and their adoption into the hunting-gathering societies of the desert, on the order of a millennium later. This diffusion of domestic herd animals into the desert is not an obvious or trivial process, as much as it may appear so in hindsight. We actually know little about herding practices in the farming villages of the PPNB (e.g. Effenberger 2012), and the unwritten assumption that these societies maintained large herds, external to the villages, in some prehistoric precursor to modern Bedouin societies (e.g. Kohler-Rollefson 1992), is unwarranted. In this context it is perhaps telling that the rock shelters of the Mediterranean Levant, so well-known for their prehistoric remains, sometimes including PPNB strata, do NOT contain thick dung layers reflecting early Neolithic pastoral exploitation, a phenomenon ubiquitous in later periods. The adoption of goats by desert hunter-gatherer societies required an adaptation differing tremendously from that of the contemporary village pastoralism; thus, the lag time derives from the need to develop the technologies and social tools and structures requisite for desert pastoralism, an adaptation fundamentally different from village herding, let alone hunting (Ingold 1980).

Second, the lag time, on the order of 500–1000 years, between the earliest evidence for herding in the desert and the earliest evidence for central cult, that is, the corporate rites expressed in the shrines, mortuary structures, and associated practices as reflected in the archaeology requires discussion. Comparing revolutions, the Neolithic or Agricultural Revolution in the settled zone can be characterized as a primary revolution, in reality a long and gradual evolution integrating interacting social, ideological, and technological changes linked at one level or another to the gradual processes of domestication, defined both in terms of the human behaviors manipulating the different plant and animals species, and the biological processes. The interactive nature of these processes and the range of plants and animals involved entail a complex set of systems, virtually by definition ensuring that the different social, economic and ideological concomitants would be locked in step one with the other. Lag times in such a continuous system may be impossible to discern, if they even exist.

The desert revolution was a secondary revolution, a revolution based on the introduction of the product of a long evolution which occurred elsewhere. The goat (and perhaps sheep, although this has not been demonstrated and is less likely environmentally) could be adopted into the desert system only with some difficulty (to judge from the lag time between appearance in the Mediterranean zone the appearance in the desert). The system which co-evolved with the goat in the settled zone, that is the process dubbed neolithisation, could not penetrate into the arid zone, for reasons which seem self-evident, deriving from the environmental constraints under which desert societies operated. That is, the goat was culled from its much larger social and cultural assemblage, divorced from the contexts of its original domestication, and relocated to a new social and physical geography. Its meaning in desert hunter-gatherer society, in the larger social sense as well as the economic sense, had to be reinvented. Thus, the goat in its relationship to desert society had to begin from scratch; hence the lag time between that incipient adoption of herding in the 7th millennium BC and the social ramifications of that adoption perhaps a millennium later.

The causality implied in the herding-to-cult succession cannot be ignored, but it would be inappropriate to infer a simple linear cause-effect system. The rise of desert cult is not merely a reaction to the rise of herding, but integral to it, one to the other in a set of reinforcing relationships. These are worth further explication.

As above, the evolution of herding societies demands significant social, cultural, economic, and technological realignment relative to hunting-gathering societies (Ingold 1980; 1987). Although in some senses this shift is analogous to the rise of village farming societies, the set of changes inherent in the transition to farming is, in fact, not congruent to that from hunting-gathering to herding gathering, the shared idea of food production and potential intensification notwithstanding. Thus, the shift from hunting herds to having them entails major changes in mobility and economic strategies, but in detail these differ greatly in concept and in detail from the agricultural parallel.

In detail, the adoption of domestic animals into a hunting-gathering society (and the material culture continuities in the desert strongly suggest the adoption of domestic animals and not the large scale penetration of new human populations) entails various nested ramifications:

1) A shift in resource importance so that grazing resources, formerly of little significance to hunter-gatherers except insofar as they might attract grazing prey, are now of high value. The growth of herds and the need to provide constant access to grazing while maintaining human control, suggest increasing levels of environmental exploitation in the senses of expanse and intensity.
2) Herding, as food production, implies potential intensification beyond the capacity of hunting-gathering. Notably, dairying can be expected to increase productive potentials even more (e.g. Russell 1988). If on one hand, population growth need not spurt with the adoption of herding, as happens with the sedentarisation of hunter-gatherers, on the other, increased resource potential in the long term can nevertheless be

expected to loosen constraints on population growth. In a bounded environment, social tools would need to evolve to address issues of larger groups.

3) The combination of increased intensity of exploitation and population growth ultimately will entail resource competition, increased territoriality and conflict. Consequentially, the development of social tools, read ranking, hierarchy, and institutions, with all the tools for maintaining, legitimising, and enhancing this new order, would be expected to evolve concomitantly with herding.

This dynamic, which can be characterised as the rise of desert tribal societies, of course accords nicely with the etic meanings attributed to the shrine and cairn systems. That is, the rise of desert cult should be seen as part and parcel of the evolution of desert tribal societies, in the southern Levantine deserts triggered by the adoption of domestic goats and the transition from hunting-gathering to herding.

Note

1 One hesitates to use the term 'cognitive system' since cognition usually implies biological change.

Bibliography

Albert, R. M. and Henry, D. O. (2005) Herding and Agricultural Activities at the Early Neolithic Site of Ayn Abu Nukhayla (Wadi Rum, Jordan). The Results of Phytolith and Spherulite Analyses. *Paléorient* 30, 81–92.

Ascher, R. (1961) Analogy in Archaeological Interpretation. *Southwest Journal of Anthropology* 17, 317–325.

Avner, U. (1984) Ancient Cult Sites in the Negev and Sinai Deserts. *Tel Aviv 11*, 115–131.

Avner, U. (1990) Ancient Agricultural Settlement and Religion in the Uvda Valley in Southern Israel. *Biblical Archaeologist* 53, 125–141.

Avner, U. (2002) *Studies in the Material and Spiritual Culture of the Negev and Sinai Population During the 6th–3rd millennia B.C.* Unpublished thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Avner, U. Carmi, I. and Segal, D. (1994) Neolithic to Bronze Age Settlement of the Negev and Sinai in Light of Radiocarbon Dating: A View from the Southern Negev. In O. Bar-Yosef and R. Kra (eds) *Late Quaternary Chronology and Paleoclimates of the Eastern Mediterranean,* 265–300. Tucson, University of Arizona and Radiocarbon.

Bailey, C. (1990) The Ottomans and the Bedouin Tribes of the Negev. In G. G. Gilbar (ed.) *Ottoman Palestine, 1800–1914: Studies in Economic and Social History*, 321–332. Leiden, Brill.

Barth, F. (1961) *Nomads of South Persia*. Boston, Little Brown.

Bar-Yosef, O. (1984) Seasonality Among Neolithic Hunter-gatherers in Southern Sinai. In J. Clutton- Brock and C. Grigson (eds) *Animals and Archaeology: 3. Early Herders and Their Flocks,* 145–160, British Archaeological Report S202. Oxford, British Archaeological Reports.

Bar-Yosef, O. and Khazanov, A. M. (1992) Introduction. In O. Bar-Yosef and A. M. Khazanov (eds) *Pastoralism in the Levant,* 1–10. Madison WI, Prehistory Press.

Binford, L. R. (1968) Post-Pleistocene adaptations. In S. R. Binford and L. R. Binford, (eds) *New Perspectives in Archaeology,* 313–42. Chicago, Aldine.

Braidwood, R. J. (1948) *Prehistoric Men*. Chicago, Field Museum of Natural History.

Cauvin, J. (2000) *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Childe, V. G. (1951 [1936]) *Man Makes Himself*. New York, New American Library.

Coe, M. D. and Flannery, K. V. (1971) Microenvironments and Mesoamerican Prehistory. In S. Struever (ed.) *Prehistoric Agriculture,* 131–142 Garden City New Jersey, Prehistory Press.

Cohen, M. N. (1977) *The Food Crisis in Prehistory*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Dayan, T., Tchernov, E., Bar-Yosef, O. and Yom-Tov, Y. (1986) Animal Exploitation in Ujrat el Mehed, a Neolithic Site in Southern Sinai. *Paléorient* 12, 105–116.

Dietrich, O., Heun, M., Notroff, J., Schmidt, K., and Zarnkow, M. (2012) The Role of Cult and Feasting in the Emergence of Neolithic Communities. New Evidence from Göbekli Tepe, South-eastern Turkey. *Antiquity* 86, 674–695.

Eddy, F. W. and Wendorf, F. (1999) *An Archaeological Investigation of the Central Sinai, Egypt.* Boulder, the American Research Center in Egypt and the University Press of Colorado.

Effenberger, A. (2012) *Assets of Lasting Value – The Whereabouts of Animals in Archaeological Sites: The Reflection of Early Domestication in Architecture and Social-Economic Organization during the Levantine Pre-Pottery Neolithic Period.* Unpublished thesis, University of Haifa. (Hebrew).

Erman, A. (1894 [1971]) *Life in Ancient Egypt*. New York, Dover.

Fritz, J. M. (1978) Paleopsychology today: Ideational Systems and Human Adaptation in Prehistory. In C. L. Redman, W. T. Langhorne Jr., M. J. Berman, N. M.Versaggi, E. V. Curtin, and J. C. Wanser (eds) *Social Archaeology: Beyond Subsistence and Dating*, 37–60. New York, Academic.

Garrard, A., Colledge, S. and Martin, L. (1996) The Emergence of Crop Cultivation and Caprine Hunting in the "Marginal Zones" of the Southern Levant. In D. R. Harris (ed.) *The Origins and Spread of Agriculture and Pastoralism in Eurasia*, 204–226. Washington DC, Smithsonian Institution Press.

Gopher, A., Goring-Morris, A. N., and Rosen, S. A. (1995) 'Ein Qadis I: a Pre-Pottery Neolithic B occupation in eastern Sinai. *'Atiqot* 27, 15–33.

Goring-Morris, A. N. and Gopher, A. (1983) Nahal Issaron: a Neolithic Settlement in the Southern Negev. *Israel Exploration Journal* 33, 149–162.

Henry, D. O., Cordova, C., White, J., Dean, R. M., Beaver, J. E., Ekstrom, H., Kadowaki, S., McCorriston, J., Nowell, A. and Scott-Cummings, L. (2003) The Early Neolithic Site of Ayn Abū Nukhayla, Southern Jordan. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 330, 1–30.

Hodder, I. (1991) *Reading the Past. Current Approaches to Interpretation in Archaeology.* Cambridge, Cambridge University.

Hodder, I. (2006) *The Leopard's Tale: Revealing the Mysteries of Catal Hoyuk*. London, Thames and Hudson.

Hodder, I. (2012) *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships Between Humans and Things.* New York, Wiley.

Horwitz, L. K., Rosen, S. A. and Bocquentin, F. (2011) A Late Neolithic Equid Offering from the Mortuary-cult Site of Ramat

Saharonim in the Central Negev. *Journal of the Israel Prehistoric Society* 41, 71–82.

Horwitz, L. K., Tchernov, E., Ducos, P., Becker, C., Von Den Driesch, A., Martin, L. and Garrard, A. (1999) Animal Domestication in the Southern Levant. *Paléorient* 25, 63–80.

Ingold, T. (1980) *Hunters, Pastoralists and Ranchers*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Ingold, T. (1987) *The Appropriation of Nature: Essays in Human Ecology and Social Relations*. Iowa City, University of Iowa Press.

Kinnes, I. (1982) Les fouaillages and megalithic origins. *Antiquity* 56, 24–30.

Kohler-Rollefson, I. (1992) A Model for the Development of Nomadic Pastoralism on the Transjordanian Plateau. In O. Bar-Yosef and A. M. Khazanov (eds) *Pastoralism in the Levant: Archaeological Materials in Anthropological Perspective,* 11–18. Madison WI, Prehistory Press.

Kristiansen, K. (1984) Ideology and Material Culture: An Archaeological Perspective. In M. Spriggs (ed.) *Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology*, 72–100. Cambridge, Cambridge University.

Kuhn, T. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Martin, L. (1999) Mammal Remains from the Eastern Jordanian Neolithic, and the Nature of Caprine Herding in the Steppe. *Paléorient* 25/2, 87–104.

Marx, E. (1992) Are There Pastoral Nomads in the Middle East? In O. Bar-Yosef and A. M. Khazanov (eds) *Pastoralism in the Levant: Archaeological Materials in Anthropological Perspectives,* 255–260. Madison WI, Prehistory Press.

Marx, E. (1977) The Tribe as a Unit of Subsistence: Nomadic Pastoralism in the Middle East. *American Anthropologist* 79, 343–363.

Meraiot, A. (2011) *Contemporary Bedouin Adaptations within the Archaeological Environment of the Ancient Byzantine Town of Avdat in Traditional and Modern Sedentarization Processes in the Negev Highlands*. Unpublished thesis, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. (Hebrew).

Mithen, S. (2007) Did Farming Arise from a Misapplication of Social Intelligence? *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 362 (1480), 705–718.

Montet, J. (1958 [1981]) *Everyday Life in Egypt*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania.

Műller, M. (2001) Afterlife. In D. B. Redford (ed.) *Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt*, Vol. 1, 32–37. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Nemat-Nejat, K. R. (1998) *Daily Life in Ancient Mesopotamia*. Greenwood Press, Greenwood, Ct.

Parker Pearson, M. (1984) Social Change, Ideology and the Archaeological Record. In M. Spriggs (ed.) *Marxist Perspectives in Archaeology*, 59–71. Cambridge, Cambridge University.

Porat, N., Rosen, S. A., Boaretta, E., and Avni, Y. (2006) Dating the Ramat Saharonim Late Neolithic Desert Cult Site. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 33, 1341–1355.

Renfrew, C. (1984) Megaliths, Territories and Populations. In C. Renfrew *Approaches to Social Archaeology,* 165–99. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.

Rosen, S. A. (1984) Kvish Harif: Preliminary Investigations at a Late Neolithic Site in the Central Negev. *Paléorient* 10/2, 111–121.

Rosen, S. A. (1988) Notes on the Origins of Pastoral Nomadism: A Case Study from the Negev and Sinai. *Current Anthropology* 29, 498–506.

Rosen, S. A. (2011) Desert Chronologies and Periodization Systems. In J. Lovell and Y. Rowan (eds) *Culture, Chronology and the Chalcolithic: Theory and Transition,* 71–83. Oxford, Council for British Research in the Levant.

Rosen, S. A., Avni, Y., Bocquentin, F. and Porat, N. (2007) Investigations at Ramat Saharonim: a Desert Neolithic Sacred Precinct in the Central Negev. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 346, 31–57.

Rosen, S. A. and Rosen, Y. J. (2003) The Shrines of the Setting Sun. *Israel Exploration Journal* 53, 1–19.

Rosen, S. A., Savinetsky, A. B., Plakht, Y., Kisseleva, N. K., Khassanov, B. F., Pereladov, A. M. and Haiman, M. (2005) Dung in the Desert: Preliminary Results of the Negev Holocene ecology Project. *Current Anthropology* 46, 317–327.

Rothenberg, B. (1979) *Sinai: Pharaohs, Miners, Pilgrims and Soldiers*. New York, Binns.

Russell, K. W. (1988) *After Eden. The Behavioral Ecology of Early Food Production in the Near East and North Africa*, British Archaeological Report S391. Oxford, British Archaeological Reports.

Simmons, A. H. (2007) *The Neolithic Revolution in the Near East*. Tucson, University of Arizona.

Struever, S. (ed.) (1971) *Prehistoric Agriculture*. Garden City, NJ, Natural History Press.

Tilley, C. (1994) *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments*. Oxford, Berg.

Wason, P. R. (1994) *The Archaeology of Rank*. Cambridge, Cambridge University.

Wiggerman, F. A. M. (2011) Agriculture as Civilization: Sages, Farmers and Barbarians. In K. Radner and E. Robson (eds) *Oxford Handbook of Cuneiform Culture*, 663–689. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Wylie, A. (1985) The Reaction Against Analogy. *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory* 8, 63–111.

Yamauchi, E. M. (1965) Tammuz and the Bible. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84, 283–290.

Yogev, O. (1983) A Fifth Millennium Sanctuary in the ‘Uvda Valley. *Qadmoniot* 16(4), 118–22. (Hebrew).

Zeder, M. A. and Hesse, B. (2000) The Initial Domestication of Goats (*Capra Hircus*) in the Zagros Mountains 10,000 Years Ago. *Science* 287 (5461), 2254.

5

Thoughts on material expressions of cultic practice. Standing stone monuments of the Early Bronze Age in the southern Levant

Ann Andersson

Introduction

Defining the sacred and approaching the archaeology of religion is not an easy feat. Therefore the aim of this article is not to make concluding statements on the nature of religion and belief as a phenomenon.[1] Rather it seeks to investigate the potential diversity of this phenomenon, as seen from archaeological remains in the EBA period of the southern Levant and hopefully ignite a discussion concerning the importance of smaller sites and structures unconnected to settlements.

In the southern Levant small and seemingly isolated sites are scattered throughout the countryside. Along with areas of activity located at the periphery of walled settlements, these sites might be easily overlooked or inadequately understood by archaeologists, but they form a complex system of sites of different sizes and functions supporting the walled settlements of the region. In order to better understand the workings of the EBA societies these sites should be considered in a larger framework. In this paper it is the archaeological material offered by standing stone sites in the central southern Levant that form the basis of enquiry and interpretations.

These interpretations are intended to offer a dynamic impression of how standing stone sites were incorporated into a wider societal context. It is argued that the cultic practices of the EBA could have consisted of both highly formalised and less formalised customs, the diversity of which is not sufficiently recognised in the archaeological record. This analysis developed from an interest in the relationship of ancient humans to the landscape in terms of movement and use of areas outside walled settlements. Furthermore, the explanatory framework of heterarchy has been considered a basic premise in order to understand the diverse nature of archaeological sites (Crumley 1995).

Historical framework of the EBA period in the southern Levant

The EBA period of the southern Levant had formerly been defined by a marked transition from the previous Chalcolithic period. Today the transition between the two periods is seen as a more gradual development (Kerner 2008, 157). The period is characterised by the appearance of walled settlements, which were most likely central places for the collection and storage of agricultural products (Philip 2008, 182). There was an intensification of practices, such as irrigation agriculture and cultivation of tree crops. Animals, such as donkeys and oxen, were increasingly used for transport and as draught animals. Tools made from metal became more common. While none of the above mentioned practices were novel technologies, they were employed more efficiently resulting in changes in the basic economy (Philip 2008, 179). In the EBA trade was conducted on a wider scale, with the movement of both goods and people, tying the regions of the southern Levant together in intricate webs of interactions (Philip 2008, 193). Trade was also conducted with more distant regions including Egypt, which might have imported goods such as fine oils and resins (Philip 2008, 182; Greenberg and Eisenberg 2002, 220). The nature of the socio-political organisation in the EBA has been debated and several scholars have found the traditional explanation of a socio-political organisation based on a city state concept invalid in relation to the walled communities of the period (Chesson 2003; Chesson and Philip 2003; Philip 2003; 2008). Instead the distinct material evidence of the EBA is explained as signifying a socio-political organisation based on staple finance strategies with elites investing their efforts in communal projects and in controlling agricultural produce (Chesson and Philip 2003, 9; Philip 2008, 166). This would explain the lack of evidence for conspicuous consumption and of marked social stratification usually indicated by elite housing and elite burials (Chesson 2003, 86; Philip 2008, 163).

Cultic practices of the EBA period in the southern Levant

Before turning to the discussion of the cultic significance of standing stone monuments the general evidence of cult in the EBA warrants some concern.

The reconstruction of ancient human daily life is difficult at best. As archaeologists we only catch a glimpse of this through architecture, objects and human remains. The reconstruction of ancient belief systems and cultic activities does not avoid this complexity and there are limitations when attempting to study belief systems and rituals of the EBA. There are no contemporary textual sources which can provide clues to the cultic practices of the period. Iconographic material is rare and consists of seals and seal impressions with motifs interpreted as scenes of cultic activity. The motifs represent people engaged in a ritual dance and human figures, one possibly dressed as a horned animal, standing next to buildings interpreted as cultic structures (Ben-Tor 1977, 94, 96; 1992, 155; Lapp 2003, 543). Due to the schematic nature of the iconographic depictions their meaning is difficult to deduce. Sculptural material includes different types of figurines. Most commonly these are zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines and composite figurines represented by laden figurines (donkeys carrying baskets) and riding figurines (donkeys ridden by a human figure) (Al Ajlouny, Douglas and Khrisat 2011, 93, 96).[2] The cultic significance of these figurines has been indicated by their find contexts in cultic structures and in burials excluding them as more secular objects such as toys and teaching aids. Finds of figurines in domestic houses have been suggested as representing evidence of domestic cults (Al Ajlouny, Douglas and Khrisat 2011, 98–102, 109–110).

Arenas of cultic practices found inside the walled settlements of the EBA period are traditionally identified by broadroom structures set apart from domestic architecture, often located within courtyards or enclosures. These courtyards or enclosure spaces often contain stone platforms interpreted as altars. The broadroom structures are relatively small architectural units with wooden posts for roof supports built on stone bases. At a number of settlements larger cultic compounds are found with multiple broadroom structures occurring close together (Philip 2008, 173).[3] It has been stated by scholars that the finds located inside cultic structures appear to be less distinctive in the EBA and that cultic paraphernalia of the period are generally ill defined (Philip 2008, 174; Genz 2010, 47, 49). It could suggest that cultic paraphernalia did not consist of "fixed" assemblages of items, but that they could vary possibly from place to place and from time to time.

Standing stone monuments of the EBA southern Levant

Definition and distribution

Standing stone monuments can be broadly defined as structures consisting of one or more upright stone slabs deliberately raised and placed in the landscape by humans. As a category of monuments standing stones are not a uniform phenomenon. They appear in different sizes, numbers and configurations. So far nineteen standing stone sites belonging to the EBA have been located in the central part of the southern Levant (Andersson 2011) (see Fig. 5.1).[4] Only seven of the nineteen sites have been investigated by excavation. These include the monuments at Dhra', Gezer, Hartuv, Khirbat Iskander, Mutawwaq, Tel Ashir and Wadi Sakrah. The majority of chronological assessments of the sites has been made by ceramic evidence recovered from surveys or by the indirect evidence provided by the proximity of the monuments to other EBA remains (Andersson 2011, 71). The standing stone sites can be roughly divided into four groups based on the relation of the stone monuments to other archaeological evidence. One group consists of open air standing stone monuments not immediately associated with settlements or other substantial archaeological remains (i.e. dolmen fields, high concentrations of cairns, stone lines etc.).[5] Open-air monuments associated with settlements represent a second group.[6] A third group are standing stones located within architectural units inside settlements.[7] The last group consists of standing stones associated with significant dolmen fields, cairns and stone lines.[8]

The physical properties of the monuments do not appear standardised, but a general description can be given. The monuments are usually made from undressed stone, which appears to have been only modestly worked.[9] The height of the monuments can vary considerably, but in the central southern Levant the monuments are generally recognised as being 1–5 m in height (Andersson 2011, tables 44 and 45).[10] The monuments can be found in different arrangements, which can consist of a single freestanding stone slab or of multiple stones placed together, commonly forming a line of monuments. The number of stone slabs in the multiple arrangements of stones varies with as many as 17 slabs set up in a line (Jones 2006, 317; 2007b 124).

It is not known if the distribution of the monuments in the central part of the southern Levant as seen today is an expression of their original distribution or if it is a result of diverse rates of land-use in the different regions (Philip 2008, 173). Today, the distribution of the sites shows a cluster east of the Dead Sea (Fig. 5.1). Towards north the numbers appear to be significantly lower, which has been connected to a more intensive agricultural use of the region (Palumbo 1998, 104). Towards south, in the Negev and the Sinai, the monuments seem to be especially well represented (Avner 2002, 65).[11] With the significant number of monuments located in the south it might be speculated that more of these monuments would originally have been in existence in the central part of the southern Levant. Alternatively, the higher distribution of monuments in the south, as seen today, could suggest that the cultic traditions related to these monuments were practiced more in these regions. Today the monuments of the central southern Levant are influenced by modern development of land resources or other forms of human impact leading to their destruction and thus the opportunity to study them in this region is rapidly diminishing.[12]

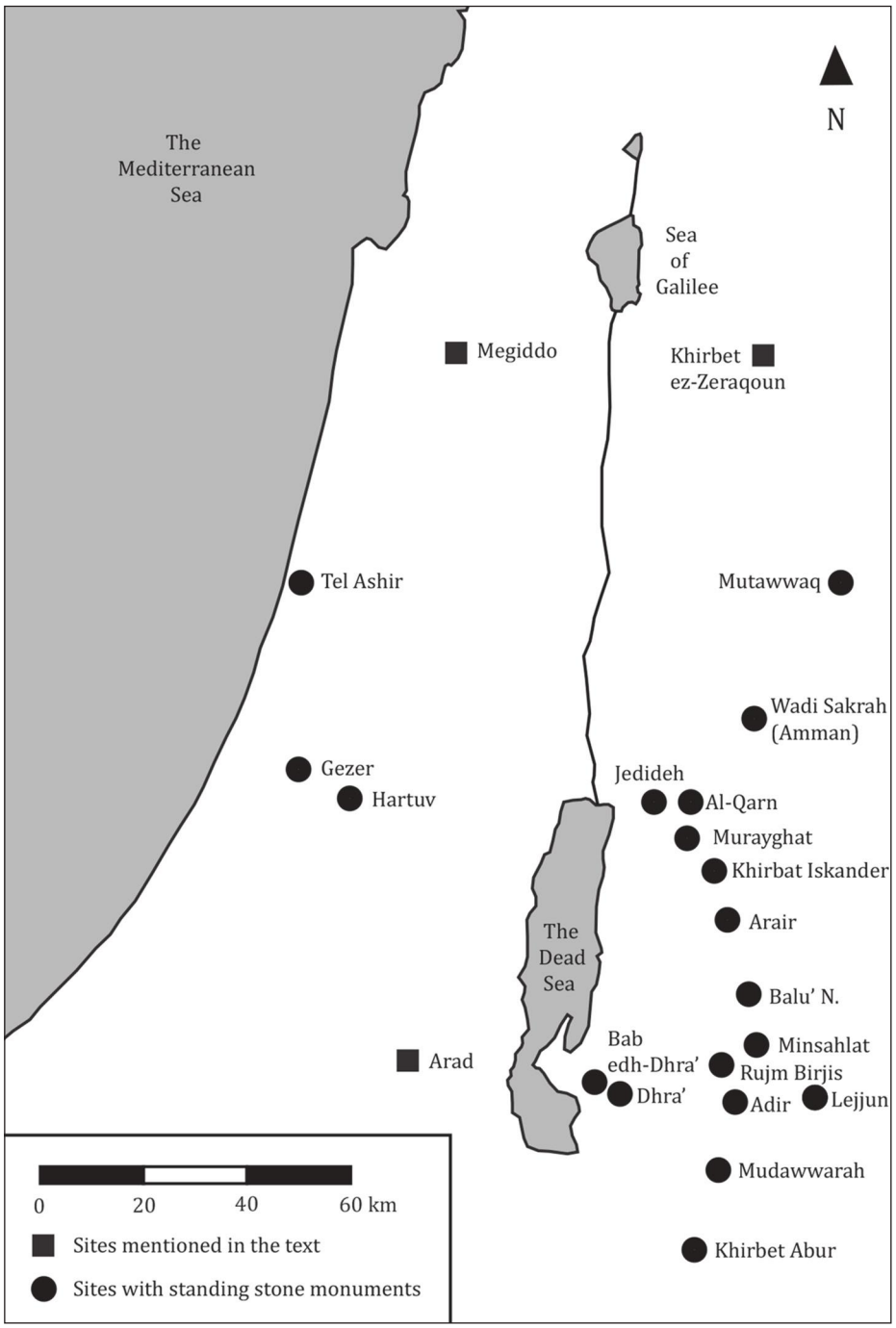


Fig. 5.1: Map of the central southern Levant with selected EBA sites. (Andersson 2011).

Advancing a definition of the sacred nature of standing stones

Besides the traditionally identified broadroom structures inside settlements the EBA cultic landscape probably incorporated a variety of places where cult could be practiced. Philip has emphasised the diversity of cultic locations known from the EBA as an indication of "… the simultaneous existence of multiple spheres of cult activity, not all of which would have been equally well integrated with systems of political control." (Philip 2008, 173). The proposal of the simultaneous existence of multiple spheres of cult activity is an appealing approach, when considering the possible diversity of cultic behaviour and their settings.

The wide distribution of a seemingly standardised plan of cultic structures found within settlements points to cultic activities in formalised settings, while the existence of domestic or private cults has been argued based on the findings of figurines in domestic contexts (Al Ajlouny, Douglas and Khrisat 2011, 109–110). These settings are located within settlements, which were unmistakably centres of intense human activity. In the past archaeological investigations have tended to concentrate efforts on larger settlements resulting in the walled settlements of the period appearing as solitary 'islands' in the landscape. However, human activity also took place outside the walled settlements and there is little reason to think that this did not include cultic practices. Standing stones are one type of monuments appearing prominently in the landscape sometimes unrelated to a settlement. Even though they appear as conspicuous features there might be no explicit reason to argue that these monuments were related to cultic activities. However, a conceptual bridge between open-air sites with standing stones, as cultic arenas, and structures traditionally identified as having a cultic function can be proposed. The connection is indicated by the identification of standing stones built into broadroom structures or located within complexes of broadroom structures. This is a feature that has been suggested at Hartuv (EB I) and at the large cultic centre, Mutawwaq (EB I) (Mazar and Miroschedji 1996, 11; Fernández-Tresguerres Velasco 2011, 114; Sala 2011, 6–7). At Hartuv the standing stone line build into the southern wall of hall 152 was interpreted as originally being a freestanding stone line that was later incorporated into the cultic structure constructed at the site, as part of a larger building complex (Mazar and Miroschedji 1996, 11). At the site of Mutawwaq a standing stone has been identified inside the cultic compound consisting of three main structures, five auxiliary buildings and a courtyard. The standing stone is located in the courtyard at the northeastern wall of the enclosure surrounding the complex. (Fernández-Tresguerres Velasco 2011, 114). Although only the two examples of Hartuv and Mutawwaq have been discovered so far, the merging of cultic structures or compounds and standing stones appears as a significant connection between the two architectural types (Philip 2008, 173). This physical link indicates a cognitive link, thus demonstrating the cultic significance of standing stones.

By ethnographic accounts and even contemporary examples the practice of any belief system can vary within a society, thus stating that any given belief system remains static and unchanging is inadequate. Highly formalised traditions may exist alongside less formal customs and the two might be practiced in different settings. Additionally, rituals can be performed at different intervals, some frequently and some rarely. This scenario is valid for contemporary and ancient cultic practices alike. Therefore, the practice of the sacred as a defined phenomenon may consist of a variety of cultic behaviours manifesting themselves in a multitude of different ways within a society and in the archaeological record. This of course is a challenge for the archaeologist, for whom standardised or large-scale manifestations of cult might be easier to detect than the more subtle expressions. A diversity of localities stretching from small-scale constructions to big architectural manifestations may be envisioned, and one might tentatively draw a comparison to the varieties of cultic arenas known from contemporary practices such as house altars, roadside shrines, village churches and cathedrals. Cultic arenas of different scale might have been more or less integrated into formal systems and would have existed in the landscape beyond the walls of settlements.

The Dhra' standing stone monument

The site of Dhra' is located in modern day Jordan in the southern Ghors. Dhra' is flanked on one side by the Dead Sea Plain and the Lisan Peninsula (towards west) and on the other by the escarpment to the Kerak Plateau (towards east). The well-known EBA I–IV site of Bab edh-Dhra' lies 4.5 km towards west in a straight line.[13] The site is situated *c*. 500 m south of the southern bank of Wadi Adh-Dhra', a tributary of the principal watercourse of the area, the Wadi al-Kerak. Situated on a hill ridge, the site was identified during a survey campaign and was excavated in 1992 and 1994 by an archaeological project directed by Carsten Körber, who was at the time assistant director at the German Protestant Institute of Amman (GPIA) (Körber 1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1995).[14] The project was a small-scale excavation concentrating on the architectural features of a standing stone and a wall (Fig. 5.2). Eight areas were investigated at the site (Areas I–VIII).

Area II contained the standing stone monument situated on a stone platform (Fig. 5.2). The standing stone itself is made from a locally available slab of stone, which is only roughly worked, standing at a maximum height of 2.90 m above ground, with a width of 3.30 m at ground level, inclining towards the top of the stone slab to a width of 1.70 m when approached from a western direction. The stone monument has a breadth of 1 m and reaches a depth of approximately 1 m into the ground (Körber 1993). A semicircular cell of stones one course high, uncovered during excavation, indicated the western face of the standing stone as the front face of the monument.[15] The excavation also disclosed the presence of two subsidiary standing stones, one on either side of the main monument. These measured *c*. 60 cm in height, 40 cm in width and 20 cm in breadth. The stone platform was traced on the long side facing west for 9–10 m at a height of 70 cm. Although it was not possible to expose the stone platform in its full extent, it was reconstructed as originally being a rectangular structure (Körber 1993, 551–552) (Fig. 5.3).

The site of Dhra' was furthermore characterised by a number of other archaeological features, such as a wall construction and four cairns located in the immediate vicinity (see Fig. 5.2). The wall was traced for approximately 400 m running along the contours of the hill ridge on an east–west axis, with a

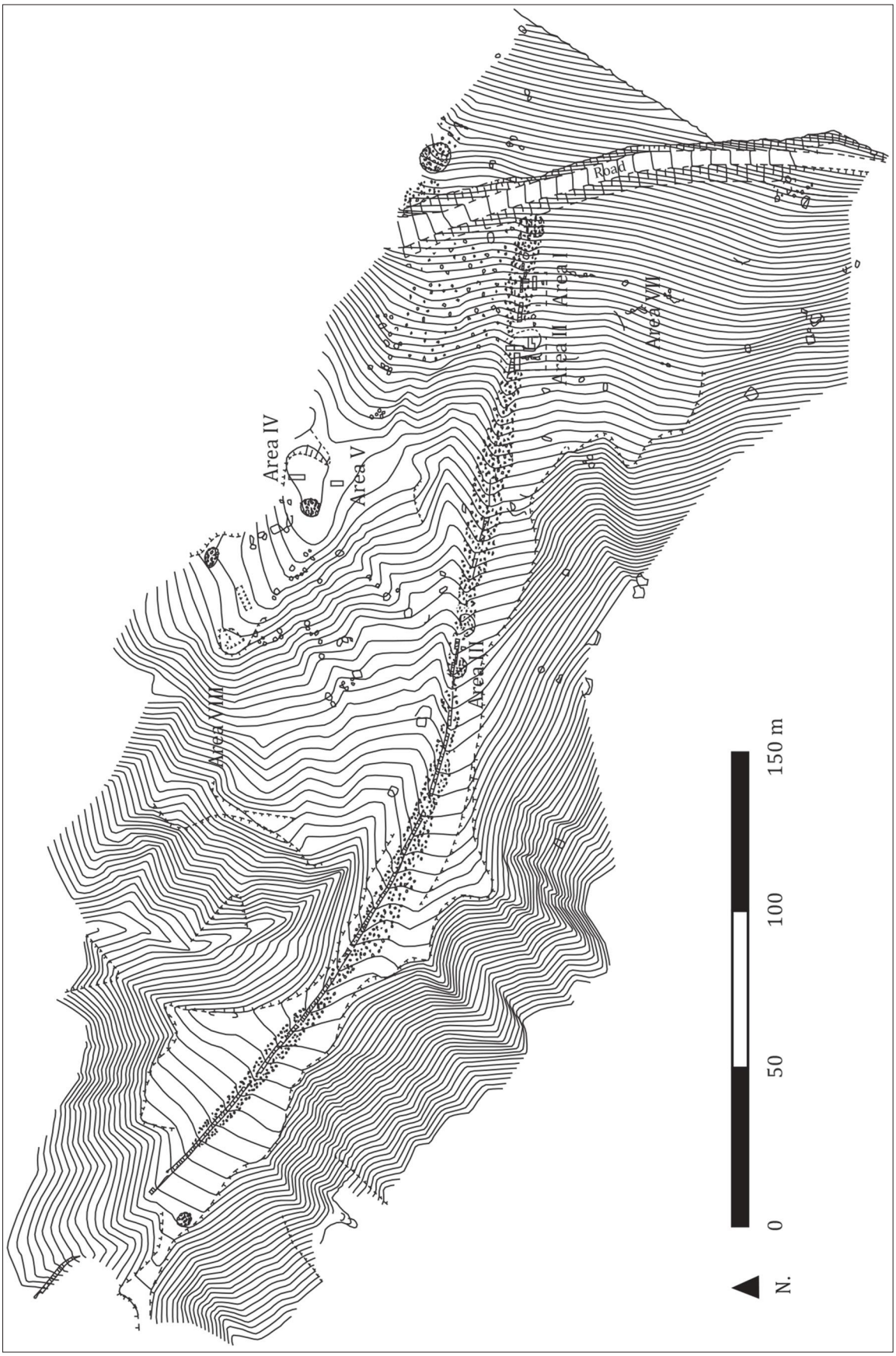


Fig. 5.2: Topographical map of Dhra' with the locations of Area I–VIII (Andersson 2011).

Fig. 5.3: View of the Dhra' standing stone from an eastern direction showing the front face of the monument and the stone platform (courtesy of Hugo Gajus Scheltema).

slight bend towards north in the eastern part. It was not possible to suggest the original extent of the wall. Like the platform, it was constructed from locally available stone and was preserved to a height of 70 cm and was 1.60 m wide with up to five courses of stone still standing at the time of excavation (Körber 1994b, 70). EB IA sherds were found in relation to the wall in Area I. Unfortunately the specific find context for the sherds is not known and therefore the evidence could not indicate the date of construction for the wall (Andersson 2011, 77). A dating for the four cairns at the site can not be suggested since they were not investigated.

A relative sequence of construction was established for the architectural features identified in Area II and the wall structure (Area I and III). The standing stone was erected first, perhaps initially as a freestanding monument, with the later addition of the surrounding stone platform and possibly at the same time the semicircular cell in front of the stone monument. The subsidiary standing stones were then added on either side of the larger standing stone. Lastly, the east–west running wall was built at the site (Andersson 2011, 16).

Despite the initial hypothesis of the standing stone being related to a burial (Körber 1993, 551; 1994b, 72) subsequent excavations did not confirm this. Although there is lack of substantial evidence of a permanent EBA settlement,[16] it is clear that effort and labour was put into the construction of the standing stone monument, its platform and the wall. Thus it can be assumed that the site was of importance for the people who built it and made use of it.

Finds from Dhra'

The finds recovered during the excavation included ceramics, two stone pestles, a grinder and flint tools. Only the ceramics have been subjected to study (Andersson 2011). A high proportion of small to large necked jars characterised the ceramic assemblage along with small to large holemouth vessels (Fig. 5.4, 1–10). Other types such as plates, small bowls and vats are poorly represented (Fig. 5.4, 11–13). The functional interpretation of the assemblage thus points to an emphasis on storage of liquid and/or dry goods and possibly aspects of food preparation (Andersson 2011, 50). The distribution of ceramics in the respective areas demonstrated that the area centred on the standing stone had one of the highest proportions of ceramics at the site.[17] This suggests that the area was a place of more intensive use compared to the other areas. Furthermore, the ceramic assemblage showed a higher degree of variation in vessel types along with a differing functional composition. Like other areas, area II had a high proportion of vessel types related to liquid and dry storage (jars and holemouth types). The anomaly compared to other areas existed in the presence of several plate and bowl types suitable for functions connected to presenting, serving or eating of foodstuffs (Andersson 2011, 77). Other interesting features of the Dhra' assemblage included a few pieces of plastic decoration (Fig. 5.4, 14–17). These could be examples figurative decoration in the form of snake applications, but the small sherd samples make this identification somewhat tentative. Snake applications are considered to be a type of cultic iconography connected to

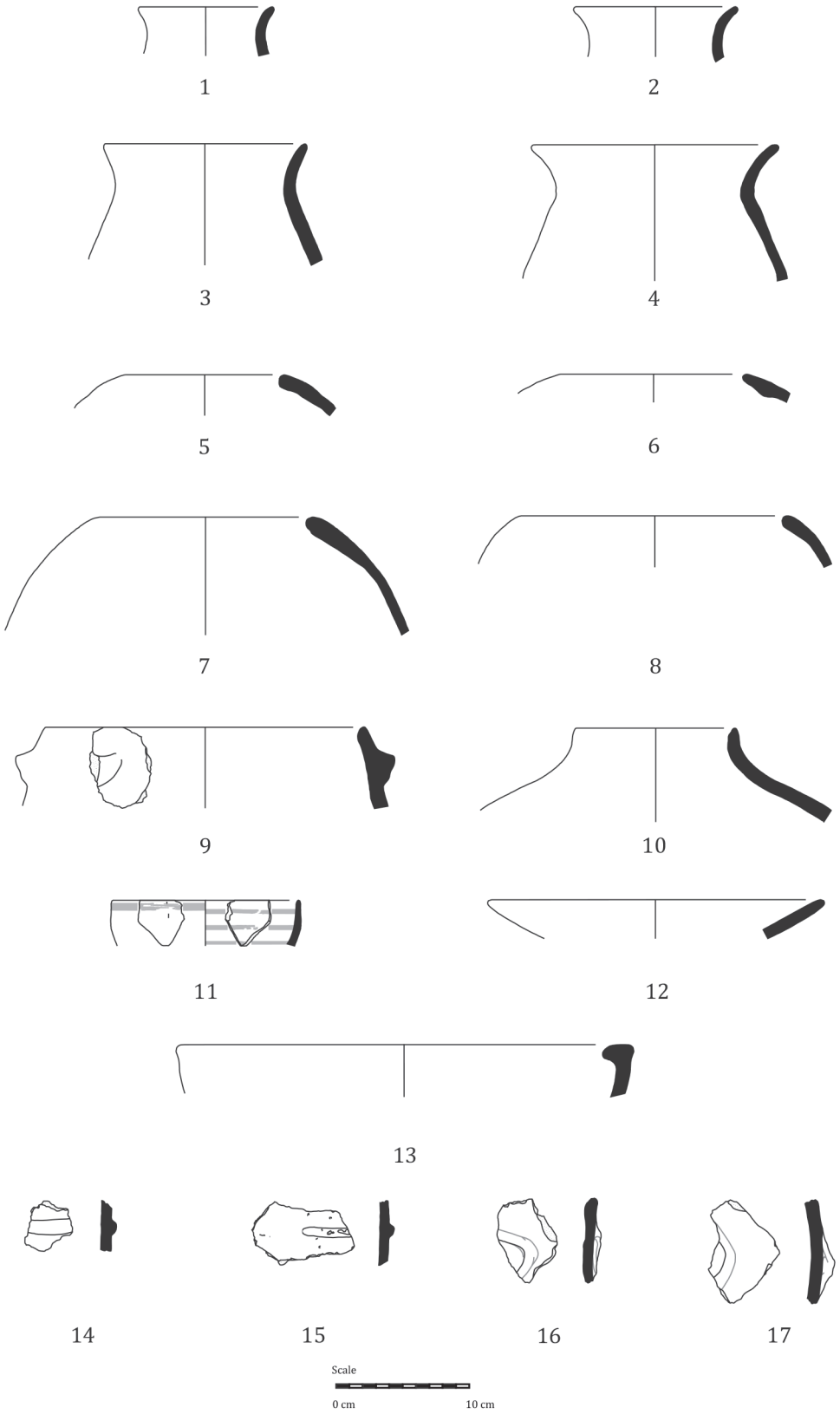


Fig. 5.4: Selection of the ceramic assemblage from Dhra'. 1–4: small to large necked jars. 5–10: small to large holemouth jars and a holemouth jar with an everted rim. 11–13: a small bowl, a plate and a vat. 14–17: plastic decoration (Andersson 2011).

the belief system of the EBA and are represented at sites like at the cultic structure at Mutawwaq (EB I) and at Khirbet ez-Zeraqoun (EB II–III) (Genz 2010, 49; Sala 2011, 7, fig. 7; Al Ajlouny, Douglas and Khrisat 2011, 101, 106–107, table 2). Based on the fabric analysis of the ceramics from Dhra' it is most likely that the plastic decoration belonged to holemouth jars and less likely to necked jars (Andersson 2011, 63, tables 22 and 23). Although some vessel forms of the assemblage were too generic to firmly place them in one or the other sub period of the EBA, many characteristic features of the ceramic assemblage indicated a dating of the material to the EB I period (Andersson 2011, 66). Even though the additional find groups have not been subject to detailed study the presence of two stone pestles (Area II and VIII), a grinder (area II) and an undefined amount of flint material (Area II, IV, V, VI, VII and VIII) indicate that the site was the location of a variety of human activities. The pestle and the grinder found in Area II are noticeable, stressing aspects of food processing activities.[18]

In sum the evidence suggests a locality with remnants of temporary occupation dating to the EB I. The ceramic assemblage of the area suggests that people performed activities such as cooking and storing of goods for shorter or longer periods of time. The evidence of these activities might at first hand appear to represent common practices of daily life. However, if it is accepted that everyday objects could be incorporated into cultic activities, it can be suggested that at least the material evidence recovered from the immediate area around the standing stone was part of ritual activities. The ceramics and stone tools found in Area II might represent offerings placed at the standing stone. They could also be connected to preparation of foodstuffs, perhaps offerings, in the vicinity of the stone monument.

The diverse appearance of standing stone sites in the southern Levant – markers of a common concept?

A cognitive link between standing stones at sites of very different physical nature is suggested here. The monuments appear as a diverse group due to the variability in the numbers and arrangements of the monuments, the size of the site where they occur and the additional archaeological features found in their vicinity. Yet it is proposed that the people visiting these sites and viewing the standing stones would have connected them to a common conceptual theme. Despite the diverse context of standing stones presented above, their setting point towards cultic purposes. However, with the cultic framework and belief system of the EBA not being clearly understood yet, no closer definition can be given here.

Standing stones may represent less formalised arenas of cultic practice or places connected to different kinds of cultural practices compared to the traditionally identified cultic structures inside settlements. The existence of large sites such as Murayghat and Jedideh, unconnected with settlements has been interpreted as ceremonial landscapes. The site of Murayghat has a collection of megalithic structures and an extensive dolmen field with a prominent standing stone (the hajr mansub) (Savage 2010; Savage and Rollefson 2001, 225). At Jedideh standing stone monuments are associated with dolmens and stone lines making up a landscape, which has been suggested as having a ceremonial function (Mortensen and Thuesen 1998, 96). It might be suggested that while many settlements had their own arenas of cultic practice, these sites, unconnected to settlement, could have acted as major cultic centres and gathering places for a number of communities, perhaps with gatherings occurring at intervals.

How the standing stone monuments found near settlements relate to the formalised cultic settings (represented by cultic structures) inside settlements is poorly understood due to their disappearance from the archaeological record since first reported or due to the lack of excavation. Of the monuments found on the outskirts of EBA settlements, only the examples at Khirbat Iskander have been subjected to archaeological investigations and the results of these are not yet published.[19] At Mutawwaq, a standing stone has been found associated with a cultic complex. Additionally, three other standing stones are found at the site, one in an open space enclosed by a wall and two on a mound overlooking the village. Mutawwaq has been suggested as a major cultic centre for settlements in its vicinity (Fernández-Tresguerres Velasco 2011; Sala 2011, 6–7). Despite the general lack of excavation what might be reasoned from the context of the monuments found in the vicinity of settlements is that a relationship existed between the settlements and the standing stone monuments found on their outskirts. They likely represent areas used by the inhabitants of the EBA communities. The small size of traditionally identified cultic structures inside settlements could suggest that there was restricted access to these buildings and that only small segments of the population could participate in the practices within the cultic buildings at one time (Genz 2010, 48). Open-air sites close to habitation could have been cultic gathering points for larger groups of people.

New attitudes towards the landscape: movement, trade and travel

The site of Dhra' is not associated with a settlement and it does not seem to have been part of a larger cultic landscape. The site is situated at a tributary to the Wadi al-Kerak, just at the escarpment to the Kerak plateau. Other reasons might explain the seemingly isolated nature of the Dhra' standing stone monument. The EBA was characterised by changes in attitude towards the landscape. The long-term investments made in certain plots of land as people inhabited walled settlements and were involved in intensified agricultural practices, might have prompted increased feelings of territoriality. However, life was not confined to the immediate surroundings of walled settlements as people moved within the landscape, to travel and to conduct trade.

The major route making travel possible from the Dead Sea plain region to the Kerak plateau would have been the Wadi al-Kerak and by implication its tributary the Wadi-adh Dhra', by which the site of Dhra' is located (Miller 1991, 1). While movements in the landscape such as travel from one destination to another might not leave much evidence behind in the archaeological record, trade is often easier to detect, from the remains of traded goods. Indirect evidence from Bab edh-Dhra' suggests that this site and its surroundings were facilitating trade and travel. A high proportion of donkey remains at the site (EB I–III) indicates that it could have been a large station of trade tied into exchange networks (Milevski 2011, 191, table 10.1). The Wadi el-Kerak route would likely have linked the Dead Sea plain and the Kerak plateau. Savage finds it tempting to suggest that a trade route connecting Bab edh-Dhra' towards west with Arad and towards east with the EB sites of the Kerak plateau would have existed in the EB I (Savage 2012). Likewise, Yekutieli has noted the connections towards east between the southern coastal plain and the Dead Sea region (EB IA), which would have been the place where bitumen originated. Bitumen has been discovered at several southern coastal plain sites (Yekutieli 2001, 676). The same route has been suggested by Milevski (Milevski 2011, 169). This recounts the indirect evidence of the possible movement through the region encouraged by trade. It suggests that Bab edh-Dhra' and its immediate vicinity was a node facilitating regular movements of people and commodities east towards the Kerak plateau and west past the Arad plain towards the southern coastal plain reaching the Shephelah.

The topographical features encouraged travel and trade along the Wadi al-Kerak, where the site of Dhra' can be found and the site is placed at a liminal location just before the escarpment to the Kerak plateau. The Dhra' standing stone has been interpreted as having a cultic purpose, which is supported by the general connection between standing stone monuments and arenas of cultic significance in the southern Levant. In this larger framework of cult and trade the Dhra' monument, a site seemingly isolated from settlements or larger cultic landscapes, but located at an important route of travel, might have tied into an extended network of movement in the countryside as a kind of cultic way station, perhaps with a function comparable to that of a roadside shrine. The ceramic assemblage found in the vicinity of the standing stone monument indicates some elements of the cultic practices performed at the site with possible offerings placed at the monument in different types of ceramic vessels. Some aspects of food processing, either symbolic or real, is indicated by the presence of pestles. The evidence from the other areas signifies the temporary occupation, which people set up at the site, where food processing and storage of goods took place.

Conclusion

Standing stones of the EBA period in the central southern Levant present themselves as a diverse group of monuments. However, their cultic significance is indicated by the cognitive connection between standing stones, open-air sites and cultic structures and compounds. It is further corroborated by the existence of these stone monuments at sites interpreted as ceremonial landscapes. Many of the monuments are found related to walled settlements, which suggest that the monuments were an integral part of the cultic milieu of the EBA. The question remains of how these related to more formalised practices at cultic structures inside the settlements and what kind of practices were performed at the monuments? In general the standing stone sites of the EBA in the south central Levant represent a constituent of the cultic landscape that is not well understood. Nevertheless, the distribution of the stone monuments, whether appearing as isolated monuments, being located in the proximity of settlements, funerary structures or stone lines or appearing inside cultic structures or complexes, indicates a widespread tradition. It is plausible that the people of the EBA would have had a shared awareness of their function and of their symbolic meaning. The site of Dhra', with its small size, evidence of temporary occupation and its location at a route of travel, represents a stopping point along a frequently travelled route with a cultic element in the form of a standing stone monument. As such Dhra' is an expression of the less easily recognised sites of the archaeological record and adds to the understanding of cultic practices of the EBA.

Notes

1 The phenomenon of religion, belief and cult has been advanced from a broad range of theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, throughout the history of archaeological study. The different standpoints will not elaborated here, but see for instance Insoll 2004, 1–100; Renfrew 1994, 47–54 and Steadman 2009, 21–35.

2 For a comprehensive overview of the distribution of figurines in the EBA see (Al Ajlouny, Douglas and Khrisat 2011, tables 3 and 4).

3 See for instance the EB II–III cultic compounds at Khirbet ez-Zeraqoun and Megiddo, consisting of multiple broadroom structures (Philip 2008, 173; Genz 2010, 47–49).

4 The EBA has been chosen as a focus in this paper, disregarding examples, which are firmly dated to other periods or monuments, which could not be dated.

5 Adir (Chesson *et al.* 2005, 10, 20, Miller *et al.* 1991, 96–98), Dhra' (Andersson 2011; Körber 1993; 1994a; 1994b; 1995), Gezer (Ben-Ami 2008), Khirbet Abur (MacDonald *et al.* 2004, 326; Scheltema 2008, 59), Tel Ashir (Gophna and Ayalon 2004), Wadi Sakrah (Scheltema 2008, 84; Abu Shmais and Scheltema 2011; Scheltema 2011). The Adir and Wadi Sakrah examples

are located within modern settlement (Adir and Amman, respectively), which might conceal their original context (i.e. possibly located in or near EBA settlements). The Gezer monuments are traditionally dated to the Middle Bronze Age II, but a reanalysis of the stratigraphy of the site by Ben-Ami dated the erection of the monuments to the EB II or III (Ben-Ami 2008, 26–27).

6 Al-Qarn (Palumbo 1998, 103–104; Savage and Rollefson 2001, 222–223, fig. 3; Savage 2010, 36), Arair (Ben-Ami 2008, 19–20;, Schick 1879, 191), Bab edh-Dhra' (Albright 1924, 6, 10; Albright 1926, 58–59; Philip 2008, 173), Balu' North (Miller *et al.* 1991, 41–43), Khirbat Iskander (Glueck 1939, 127–129, fig. 48; Richard and Boraas 1984, 64, fig. 5; Richard 2010, 8, 10; Richard and Long jr. 2006, 274; 2007, 270–271; D'Angelo 2010, 209–210), Lejjun (Chesson *et al.* 2005, 20, 24–25; Jones 2006; 2007a; 2007b), Minsahlat (Chesson *et al.* 2005, 19–20; Miller *et al.* 1991, 63), Mudawwarah (Chesson *et al*. 2005, 10, fig.1, 25; Miller *et al.* 1991, 145), Mutawwaq (Fernández-Tresguerres Velasco 2011, 113–119), Rujm Birjis (Miller *et al.* 1991, 55–57, Chesson *et al*. 2005, 12–13, fig. 3).

7 Hartuv (Mazar and Miroschedji 1996, 7–9, 11–12) and Mutawwaq (Nigro, Sala and Polcaro 2008, 220–222, 227; Scheltema 2008, 73–75; Fernández-Tresguerres Velasco 2011, 113–114).

8 Jedideh (Mortensen and Thuesen 1998, 96) and Murayghat (Savage 2010; Savage and Rollefson 2001).

9 Exceptions do exist in the examples from Murayghat (the hajr Mansub) and Gezer. These standing stones are characterized by incised grooves and cupmarks (Ben-Ami 2008, 23, fig 4; Savage 2010, 36, fig 4).

10 Some scholars have identified standing stones as low as 10 or 30 cm in height. These would be hard to detect individually and have been identified in context with other standing stones or other features pointing to their purpose (Avner 1990, 133; Gophna and Ayalon 2004, table 1).

11 I would like to thank Dr Uzi Avner for giving me access to his unpublished PhD. (Avner 2002). Avner's 2002 analysis of standing stone sites in the Negev and the Sinai was based on 207 monuments. The number of identified monuments has since risen to approx. 400 standing stone sites (not including the hundreds of other cult sites containing standing stones) (Avner 2002; Avner pers. comm. 2012).

12 Hugo Gajus Scheltema has voiced his concern on the issue of the preservation of these sites (Scheltema 200, 115–117). This concern is very relevant. As late as the spring of 2012 the stone line at Lejjun was damaged, apparently by looters, who have dug 2 m. into the ground at the base of some of the standing stones tumbling over two and damaging a third (pers. comm. Jennifer E. Jones 2012). In addition large-scale quarrying is threatening to damage the ceremonial site Murayghat (Savage 2010).

13 It is interesting to note that early accounts of standing stones in the vicinity of Bab edh-Dhra' have been reported (Albright 1924, 6, 10; 1926, 58–59). Unfortunately these have since disappeared (Philip 2008, 173).

14 I would like to thank Carsten Körber for the opportunity to study the ceramic material from Dhra'. I would also like to thank the staff at the German Protestant Institute of Amman (GPIA) and especially Dr Jutta Häser, for making my study and thus this publication possible. Furthermore I would like to extend my thanks to Dr Susanne Kerner for initiating my study of this material.

15 This is a feature found at monuments towards south, in the Negev and the Sinai regions (Avner 2002, 66, 84), but has also been identified farther north at Mutawwaq (Fernández-Tresguerres Velasco 2011, 116, 118, fig. 7).

16 However, it should be noted that excavations uncovered only small samples of the site (area IV and V), beyond the areas concentrating on the standing stone monument (area II) and the wall (area I and III).

17 Area VI had an equally high proportion of ceramics, but since only surface collection of ceramics were conducted in this area, this feature was interpreted as signifying erosion from other parts of the site or as suggesting underlying archaeological strata (Andersson 2011, 80).

18 With the finds of pestles, a grinder and flints at Dhra' it is interesting to note the character of finds from the Negev and Sinai sites, which according to Avner, often included flint and grinding tools (Avner 2002, 76–78).

19 The investigations of Khirbat Iskander monuments will be published in the future (D'Angelo 2010, 209–210; Richard 2010, 10).

Bibliography

Abu Shmais, A. and Scheltema, H. G. (2011) A Menhir discovered at Wadi es-Saqra, Amman district, Jordan. In Tara Steimer-Herbet (ed.) *Pierres levées, steles anthropomorphes et dolmens. Standing stones, anthropomorphic Stelae and Dolmens,* 41–46. British Archaeological Report S2317. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Al Ajlouny, F., Douglas, K., and Khrisat, B. (2011) Spatial Distribution of the Early Bronze Clay Figurative Pieces from Khirbet ez-Zeraqõn and its Religious Aspects. *Ancient Near Eastern Studies 48,* 88–125.

Albright, W. F. (1924) The Archaeological Results of an Expedition to Moab and the Dead Sea. *Bulletin of the American schools of Oriental Research 14*, 2–12.

Albright, W. F. (1 926) The Jordan Valley in the Bronze Age. *Annual of the American School of Oriental Research 6,* 13–74.

Andersson, A. (2011) *An Analysis of the Ceramic Assemblage from the EBA Period Site, Dhra', in the southern Levant, Jordan.* Unpublished MA thesis. University of Copenhagen.

Avner, U. (1990) Current Archaeological Research in Israel: Ancient Agricultural Settlement and Religion in the Uvda Valley in Southern Israel. *Biblical Archaeologist*, 53/3, 125–141.

Avner, U. (2002) *Studies in the Material and Spiritual Culture of the Negev and Sinai Populations, during the 6th–3rd Millennia B.C.* Unpublished PhD thesis. Hebrew University.

Ben-Ami, D. (2008) Monolithic Pillars in Canaan: Reconsidering the Date of the High Place at Gezer. *Levant* 40/1*,* 17–28.

Ben-Tor, A. (1977) Cult Scenes on Early Bronze Age Cylinder Seal Impressions from Palestine. *Levant* 9, 90–100.

Ben-Tor, A. (1992) New Light on Cylinder Seal Impressions Showing Cult Scenes from Early Bronze Age Palestine. *Israel Exploration Journal* 42/3–4, 153–164.

Chesson, M. (2003) Households, Houses, Neighbourhoods and Corporate Villages: Modelling the Early Bronze Age as a House Society. *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 16/1, 79–102.

Chesson, M. and Philip, G. (2003) Tales of the City? Urbanism in the Early Bronze Age Levant from Mediterranean and Levantine Perspectives. *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*, 16/1, 3–16.

Chesson, M., Makarewicz, C., Kuijt, I. and Whiting, C. (2005) Results of the 2001 Kerak Plateau Early Bronze Age Survey. In N. Serwint (ed.) *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 59, 1–63. Boston, Massachusetts, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Crumley, C. (1995) Heterarchy and the Analysis of Complex Societies. *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 7/1*,* 1–5.

D'Angelo, J. (2010) Excavations of the Area E Cemetery. In S. Richard, J. C. Long, P. S. Holdorf and G. Peterman (eds) *Khirbat Iskander, Final Report on the Early Bronze IV Area C "Gateway" And Cemeteries,* 209–222. Archaeological Report 14. Boston, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Fernández-Tresguerres Velasco, J. A. (2011) Pierres dressées dans la région de Mutawwaq (Jordanie). In T. Steimer-Herbet (ed.) *Pierres levées, steles anthropomorphes et dolmens. Standing stones, anthropomorphic Stelae and Dolmens,* 113–122. British Archaeological Report S2317, Oxford, Archaeopress.

Genz, H. (2010) Thoughts on the Function of 'Public Buildings' in the Early Bronze Age Southern Levant. In D. Bolger and L. C. Maguire (eds) *The Development of Pre-State Communities in the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honour of Edgar Peltenburg.* 46–52. Themes from the Ancient Near East BANEA Publication Series, 2. Oxford, Oxbow Books.

Glueck, N. (1939) Explorations in Eastern Palestine III. *Annual of the American Schools of Oriental research* 18/19. Chicago, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Gophna, R. and Ayalon, E. (2004) Tel Ashir: An Open Cult Site of the Intermediate Bronze Age on the Bank of the Poleg Stream. *Israel Exploration Journal* 54/2*,* 145–173.

Greenberg, R. and Eisenberg, E. (2002) Egypt, Bet Yerah and Early Canaanite Urbanization. In E. C. M. Van den Brink and T. E. Levy (eds) *Egypt and the Levant. Interrelations from the 4th through the Early 3rd Millennium B.C.E.,* 213–222. London, Leicester University Press.

Insoll, T. (2004) *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion.* London, Routledge.

Jones, J. E. (2006) Reconstructing Manufacturing Landscapes at Early Bronze Age Al-Lajjun, Jordan. The First Season (2003). *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 50, 315–323.

Jones, J. E. (2007a) A Landscape Approach to Craft and Agricultural Production. In T. E. Levy, P.M. Daviau,Y. Michéle, W. Randall and M. Shaer (eds) *Crossing Jordan. North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan,* 277–284. London, Equinox Publishing.

Jones, J. E. (2007b) Craft Production and Landscape in the Early Bronze Age Settlement at Al-Lajjun, Jordan. In F. Kraysheh (ed.) *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan IX: Cultural Interaction through the Ages,* 123–131 place of publication and publisher?

Kerner, S. (2008) The Transition Between the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age in the Southern Levant. In H. Kühne, R. M. Czichon, Rainer and F. J. Kreppner (eds) *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East. 29 March–3 April 2004. Freie Universität Berlin. Vol. 2: Social and Cultural Transformation. The Archaeology of Transitional Periods and Dark Ages Excavation Reports,* 155–166. Weisbaden, Harrasowitz Verlag.

Körber, C. (1993) Edh-Dhra' Survey 1992. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. The Kenneth Wayne Russel Memorial Volume* XXXVII, 550–553.

Körber, C. (1994a) Archaeology in Jordan: Explorations in adh-Dhra'. In G. L. Peterman (ed.) *American Journal of Archaeology (AJA)* Vol. 98, no. 3, 533–534.

Körber, C. (1994b) Monolithic pillars in Jordan and the 1992 excavations at Dhra'. In S. Kerner (ed.) *The Near East in Antiquity. Archaeological work of the National and International Institutions in Jordan, Vol. IV*, 65–74.

Körber, C. (1995) Bereicht über die Grabungskampagne in ed-Dra 1994. *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts für Alterwissenschaft des Heiligen Landes*, 4, 46–47.

Lapp, N. (2003) Cylinder Seals, Impressions, and Incised Sherds. In W. E. Rast and T. R. Schaub (eds) *Bab edh-Dhra': Excavations at the Town Site (1975–1981) Part 1: Text. Reports of the Expedition to the Dead Sea Plain, Jordan, Vol. 2,* 522–565. Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns.

MacDonald, B., Herr, L. G., Neeley, M. P., Gagos, T., Moumani, K. and Rockman, M. (2004) *The Tafilah-Busayrah Archaeological Survey 1999–2001, West-Central Jordan*, Archaeological Report 9. Boston, American Schools of Oriental research.

Mazar, A. and Miroschedji, P. (1996) Hartuv. An Aspect of the Early Bronze Age I Culture of the Southern Israel. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 302*,* 1–40.

Milevski, I. (2011) *Early Bronze Age Goods Exchange in the Southern Levant. A Marxist Perspective.* London, Equinox Publishing.

Miller, J. M. (1991) The Survey. In J. M. Miller (ed.) *Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau. American Schools of the Oriental Research*, 1–22. Archaeological Report 1. Atlanta, Scholars Press.

Miller, J. M. *et al.* (1991) The Sites. In J. M. Miller (ed.) *Archaeological Survey of the Kerak Plateau. American Schools of the Oriental Research*, 23–168. Archaeological Report 1. Atlanta, Scholars Press.

Mortensen, P. and Thuesen, I. (1998) The Prehistoric Periods. In M. Piccorillo and E. Alliata (eds) *Mount Nebo. New Archaeological Excavations 1967–1997,* 85–99. Jerusalem, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.

Nigro, L., Sala, M. and Polcara, A. (2008) Preliminary Report of the Third Season of Excavation of Rome "La Sapienza" University at Khirbat al-Batrawi (Upper wadi Az-Zarqa'). *Annual of the Department of Antiquities in Jordan* 52, 209–230.

Palumbo, G. (1998) The Bronze Age. In M. Piccorillo and E. Alliata (eds) *Mount Nebo. New Archaeological Excavations 1967–1997,* 100–109. Jerusalem, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.

Palumbo, G. (2008) The Early Bronze Age IV. In R. B. Adams (ed.) *Jordan. An Archaeological Reader*, 227–262. London, Equinox Publishing.

Philip, G. (2003) The Early Bronze Age of the Southern Levant: A Landscape Approach. *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology,* 16/1*,* 103–132.

Philip, G. (2008) The Early Bronze Age I–III. In R. B. Adams (ed.) *Jordan. An Archaeological Reader*, 161–22 6. London, Equinox Publishing.

Renfrew, C. (1994) The Archaeology of Religion. In C. Renfrew and E. B. W. Zubrow (ed.) *The Ancient Mind. Elements of Cognitive Archaeology,* 47–54. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Richard, S. (2010) Introduction. In S. Richard, J. C. Long, P. S. Holdorf and G. Peterman (eds) *Khirbat Iskander, Final Report on the Early Bronze IV Area C "Gateway" And Cemeteries,* 1–19. Archaeological Report 14. Boston, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Richard, S. and Boraas, R. S. (1984) Preliminary Report of the 1981–1982 Seasons of the Expedition to Khirbet Iskander and its Vicinity. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 254, 63–74.

Richard, S. and Long Jr, J. C. (2006) Three Seasons of Excavation at Khirbet Iskander, 1997, 2000, 2004. *Annual of Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 49, 261–276.

Richard, S. and Long Jr, J. C. (2007) A City in Collapse at the End of the Early Bronze Age. In T. E. Levy, P. M. Daviau, Y. Michéle, W. Randall and M. Shaer (eds) *Crossing Jordan. North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan,* 269–279. London, Equinox Publishing Ltd.

Sala, M. (2011) Sanctuaries, Temples and Cult places in Early Bronze I Southern Levant. *Vicino & Medio Oriente,* XV, 1–32.

Savage, S. H. (2010) Jordan's Stonehenge: the Endangered Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age Site in al'Murayghat – Hajr al-Mansûb. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 73/1, 32–46.

Savage, S. H. (2012) From Maadi to the plain of Antioch: What can Basalt Spindle Whorls Tell Us about Overland Trade in the Early Bronze I Levant? In M. S. Chesson, W. Alfrecht and I. Kuijt (eds) *Daily Life, materiality and Complexity in Early Urban Communities of the Southern Levant. Papers in Honor of Walter E. Rast and R. Thomas Schaub,* 119–138. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns.

Savage, S. H. and Rollefson, G. O. (2001) The Moab Archaeological Resource Survey: Some Results from the 2000 Field Season. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 45, 217–236.

Scheltema, H. G. (2008) *Megalithic Jordan. An Introduction and Field Guide.* American Center of Oriental Research Occasional Publication 6. Amman, American Center of Oriental Research.

Scheltema, H. G. (2011) Standing Stones in Jordan: Some Remarks on Occurrence, Typology and Dating. In T. Steimer-Herbet (ed.) *Pierres levées, steles anthropomorphes et dolmens. Standing stones, anthropomorphic Stelae and Dolmens,* 47–52. British Archaeological Report S2317. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Schick, C. (1879) Journey into Moab. *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement* 11/4, 187–192.

Steadman, S. R. (2009) *The Archaeology of Religion: Cultures and Their Beliefs in Worldwide Context.* Walnut Creek, Left Coast Press.

Yekutieli, Y. (2001) The Early Bronze Age IA of the Southern Canaan. In S. R. Wolff (ed.) *Studies in the Archaeology of Israel and Neighbouring Lands in Memory of Douglas L. Esse.* Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 59, 659–688. Chicago, Illinois.

6

Late Chalcolithic Mesopotamia: towards a definition of sacred space and its evolution

Pascal Butterlin

It is usually admitted that the development of monumental architecture is one of the major aspects of the urbanisation process in Late Chalcolithic Greater Mesopotamia. From the beginning, this development has been linked to the institutionalisation of religious practice at the dawn of history. This theocratic view of Mesopotamian history is well known, its roots lie in Deimel's temple state theory. Formulated during the 1920s to explain 3rd millennium city State development, this theory has been applied to 4th millennium architecture during the 1930s; at Uruk as in Gawra or tell Brak, the monumental tripartite buildings excavated were interpreted as 'temples', and all the iconographic data interpreted along the 'King Priest theory'. Deimel's ghost is still operating in the processual approach of those developments, because neo evolutionist theories have largely viewed the development of complex societies as the result of the development of a religious elite of priests, integrating in huge religious compounds and festivals the people both of the city and its countryside. The precise nature of this integration remains disputed, but it is commonly accepted that priests built up a redistributive system to control and manage the incipient urban economies. This largely theocratic view has been challenged during the 1980s, following the debates about the evolution of tripartite architecture, for the most during the Ubaid period. Curiously, Ubaid monumental architecture has been the main focus of attention in those discussions and the following 'Uruk' period has attracted less attention, on that specific topic. Discussion has focused largely on the Uruk expansion, the local developments prior to this phenomenon and its chronology. Even if the classical vision of the priest kings of Uruk times has been challenged by philologists (Steinkeller 2001), the debate has remained centred around the idea that Uruk was first of all a religious centre, theatre of the sacred marriage represented on the Uruk vase. My point here is not to challenge the idea that Uruk or Susa were religious centres or that such festivals occurred at Uruk or elsewhere during the 4th millennium, but to establish on what criteria we can discuss the notion of sacred, in societies which were the cradle of huge mutations, from LC 1 to LC 5 period.

First of all it is useful to present an overview of those discussions and their conceptions about what religion should mean during the proto-urban period. Our second step will be focused on the kind of scenography which appears through Late Chalcolithic monumental architecture and the last one will be to contextualise those observations and define a kind of mental map of Late Chalcolithic religiosities.

Theocracy and neo-evolutionism

Writing something about the sacred during the late 4th millennium is definitely an impossible challenge. Charvat has delineated carefully some orientations about the spiritual world developed during 'Uruk' times and its revolutionary nature (Charvat 2002, 150–158). And even if much has been written on the topic, we have to recognise that we are dealing with some recurrent assumptions about what this religiosity should be and what kind of agency we should expect to reconstruct. First of all, we are dealing with very different cultural traditions in Greater Mesopotamia, since the Late Neolithic period (Fig. 6.1). Even if those regions belong to a shared cultural community from the Ubaid period on, that does not mean that there existed some common 'religion', or a common set of beliefs, even during the so called 'Uruk expansion'. Late Chalcolithic religious history has been largely dominated by some key issues defined for the most part during the Uruk excavations, and we are still largely influenced by that way of thinking.

The first impediment is linked to the king priest theories. As we have noted in our introduction, Deimel's hand is everywhere in this way of dealing with Late Chalcolithic societies, especially at Uruk itself. Following the excavations at Uruk, in Eanna and Anu Ziggurat sectors, archaeologists recognised 'temples', with the clear assumption that tripartite architecture was in itself proof of the existence of religious monumental architecture either on high or low terraces. Heinrich (1982), in his monumental synthesis, introduced a hint in this way of seeing things, distinguishing temples and 'Kulthäuser', that is the buildings in Eanna which were thought to be festival

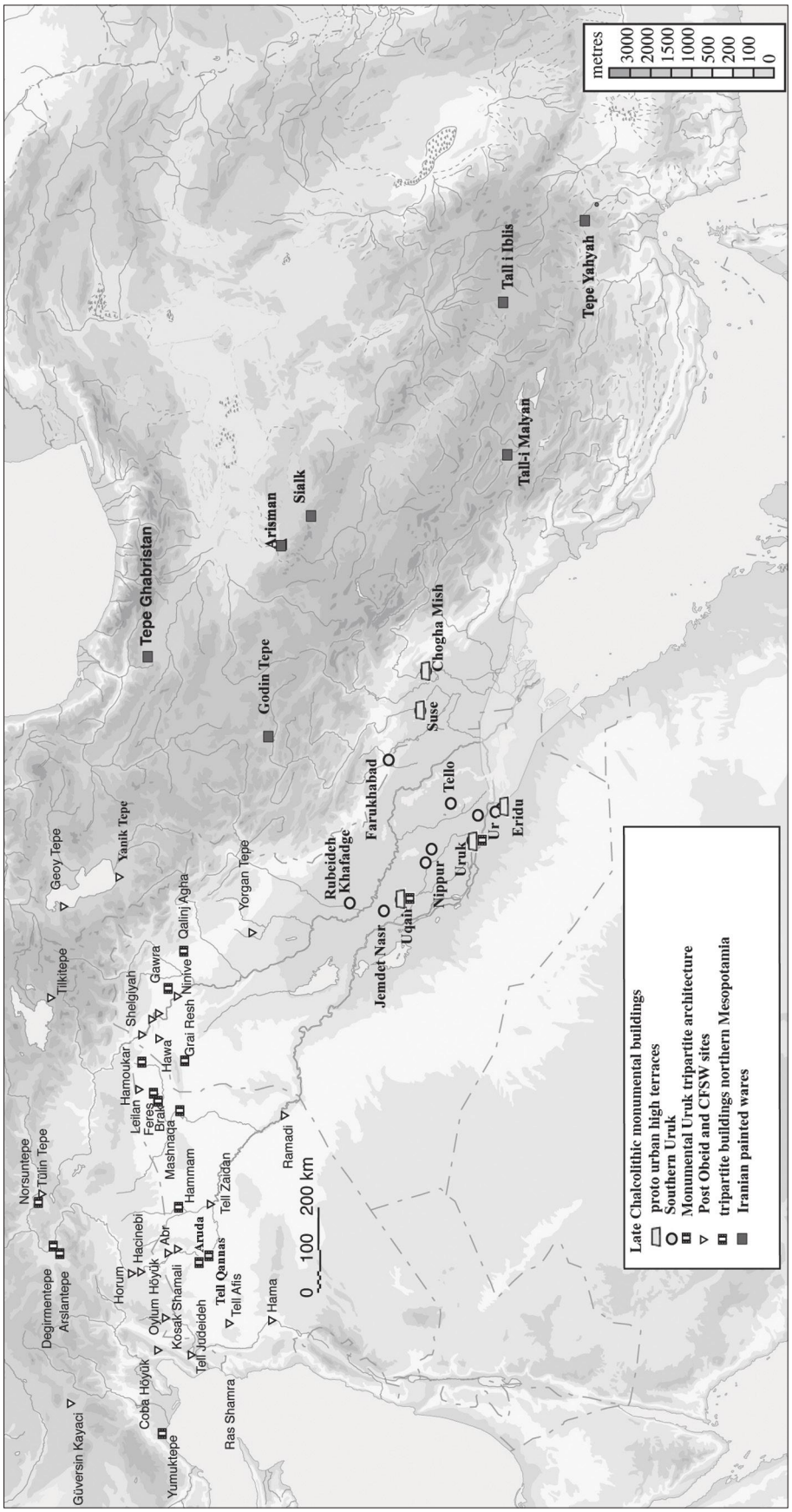


Fig. 6.1: Proto-urban centres in Greater Mesopotmia (P. Butterlin).

houses, or reception houses in the case of the buildings and the real temples (the white temple for instance). The Eanna buildings were interpreted as the predecessors of the later Eanna precinct, crowned by the massive ziggurat and dedicated to the goddess Inanna, whose engraved symbols were recorded on various objects (Blocher 2013). The sector named 'Anu Ziggurat', only because it was situated near the later Bît Resh monument dedicated to the god Anu, was thought to be the high temple of another deity, the differences between the two precincts being assigned two religious differences (Nissen 1988, 100–101). It was conceived as the other centre of a twin city, Kullab, being under the protection of an unknown god and Eanna of Inanna. Those centres would have merged together in prehisoric times (Nissen 2001). Uruk was seen as the matrix of future City-States, the supposed order prevailing in later Early Dynastic times being exported towards the late 4th millennium, that is 800 years before.

The results of the excavations at Tepe Gawra were also interpreted along the same line (Tobler 1950; Rothman 2002; 2009). The tripartite buildings discovered there were interpreted as another set of archaic temples, as would be, some years later, the whole of the Eridu sequence (Safar and Lloyd 1981) or the Uqair Buildings. It appeared clearly that tripartite architecture had a very long story and that the Uruk buildings were only the latest stages of a long evolution, beginning in Ubaidian times. That meant that the socio-religious order prevailing during the late Uruk period was already at stake at Eridu or Susa earlier on. Therefore, the sealings figuring masked figures were interpreted as representations of 'shamans', early religious leaders of proto-urban communities like Susa A. Those shamans would have been later replaced by king priests figured as master of the animals, and performers of rituals. The idea that those centres were directed by king priests at the head of the society has been enduring, especially since iconography has been interpreted on the same line. The various representations of the 'king priests' and, first of all, the famous Uruk vase, were conceived as the '*mise en scène*' of ritual activities and the celebration of a theocratic order (Butterlin 2003, 74–77; Winter 2007).

Neo-evolutionism has not fundamentally modified this situation. In fact, the theocratic model was embedded in Service's model from the beginning. Tracking the great divide between chiefdom and states was merely tracking two different steps in a theocratic evolutionary line, from religious chiefs to king priests. This way of dealing with the archaeological record has been challenged, especially during the 1980s, around the now classical discussion about tripartite Ubaid architecture: on what precise criteria could we define a 'temple'? Aurenche, Forest and Margueron represent different critical approaches of the theocratic way of interpreting the data (Aurenche 1981; Forest 1996; 1999; Margueron 1992; 2009).

A good example of those discussions is the debate about the Gawra sequence: thoroughly excavated during the 1930s by American excavators (Speiser 1935; Tobler 1950), it has long been considered as the best example of a rank society at the time of the chiefdoms and complex chiefdoms of the 4th millennium BC (Forest 1983; 1996; Rothman 2002; Frangipane 1996). With its 19 levels, it provides an extraordinary sequence, spanning from the 6th to the mid-4th millennium BC (Fig. 6.2). Its material and the global structures of its different levels came under close scrutiny during the 1980s; at the beginning of our century they induced a new set of studies gathered in a collective book published in 2009 (Butterlin 2009). Without any doubt, Tepe Gawra is the mirror of evolutionism and its failure as an euristic device, especially when we speak about 'chiefdom' and 'complex chiefdom' and the role of religion in those processes.

Tepe Gawra seems to be an ideal case: the tell was completely excavated until level IX, and half of the surface of the prehistoric village was unearthed. It produced an impressive and apparently continuous superimposition of villages, offering the opportunity to follow the evolution of a prehistoric community in Upper Mesopotamia, from the Halaf period to the middle of the 4th millennium. An impressive set of tripartite building has been excavated and they were considered as 'temples' (Tobler 1950).

From that point on, scholars first focused on the interpretation of the inner organisation of this community, identifiying clear breaks in the sequence: after level XVI, level XIII, and thereafter, level XII and the following levels (Butterlin 2005). The sequence provides a complete evolutionary set, from an egalitarian society to the simple and complex chiefdom, especially on the various phases of level VIII. But looking more precisely at these approaches, one may see easily that there are considerable discrepancies between those interpretations: where Frangipane identifies a simple chiefdom, Forest sees a '*communauté domestique agricole*' based on nuclear families (Frangipane 1996; Forest 1996). Most importantly, the role played by 'religion' in this matter is disputed. The crucial point is to know here if and when religious architecture appears at Gawra. For example Rothman distinguished in each level (during LC period) a new step on the evolutionary ladder, from the simple chiefdom to the theocratic complex chiefdom. He proposes to interpret the differences observed between the tripartite buildings as a functional one: all the tripartite buildings are not temples but only the *in antis* ones should be considered that way, from level XI on. Before, there are no traces of religious architecture and so level XI should be considered in northern Mesopotamia during LC 2 period as the great differentiation between religious and secular architecture. Forest, on the other hand, as Margueron denies the idea that there existed even one temple in Gawra. All the monumental architecture is secular and its evolution is interpreted as an inner evolution of the chiefdom or as the result of exterior influence notably from the south. Those buildings were houses of chiefs.

Behind this discussion lies a stratigraphic issue which was underestimated. Since the 1980s, many debates have dealt with the standard stratigraphic division of the Gawra sequence. I have produced a new section of the site, recording the actual altitudes of the summit of the walls and their foundations. This

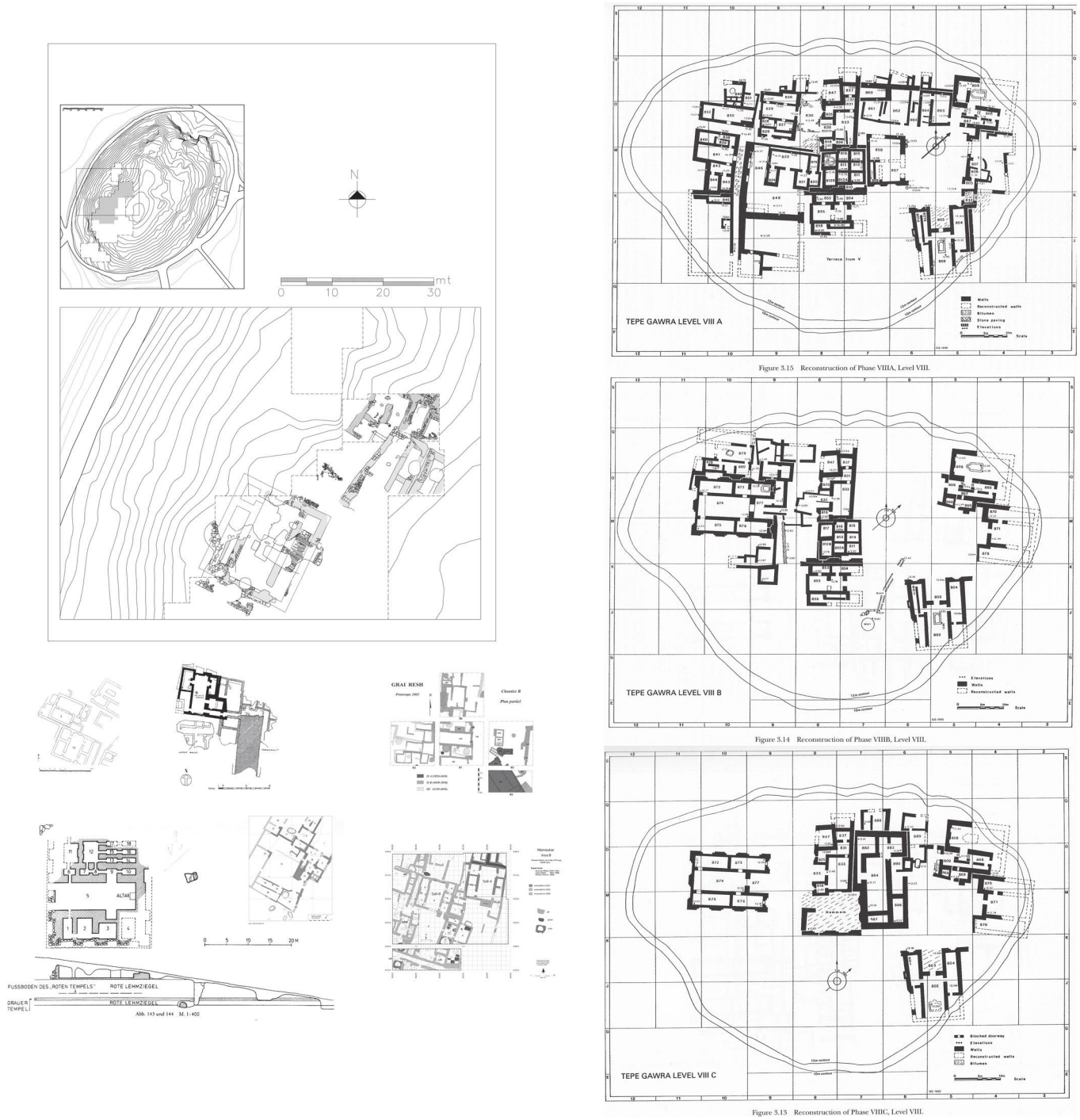


Fig. 6.2: Tripartite architecture of Upper Mesopotamia. Left: Arslantepe VII, Grai Resh, Brak and Hamoukar; right: Tepe Gawra VIII, A–C, composition at same scale (P. Butterlin).

kind of study allows us to identify the numerous stratigraphic discrepancies and to re-evaluate the data. It is now well known that the whole sequence is an artificial reconstruction; Forest, Rothman and I tried to solve the main problems, wherever it was possible. One might suggest that the existence of shrines or 'temples' could have been an excellent focus and justify the recurrent occupation of the site or some spots of the site. But this is not the case.

Against Rothman's assumption about religious architecture, Margueron adopts a phenomenological approach towards religious architecture based on a fundamental assumption (Margueron 2009). The sacred space is a stage, where the

encounter between the deity and the faithful or the devotee occurs. It is materialised by the place of epiphany and the place of offering. It explains the stability of this kind of place. At Gawra, those 'temples' constituted a matter of discussion and Margueron successfully demonstrated that none of those temples was built upon a former one (Margueron 2009). If one puts on a plan all these temples, it is astonishing to see that they 'moved' around the whole settlement all along its history. It is quite the opposite at Eridu for instance, from Ubaid times on and in the later temples in the City States. This lack of continuity at Tepe Gawra, even in the monumental space, gives the impression of a constant redistribution of power in those 'chiefdoms', whether this power is religious or not in its roots.

Those roots have particularly been discussed by Frangipane who has proposed to make the distinction between the sources of power in northern and southern Mesopotamia or Susiana (Frangipane 1996; 2007). The precocious development of high terraces and monumental architecture in Ubaidian Mesopotamia and Susiana has been linked to the way some households among the extended households of southern Mesopotamia managed to stand as a benchmark for the whole community (Pollock 1999). This process had already occurred during the Ubaid 0–2 phases and it would explain how those families concentrated through kinship the material resources in a staple finance system. This system would have been successful and highly dynamic in Southern Mesopotamia, whereas it resulted in a monumental failure in Susiana (Hole 2010). Ritualised exchange would have been the key for the development of high ranking families having a special kind of prestige, as proposed by Adams and later by Stein. This kind of organisation would have been fundamentally different from the horizontal egalitarian societies in the north, even after the Ubaid expansion. There, a different kind of elite, whose power was not founded on staple finance but wealth finance was developing.

This would surely explain the huge differences one observes between the different parts of Greater Mesopotamia later on during the Late Chalcolithic period. Recent researches have focused on defining different paths towards urbanisations from the Ubaid 3–4 on, to the end of the 4th millennium, following the definition of a new chronological framework, at Santa Fe in 1998 (Rothman 2002). Religion, and we mean here institutionalised forms of religiosity, seems to be deeply embedded in the development of Southern Mesopotamia and Susiana during the Ubaid times/Late Susiana. It is best materialised through the development of monumental high terraces. It is not the case in Northern Mesopotamia, where a different path towards urbanisation occurs, with possibly different religious traditions, as expressed for example by the widespread distribution of eye idols in this region during the LC 3 period (Stein 2012). It is only during the LC 3 or 4 period that some buildings could be interpreted as 'temples', at Arslantepe and Tell Brak (Eye temple). And those differences are particularly striking when we discuss those famous tripartite monumental buildings and their evolution.

Religious or political scenography in proto-urban societies?

Whatever the situation during the late Neolithic in Greater Mesopotamia, everybody agrees that from the late Ubaid times on, the development of tripartite monumental architecture is one of the major aspects of the urbanisation of this part of the world and a major step in religious history. It is agreed that it created a new relationship to the sacred, embedded in its institutionalisation through central agencies and their architectural expression. The main impediment is here quite simple: since a temple is fundamentally in Mesopotamian tradition the house of the god, and since tripartite architecture became during the Ubaid period the usual way of building houses, how is it possible to distinguish the house of the god from another one, especially the chief's one? It is the classical dilemma and paramount in this process is the development of integrated monumental complexes, whether as complex compounds or high terraces, where tripartite units are only one part of the whole scenography, but still the object of the main focus. It is possible to make among all those buildings some differences, and I will argue here that those differences are some clues to understand the early differentiation between political and religious prestige buildings.

First of all, let us come back to tripartite buildings themselves and their evolution. Much attention has been devoted to Ubaid architecture but proto-urban tripartite architecture has not been studied so intensely. The publication of the whole data of Uruk (Eichmann 1989; 2007, and for an overview 2013), recent excavations in northern Syria, in Brak, Hamoukar or Tell Feres have produced new data and allowed us to study the whole documentation in a unified manner (Butterlin 2009; 2012; Stein 2012). First of all, tripartite architecture is basically the typical layout of a house, from Ubaidian times on. It is still the case during the LC 1 period, at Tepe Gawra or Degirmentepe for instance. The main difference is the disappearance at this stage of the cruciform layout of the central space which was typical of Hamrin and Gawra Ubaidian architecture. When one compares the surfaces, it appears clearly that the typical village house at that time has an area of about 90–100 m^2, with an average area of 35 m^2 for the central place. It is less for example than at the Tell Madhur house. The great houses at Degirmentepe or Gawra XII have an area of *c*. 175 m^2 and a central place of 50 m^2. Those houses are considered to be the houses of the chiefs of those northern mesopotamian villages. Two household levels are clearly present and there are no traces of any religious activity in those houses.

At that time, nothing compares to the scale achieved in Southern Mesopotamia where a typical monumental tripartite architecture appears during the Ubaid 3–4, at Eridu, Uruk and possibly Oueili. There, the tripartite houses have an average surface of 280 m^2 and a central space of *c*. 95 m^2. Those buildings situated on terraces belong to a completely different tradition. During the LC 2 and 3, at a time where no information is available in Southern Mesopotamia, we

observe the following situation in the north (Fig. 6.2): first of all in the tigridian region, tripartite architecture ceases to be the 'normal' way of living and is now reserved. At Gawra, one finds only two or more monumental houses with a great stability of the surface of the central space (around 27 m^2), and a progressive monumentalisation of the houses, around 190 m^2, for the greatest ones. With the development of the typical *in antis* layout and a surface around 190–200 m^2, we can define a monumental module in the Tigris region. Are those buildings temples? This is still debated but we are dealing with a typical scale, a northern monumental module. In the Khabur basin, tripartite domestic architecture is still widely used as in the Sinjar. Interestingly, the LC 3 houses are smaller than during the LC 1 phase, *c.* 70 m^2 in surface with a central space of 20 m^2. It is precisely at this time that a different type of tripartite architecture appears for the first time, at Arslan tepe (Frangipane 2004; 2007) and Tell Brak (Eye temple): those buildings are outliers in the whole sequence in the north with 400 m^2 and 575 m^2 of general surface and central spaces of 123 m^2 and 108 m^2. If we compare the Eye temple to what we know of tripartite architecture in the north, it appears that the distance between them is particularly marked. The existence of storage rooms in the northern half of this building is quite specific, and unusual.

This surface of 400–500 m^2 is astonishing in the north. Those buildings were usually considered as temples, with a layout inspired from the south. Indeed, this surface is precisely what I proposed to name the Uruk standard monumental buildings (Butterlin 2012): at Uruk, both at Eanna and at the Anu ziggurat, this scale is the most attested one, with an average surface of 400 m^2 for those buildings (Fig. 6.3). There are two other steps, what I call second rank and giant buildings. Nothing indicates in all those buildings that we are dealing with temples. At Uruk, it is usually accepted, as in Arslantepe or Brak, that those buildings were used ceremonially, for assemblies and ritual consumption. It is the same case at Gawra, but the general layout is not the same. This theme is central in the discussion around commensality and rituals of feastings. The main question is of course to know for whom those reception places were conceived, and what kind of general layout was present.

The main difference that can be observed first of all concerns the circulation system: at Gawra from level XI on, the *in antis* layout marks a complete shift from the previous traditions, where lateral access prevailed. This means that we are dealing with a very specific type of reception, with a direct an unique access to the central space. At Uruk, apart from the Anu ziggurat sequence, the prevailing system is the multiple access one, with a growing number of lateral doors, as the building becomes bigger. Usually, the central space presents two openings on each small side which are to be interpreted as windows, not doors.

A second point is the general layout of the central space. Since the late Neolithic, the main hall was the special focal point of those buildings, a space of reception and prestige, usually with a fireplace. This is still the case with various specific layouts. At Uruk, the presence of a second hall of reception, the so-called *Kopfbau* and a very distinctive supposed fireplace, usually compared to a keyhole, characterise the tripartite buildings. Those keyholes are also attested in the pillared 'halls', which seem to be simplified versions of tripartite buildings, reducing more and more the wings. At Uruk, those reception halls can be divided into three classes: a standard one, typically 5–6 m and a large one, 16–18 m long. These reception rooms are di-symetrically organised: usually with a pair of doors around the fireplaces and a double pair on the other side of the room. The organisation is completely different at the white temple, with a symmetric layout; we will come back later to that point.

A second rank is characterised by a much wider central space 8–11 m large, and with various lengths, up to 37.50 m or 62 m for the *Kalksteingebäude*. Here the same di-symmetrical organisation of space prevails as is the case for the temple C. Three fireplaces are present in the central place, two in the western half of the room and one rectangular in shape, in the eastern part. This central space is clearly divided in two equal parts, the eastern one with a huge fireplace and access to the staircases and a western one, with multiples doors and two fireplaces. This means a kind of specialisation and, in some way, a polarisation of space. I would argue that the eastern part was the place of honour, and the western one the place where the visitors were welcomed, and could get out easily. This is, finally, the main purpose of all those doors, to give instant and quick access to specific parts of the building. How many people gathered there remains difficult to assess, the important point is that the existence of many reception places means that different assemblies occurred at the same time in different spaces.

This last remark drives us to our second point. All this organisation of space is highly differentiated and organised along a central idea, a hierarchised and differentiated system of reception, which is the typical way of creating some kind of distance. This effect was achieved through different scenographies which have been identified long ago: buildings situated on top of high terraces belong to completely different kind of complexes as those integrated in complex combinations of structural units, as is the case for most of the tripartite buildings excavated at Eanna. Are those differences linked to different kind of rituals as proposes Nissen? It is possible but the conception of space is utterly different.

At Eanna, it is possible to identify in the later stages of the sequence, now GS 16, four different compounds. Three of them comprise one building of second rank, and one or two standard buildings, organised around courts and in one case associated with a pillared hall. The interesting point here is the variation around a common structural scheme: elementary units are combined in different ways. As far as we know, those compounds are enclosed and welcomed gatherings. We ignore what kind of assemblies occurred there but the very fact that those complexes coexisted means that

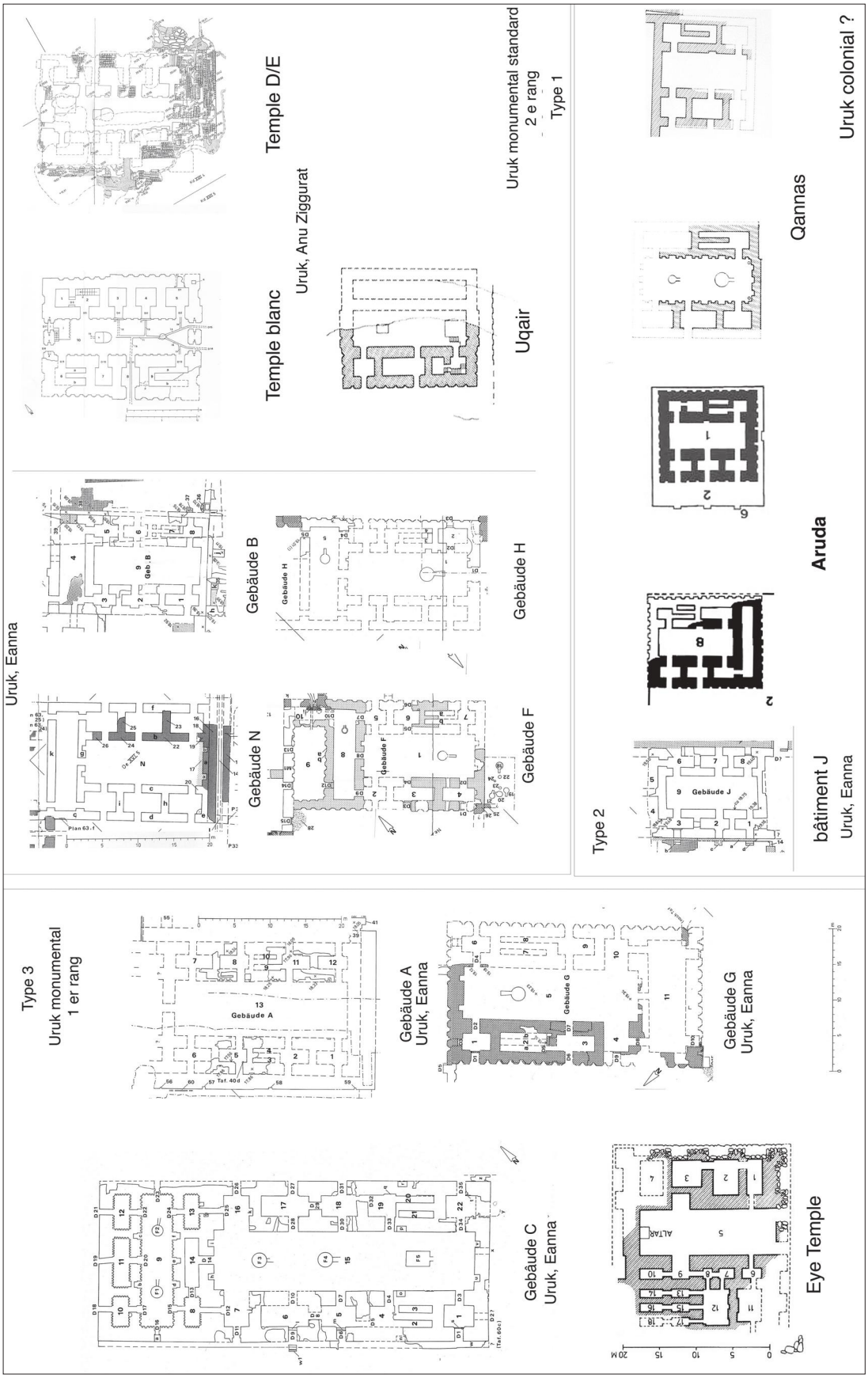


Fig. 6.3: Uruk monumental architecture, Uruk Eanna and Anu ziggurat (Courtesy R. Eichmann 2007) and colonial tripartite architecture, composition at same scale (P. Butterlin).

more than one assembly occurred at the same time, and that those assemblies were divided along several compounds, but concentrated in one place. All this evocates some kind of confederal system associating different social units. It is most probable that huge ceremonies or feasts occured there, with redistribution operations. It is well known that the sealings and the few archaic tablets recovered in those complexes are linked to these operations. Those complexes can therefore be considered as a very specific step in the history of commensality (Pollock 2012): ultimate expression of the 'tripartite tradition' of receptions, they were the laboratory of a new society.

The next level in Eanna, level 15 is all the more interesting: the old complexes are levelled, apart from the complex of building C which is enlarged, to the west. A new court and three building are added to a system which appears as a reception complex. Two of those new buildings are halls: the *Hallenbau* and the *Pfeilerhalle*, the latter being strategically situated between the two courts. It appears as a monumental gateway decorated with stone cone panels. The adornment of the 12 polygonal pillars of this building has been interpreted as a zodiac, giving to this building an almost cosmological meaning. It could well be the case but a more fruitful approach is to understand the symbolic value of the colours used.

White, red and black were the main colours used in cone mosaics. Charvat has linked those colours to both symbolic and social components of the Uruk society (Charvat 2002, 145). He has argued that white was the colour of the gods, mixing purity, fertility and divinity. The white coating of the walls and the floors of the white temple are in this case of special significance. Red and black stand for two of the estates he identifies in Uruk society: red for the power, LUGAL, KINGAL, and black for the commoners (LU, GURUSH). Let us add in the case of the *Pfeilerhalle*, that the western façade of the building, oriented towards the external part of the compound was adorned in black and white as the eastern part, looking towards the inner part, with temple C, was adorned in red and white mosaics. If red was indeed the symbol of archaic power it could make some sense, in a complex which appears as a protopalace. The great court situated to the south belongs also to this new complex and we could argue that the last stage of the Eanna complex saw the development of a huge protopalatial ceremonial complex, built upon the ruins of a different system.

Could we be speaking of some kind of temple/palace complex, where redistributive and ritualised operations occur? It is the idea put forward by Frangipane about the Arslantepe VI A complex and it points out how difficult it is to understand those complexes. At Arslantepe, tripartite architecture occurs at level VII, with the already mentioned temple C, centrally situated upon a low terrace on the hill. The discovery of a lot of mass produced bowls on the soil of this building leaves no doubt about its redistributive functions, along with seals. Its religious function remains unclear and we have already noticed that its layout and its scale fit more with the southern mesopotamian tradition than a northern one. It could therefore have been a 'temple'. The important point is the abandonment of the tripartite layout of monumental buildings at the end of the 4th millennium and the progressive development of an integrated complex, layer VI A, where bipartite monumental buildings become the main architectural structural units. This extraordinary complex articulated around a street has provided a fabulous insight on the complex redistributive system at work at Arslantepe, with minor influence coming from Southern Mesopotamia. The ritualised way of the redistribution processes occurring at Arslantepe must have been embedded within a set of religious beliefs and practices which belong to a different tradition from the one in the south. The paintings discovered on the walls of the main corridor are clear testimony of a completely different symbolic universe. Temple C of the preceding period was replaced by a bipartite building and it is difficult to consider that every bipartite building was conceived as the house of a god. Those buildings situated on the southern slopes of the hill near a gate were clearly some interface where differentiated receptions/distributions occurred, as appears in the building B and nearby storehouse.

To sum up, this study of tripartite and monumental architecture seems to confirm the idea expressed by Steinkeller that there existed a very early division between religious and secular powers in those states (Steinkeller 1999). This difference appears especially through different kinds of scenographic layouts and integration devices of elementary units which all derive from the tripartite archetype, adapted to specific cultural and political situations.

Time and space: a new religious mind?

It is a common idea to recognise a profound ideological mutation accompanying the urban revolution. The presentation of the religious dimensions of those mutations is usually centred around the idea that the religious roots of the traditional agrarian city-State of Mesopotamia were founded at Uruk, through the institutionalisation of the relationship between the king priest and the godess. This revolution is best expressed through the famous Uruk vase, materialisation of a new vision of the world and the social order. The monumental centre of Uruk has been interpreted along this theocratic view: the Eanna monuments were seen as the stage of the sacred marriage festivals and the 'Anu complex' could have been linked also to those rituals. It remains difficult to link the various names given to temples in the archaic texts to actual buildings, all the more because those texts have not been found *in situ*, and are attributed to the later phases of the Uruk period, that is Uruk IV a or III, that is LC 5 and later (Szarzynska 1992). She records 25 names of temples in the archaic texts of Uruk, the two main terms designating them being èß and é. The various reorganisation of the Eanna precint and the Anu complex are attributed to changes in religious conceptions combined to political changes. Those changes do not appear in the textual data, either because they occurred before the development of the earliest scripture

(especially at the Anu ziggurat) or because the actual data is not clear enough to understand those changes.

Once we abandon the idea that tripartite monumental architecture is necessarily devoted to religious activities, how is it possible to establish a distinction between religious or secular buildings? Is this distinction useful at all in this context? Forest argued that the whole series was secular and that the only real temples were at Uruk the *Riemchengebäude* and the *Steingebäude* (Forest 1999). The tripartite buildings were merely communal buildings. This view is certainly excessive but it points out the weakness of the theocratic views. My proposition here is that it is possible to make a distinction between different types of monumental settings, those devoted more specifically to political purposes being the integrated complexes articulating various tripartite buildings, halls and courts. On the contrary, isolated tripartite buildings on top of terraces or situated in specific compounds constitute a different set of complexes. This is specifically the case for the Anu complex, the Uqair temple and possibly the Jebel Aruda 'temples'. At this point, we can propose two lines of arguments. The first is the particular organisation of this kind of tripartite building, the second is the evolution of those buildings or the complexes in which they were integrated. Here the question will be centred on the very specific space and time in which those complexes were integrated.

As we have seen, most of the tripartite monumental buildings excavated were organised around fireplaces both present in monumental and domestic architecture, for instance in the Euphrates colonies houses. Some of those buildings present more complex installations, and it is of the utmost importance to understand if those installations are relied to cultic or ritual activities. Two buildings both isolated either on top of a terrace or in a precinct are specific: the white temple and its predecessors, and the *Steinstiftgebäude*, the stone cone building. As we have seen, the tripartite monuments built upon the Anu ziggurat belong clearly in scale to the monumental standards of the Uruk period. What distinguished them is their specific layout and some peculiar installations. There was no *kopfbau* at the white temple, two doors only gave access to the building, one from the north and the other by the south. The whole plan of the building as building D and E before presents some singularities: the walls of the eastern half of the building are wider than those of the western part and this enlargement seems to have no structural meaning. The central space is not rectangular but slightly trapezoidal in shape and wider in the east than in the west. Two features are present in this central space: one stepped platform in the centre of the space and a podium in the northwestern part of the central place, accessed by a small staircase. One additional feature was a complex systems of gutters whose function remains uncertain. They were interpreted as ritual by Heinrich but it is still difficult to understand what was their purpose. The association of a stepped platform and a platform standing against the wall is the main argument to identify the building as a temple but the specific rituals performed there remain unclear.

It is the same case when dealing with the *Steinstiftgebäude*. Without analysing this most particular building, now fully published (Eichmann 2007, 364–378), two features are of particular interest: the so-called basin (Room 4) and the complex installations present in the central space (Room 9), a fireplace, again a gutter and post-holes, seven around the fireplace and ten in the southwestern half of the central space of the building. Those latter are organised in three rows and their function remains unclear. The basin, defined by the coated bitumen soil, occupied the whole space 4: it was at least 1 m deep and its purpose remains unclear. The specific function of this building is not as clear as for the white temple, and it remains singular in the whole sequence. Its specific way of building, interpreted as a kind of purification ritual, the construction after the destruction of the building of the *Riemchengebäude*, whose rich content was interpreted as the product of a ritual deposit, the objects stemming from the stone cone building, have contributed to the idea that it was a very specific ritual building linked with water. This particularity lead Lenzen to the idea that it was devoted to the god Enki but this still remains a guess (Eichmann 2007, 378).

It has long been recognised that there existed a completely different conception of architectural space between the large integrated complexes excavated at Eanna and the Anu ziggurat for instance. The difference lies in the way the buildings are combined and set up, it lies also in a different conception of the regeneration of those complexes. It is obvious at Eanna for instance that the whole sector was regularly an object of huge readjustements, the former buildings usually being levelled to the soil. It is impossible to know how long some of those buildings lived but it is important to notice that apart for Building C, the other tripartite buildings were short lived, whole complexes being levelled and replaced by different ones. This instability is one good criteria to consider those buildings and complexes as secular and it stands in opposition to the dynamics operating in the high terraces complexes. The distinction high low-terrace is not so easy to establish from the beginning (Lenzen 1941). The distinction is obvious at Uruk, or Uqair; it is not so clear during the Ubaid period. The future high terraces at Uruk or Eridu began as low terraces.

When we compare the proto-urban development of those high terraces some interesting further points appear. For instance, at Uruk and Susa, the high terraces were not the first terraces or massifs built on the site. At Susa, the first monumental building is the funerary massive and at Uruk Anu, an Ubaidian terrace upon which stood tripartite buildings was erecetd before the construction of the 'Anu ziggurat' (Fig. 6.4). The link between those Ubaidian terraces, which were progressively enlarged and the Anu ziggurat is not clear. Eichmann has suggested that their later levels existed at the same time as level Z 20 and 19 of the ziggurat. The main point is that this ziggurat was built later and that the two terracces coexisted for a while during the Ubaid 4 period. In fact, the same process occurs at Susa: foundation of a first monument,

coexistence of both monuments and, later on, abandonment of the first monument and development during the Uruk period of the high terrace. It is not possible here to argue further on that point, let us just say that the comparison could go further since the two sequence seem to be contemporary, from late Ubaid to Uruk times. Between those stages, signs of abandonment and destruction are obvious both in Uruk and Susa and those phases seem to indicate a discontinuous history on critical spots of those proto-urban centres (Fig. 6.5).

At Uruk, the older terrace was covered by a new monument the so-called *Steingebäude* whose history and function are still debated (Eichmann 2007). Considered by its excavators as a funerary monument used during the sacred marriage as the repository for the dead king, this

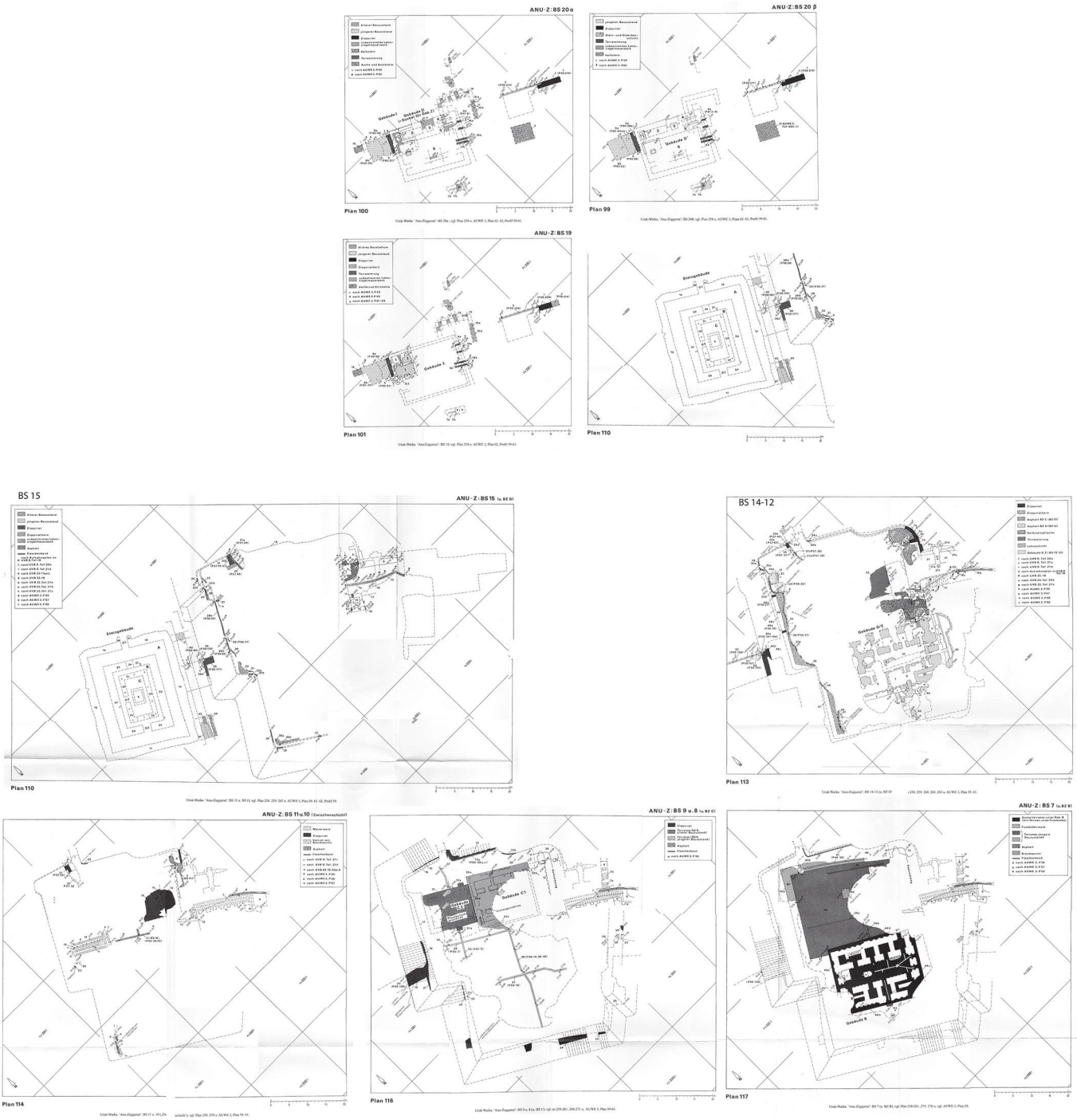


Fig. 6.4: Uruk, Anu Ziggurat, proto urban levels (courtesy R. EIchmann 2007), composition at same scale (P. Butterlin).

monumental subterranean structure has been considered by Forest with the *Riemchengebäude* as the only real temple in Uruk. This is certainly misleading since there are no traces of ritual installations in either building, but it is clear that the *Steingebäude* was linked in some way to the high terrace. This building was not short lived as previously thought by the excavators, and even if it is difficult to know how long it lived, it seems that while the terrace was slowly growing, the stone structure remained untouched, until its massive and complex filling, and sealing by the later ziggurats. The building is centrally built upon: a central space is bordered by two concentric corridors, delimitated by massive walls made of limestone and moulded concrete blocks. It seems difficult to admit that they were only supporting a light structure as usually proposed. If the central space of this monument was a place of display, as suggested by the central rectangular platform set in it, it could have been a place of exposition, with a subterranean level and a first level, made of bricks, where people could look from the first level onto the subterranean place of exposition. It is of course tempting to see there two steps of the sacred marriage, but that remains only a guess. It has been interpreted as a '*gueule d'enfer*' by Szarzynska (1981) and Charvat has proposed to see there a primitive 'Giparu', the reed mat set on the central platform being the nuptial bed of the pontifical couple EN and NIN (Charvat 2002, 101). The five post-holes set in the platform which represent, to his mind, the centre of the world and its four cardinal points, would give to this space an 'archetypal' function. It would have a mythical place linked to the beginnings of the world and a critical spot in Uruk's religious topography. The relationship between this huge monument and the tripartite buildings which were regularly rebuilt upon the high terraces is one of the keys to understanding the rituals performed there. But, interestingly, the *Steingebäude* is not the oldest building on this spot. The developement of high terraces was therefore not the first step of the proto-urban development but seems to be merely the sign of a promotion, political and religious.

It has long been said that both Uruk and Susa, two of the first great metropolis of the ancient Near East, were the result of a kind of *synoikismos*. Susa would have been a kind of confederal sanctuary (Hole 2007), developing at the expense of Chogha Mish which was the previous centre in eastern Susiana. Uruk would have been the result of the merging of Eanna and Kullab. This last point is not so clear, because if we follow our line of argument, we have to conclude that the Inanna temple, the Eanna, was actually situated from the beginning on the so-called 'Anu ziggurat'. It remains difficult to know what kind of buildings were present at Eanna in the earlier stage of the Uruk period and the synchronisation of the Anu ziggurat and Eanna sequences remains a matter of debate. This enduring debate is centred upon the interpretation of the so-called *Datierungschnitt* in Uruk and its relationship with the eastern corner of Eanna. But there are good reasons to believe that the white temple is older then the Eanna precinct buildings (level IV) and could be contemporary with the older buildings, especially the *Steinstiftgebäude*. It seems that during the late Uruk period, the whole of the monumental centre at Uruk was integrated and connected through a complex system

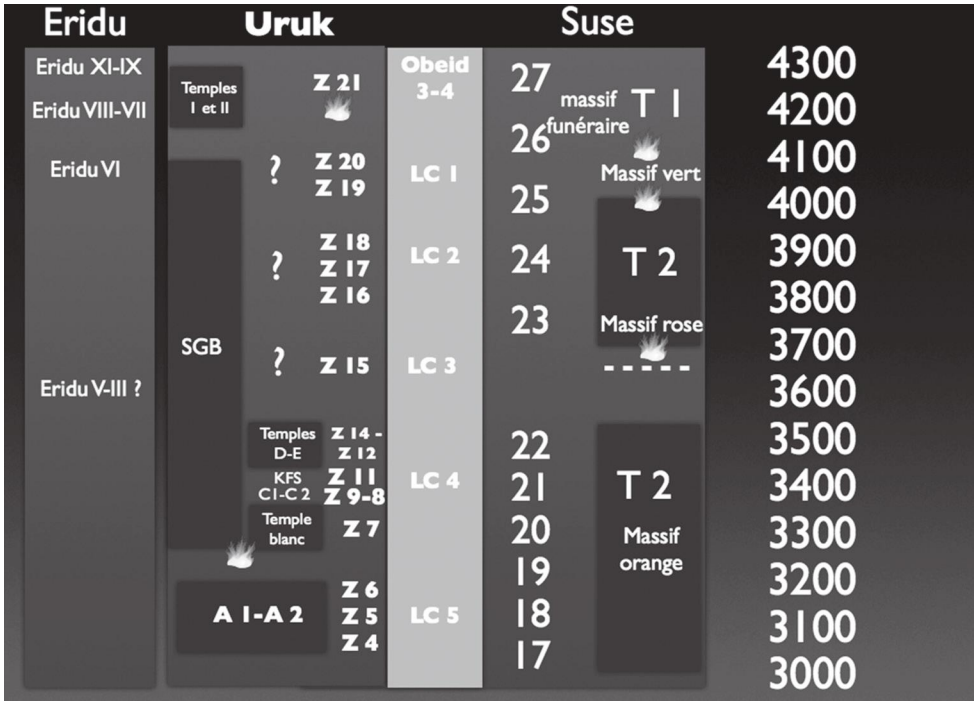


Fig. 6.5: Uruk and Susa: chronocultural table (P. Butterlin).

of terraces; a huge terrace called Alte Terrasse linking the Eanna with the later levels of Anu ziggurat (A 3–1). At this time, it seems that the protopalatial complex situated at Eanna was connected to the high terrace, through the old terrace. After the Uruk collapse, and the destruction of the building C complex, a new high terrace was built upon the old protopalatial complex, and it could be said that Eanna became Eanna at last. This huge shift after more than a millennium of careful reconstructions of the high terrace is, in itself, a complete change and must have been a revolution, both political and religious. The protopalatial complex has been levelled and it disappears with the king priest images. It is difficult to link this set of data to the textual data as mentioned above. But it is intresting to notice that there seems to be a shift in the archaic texts from Uruk IV to III: during the later stage of Uruk IV the main term applied to temples is simply èß, the term é being seldom used. During the Uruk III phase, that is after levelling of the level IV buildings and construction of the Eanna high terrace, the term é became more frequent along the use of more precise designations associating èß with deities notably Inanna (Szarzynska 1992, table 2, 287) and this shift is perhaps linked to those reorganisations.

Those briefs remarks give us a good insight on the highly dynamic societies which developed in Mesopotamia and Susiane from the 5th millennium to the 4th millennium. Instead of the regular and very continuous development usually described, we identify huge crisis, especially materialised upon the high terraces which were very sensitive points of representation, by levels of destructions, and huge shifts. Those shifts are testimony of a rhythm of evolution and cycles of regeneration. Besides the usual imagery of abundance, and the ideology of the cyclical regeneration of nature by the sacred marriages, lies another picture, punctated by major crises and reconstructions, whose religious aspects remain to be understood without any prejudice.

Bibliography

Adams, R. Mac. (1981) *Heartland of Cities: Surveys of Ancient Settlements and Land Use on the Central Floodplain of the Euphrates.* Chicago, Chicago University Press.

Blocher, F. (2013) Die Iconographie der Inanna/Ischtar im alten Orient. In N. Crüsemann, M. van Ess, M. Hilgert and B. Salje (eds) *Uruk-5000 Jahre Megacity*, 83–91. Begleitband zur Ausstellung Uruk 5000 Jahre Megacity Pergamon Puseum-Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Publikation des Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Band 58. Petersberg, Imhof Verlag.

Butterlin, P. (2003) *Les temps proto-urbains de Mésopotamie, contact et acculturation à l'époque dite d'Uruk en Mésopotamie*, Paris, CNRS éditions.

Butterlin, P. (2009) Tepe Gawra et le monde proto-urbain de Mésopotamie. In P. Butterlin (ed.) *A propos de Tepe Gawra, le monde proto-urbain de Mésopotamie, about Tepe Gawra, a proto-urban World in Mesopotamia*, 1–15, Subartu XXIII.

Butterlin, P. (2012) Les caractéristiques de l'espace monumental dans le monde urukéen, de la métropole aux colonies. *Origini* XXIV, 171–191.

Butterlin, P. (2013) Les terrasses monumentales proto-urbaines et les centres proto-urbains de Suse à Uruk, études proto-urbaines 1. In J. L. Montero-Fenollos (ed.), *Du village néolithique à la ville mésopotamienne, Bibliotheca Euphratica* vol. I, 117–132.

Charvat, P. (2002) *Mesopotamia before History*, Routledge, London and New York.

Eichmann, R. (1989) *Uruk, die Stratigraphie, Grabungen 1912–1977 in den Bereichen Eanna und Anu-Ziggurat.* Augrabungen in Uruk-Warka Endberichte (AUWE 3), 2 vol. Mainz am Rhein, von Zabern.

Eichmann, R. (2007) Uruk Architektur I, *Grabungen 1912–1977 in den Bereichen Eanna und Anu-Ziggurat.* Augrabungen in Uruk-Warka Endberichte(AUWE 14), 2 vol. Rahden, von Zabern.

Eichmann, R. (2013) Frühe GroBarchitektur in der Stadt Uruk. In N. Crüsemann, M. van Ess, M. Hilgert and B. Salje (eds) *Uruk-5000 Jahre Megacity*, 117–127. Begleitband zur Ausstellung Uruk 5000 Jahre Megacity Pergamon Puseum-Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Publikation des Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Band 58. Petersberg, Imhof Verlag.

Emberling, G. (2002) Political Control in an Early State: The Eye Temple and the Uruk Expansion in Northern Mesopotamia. In L. Al-Gailani Werr, J. Curtis, H. Martin, A. McMahon, J. Oates and J. Reade (eds) *Of Pots and Plans: Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria Presented to David Oates in Honor of His 75th Birthday*, 82–90. London, Nabu Publications.

Forest, J. D. (1996) *Mésopotamie, Naissance de l'Etat.* Paris, Editions Paris Méditerranée.

Forest, J. D. (1999) *Les premiers temples de Mésopotamie (4ème et 3ème millénaires*). Oxford, British Archaeological Report S765.

Frangipane, M. (1996) *La nascita dello Stato nel Vicino Oriente*. Rome et Bari, Laterza & Figli.

Frangipane, M. (1997) A 4th Millennium Temple/Palace Complex at Arslan Tepe-Malatya. North South Relations and the Formation of Early State Societies in the Northern Regions of Greater Mesopotamia. *Paléorient* 23/1, 45–73.

Frangipane, M. (2004) *Alle Origini del potere. Arslan Tepe, la collina dei Leoni.* Rome, Electa.

Frangipane, M. (2012) Fourth Millennium Arslantepe: the Development of a Centralised Society Without Urbanisation. *Origini* XXIV, 19–40.

Heinrich, E. (1982) *Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im alten Mesopotamien.* Berlin, de Gruyter.

Hole, F. (2010) A Monumental Failure: the Collapse of Susa. In R. A.Carter and G. Philip (eds) *Beyond the Ubaid, Transformation and Integration in the Late Prehistoric Societies of the Middle East.* Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization 63, 227–245.

Jacobsen, T. (1976) *The Treasures of Darkness.* New Haven, Yale University Press.

Lenzen, H. (1941) *Die Entwicklung der Zikkurat von ihren Anfängen bis zur Zeit der III dynastie von Ur*, AUWE 4, Leipzig.

Margueron, J.-C. (1992) Sanctuaires sémitiques. *Supplément au dictionnaire de la Bible, Tome 11,* 1104–1258. Paris.

Margueron, J.-C. (2009) Le temple et le sacré à la fin du cinquième et au début du quatrième millénaire à Tepe Gawra. In P. Butterlin (ed*.) A propos de Tepe Gawra, le monde proto-urbain de Mésopotamie, about Tepe Gawra, a proto-urban World in Mesopotamia*, Subartu XXIII, 39–77.

Nissen, H. J. (2003) Uruk: Key Site of the Period and Key Site of the Problem. In J. N. Postgate (ed.) *Artefacts of Complexity, Tracking the Uruk in the Near East*, 1–16. British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

Pollock, S. (1999) *Ancient Mesopotamia.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Pollock, S. (2012) Politics of Food in Early Mesopotamian Centralized Societies. *Origini* XXIV, 153–168.

Rothman, M. S. (2002) *Tepe Gawra, the Evolution of a Small Prehistoric Center in Northern Iraq.* Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania.

Rothman, M. S. (2009) Religion, Function, and Social Networks: Tepe Gawra in the fifth and early Fourth Millennia B.C. In P. Butterlin (ed.) Tepe Gawra, Centre proto-urbain de Haute Mésopotamie et son monde. *Subartu* XXIII, 15–38.

Safar, F., Mustafa, A. and Lloyd, S. (1981) *Eridu.* Baghdad, Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Culture and Information. State Organization of Antiquities and Héritage.

Stein, G. (1994) Economy, Ritual, and Power in 'Ubaid Mesopotamia'. In G. Stein and M. Rothman (eds), *Chiefdoms and Early States in the Near East*, 35–46. Madison, WI, Prehistory Press.

Steinkeller, P. (1999) On Rulers, Priests, and sacred Marriage: tracing the Evolution of Early Sumerian Kingship. In K. Watanabe (ed.) *Priests and Officials in the Ancient Near East*, 103–138. Heidelberg, Universitätsverlag C.Winter.

Szarzinska, K. (1981) Some remarks on the so called Steingebäude in archaic Uruk Warka. *Akkadica* 23, 45–49.

Szarzinska, K. (1992) Names of Temples in the Archaic Texts from Uruk. *Acta Sumeroligica* 14, 269–287.

Winter, I. (2007) Representing Abundance: the Visual Dimension of the Agrarian State. In E. Stone (ed.) *Settlement and Society, Essays Dedicated to Robert McCormick Adams*, 117–139. Los Angeles, University of California, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology.

Yoffee, N. (2007) *Myths of the Archaic State, Evolution of the Earliest Cities, States and Civilizations.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

PART II

HOUSING THE GOD

7

A sanctuary, or so fair a house? In defense of an archaeology of cult at Pre-Pottery Neolithic Göbekli Tepe

Oliver Dietrich and Jens Notroff

The tell of Göbekli Tepe[1] is situated about 15 km northeast of the modern town of Şanlıurfa between the middle and upper reaches of the Euphrates and Tigris and the foothills of the Taurus Mountains (Fig. 7.1). Rising to about 15 m on a limestone plateau at the highest point of the Germuş mountain range, the mound is spreading on an area of about 9 ha, measuring 300 m in diameter. The location was known as a Pre-Pottery Neolithic site since a combined survey by the Universities of Chicago and Istanbul in the 1960s (Benedict 1980), but the architecture the mound was hiding remained unrecognised until its discovery in 1994 by Klaus Schmidt (Schmidt 2006; 2012). Since then annual excavation work was conducted, uncovering monumental buildings not suspected in such an early context (Schmidt 2001; 2006; 2010).

At current state of research it is possible to distinguish at least three stratigraphic layers. Their archaeological dating based on typological observations is backed up and confirmed by a growing number of radiocarbon dates (Dietrich 2011; Dietrich and Schmidt 2010). The hitherto oldest layer uncovered at Göbekli Tepe, Layer III, belongs to the 10th millennium BC, the earlier phase of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (PPN A). At Göbekli Tepe this layer produced monumental architecture characterised by 10–30 m wide circles formed by huge monolithic pillars of a distinct T-like shape (Fig. 7.2). These pillars, reaching a height of up to 4 m, are interconnected by walls and benches. They are always orientated towards a central pair of even larger pillars of the same shape. Hands and elements of clothing betray the anthropomorphic character of the pillars (Fig. 7.3), the T-head being an abstract depiction of the human head viewed from the side, while the shaft forms the body. Five stone circles, Enclosures A, B, C, D and G were discovered in the main excavation area (Fig. 7.4) at Göbekli Tepe's southern depression. Enclosure F was excavated at the southwestern hilltop and Enclosure E is situated at the western plateau. While Enclosures A, B, F and G are still under excavation, E was recognised as a completely cleared enclosure of which only the floor and two pedestals cut out of the bedrock for the central pillars are still visible.

A younger layer is superimposing this monumental architecture in some parts of the mound. This Layer II[2] is dating to the 9th millennium BC and can be set into the early and middle PPN B. The smaller, rectangular buildings, measuring about 3 × 4 m, characteristic for this stratum may be understood as a reduction of the noticeably larger older enclosures. Number and height of the T-shaped pillars are reduced, often only two small central pillars are present, the largest among them not exceeding a height of 2 m. Sometimes these rooms even show no pillars at all, a certain degree of expenditure is visible in the floors, which consist of terrazzo-like pavements. Thereafter, building activity at Göbekli Tepe seems to have come to an end. Layer I describes the surface layer resulting from erosion processes as well as a plough horizon formed in the more recent centuries.

The question: special building, sanctuary, temple or "so fair a house"?

From its discovery on, the interpretation of Göbekli's suprising architecture has centered around the terms 'special buildings' (*Sondergebäude*), 'sanctuaries', or 'temples'. This line of interpretation has recently been called into question by E. B. Banning. He challenges the existence of pure domestic or ritual structures for the Neolithic (Banning 2011, 27–629), arguing that archaeologists tend to impose western ethnocentric distinctions of sacred and profane on prehistory, while anthropology in most cases shows these two spheres to be inseparably interwoven (Banning 2011, 624–627, 637). In his eyes, buildings always combine both aspects with a more expressive or discrete presence of symbolic content, and Göbekli Tepe was a settlement with buildings rich in symbolism, but nevertheless domestic in nature.

In this short paper we want to take his approach to the site as a starting point to discuss the possibility of an archaeology of cult or even religion at Göbekli Tepe. First the interpretational framework will have to be clarified, before in a second step a detailed discussion of relevant archaeological data from

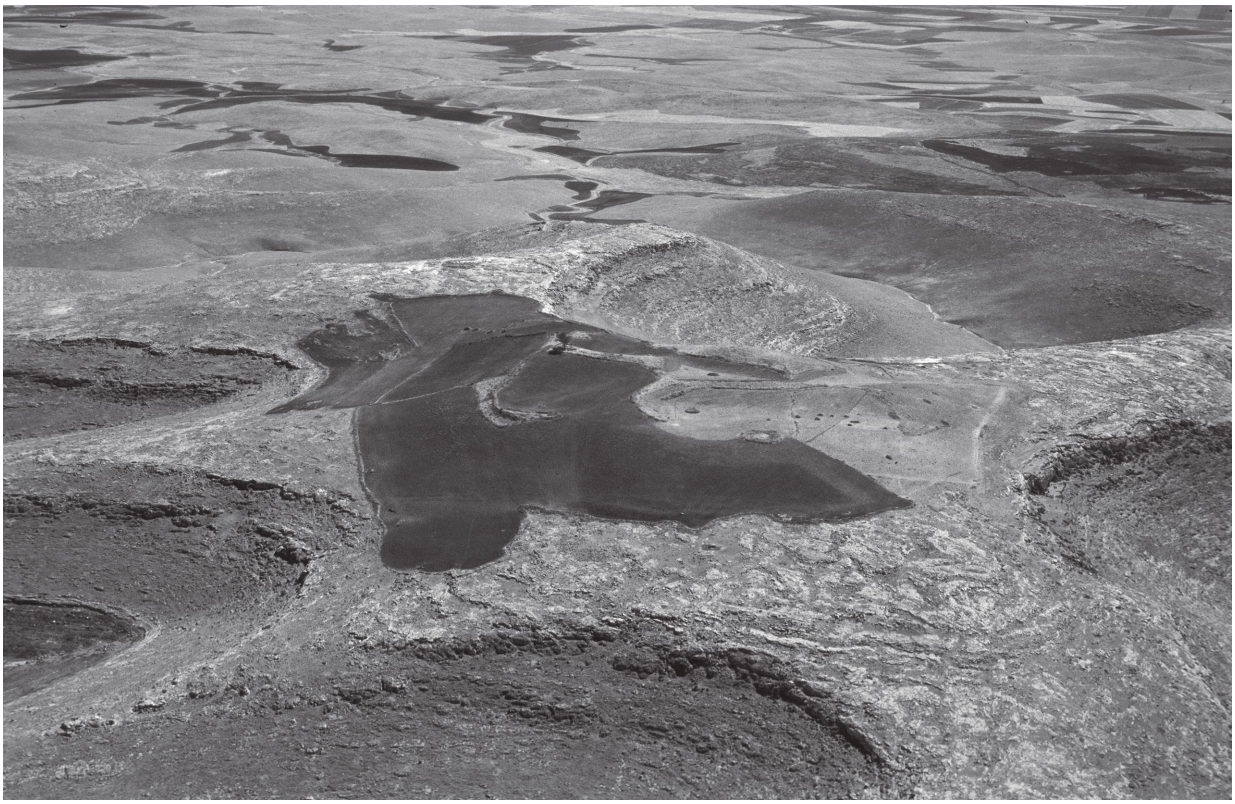


Fig. 7.1: Aerial view of Göbekli Tepe before excavation work started (photo: O. Durgut, © DAI).

Göbekli and other sites of the Near Eastern Early Neolithic follows.

Approaching the sacred

That cult, ritual and ultimately religion are concepts often cited but seldom well defined by archaeologists or securely attested for in the archaeological record is already a commonplace repeated in many writings on sites and finds (cf. Bertemes and Biehl 2001, 14–15 for an account of references). Another such commonplace is the insight that archaeologists tend to classify findings especially hard to interpret as 'cultic'. Mix that with the now widespread post-modernist proposition that archaeologists can only understand and classify what they already know, that every single interpretation is biased by the scientist's individual and cultural background, and we have written a short but devastating obituary for an archaeology of cult and religion. Thoughts in this direction are anything but new. Already in 1954 C. Hawkes placed 'religious institutions and spiritual life' on the last – and by purely archaeological evidence without the aid of texts hardest to reach – step on what today often is referred to as his 'ladder of inference' (Hawkes 1954, esp. 161–162). But does this mean that we have to confine ourselves to just file special sites and finds as something out of the norm, unusual and surprising without further investigating into their significance? A growing number of comprehensive studies (e.g. Renfrew 1994; Biehl *et al.* 2001; Insoll 2004; Kyriakides 2007; Insoll 2011) and in-detail approaches to the Near Eastern early Neolithic (e.g. Cauvin 1994; Özdoğan and Özdoğan 1998; Schmidt 1998; Gebel *et al.* 2002; Verhoeven 2002; Hodder 2010) speaks out in favor of the possibility of archaeological insights into beliefs even for non-literate times and societies, however restricted by the limits of archaeological evidence.

It is obviously a futile task to overcome the historically and biographically bound individual in the interpretation of the archaeological record. It is the nature of the human mind to explain the world in relation to former experiences, indifferent whether they form part of the individual's own biography or have been adopted from others. This will come even more into play when we face an assemblage lacking so many parts of the puzzle as archaeological sites usually do. An archaeology without intuitive reasoning and clues drawn intentionally or subconsciously from analogies is hardly imaginable. And it is absolutely clear that every approach to a site can lead only to *one,* not *the* narrative of the respective place and time. But nevertheless there are of course interpretations more probable than others, more appropriate to the evidence left behind. We have to try and get in touch as much as possible with the 'ancient mind' to assess the probability of one interpretation over another.

Fig. 7.2: Göbekli Tepe: aerial view of the main excavation area, Enclosure D in the foreground (photo: N. Becker, © DAI).

Banning tries to achieve this by collecting ethnographic evidence showing that for many societies there are no hard boundaries between the sacred and the profane (Banning 2011, 624–627). It is certainly true that we perceive this boundary much stricter after centuries of secularisation in the western hemisphere (Banning 2011, 637) and therefore tend to form an equation between unusual/uncommon=sacred/ritual, although this differentiation also exists in some non-western societies, as Banning (2011, 624) admits. He then moves on to show how this entanglement between sacred and profane may lead to a reality, in which 'seemingly mundane things, such as houses, could be sacred and that some sacred things, such as amulets, could be far from awe inspiring' (Banning 2011, 624). He then lists aspects of Neolithic Near Eastern domestic architecture, like in-house inhumations, caches and wall paintings as proof for the sacred leaking into everyday

Fig. 7.3: Arms, hands and elements of clothing reveal the anthropomorphic character of Göbekli Tepe's pillars (Pillar 31 in the centre of Enclosure D) (photo: N. Becker, © DAI).

live (Banning 2011, 627–629), making a clear distinction impossible.

These arguments are valid and add to a very possible narrative of this aspect of Neolithic life. In fact the idea of manifestations of the sacred in houses or parts of houses is neither new, nor surprising. One of the main protagonists of this line of thought is M. Eliade, who, based on vast ethnographic and historical evidence, argued vehemently for the entanglement of sacred and profane as the primordial state in human societies (Eliade 1959). Eliade starts from the observation that building a house, i.e. settling down in an area, was a crucial and potentially dangerous act in traditional societies: 'for what is involved is undertaking the creation of the world that one has chosen to inhabit' (Eliade 1959, 51). The newly erected dwelling had to fit into the world created by supernatural powers, and this was achieved by repeating

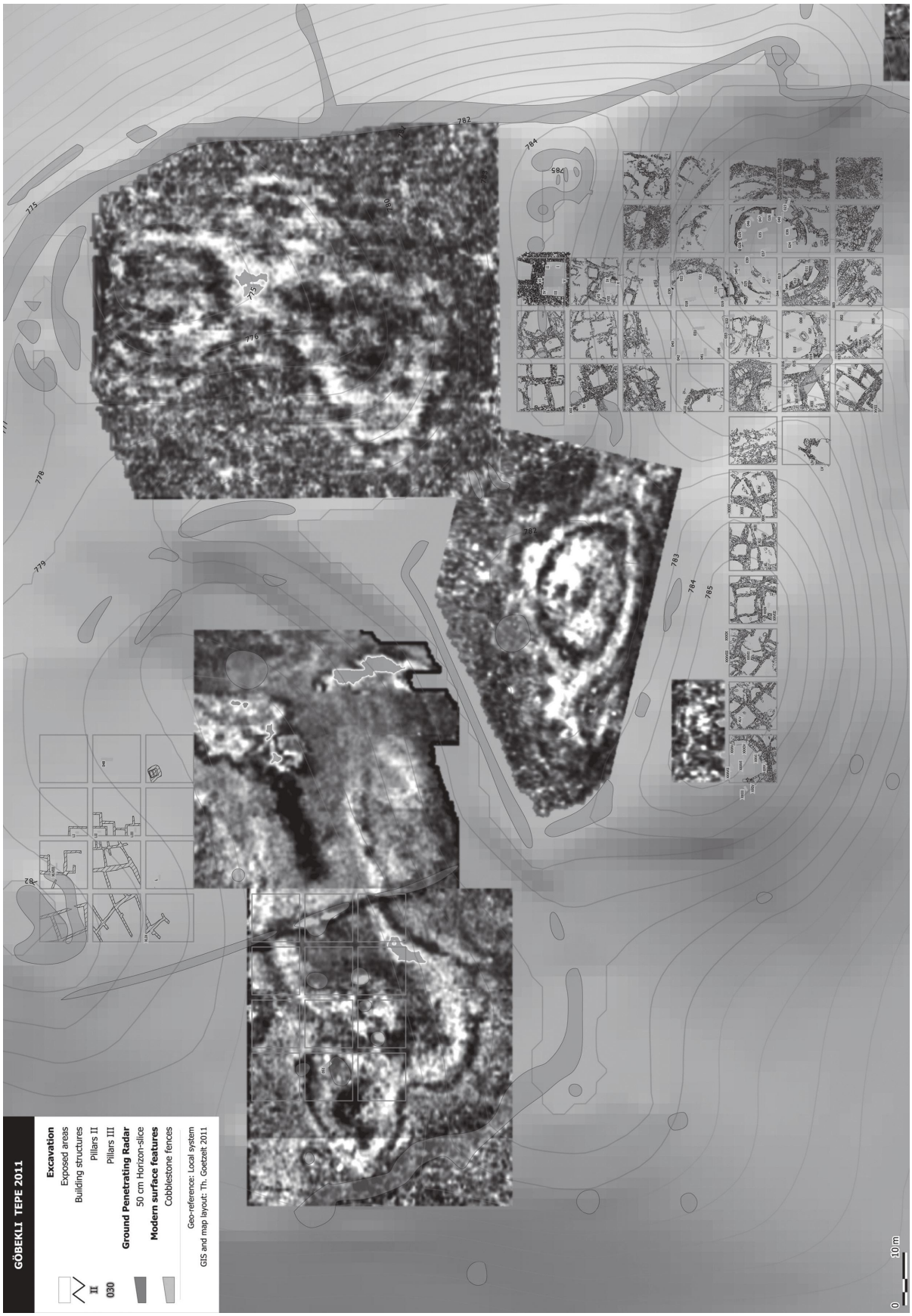


Fig. 7.4: Plan of excavations and geophysical surveys at Göbekli Tepe (graphics: T. Götzelt, © DAI).

the cosmogenic acts of deities through a construction ritual, or by projecting the order of the cosmos into the construction, e.g. by erecting a central column which equals the *axis mundi,* the center of the world (Eliade 1959, 52–53). Houses in this way always incorporated a sacred aspect, or even reflected the image of a world ordered by religious principles. In Eliade's (1959, 43–44) view, the house as a representation of the cosmos reassured man of living in an ordered world: 'where the break in plane was symbolically assured and hence communication with the other world, the transcendental world, was ritually possible'.

But none of these musings speaks against special loci, where belief and cult, which are present in every aspect of life, focus. In Eliade's words, besides the sacred aspects of houses: 'the sanctuary – the center par excellence was there, close to him [man], in the city, and he could be sure of communicating with the world of the gods by entering the temple' (Eliade 1959, 43).

These more theoretic thoughts are underlined by ethnographic evidence, which shows societies making no strict differentiation between holy and profane in everyday life nevertheless to have spatial focal points of the holy and cult, which do not have to be associated with domestic architecture. New Guinea seems to come handy for ethnographic analogies regarding the Neolithic on many levels, as cultural features like the extensive use of stone axes (Pétrequin – Pétrequin 2000), lithics in general (Silitoe and Hardy 2003) and cult practises[3] including plastered skulls of ancestors and slain enemies (Kelm 2011) seem to relate easily to phenomena known archaeologically from that period[4].

As far as details on the multitude of traditional religions of New Guinea are known, they all were present in every aspect of life (Stöhr 1987, 424–425). Nevertheless, for example Zöllner (1977, 332–336) has noted in his extensive study of the Jalî in Iriyan Jaya that a distinct religious realm exists, specified by the term *ûsa*. Phenomena can thus be classified as being sacred or not; the marked difference to western thought is the general interrelation – be it weaker or stronger – of religion with every other aspect of life. This notion of the sacred is to be found all over New Guinea (Stöhr 1987, 426). Having said this, and agreeing that the sacred is clearly present in the domestic realm, there are still different types of special buildings, in which sacred activity concentrates. Many rites and festive repetitions of myths center in the men's houses (Stanek 1987; Konrad and Biakai 1987), which exist in nearly every village. These are multifunctional buildings, which combine domestic aspects (sleeping room for the men segregated from the women) with ancestor veneration (storing of skulls, of ritual paraphernalia, carved posts representing ancestors), cult activity (storage room for masks worn in ritual acts, exclusive parts of rituals or preparations for rituals performed only there), and political action (assembly of the men as highest decision making body, jurisdiction). These buildings are clearly not reducible to a function as sanctuaries, and often they are not constructed very differently from the other houses of a village, but recognisable due to their central placing in the village plan, often combined with dancing or assemblage places (Cranstone 1971, 134; Stanek 1987, 624–626; there may be differences in the inner spatial division: Roscoe and Telban 2004, 109). But then there are also examples of special cult-houses.

The Tifalmin of highland New Guinea (settling in the valley of the Ilam, a tributary of the Sepik) constructed intra-village men's houses to guard males from the negative influences women are thought to have on their social qualities necessary to become influential big men (Cranstone 1971, 134). These houses share the same construction with the family houses. But central to cult activity in their ancestor cult is a separate cult-house in one village (Brolemavip) that differs from the usual construction 'in having its façade covered with about twenty carved boards set vertically' (Cranstone 1971, 137). This house may only be entered by senior men and contains ancestral relics (e.g. bones, wisps of beard), a crocodile skull and two clubs with stone heads, while the walls are lined with the lower jaws of pigs (Cranstone 1971, 137). Further west, in the Star mountains region, for the Mountain Ok, a wide range of such cult-houses (*bokam iwo*) has been recorded, standing usually in an exposed position in the villages (in the middle of a big feasting place) but differing markedly in size among one another and from domestic architecture (sometimes they are even smaller), but usually bearing some architectural differences to the latter (Michel 1988, 229). They contain a large collection of pig and marsupial jaws, feathers, bows, arrows, plants, ancestor relics and other objects, arranged to elaborate patterns rather freely around certain basic rules regarding house sides and levels (Michel 1988, 230). We do not want to enter into the details of these conceptions here, but only to reinforce the point that specialised cult architecture does exist in societies not perceiving the antagonism of holy and profane like western people do. And, to complete the argument, cult areas and buildings in New Guinea also occur completely detached from the domestic sphere of the village.

As an example, we want to insist shortly on the case of the Tolai on the Gazelle Peninsula in northeastern New Britain. The bigger part of (male) Tolai society was engaged in two secret societies, the *dukduk* and the *iniet*. While the first has raised the interest of early ethnographers due to the splendid masks worn during ritual and exists in spite of colonial attempts of suppression in modified form till today (Mückler 2009, 165–167), the second one was rather quickly and efficiently suppressed by German colonial officers due to rumors about sexual and cannibalistic excesses during ritual meetings held in remote places (Kroll 1937, 201–202), which renders a detailed description partly problematic (Koch 1982, 14–16; Epstein 1999, 274). Nevertheless a fairly coherent picture of a male secret society with aspects of ancestor veneration and sorcery emerges, which is of interest to the questions discussed here.

As Kroll states, the majority of men in the northeastern Gazelle Peninsula formed part of the *iniet*; the main advantage of being an initiate was the knowledge of sorcery passed on

to the *tena iniet* and social status ranging from admiration to fear vis-à-vis a powerful sorcerer (Koch 1982, 16; Epstein 1999, 274–276). The centre of *iniet* belief seems to have been the possibility of a 'spirit or soul entering into and thus taking on the form of a bird […], a pig, a shark, or a snake, or even another person' (Epstein 1999, 275) and profiting from these abilities. The knowledge of these transformations was handed down to initiates at remote places in the woods called *marawot*, were also the other rituals took place (Kroll 1937, 182). The *marawot* is described as a rectangular space of 10 × 30 m, surrounded by mats as visual protection; in the middle was a dancing place again screened by mats, in front of which a small hut stood (Koch 1982, 19). Not only ceremonies were held here, but also the paraphernalia were stowed in the hut or buried nearby when no ceremonies were held (Koch 1982, 19, 24). It was forbidden for non-initiates (and women) to enter the precinct; should a man accidently find the place he was menaced with death and could, as a last resort, beg to be accepted in the *iniet* (Kroll 1937, 182). Admission included the payment of a sum of shell money and a complex multi-phased ceremony (Kelm 2011, 175). A key moment in this ceremony was the presentation and explication of the stone sculptures of the *iniet* spirits to the initiate, who also got a figure of his own as well as a new name (Koch 1982, 19–20).

The elaborate stone sculptures, which often were painted and adorned with organic materials (e.g. to imitate beards) have early caught the attention of the Europeans (Koch 1982). They show men and women as well as a wide range of animals and are embedded in a complex kinship system, bearing names and being related to other sculptures (Kroll 1937, 197–200; Mückler 2009, 168). The sculptures are thought to be the domicile of – or actually the – powerful ancestors (former members of the *iniet*) and contact with them is dangerous even for initiates. Much more could be said about this interesting case study, but this short account should suffice to show that even if we have to act on the assumption of entangled spheres of holy and profane this does not exclude special places or buildings destined for cultic activities.

We do not want to fall into the easy trap of taking superficial compliances with Göbekli like the striking stone sculptures as an argument for determinations of the latter's character and function. The discussion should neither center on direct analogies, nor on the general possibility of cult architecture in prehistory, but on identifying it archaeologically.

A research agenda for an archaeology of cult?

The past three decades have seen several attempts to overcome Hawkes' concerns at least partly and to develop methodologies to pin down the elusive in the archaeological record. The approaches to the topic are as diverse as the theoretical spectrum of archaeology. Detailed accounts of these attempts fill many pages of books on the topic (e.g. Insoll 2004, 42–103); it is neither possible nor necessary to repeat the pros and contras of different approaches here. What is needed instead is a tool, which helps us to separate buildings more domestic in nature from those related primarily to cult. C. Renfrew's archaeological indicators of ritual, first defined in his seminal work on Phylakopi (Renfrew 1985, 18–21) and refined later on (Renfrew 1994; 2007) spring to mind here. In the 1994 version of the list, he groups 16 hints for recognising cult in four categories (for the following Renfrew 1994, 51–52).

His first point is "focusing of attention". This is achieved (1) through ritual taking place in a location marked by special natural features such as mountain tops, caves etc., or (2) in a special building. Further, (3) "attention focusing devices" may be used, "reflected in the architecture, special fixtures (e.g. altars, benches, hearths) and in moveable equipment", and (4) the sacred area may be rich in repeated symbols. The second category of indicators regards a function as a "boundary zone between this world and the next" (or, in Renfrew 2007, 115 "special aspects of the liminal zone") and includes (5) "conspicuous public display (and expenditure)" during ritual as well as "hidden exclusive mysteries" visible in the architecture and (6) concepts of cleanliness and pollution as well as maintenance regarding the sacred zone. The third category, "presence of the deity" may include (7) cult images or representations, and (8) an iconography that may relate to the deities or their myths, often including animal iconography relating to certain supernatural powers. This ritualistic symbolism may (9) relate to symbols used in funerary ritual or *rites de passage*. The last category, "participation and offering" incorporates (10) special gestures of adoration, which may reflect in imagery, (11) "devices for inducting religious experiences (e.g. dance, music, drugs and the infliction of pain)", (12) sacrifice of animals or humans, (13) consumption or offering of food and drink, (14) sacrifice of objects, maybe including breaking, hiding, discard, (15) a great investment in wealth reflected in equipment and offerings, and (16) also in the sacred structures.

It has to be clear from the start that these categories elaborated for a Greek sanctuary may, at least partly, not be applicable everywhere. If architecture is missing, some of the hints will not be usable, and a complex and repeated action is necessary to leave traces in the archaeological record. Some points may be modified slightly, or combined, as for example cult architecture may be erected in special natural places, and 'deity' may not be the term to use in belief systems that e.g. center around ancestors, like Renfrew (2007, 115) acknowledges by re-naming the category to "presence of the transcendent and its symbolic focus". Critique has aimed especially at the seemingly stereotype checklist-character (e.g. Insoll 2004, 99–100), and we agree that just ticking off indicators will not suffice to identify religion and cult. But Renfrew's list does not imply this necessarily, and was not intended to be used in that way by its author (Renfrew 1994, 51–52). The archaeologist has to fill the points with life and to add further evidence where necessary. Renfrew (2007, esp.

115) himself has addressed critique to his approach by stating that the indicators will identify ritual, regardless whether it is secularly or religiously motivated. He concludes that categories 2 and 3 may relate more securely to transcendental aspects, and stresses especially the role of high effort and labor input in monumental sites as an indicator for "some more holistic belief system, in which religious belief must have been at least one component of the motivation" (Renfrew 2007, 115, 120–121).

As justified as some of the critique may be, obviously a strictly archaeological framework is needed for identifying cult, as some recent studies seem to be more occupied with the identification of religion in ethnographic examples or in historical times than with the actual archaeological record. There is an especially big gap between living culture and archaeology when non-material aspects are concerned, one which cannot be simply filled in by colourful anthropological evidence. As archaeologists we have to base our assumptions on the archaeological record, and sadly Renfrew may be right in stating that cult and religion are only discernible "where religious practices involve either the use of special artifacts or special places, or both" (Renfrew 1994, 51). There are certain limits to archaeological inference, and we agree that it will be a much more possible task to discern sacral ritual, e.g. repeated acts that have left significant material evidence, than the complex system we address with the term 'religion' (Renfrew 1994, 51). To assure that Renfrew's indicators are a viable tool, the small excursus to New Guinea may not only demonstrate the possibility of specialised cult architecture in traditional societies, it can be used also as a test ground. Would the indicators lead an archaeologist to interpret Melanesian cult-houses and *iniet* gathering places as part of the transcendental belief system? In answering this question we will have a look especially at the categories identified by Renfrew as relating more securely to cult.

(1–2) Cult-houses lie in exposed spatial settings inside the village, often surrounded by dancing grounds, while *iniet* cult places lie outside settled areas in the woods. Cult-houses differ in construction from domestic buildings; *iniet* sites have special constructions for ritual activities and storing the paraphernalia. (3) Cult houses have relicts arranged in specific, visually impressive patterns, in the *iniet* elaborately worked and decorated stone sculptures are of central importance. (4) The cult house inventory consists of symbolic objects of different classes; the *iniet* sculptures represent a system with fixed, repeated symbols. (5) Both cult houses and *iniet* places have restrictions regarding the persons allowed to enter (mysteries revealed only to initiates), knowledge is kept secret. This reflects in the architecture (sight protection at the *marawot*, screened, unaccesable cult-houses). Conspicuous display of symbolism exists for those taking part in the cult. (6) *Iniet* places are arranged and maintained by participators in the cult; cult-houses are cared for by one specially elected person (Michel 1988, 229–230). Concepts of pollution are expressed for example in eating taboos for *iniet* members (Kroll 1937, 201; Koch 1982, 19), however this is not visible archaeologically. (7) Cult images are evident for the *iniet*, however it is hardly imaginable that their meaning would be understood without an oral tradition; representations in the form of ancestor-related artefacts and animal skulls are found in the cult-houses. (8) An iconography relating to ancestors and myths is clear for the *iniet*. In the cult-houses it does exist in the arrangement of objects and the objects themselves, but would hardly be reconstructible when one imagines an archaeological context mixed-up due to depositional and post-depositional processes. (9) Regarding the relations to other cultic activities, *iniet* sculpture is not used outside the *iniet*, while symbolism related to ancestors will be used generally in ceremonies; it remains unclear whether this connection would be attestable archaeologically. (10) Special gestures of adoration seem not to be reflected in iconography. (11) Dance and music play an important role in ceremonies, for the *iniet* they would be provable through miniature depictions of musical instruments (Kroll 1937, 191, fig. 21). (12) Sacrifice of animals or humans is not attested during the *iniet* and not at the cult-houses; ironically it is very possible that a house full of animal bones and the plastered skulls present there as well as at the *iniet* sites would betray the impression of sacrifice to the archaeologist. (13) Consumption of food and drink are important parts of the ceremonies, which possibly would leave traces in the archaeological record. (14) Sacrifice of objects is not evident; however it is possible that *iniet* sculptures buried at the *marawot* and items belonging to ancestors in the cult house would be taken by archaeologists as such. (15–16) A great investment in wealth, respectively working time, is evident from the *iniet* sculptures and the (wooden) décor of the cult-houses.

Summing up, cult-houses and *iniet* places would be identified without doubt as sacred loci by these criteria, anyway losing a lot of the original meaning, and some items taking on a completely new one (e.g. hidden sculptures transformed to offerings). The minutiae of ancestor veneration or a secret society's ritualistic acts would not be deducible, but a general notion of cultic/religious behavior would get through.

The next question is, whether Renfrew's criteria would lead an archaeologist also to regard the men's houses as sanctuaries. We do not think that this is the case. Men's houses would fulfill point 1, but are constructed like normal houses. Symbolism would be present in carved posts and items like plastered skulls, but many of the other criteria would be missed. It seems very probable that men's houses would be categorised as multifunctional buildings due to strong domestic features like bedsteads and resemblances in construction plans with other domestic buildings. As the criteria proposed by Renfrew thus seem to suffice for identifying the transcendent at least on a basic level; the next step will be to apply them to Göbekli Tepe.

Göbekli Tepe

(1) Göbekli Tepe lies on the highest point of the Germuş mountain range. The spot is hostile to settlement; today Göbekli is the only place with arable soil on the otherwise barren limestone plateau. Botanical analysis indicates a relatively open, forest-steppe landscape with pistachio and almond trees for the early Neolithic, very sensible to human interference (Neef 2003, 14–15). Degradation of landscape may well have begun during the use-time of Göbekli. Botanical remains show some evidence for hygrophilous vegetation near springs (Neef 2003: 15), but no springs are known in the vicinity of the site and a geological survey revealed artesian phenomena to be excluded in the area (Herrmann-Schmidt 2012, 57). The next accessible springs are located about 5 km linear distance to the northeast (Edene) and to the southeast (Germuş). A group of pits at Göbekli's western slope could represent rain water cisterns with a total capacity of 15,312 m^3 (Herrmann-Schmidt 2012) accumulating enough water for people to stay for longer periods of time, but probably not during the rainless summer. The next Neolithic settlements so far known lie in the plain in immediate vicinity of springs, like Urfa-Yeni Yol (Çelik 2000). Apart from these issues concerning the possibility of permanent settlement in the hostile environment at Göbekli, the impressive and dominant position of the site towering over the Harran plain has to be remarked.

(2) As stated above, Göbekli's architecture consists exclusively of 20–30 m wide stone circles made up of T-shaped pillars with benches along the perimeter walls in the older Layer III and of smaller, rectangular buildings with smaller and fewer or no pillars at all in Layer II. A geophysical survey has shown that the older round megalithic enclosures existed all over the site (Fig. 7.4). Other building types are not attested at Göbekli. Contemporaneous domestic architecture is well known in the upper Euphrates region due to the long and secure stratigraphy of rectangular freestanding buildings at Çayönü (Schirmer 1988; 1990; Özdoğan 1999) and extensive excavations at Nevalı Çori (Hauptmann 1988). Contemporaneous with Göbekli Tepe in this sequence would be Çayönü's 'grillplan-phase' (PPNA), the 'channeled' ground plans (early PPNB; attested for well also in Nevalı Çori), and the 'cobble paved buildings' (middle PPNB; cf. Schirmer 1988; 1990: 365–377; Özdoğan 1999, 41). None of these building types is present at Göbekli, and neither are there roasting pits, fireplaces or hearths. What is present on the other hand is a building type which shares commonalities with constructions usually appearing individually in settlement sites and termed 'special buildings'. Some short examples may suffice to show key resemblances with Göbekli Tepe.

In Çayönü a long sequence of 'special buildings' has been documented (Fig. 7.5, 1–3). To the 'grill plan phase' belongs the 'flag stone building' named after the elaborate construction of its floor with large stone slabs (Schirmer 1990, 378). The walls of the building were subdivided by several projections, in the east probably a bench existed, and standing slabs are interpreted to have held the roof. Somewhat younger is the 'skull building', named after the skulls found in ossuaries integrated into its walls and the so-called cellars (Schirmer 1990, 378–382). Benches along the walls seem to have been an important element here, too, standing stone slabs again held the roof. Interior fittings include bull skulls in several phases and a big 'stone table'. Both buildings are of rectangular or square shape, uncertainties remain due to partly destructions. To Çayönü's 'cell plan phase' belongs the rectangular 'terrazzo-building', named after its elaborate red cement-like floor, which is subdivided by four white bands (Schirmer 1990, 382–384). Approximately half of the floor area is disturbed by a later pit, nevertheless some details of inner organisation were recognisable, e.g. a basin of 1.25 m diameter in the northeastern and a table-like stone slab found slightly above the northwestern corner of the building. Characteristic traits of these special buildings are thus the benches hinting at gatherings as one scope, rich and elaborate inner fittings as well as special installations and finds. This pattern repeats itself with finds in other sites.

Placed as well in southeastern Turkey, the settlement of Nevalı Çori has revealed domestic architecture comparable to Çayönü's 'channeled phase' (Hauptmann 1988) as well as a three-phased 'cult building' (Hauptmann 1993; 1999, 74–75). Like the other buildings it was erected in limestone masonry with clay mortar, but with an approximately square (Fig. 7.5, 4), not rectangular ground plan, and with benches along the walls. In more or less regular intervals orthostats stood in these benches, of which in most cases only the shaft was preserved. Complete examples from the building's northern corner show Γ-like heads, a variant of the T-shaped pillars from Göbekli (Hauptmann 1993, 50, 52–53). The latter are also present at Nevalı Çori; of the two central pillars of the building one has a completely preserved T-shape. The building bears not only similarities to Göbekli in its layout (comp. the reconstruction in Becker *et al.* 2012, fig. 4), a rich inventory of stone sculptures (Hauptmann 1993, figs 19–26) resembles the finds from Göbekli Tepe as well. The aspect of a gathering known already from Çayönü is here clearly expressed in the architecture, with the peripheral pillars surrounding the central pair.

A long list of further examples of 'special buildings' in settlements could be reproduced here, as nearly every PPN site excavated on a larger scale features such architecture, but it may suffice to point out the other main type of such buildings, known largely from the region to the southwest of Göbekli. In Jerf el Ahmar (Fig. 7.5, 5) and Mureybet (Fig. 7.5, 6) in northern Syria subterranean round structures have been revealed, whose interior is subdivided in smaller cellular rooms. They are interpreted by the excavators as multifunctional buildings with aspects of storage, gathering and cult (Stordeur *et al.* 2000, 32–37), the latter *inter alia* due to the discovery of a headless human skeleton in the central room of one of the buildings from Jerf el Ahmar (Stordeur 2000, 2, fig. 4) and of

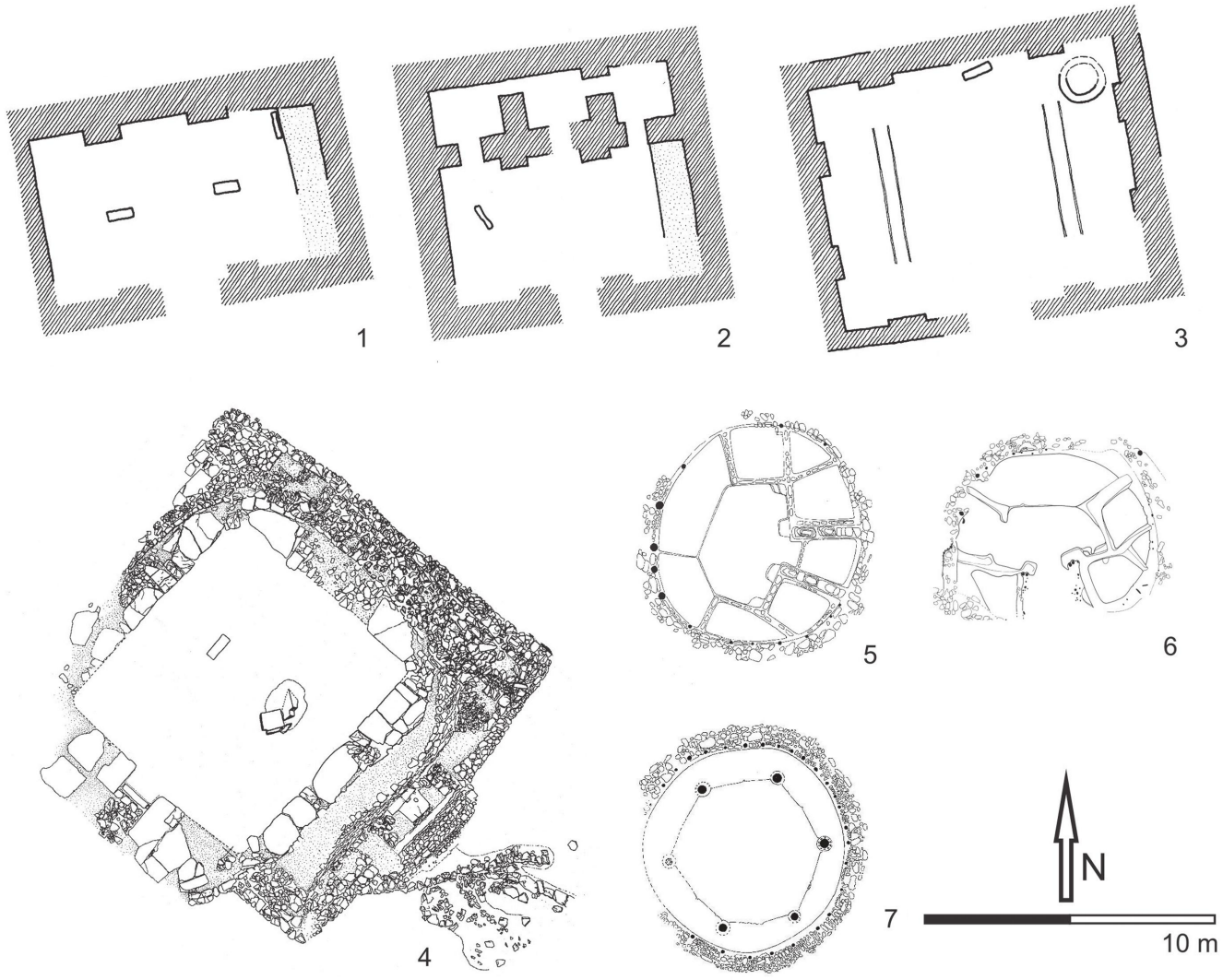


Fig. 7.5: 'Special Buildings' of the PPN: 1. Çayönü, 'Flagstone Building' (after Schirmer 1983, fig. 11c); 2. Çayönü, 'Skull Building' (after Schirmer 1983, fig. 11b); 3. Çayönü, 'Terrazzo Building' (after Schirmer 1983, fig. 11a); 4. Nevalı Çori (after Hauptmann 1993, fig. 9); 5. Jerf el Ahmar (after Stordeur et al. *2000, fig. 9); 6. Mureybet (after Stordeur* et al. *2000, fig. 2); 7. Jerf el Ahmar (after Stordeur* et al. *2000, fig. 5).*

a cache of two skulls in another one (Stordeur 2000, 1). In the transitional phase between PPNA and PPNB at Jerf el Ahmar another round building with a diameter of 8 m existed (Fig. 7.5, 7), which featured benches with decorated stone plates along the inner walls (Stordeur 2000, 3; Stordeur *et al.* 2000, 37–41), while the interior was subdivided by *c*. 30 wooden posts carrying the roof.

Summing up, at Göbekli no traces of the well-known PPN domestic architecture exist, but buildings, which at contemporaneous settlement sites form an exception, standing out by rich iconic finds and emphasising the aspect of gathering places through their layouts.

(3) Attention focusing devices are abundant at Göbekli Tepe. The important role of benches has already been stressed, and as in Nevalı Çori the layout of the pillars depicts a gathering. Not only are the richly decorated pillars attention focusing devices par excellence, but as in Nevalı Çori, Göbekli's buildings have yielded a large series of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic sculptures (Schmidt 2008; 2010), which repeat the same types canonically (e.g. wild boar, snarling predator). Some of these sculptures have cones for being set into the walls, giving the impression of jumping at visitors; others were attached to the pillars, as the impressive high-relief of a predator on Pillar 27 shows. Göbekli has also generated special object classes,

which are so far missing at other sites. A striking example are shallow limestone plates with channels, in one case found in situ set inside the terrazzo floor in front of Pillar 9 in Enclosure B. An association with libations seems probable.

But even more striking is that whole object classes known from settlements are missing (Schmidt 2005). Clay figurines are absent completely from Göbekli. This observation gains importance in comparison to Nevalı Çori, where clay figurines are abundant, missing only in the 'cult-building' with its stone sculptures and T-shaped pillars (Hauptmann 1993, 67; Morsch 2002, 148). Clay and stone sculptures may thus well form two different functional groups, one connected to domestic space and one to the 'cult building' – and to Göbekli Tepe. Awls and points of bone are largely missing from Göbekli. The tasks carried out with them presumingly were not practiced here. Other find groups, like obsidian, are not absent, but clearly underrepresented. From 18 years of excavations at Göbekli Tepe only *c*. 400 pieces are known, an exceptionally small number compared to the vast amounts of flint present at the site. But this small group is extremely heterogeneous on the other hand. Seven raw materials from four different volcanic regions have been detected.[5] Whether this hints at different groups of people congregating at Göbekli remains a point of debate for the moment.

(4) Not only the types of sculptures are canonical, the depictions of animals repeat themselves, too, and are obviously subject to a certain degree of typological standardisation. And the image range of the different enclosures is far from random (Becker *et al.* 2012, fig. 24). In Enclosure A snakes are the dominating species, in Enclosure B foxes prevail, in Enclosure C boars take over this role, while Enclosure D is more varied, with birds playing an important role. Again the question of different groups present at Göbekli Tepe is posed. At least general assumptions concerning the builders may be drawn. A selection was not only made with objects and depiction types. What is missing completely from Göbekli is female iconography. There is only one woman depicted on a slab in a building from Layer II, but this representation has to be regarded a later graffito due to its style and placement (Schmidt 2006; 2012). Whenever the sex of representations is identifiable, males are portrayed, and ithyphallic depictions are abundant. At Göbekli Tepe only a part of society becomes visible, the male hunter.

To address the next point, from Göbekli's iconography emerges clearly the site's role as a "boundary zone between this world and the next". The imagery is concerned with dangerous animals like scorpions, snakes and predators, sometimes in combination with their apparently dead prey (Notroff *et al.* 2014). Animals are often shown in unfavourable conditions with their ribs clearly sticking out. Images of that sort are known from other contexts and sites in the Near Eastern Neolithic (Hodder and Meskell 2011) and beyond (Schmidt 2013) reflecting a symbolism of life and death.

Although its complex imagery is difficult to decode, Pillar 43 from Enclosure D bears witness to a certain narrative character of the depictions, which opens up the possibility of myths being portrayed. We want to insist here only on the scenes at the lower right of this pillar, where a headless man is visible, who is accompanied by a large bird; even more birds, namely vultures, can be seen in the pillar's upper part. Comparable imagery is known from sites like Çatalhöyük (Cutting 2007) and Nevalı Çori (Schmidt 2006, 77–78; 2010, 246–249) and could hint at a concept of death assigning animals a practical role in the excarnation of dead bodies as well as a figurative one in carrying the dead, reduced to their heads, into an afterlife (Schmidt 2006, 78).

Not only the iconography of Göbekli Tepe expresses an atmosphere of death and fear, the material culture seems to corroborate, too, that the enclosures possibly were not exclusively meant for gatherings of the living. Among the rich avifauna of the site (Peters *et al*. 2005), corvids make up for more than 50%, while in settlement sites they usually do not exceed 5–10% (Peters *et al.* 2005, 231). The habitat at Göbekli Tepe must have been very attractive for these birds, which are known as necrophagous, a characteristic also applying to a large number of the other animals depicted. In recent campaigns the filling levels of the enclosures have yielded a considerable amount of human bones mixed up with the archaeofauna. Often they show evidence for post-mortem manipulations, mostly cutting marks. At least one aspect of the function of Göbekli Tepe's enclosures seems to be related to death (Notroff *et al.* 2014).

(5) Whether at Göbekli "conspicuous public display (and expenditure)" was emphasised or the impression of "hidden exclusive mysteries" was corroborated depends to a certain degree on the reconstruction of the buildings. If we imagine them open to the sky, then a certain public aspect would have to be taken into account, although the group of participants seems to have been restricted, as argued above. Another possibility is a reconstruction along the lines of largely subterranean buildings accessible through openings in the roof, similar to the *kivas* of the North-American Southwest, rather unimpressive and hidden from the outside. So far no clear indicators for roofs have been found, and the question remains open to debate.

(6) Concepts of cleanliness and pollution and in fact of an ordered and predestined cycle of life are clearly visible for Göbekli Tepe's enclosures. They were constantly repaired, as for example broken pillars show that were put back in their places. The circles were not left open after abandonment. Enclosures C and D, excavated to ground level recently, were obviously cleared thoroughly of their inventory and backfilled intentionally with homogenous material in a manner which reminds of a burial. During this process sculptures and other items were placed deliberately in the filling (see below, 14). This may also explain the lack of evidence for roofing, as the roofs may have been de-constructed in the process.

(7–8) The presence of 'deities' at Göbekli is clearly a highly complex question (Becker *et al.* 2012). As stated above,

Göbekli's pillars own an anthropomorphic quality. This may best be demonstrated with the central pillars of Enclosure D. At both pillars, reliefs of arms on the broad sides were long known (Fig. 7.3). The eastern Pillar 18 shows in addition a fox in its right arm. At the pillars' small side there are reliefs in the shape of a crescent, a disc and a motif of two antithetic elements. The western Pillar 31 is wearing a necklace in the shape of a bucranium. The so far hidden lower parts of the pillars' shafts were unearthed recently. Hands and fingers became visible soon at both pillars, but also an unexpected discovery could be made: both pillars are wearing belts just below the hands, depicted in flat relief. A belt buckle is visible in both cases, and the belts are decorated with symbols. At both belts a loincloth, apparently of fox skins – also depicted in relief – is hanging down. As the loincloth is covering the genital region of the pillars, we cannot be sure about the sex of the two individuals. But since clay figurines from Nevalı Çori, which are wearing belts, always are male, while female depictions lack this attribute (Morsch 2002, 148, 151), it seems highly probable that the pair of pillars in Enclosure D represents males, too.

An anthropomorphic quality of course does not imply that the pillars do necessarily depict human beings. Their highly abstracted character must be considered intentional, since we know of the existence of more naturalistic and life-sized depictions like the contemporaneous 'Urfa man' (Bucak: Schmidt 2003; Hauptmann 2003), and numerous heads of such statues were discovered at Göbekli Tepe (Becker *et al.* 2012, fig. 17). Whether anthropomorphic gods may be presumed for early Neolithic hunter-gatherers is highly questionable (Becker *et al.* 2012), nevertheless it seems that faceless supernatural beings individualised through symbols are depicted in a canonical way at Göbekli Tepe and other contemporaneous T-pillar sites (see below). Interpretations in the lines of ancestor veneration in societies based on and organised in categories of kinship, maybe in the context of a dualistic organisation reflected in the recurring pair of central pillars, may be a line of thought to be followed (Bodet 2011; Becker *et al.* 2012), especially as the often discussed 'Mother Goddess' is missing at Göbekli and challenged generally as an explanation pattern for Neolithic religion recently (cf. Schmidt 1997, 76–77, fig. 5; Cutting 2007, 128, 132–133; Hodder and Meskell 2011).

(9) The symbol system visible at Göbekli is not restricted to this site and context. The distinctive T-pillars are known from Nevalı Çori and other sites of the Urfa region (e.g. Sefer Tepe, Karahan and Hamzan Tepe: Moetz and Çelik 2012), but the characteristic zoomorphic and abstract signs are known from a wide range of settlement sites in Upper Mesopotamia on shaft straighteners, plaquettes and stone bowls, indicating Göbekli's catchment area (Dietrich *et al*. 2012). Apart from special buildings in settlements, these signs seem to play an important role in funerary rites as the graves from Körtik Tepe show, where large numbers of decorated stone bowls have been found (Özkaya and San 2007, fig. 6, 15–18).

(10) To get to Renfrew's last category, "participation and offering", the T-shaped pillars are always shown in a fixed position with their hands brought together on the abdomen above the belt, but whether this represents a special gesture of adoration remains unclear.

(11) It is clearly not easy to get a grip on "devices for inducting religious experiences" if they include things like dance, music and the infliction of pain. At least the infliction of fear and the invocation of death seem to have played an important role at Göbekli, as stated above. There is a rich repertoire of PPN dancing scenes (Garfinkel 2003) shedding some light on the nature of early Neolithic feasts. Recent research has also produced tentative evidence for a production and consumption of alcoholic beverages at Göbekli (Dietrich *et al.* 2012).

(12) Sacrifices of animals or humans are not clearly attested at Göbekli Tepe, one reason is maybe to be seen in the clearance of the enclosures at the end of their lifecycles. Nevertheless there could be evidence for libations (the limestone plates, see above), and structured deposition during refilling activities may have a dedicational character (see below).

(13) Next to the probable consumption of beer, the sediments used to backfill the monumental enclosures at the end of their use-lives give an interesting hint at activities at Göbekli. The filling consists of limestone rubble from the quarries nearby, flint artefacts and animal bones smashed to get to the marrow, clearly the remains of meals. The species represented most are gazelle, aurochs and Asian wild ass, a range of animals typical for hunters. What is not so typical is the sheer amount of bone material, which hints at extensive feasting (Dietrich *et al*. 2012), whose attendants may have come from considerable distances to Göbekli, if one regards the distribution pattern of the iconography (and maybe the obsidian raw materials).

(14) The filling of the enclosures is also remarkable from another point of view. During refilling, meaningful parts of the enclosures' fittings were deposited in a very structured manner near to the pillars, most often the central pillars (Becker *et al.* 2012). This applies to naturalistic human heads broken off from statues like the 'Urfa man' as well as to zoomorphic statues, reliefs and other items.

(15–16) Great investment in resources and work is clearly discernible for Göbekli's enclosures and their fittings. As Renfrew (2007, 120–121) stresses the importance of this point for the detection of cult, and Banning (2011, 632–633) denies high effort for erecting the enclosures, we will go into some detail here. In the case of Enclosure D, the two pillars in the centre are measuring about 5.5 m in height and weigh about 8 metric tons. The labor force necessary to carve the pillars from the rock, for transporting and finally erecting them, was considerable. While, for example, for the giant *moai* statues of Rapa Nui (Easter Island), with a typical height of 4 m and a weight of 12 tonnes (Kolb 2011, 140) a number of 20 individuals was calculated to be necessary to

carve such a statue in their spare time within 1 year (Pavel 1990), and 50–75 people to move it over a distance of 15 km within the course of a week (Van Tilburg and Ralston 2005), ethnographic records from the early 20th century report that on the Indonesian island of Nias 525 men were involved in hauling a megalith of 4 m^3 over a distance of 3 km to its final location in 3 days using a wooden sledge (Schröder 1917). That such a large number of participants is not necessarily caused by the labour involved exclusively, shows another example from Indonesia. In Kodi, West Sumba, the transport of the stones themselves used for the construction of megalithic tombs is ritualised and asks for a large number of people involved as witnesses (Hoskins 1986).

However, at Göbekli Tepe the monumental enclosures of Layer III consist of several such megalithic elements cut out of the surrounding limestone plateaus, as for example an unfinished T-Pillar with a size of about 7 m and volume of 20 m^3 illustrates. Thus, the numbers given here may be in need of some extrapolation when projecting them onto about a dozen of such pillars forming one enclosure, especially considering the amount of time groups of hunters may have been able to invest. This suggests a certain degree of cooperation and organisation among several of such groups, since – apparently – a noteworthy number of people from the wider area had to be drawn together. A common mode for executing large communal tasks like this has been described under the term 'collective work events', usually achieved through the prospect of a lavish feast (Dietler and Herbich 1995). Gathering of work force may thus have been one motivation behind the large-scale feasting visible at Göbekli Tepe.

Conclusion: rather a sanctuary

Summing up, there seems to be enough evidence, with a checklist or without, to interpret Göbekli Tepe as a cultic place formed of special buildings with distinct and fixed life-cycles of building, use, deconstruction and burial. All of these stages seem to be marked by specific ritual acts, of which the last, i.e. those related to burial and deposition of symbolic objects are best visible archaeologically.

What remains is largely a problem of adequate terminology to address these buildings and the site as a whole. If 'temple' is understood as a technical term for specialised cult architecture, one could use it for Göbekli Tepe. If the term is defined in our western perception as a place where a god is present, 'sanctuary' would maybe be a more neutral description; alternatively the auxiliary construction 'special buildings' (*Sondergebäude*) could be used to escape any trap of culturally bound denominations. But in any case one thing is sure: the idea that Göbekli's buildings are 'so fair houses' is not supported by the evidence available so far.

Notes

1 The site of Göbekli Tepe is excavated since 1995 under the direction of Klaus Schmidt as a research project at the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), from 2003 onwards funded with support of the German Research Foundation (DFG). Both authors are involved in this research project since 2005 resp. 2006 and would like to thank Klaus Schmidt for the opportunity to participate in the project. Furthermore we would like to express our gratitude to the General Directorate of Antiquities of Turkey for the kind permission to excavate this important site. Originally, Klaus Schmidt would have liked to take a position towards Banning's (2011) interpretation of the site (see below) himself, but due to scheduling conflicts he could not participate in the preparation of this paper.

2 Layer II had been subdivided preliminarily during excavation work in IIa and IIb as in some surface-near areas also small round building structures have been documented. Their layout clearly differs from the usual rectangular buildings and there are some indications that they are considerably older. As the character of these buildings, which maybe belong to a fourth layer, has not been understood completely yet, the former labels IIa and IIb have been waived, as they implied a close relation between the buildings. Layer II refers exclusively to the rectangular building phase.

3 For an attempt at reconstructing PPN beliefs based partly on ethnographic evidence from New Guinea see Verhoeven 2002.

4 Of course it is in no way intended to draw direct conclusions from spiritual life in New Guinea for the PPN here. Completely different examples could have been used, but it seems nevertheless more consequent to draw on material that seems to relate in certain aspects to the material culture studied archaeologically.

5 Personal communication Tristan Carter, Toronto.

Bibliography

Banning, E. B. (2011) So Fair a House: Göbekli Tepe and the Identification of Temples in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic of the Near East. *Current Anthropology* 52/5, 619–660.

Becker, N., Dietrich, O., Götzelt, T., Köksal-Schmidt, Ç., Notroff, J. and Schmidt, K. (2012) Materialien zur Deutung der zentralen Pfeilerpaare des Göbekli Tepe und weiterer Orte des obermesopotamischen Frühneolithikums. *Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie* 5, 14–43.

Benedict, P. (1980) Survey Work in Southeastern Anatolia. In H. Çambel, and R. J. Braidwood (eds) *İstanbul ve Chicago Üniversiteleri karma projesi güneydoğu anadolu tarihöncesi araştırmaları – The Joint Istanbul – Chicago Universities Prehistoric Research in Southeastern Anatolia*, 150–191. Istanbul: University of Istanbul, Faculty of Letters Press.

Bertemes, F. and Biehl, P. F. (2001) The Archaeology of Cult and Religion: An Introduction. In P. F. Biehl, F. Bertemes and H. Meller (eds) *The Archaeology of Cult and Religion*, 11–24. Budapest, Archaeolingua.

Biehl, F., Bertemes, F. and Meller, H. (ed. 2001) *The Archaeology of Cult and Religion*. Budapest, Archaeolingua.

Bodet, C. (2011) The megaliths of Göbekli Tepe as a standing statement of Neolithic kinship structures. Peneo 3/1, 1–15. «http://www.ifea-istanbul.net/website_2/images/stories/ archeologie/peneo/gobekli.pdf» (23.08.2011).

Bucak, E. and Schmidt, K. (2003) Dünyanın en eski heykeli. *Atlas* 127, 36–40.

Cauvin, J. (1994) *Naissance des divinités, naissance de l'agriculture*. Paris, Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Çelik, B. (2000) An Early Neolithic Settlement in the Center of Şanlıurfa, Turkey. *Neo-Lithics* 2–3, 4–6.

Cranstone, B. A. L. (1971) The Tifalmin: A 'Neolithic' People in New Guinea. *World Archaeology* 3/2, 132–142.

Cutting, M. (2007) Wandmalereien und -reliefs im anatolischen Neolithikum. Die Bilder von Çatal Höyük. In *Vor 12000 Jahren in Anatolien. Die ältesten Monumente der Menschheit*, 246–257. Stuttgart, Theiss Verlag.

Dietler, M. and Herbich, I. (1995) Feasts and labor mobilization. Dissecting a fundamental economic practice. In M. Dietler and B. Hayden (eds) *Feasts. Archaeological and ethnographic perspectives on food, politics, and power*, 260–264. Washington, DC & London, Smithsonian Institution Press.

Dietrich, O. (2011) Radiocarbon dating the first temples of mankind. Comments on 14C–dates from Göbekli Tepe. *Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie* 4, 12–25.

Dietrich, O. and Schmidt, K (2010) A Radiocarbon Date from the Wall Plaster of Enclosure D of Göbekli Tepe. *Neo-Lithics* 2, 82–83.

Dietrich, O., Heun, M., Notroff, J., Schmidt, K. and Zarnkow, M. (2012) The Role of Cult and Feasting in the Emergence of Neolithic Communities. New Evidence from Göbekli Tepe, South-eastern Turkey. *Antiquity* 86, 674–695.

Eliade, M. (1959) *The Sacred and the Profane.* New York, Brace & World.

Epstein, A. L. (1999) Tolai Sorcery and Change. *Ethnology* 38/4, 273–295.

Garfinkel, Y. (2003) *Dancing at the Dawn of Agriculture*. Austin, University of Texas Press.

Gebel, H. G. K., Hermansen, B. D. and Hoffmann Jensen, C. (eds) (2002) *Magic Practices and Ritual in the Near Eastern Neolithic*. Berlin, ExOriente.

Hauptmann, H. (1988) Nevalı Cori: Architektur. *Anatolica* XV, 99–110.

Hauptmann, H. (1993) Ein Kultgebäude in Nevalı Cori. In M. Frangipane, H. Hauptmann, M. Liverani, P. Matthiae and M. Mellink (eds) *Between the Rivers and Over the Mountains. Archaeologica Anatolica et Mesopotamica Alba Palmieri dedicata*, 37–69. Rome, Università di Roma "La Sapienza".

Hauptmann, H. (1999) The Urfa Region. In M. Özdoğan and N. Başgelen (eds), *Neolithic in Turkey*, 65–86. Istanbul, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.

Hauptmann, H. (2003) Eine frühneolithische Kultfigur aus Urfa. In M. Özdoğan, H. Hauptmann and N. Başgelen (eds), *Köyden Kente. From village to cities. Studies presented to Ufuk Esin*, 623–636. Istanbul, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.

Hawkes, C. (1954) Archaeological Theory and Method: Some Suggestions from the Old World. *American Anthropologist* 56/2, 155–168.

Herrmann, R. A. and Schmidt, K. (2012) Göbekli Tepe-Untersuchungen zur Gewinnung und Nutzung von Wasser im Bereich des steinzeitlichen Bergheiligtums. In F. Klimscha, R. Eichmann, C. Schuler and H. Fahlbusch (eds) *Wasserwirtschaftliche Innovationen im archäologischen Kontext*, 57–67. Rahden, Verlag Marie Leidorf.

Hodder, I. (ed.) (2010) *Religion in the Emergence of Civilization: Çatalhöyük as a Case Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hodder, I. and Meskell, L. (2011) A "Curious and Sometimes a Trifle Macabre Artistry". Some Aspects of Symbolism in Neolithic Turkey. *Current Anthropology* 52/2, 235–263.

Hoskins, J. A. (1986) So My Name Shall Live: Stone-Dragging and Grave-Building in Kodi, West Sumba. *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 142/1, 31–51.

Insoll, T. (2004) *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion*. London and New York, Routledge.

Insoll, T. (ed.) (2011) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Kelm, (2011) Schädelmasken aus Neubritannien. In A. Wieczorek and W. Rosendahl (eds) *Schädelkult. Kopf und Schädel in der Kulturgeschichte des Menschen*. Regensburg: Schnell und Steiner.

Koch, G. (1982) *Geister in Stein. Die Berliner Iniet-Figuren-Sammlung*. Berlin, Museum für Völkerkunde.

Kolb, M. J. (2011) The Genesis of Monuments in Island Societies. In M. E. Smith (ed.) *The Comparative Archaeology of Complex Societies*, 138–164. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Konrad, G. and Biakai, Y. (1987) Zur Kultur der Asmat. Mythe und Wirklichkeit. In M. Münzel (ed.) *Neuguinea. Nutzung und Deutung der Umwelt*, 465–509. Frankfurt am Main, Museum für Völkerkunde.

Kroll, H. (1937) Der Iniet. Das Wesen eines melanesischen Geheimbundes. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 69, 180–220.

Kyriakides, E. (ed.) (2007) *The Archaeology of Ritual*. Los Angeles, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press.

Michel, T. (1988) Kulthäuser als ökologische Modelle, Star Mountains von Neuguinea. *Paideuma* 34, 225–241.

Moetz, F. K. and Çelik, B. (2012) T-shaped Pillar Sites in the Landscape around Urfa. In R. Matthews and J. Curtis (eds) *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East. Volume 1: Mega-cities & Mega-sites*, 665–709. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag.

Morsch, M. (2002) Magic Figurines? Some Remarks about the Clay Objects of Nevali Cori. In H. G. K. Gebel, B. D. Hermansen and C. Hoffmann Jensen (eds) *Magic Practices and Ritual in the Near Eastern Neolithic*, 145–162. Berlin, ExOriente.

Mückler, H. (2009) Kult und Ritual in Melanesien. Geheimbünde, Rangordnungsgesellschaften, Cargo und Kula. In H. Mückler, N. Ortmayr and H. Werber (eds), *Ozeanien. 18. bis 19. Jahrhundert. Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 164–189. Wien, Promedia.

Neef, R. (2003) Overlooking the Steppe-Forest: A preliminary Report on the botanical Remains from Early Neolithic Göbekli Tepe. *Neo-Lithics* 2, 13–16.

Notroff, J., Dietrich, O. and Schmidt, K. (2014) Building Monuments – Creating Communities. Early monumental architecture at Pre-Pottery Neolithic Göbekli Tepe. In J. Osborne (ed), *Approaching Monumentality in the Archaeological Record*, 83–105. Albany, SUNY Press.

Özdoğan, A. (1999) Çayönü. In M. Özdoğan and N. Başgelen (eds), *Neolithic in Turkey*, 35–63. Istanbul, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.

Özdoğan, A. and Özdoğan, M. (1998) Buildings of Cult and Cult of Buildings. In G. Arsebük, M. Mellink W. Schirmer (eds) *Light on Top of the Black Hill – Studies presented to Halet Çambel*, 581–602. Istanbul, Ege Yayınları.

Özkaya, V. and San, O. (2007) Körtik Tepe. Bulgular ışığında kültürel doku üzerine ilk gözlemler. In M. Özdoğan and N. Başgelen (eds), *Türkiye'de neolitik dönem*: 21–36. Istanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.

Pavel, P. (1990) Reconstruction of the Transport of Moai. In H.-M. Esen-Bauer (ed.) *State and Perspectives of Scientific Research in Easter Island Culture*, 141–144. Frankfurt am Main, Courier Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg.

Peters, J., von den Driesch, A., Pöllath, N. and Schmidt, K. (2005) Birds in the megalithic art of Pre-Pottery Neolithic Göbekli Tepe, Southeast Turkey. In G. Grupe and J. Peters (eds) *Feathers, Grit and Symbolism. Birds and Humans in the Ancient Old and New Worlds*, 223–234. Rhaden, Verlag Marie Leidorf.

Pétrequin, P. and Pétrequin, A.-M. (1993) *Écologie d'un outil: la hache de pierre en Irian Jaya (Indonésie)*. Paris, CNRS Editions.

Renfrew, C. (1985) *The Archaeology of Cult*. London, Thames and Hudson.

Renfrew. C. (1994) The Archaeology of Religion. In C. Renfrew and E. B. W. Zubrow (eds) *The Ancient Mind. Elements of Cognitive Archaeology*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Renfrew, C. (2007) The Archaeology of Ritual, of Cult, and of Religion. In E. Kyriakides (ed.) *The Archaeology of Ritual*, 109–122. Los Angeles, The Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press.

Roscoe, P. and Telban, B. (2004) The People of the Lower Arafundi: Tropical foragers of the New Guinea Rainforest. *Ethnology* 43/2, 93–115.

Schirmer, W. (1988) Zu den Bauten des Çayönü Tepesi. *Anatolica* XV, 139–159.

Schirmer, W. (1990) Some Aspects of Building at the 'Aceramic-Neolithic' Settlement of Çayönü Tepesi. *World Archaeology* 21/3, 363–387.

Schmidt, K. (1997) "News from the Hilly Flanks". Zum Forschungsstand des obermesopotamischen Frühneolithikums. *Archäologisches Nachrichtenblatt* 2/1, 70–79.

Schmidt, K. (1998) Frühneolithische Tempel. Ein Forschungsbericht zum präkeramischen Neolithikum Obermesopotamiens. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 130, 17–49.

Schmidt, K. 2001. Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey. A preliminary Report on the 1995–1999 Excavations. *Paléorient* 26/1, 45–54.

Schmidt, K. (2005) Die "Stadt" der Steinzeit. In H. Falk (ed.), *Wege zur Stadt – Entwicklung und Formen urbanen Lebens in der alten Welt*, 25–38. Bremen, Hempen.

Schmidt, K. (2006) *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel. Das rätselhafte Heiligtum der Steinzeitjäger. Die archäologische Entdeckung am Göbekli Tepe*. München, C. H. Beck.

Schmidt, K. (2008) Die zähnefletschenden Raubtiere des Göbekli Tepe. In D. Bonatz, R. M. Czichon and F. Janoscha Kreppner (eds), *Fundstellen. Gesammelte Schriften zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altvorderasiens ad honorem Hartmut Kühne*, 61–69. Berlin: Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag.

Schmidt, K. (2010) Göbekli Tepe – the Stone Age Sanctuaries. New results of ongoning excavations with a special focus on sculptures and high reliefs. *Documenta Praehistorica* 37, 239–256.

Schmidt, K. (2012) *Göbekli Tepe. A Stone Age Sanctuary in South-Eastern Anatolia*. Berlin, ExOriente.

Schmidt, K. (2013 Von Knochenmännern und anderen Gerippen – zur Ikonographie halb- und vollskelettierter Tiere und Menschen in der prähistorischen Kunst. In Th. Uthmeier (ed.) *Gedenkschrift für Wolfgang Weißmüller*, 195–201. Büchenbach, Verlag Dr. Faustus.

Schröder, E. E. W. (1917) *Nias, ethnographische, geographische en historische aanteekeningen en studien*. Leiden: Brill.

Silitoe, P. and Hardy, K. (2003) Living Lithics: Ethnoarchaeology in Highland Papua New Guinea. *Antiquity* 77, 555–566.

Stanek, M. (1987) Die Männerhausversammlung in der Kultur der Iatmul (Ost-Sepik-Provinz, Papua Neuguinea). In M. Münzel (ed.) Neuguinea. Nutzung und Deutung der Umwelt, 621–643. Frankfurt am Main, Museum für Völkerkunde.

Stöhr, W. (1987) Die Religionen Neuguineas. In M. Münzel (ed.) Neuguinea. Nutzung und Deutung der Umwelt, 419–462. Frankfurt am Main, Museum für Völkerkunde.

Stordeur, D. (2000) New discoveries in architecture and symbolism at Jerf el Ahmar (Syria), 1997–1999. *Neo-Lithics* 1, 1–4.

Stordeur, D., Brenet, M., der Aprahamian, G. and Roux, J. C. (2000) Les bâtiments communautaires de Jerf el Ahmar et Mureybet horizon PPNA (Syrie). *Paleórient* 26/1, 29–44.

Van Tilburg, J. A. and Ralston, T. (2005) Megaliths and Mariners: Experimental Archaeology on Easter Island. In K. L. Johnson (ed.) *Onward and Upward*: *Papers in Honor of Clement W. Meighan*, 279–306. Chico, CA, Stansbury Publishing.

Verhoeven, M. (2002) Ritual and Ideology in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B of the Levant and Southeast Anatolia. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 12/2, 233–258.

Zöllner, S. (1977) *Lebensbaum und Schweinekult*. Darmstadt, Theologischer Verlag Rolf Brokhaus.

8

Where to worship? Religion in Iron II Israel and Judah

Beth Alpert Nakhai

Traditionally, studies of religion in Iron Age Israel have utilised one of two evidentiary corpora, the biblical or the archaeological; with increasing frequency, such studies are enhanced by scholars who dialogue between them. It is not overly optimistic to suggest that the broad outlines of Israelite religious belief and practice are, by now, known – nor is it pessimistic to accept the fact that the biases inherent in our data (and perhaps within ourselves) mean that we will never fully know all that transpired in the realm of Israelite religion. The factors that advance contemporary studies over those of previous generations include an enriched archaeological database, a fuller understanding of the ways in which the Hebrew Bible pertains to Iron Age religion, the discovery of women as full partners in Israelite society, and newfound attention to the importance of household (as opposed to national) religion. This paper considers some of these advances by looking at what is now known about Israelite religion beyond the Jerusalem Temple: (1) at the level of the nation; (2) at the level of the extended family; and, (3) at the level of the individual.[1]

Temples to the National Deity: "Houses of God"

Absent archaeological evidence for the Jerusalem Temple, scholars are forced to rely upon relevant passages throughout First and Second Kings, which describe the Temple, its construction and consecration, its renovations and alterations, and finally, its destruction at the hands of the Babylonians. They are aided by comparanda from earlier and contemporary temples at sites such as Hazor, Tell Tayinat, and ʻAin Dara. The literature on these and other temples is rich.[2] Briefly stated, the temple in Jerusalem was tripartite in plan, accessed through a spacious courtyard, and well appointed with elegant cultic paraphernalia.[3] It was constructed as a royal chapel at the beginning of the Monarchy (1 Kgs 6–7);[4] later, its national importance grew in response to moves toward centralisation and institutionalisation. Recent studies convincingly place this transition (which additionally and for the first time, allowed for public access to the Temple) in the second half of the eighth century, during the reigns of Jotham (2 Kgs 15:35b) and Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:10–18; Hurowitz 2005, 90–95; Lemaire 2011). This religious centralisation was later amplified by the actions of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:4; Bloch-Smith 2009) and Josiah (2 Kgs 23:4–24; Dever 1994). While the Jerusalem Temple may never have played as important a role in Israelite and Judaean life as it would come to play later, once it was but a memory, it was nonetheless significant throughout the Iron Age II as an emblem of monarchy and priesthood, and as a national "organising principle". It was the one sacred building that stood throughout the entire Monarchy, United and Divided alike. The other sacred places of the Iron II were of lesser longevity; none spanned both eras and some were comparatively short-lived (for further on dating, see Dever 2004; Mazar 2005).

The Hebrew Bible notes Jeroboam's construction of two royal temples for the northern nation of Israel (*c*. 930 BCE; 1 Kgs 12:26–33).[5] Excavations at Tel Dan have revealed a prominently sited monumental platform on which, perhaps, Jeroboam's temple with its bull image once stood; it was modified and used throughout the Iron Age and even as late as the Hellenistic period.[6] Cultic objects including seven-wicked oil lamps, clay and faience figurines, ceramic incense stands, a four-horned stone altar, and a sunken stone basin, were associated with it. So, too, were two subsidiary rooms half a dozen metres to the west, which contained an altar made of six uneven stone blocks, two small stone incense altars, burnt animal bones, a bronze sceptre head, and three iron shovels. In addition, four *maṣṣebâ* (standing stone; plural *maṣṣebôt*) shrines can be related to Dan's gateway system. They contained 3–5 standing stones; a modest array of cultic materials indicates sacrifice and other ritual acts (Biran 1994, 159–233; 1998; 2001; Zevit 2001, 180–96; Bloch-Smith 2006, 73–74). References to Bethel, Dan's counterpart to the south, were common in the Bible (e.g. 1 Kgs 13; 2 Kgs 17:25–28) even long after the Assyrian destruction of the northern nation (Rainey 2006 and references therein), although no physical evidence for a temple (let alone a golden calf) has been uncovered there. Indeed, Bethel became emblematic of all that the Deuteronomists (who gave the narrative in Deuteronomy-2

Kings much of its ideological stance, as well as its final form) and Israel's many prophets (Jer 48:12–13; Hos 10:15; Amos 3:14, 4:4, 5:5, 7:10–13), considered wrong with the nation and with its people.[7]

A. Faust recently underscored the prevalence of cultic buildings ("any structure built specifically for religious purposes") at Late Bronze Age sites in the southern Levant, identifying them at more than 20 sites (Faust 2010, 23; see also Mazar 1992; Nakhai 2001, 119–160). Significantly, every excavated LBA site had at least one, and some had more than one. In contrast, in the Iron II, dedicated cultic buildings were rare in Israel and Judah – even though this was not the case in neighboring lands. In his opinion, the small number of cultic buildings in Israel and Judah highlights a radical restructuring of religion between the Canaanite Late Bronze Age and the Israelite/Judaean Iron Age II (see also Gilmour 1997). The extent of this restructuring becomes even more apparent when one factors in the exponential growth in population and in the number of settlements in the Iron Age, as compared to the Late Bronze II (Faust 2010, 28–29).[8] W. Mierse articulated this insight differently, describing the shift between the abundance of temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and their scarcity in the Iron II as a move from the prestigious to the vernacular in sacred architecture. The few prestigious temples of the Iron Age Levant (including those at Jerusalem and Dan) are understood to have been components of royal complexes constructed by new dynastic heads (see also Ahlström 1982), structured so as to accommodate formal movement such as stately processions. Elsewhere, at sites with smaller places of worship, the range of architectural forms and the informality of design were purposeful, intended to accommodate a variety of cultic needs and to reflect different ways of approaching the Divine (Mierse 2012, 300–308).

In addition to the three religious "capitals" (Jerusalem, Dan, Bethel), several other sites contained places for worship that evoked the tropes, motifs and symbols of national religion, even as public access to them was unlikely. The sacred places at Arad, Lachish, Megiddo and (presumably) Beersheba were small, integrated into larger buildings, and were more easily identifiable by their contents than by their physical structure. As a whole, they embodied elements of the nation's formal religion, which included at least some from among the following features and ritual objects: dedicated space for the placement of ritual objects and for worship; stone altars (often four-horned) that were too heavy to move easily; *maṣṣebôt*; chalices and other ritual vessels; unornamented, fenestrated and/or decorated ceramic offering stands and altars; cultic implements; and, storage space.

Massive horned altars comprised of multiple nicely hewn stone blocks, as well as stationary and movable horned altars carved from a single stone block, comprised a common element of Iron II cultic paraphernalia. S. Gitin has demonstrated that the presence of stone altars (whether four-horned or not) "should be considered a criterion for defining sacred space" (2002, 117).[9] Horned altars (like the differently constructed altars in Jerusalem and Arad) stood in the courtyards of royal sanctuaries (although they were not always discovered in those courtyards). The nicely hewn "horns" from the monumental altars that were found at Dan and Megiddo match those of the (reassembled) horned altar from Beersheba (Lamon and Shipton 1939, 24, fig. 29; Aharoni 1975b; Biran 1994, 203, fig. 16).[10] The remains of Megiddo's monumental horned altar stood in front of a large residential structure, Building 2081 (Area AA; Str. VA–IVB; Iron IIA). Most of the cultic paraphernalia, including smaller horned altars, an offering table, a ceramic stand with downturned petals, a tripod mortar, pottery, and a krater containing nearly 700 astragali (of which 20% were worked), was found tucked away in a niche in the broad courtyard at the front of the building (May 1935; Loud 1948, 45, figs 100–102; Ussishkin 1989, 170–172; Negbi 1993; Frick 2000, 67–68; Zevit 2001, 220–225).[11]

Beyond its monumental horned altar, archaeological evidence for the Beersheba temple (Iron IIB–C) remains scarce, despite extensive excavation of the site.[12] However, its importance as a site of national religious importance is highlighted by Amos's inclusion of Beersheba, together with Bethel, Gilgal, Samaria and Dan, as a venue for illegitimate worship (5:5, 8:4). It is further highlighted by the popular phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" (Judg 20:1, 1 Sam 3:20, 2 Sam 3:10, 17:11, 24:2, 15, 1 Kgs 5:5), which is used to describe Israel's full geographic – and demographic – extent. This phrase suggests more than compass points, north to south. Rather, it encompasses Israel's entirety, holy space and holy community, from its northernmost to its southernmost sacred site.[13]

In the Iron IIB–C, a small temple stood within the Judaean fortress at Arad. Constructed within this remote military installation, it bore little resemblance to the larger one in Jerusalem. In the courtyard stood a large altar, constructed of stone boulders. Animal bones and ashes lay in front of it, while a ceramic stand, two offering bowls inscribed with the letters *qof kap* (standing for *qōdeš kōhănîm*, consecrated for the priests), and a bronze figure of a crouching lion were found nearby. Paired stone altars flanked the entry to the raised *cella* in the back of the temple, and paired *maṣṣebôt* stood at its back wall (Aharoni 1968).[14] A large krater from Beersheba inscribed with *qdš* (holy; Aharoni 1975a, 167), ostraca from Arad with the names of the priestly families Meremoth (Ezra 8:33) and Pashhur (Jer 20:1), and more, connect both these sites with the Jerusalem priesthood (Aharoni 1968, 11; see also Ahlström 1982, 41) and underscore the inclusion of the Beersheba and Arad temples within the realm of national religion.

In addition to the monumental horned altars found at Dan, Megiddo and Beersheba, smaller versions were found at Dan (Biran 1994, 196, fig. 155), and at Megiddo in both the 2081 and 338 sanctuaries (May 1935, 12–13, pl. 12). D. Ussishkin identified Megiddo Building 338 (Area BB; Str. VA/IVB; Iron IIA) as a royal (governor's) residence, fronted by a spacious courtyard. The shrine room within it, Room 340, originally

contained an offering table, a bench, four short stone stands, model shrines, a tripod mortar, horned and columnar stone altars, and a simple male figurine, although at the time of discovery, some of these materials had been dispersed to other rooms and to the courtyard (Ussishkin 1989, 1993; see also Negbi 1993; Zevit 2001, 227–31).

During the Iron IIA, Lachish also contained a sacred space that revealed a connection with the Jerusalem cultus. Cult Room 49 (Str. V), a small, benched chamber with a built-in altar, was filled with cultic paraphernalia. A small horned altar stood in front of the permanent altar. Four ceramic stands, of which two were fenestrated, originally supported bowls used for burning. Z. Zevit's reconstruction of the room and its contents, much of which was discovered *in situ*, pairs the stands and places them at opposite sides of the built-in altar.[15] The numerous ceramic vessels include chalices, lamps, bowls, jugs and juglets, a storage jar, and cooking pots. Due to structural damage, it is not possible to determine whether Cult Room 49 was part of a larger building, although this is suggested by the fact that its rear wall extended well beyond the confines of Room 49. A nearby open area, Locus 81, contained a *maṣṣeb*â and an olivewood pole; its two *favissae* contained additional *maṣṣebôt* and a seven-cupped stone (Aharoni 1975c, 26–32; Nakhai 2001, 178–179; Zevit 2001, 213–218).

To summarise, this informal network of royally sanctioned temples in Israel and Judah fulfilled elements of the monarchic agenda, establishing authority and providing prestige, visibility, and some degree of control over a populace more accustomed to kin-based forms of worship. While this was true throughout the Monarchy, it was truer of the Iron IIA, during which time the full extent of governmental organisation was still being crafted; in the Iron IIB–C, governmental infrastructure and leadership were more fully imposed on the cities of Israel and Judah (Shiloh 1979; Nakhai 2001, 176–93; Mazar 2005, 25–26; Faust 2012, 13–27, 263–268). The shift in nationally significant places of worship from the Iron IIA to the Iron IIB–C reflects two related political and military phenomena. The first is the split between Israel and Judah subsequent to the death of Solomon, which resulted in the establishment of two new religious centers in the north (Dan, Bethel). The second is the devastation caused by the *c*. 925 BCE attack on Israel by Egypt's king Sheshonq I (biblical Shishak; for more on Shishak's campaign and its affect on Israel and Judah, see Stager 2003; Shortland 2005; Mayes 2011; Dever forthcoming). Not only was there damage throughout the land (Bruins *et al.* 2003), but also the Jerusalem Temple and the nearby palace were plundered (1 Kgs 14:25–26). Just as the consequences of the later 701 BCE attack by the Assyrian king Sennacherib included not only destruction and impoverishment, but also religious centralisation (Bloch-Smith 2009), so too was religious centralisation among the consequences of Shishak's military campaign.[16] As Judah reconstituted itself, official control over religion was to some extent tightened, in consequence of which royally sanctioned worship took place only in Jerusalem, and in strategic sites along its southern border (Arad, Beersheba). The sanctuary at Lachish was never reconstructed. In Israel, the situation was somewhat different since that nation needed to inaugurate its own national sanctuaries (Dan, Bethel), but with that accomplished, the sanctuaries at Megiddo were not reconstructed and no other prominent place of Yahwistic worship was established. At the same time, in response to both the freedom of worship of the Iron I and the deep clan ties that had developed during those 200 years, much Iron II worship continued to take place in alternate venues, whether outdoors, in houses, or in modest structures integrated into housing compounds.[17] An examination of religion in the context of Israel and Judah's extended families provides insight into this more common form of worship.

Community shrines and worship by the extended family

Those places at which the Hebrew Bible claims that Israelites worshipped in the era prior to the Monarchy number approximately thirty (Zwickel 2012; see also Na'aman 1987),[18] of which only four (Beersheba, Bethel, Dan, Jerusalem) were later adapted for formal royal worship. Since most of these places cannot be connected to actual sites in Israel or Judah, consideration of archaeological correlates for these biblical narratives remains beyond reach. Of the places at which sanctuaries of some sort are indicated (including Shiloh [Judg 18:31, 21:19–23; 1 Sam 1:1–28, 4:4, 14:3; 1 Kgs 2:27]; Nob [1 Sam 21–22]; and, Gilgal [Josh 4:20; Judg 2:1; 2 Sam 11:14–15; Hos 4:15; Amos 4:4–5]), only Shiloh has been identified archaeologically and it yielded cultic materials but no sacred structure (Finkelstein 1988, 220–234). To complicate matters further, cultic materials have been found at some Iron I sites that cannot be identified with pre-monarchic sacred places mentioned in the Bible (Nakhai 2001, 39–57, 170–176; Edelman 2010). The typical form of worship in these biblical narratives was animal offerings, the fat burned and the meat shared by the family (Anderson 1992, 870–882). In some but not all instances, the intercession of a priest was required to manage the sacrifice and to wear the ephod, which was important for its oracular function (Zwickel 2012).

It is significant that this material, composed during and just after the Monarchy but purporting to describe the pre-monarchic period, not only portrays – but also expresses no discomfort with – the well-accepted Israelite custom of worshipping at multiple locales, occasionally with priest-led ceremonies but more often without the mediation of formal leadership (Nakhai 2001, 44–57). It is, of course, difficult to equate these biblical narratives with real-life practices, given the many complexities. Still, it seems clear that even as the structure of Israelite society began to change with the introduction of kingship, a royal chapel, and a centralised administration, religious practice continued at the local level, with local shrines officiated over by clan leaders and family

elders. As for the newly disenfranchised priests, they too claimed a place within local religious practice, as they settled in towns and villages and passed their priestly traditions down to their descendants (Nakhai 2001, 161–168).[19]

Scholars have emphasised the sharp break in religious praxis between the Late Bronze II and the Iron I (most recently, Nakhai 2001; Faust 2010; Mierse 2012; Zwickel 2012; and references therein). The open-air shrines, priesthoods of limited size and scope, and personalised cultic practices of the Iron I, highlight early Israel's subsistence economy and social structure. According to W. G. Dever, the typical Israelite four-room house was a marker of an egalitarian ethos (2003, 110). Iron Age villages, as well, exhibited elements of this ethos of egalitarianism (Faust 2012, 220–223). To this I would add that throughout the Monarchy, the popularity of worship venues in homes and housing compounds, and in settlements of all sizes, was yet another aspect of the Israelite reaction against centralised authority (even as the tropes of formal religion resounded among these local shrines).[20] Taken together, these factors focus attention on the more prevalent dimension of worship in Israel and Judah, that is, worship that was decentralised and locally-based, in contrast to the better-known components of worship, the formal temples that served the monarchy and other elites.[21]

In recent years, scholars have delineated Israelite social structure both by mining relevant biblical passages and by turning their attention to the archaeology of the everyday – to housing compounds and houses, to households and families, and (occasionally) to women.[22] R. de Vaux offered a detailed analysis based on the Hebrew Bible, ancient Near Eastern comparanda, and near-contemporary ethnographic studies (1961, 19–90; see too Matthews and Benjamin 1993; Blenkinsopp 1997). L. Stager formulated explicit connections between Israelite social structure and those places in which Israelites actually lived (1985; see too Albertz 2012a, 21–46; Faust 2012; and references therein). D. Schloen contextualised the Israelite household within its broader Near Eastern world (2001, 135–183), while others have focused on household archaeology at a single site (Hardin 2010; essays in Yasur-Landau *et al.* 2011; Dever 2012; and references therein). C. Meyers, J. Ebeling, S. Ackerman and B. Alpert Nakhai have strongly argued for the inclusion of women in all studies of Israelite and Judaean social structure, religion, economy, and daily life (Meyers, *inter alia*, 1988; 2013; Ackerman 2003; 2008; Nakhai 2005; 2007; 2008a; 2008b; Ebeling 2010; and references therein). Too, the focus by some text scholars, epigraphers and art historians on names and images within the Bible, and on seals, sealings, and inscriptions, on coroplastic and other figurative imagery, and more, directs attention to the individual rather than to the community at-large (see, *inter alia*, van der Toorn 1996, 181–372; Bodel and Olyan 2008; Ziffer 2011; Albertz and Schmitt 2012; and references therein). One outcome of this scholarship is a growing awareness of the physical manifestations of worship at the local level, in contradistinction to national, royal religion (see, most recently, R. Albertz and R. Schmitt's encyclopedic *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant* [2012]). Such awareness facilitates the interpretation of previously obscure installations and of the panoply of small finds that are found within houses, housing compounds, and settlements of all sizes.[23]

By now, then, the basic structure of Israelite society, the nuclear family (*bayit*), extended family (*bēt 'av*), and clan (*mišpāḥâ*) is well known, thereby facilitating the identification of venues for worship and modes of worship at the community and/or family level. Community shrines were part of the religious infrastructure of Israelite and Judaean settlements, and they functioned alongside the royal religious network described above. Their identification depends less on isolating discrete archaeological structures than on recognising constellations of features and artefacts that point toward non-official community worship.[24] These shrines, which I have described as "shrines of the family elders," functioned within a continuum of size and accessibility (Nakhai 2011; 2014a). In *toto*, they were utilised by the extended family units (Albertz's "multigenerational joint family" [2012a, 25]), which were the bedrock of these communities.[25] Some of the material culture factors that distinguish these community shrines from the national ones are: monumental or large stone altars (found at royally sanctioned but not at community shrines); *maṣṣebôt* (common at royally sanctioned shrines and rare at community shrines); stationary or portable stone altars, ceramic altars, and model shrines (common at community shrines and rare at royally sanctioned shrines); clay figurines (found at community shrines and not at royally sanctioned shrines). These factors (and others too) must be evaluated according to the preponderance of the evidence rather than by any absolute calculation; that is, the preponderance of the evidence points toward identifying a number of worship sites as community rather than royally sanctioned shrines. A brief examination of several of these shrines, found at Iron II sites including (but not limited to) Ta'anach, Beth Shean, Tell el-Far'ah (N), Tell en-Nasbeh, and Lahav/Tel Halif, follows.[26]

A mid-8th century building at Beth Shean was one of the largest four-room houses in Iron II Israel (Area P, Str. P-7, L. 28636; Mazar and Fink 2006, 212–230; Mazar 2006a, 269–278). Its central roofed chamber (L. 28638, L. 28641) contained numerous daily life installations and artifacts, including a small bin, a grinding installation and grinding stones, pottery that included a number of store jars, charred wheat, two looms and textile tools (Mazar 2006b, photos 12.2–12.5). Other artifacts underscore the family's wealth; they include a finely carved miniature alabaster cosmetic dish,[27] a bone spatula likely used for cosmetics, and a small gypsum juglet. Here, women made clothing and prepared food, cooking it in the open space in front of the house. At the same time, religious ephemera suggest that ritual acts were integrated into the daily lives of the women who lived here (Nakhai 2014a). The ephemera of domestic

rituals, including the head of a female figurine, a Bes amulet, an astragalus, and an animal figurine, were found near the house. So, too, was an uninscribed clay tablet; a second one was found nearby (Yahalom-Mack and Mazar 2006, 471–473).

The room to the right of the central chamber (Room 18601) contained a shrine of the family elders (Nakhai 2014a). It was comprised of a libation area just left of the entrance, consisting of an unusual stone and brick installation that held a large water jar, a small vessel and a basalt bowl. In one corner of the room, domestic pottery lay on and around a low bench. Luxury goods, some of which was used ritually, include a stone cosmetic bowl and lid, small gypsum juglets, a blue faience bead, seashells, juglets, and five iron arrowheads (Yahalom-Mack and Mazar 2006).[28] This spacious house, stocked with ceramic vessels sufficient for feeding some twenty people, was inhabited by a single wealthy family (Mazar 2006a, 273–274). I would suggest that among its inhabitants were family elders, responsible for convening their extended family for ceremonial occasions that included ritual meals, for which they maintained their extensive pantry.

A similarly equipped house was discovered at Ta'anach. The so-called "cultic structure" was founded in the late-11th century BCE (Period IIA = late 11th–mid-10th century BCE); the scant remains from that era highlight the wealth and status of the building's occupants (Frick 2000, 40–43). The more extensive mid-10th century material (Period IIB = *c*. 960–925 BCE; Area B; squares SW 1-7, 1-8, 2-7, 2-8 [Frick 2000, 43]) reveals the partial remains of a four-room house, and not the remnants of a sacred building (*contra* Rast 1994; Frick 2000).[29] Of the two better-preserved rooms, Room 1 was used primarily for storage and Room 2 for food preparation (Rast 1994, fig. 21-1; Frick 2000, 43–44, 51, 170; Schmitt 2012b, 169–172). The building contained domestic materials (including ample pottery for food preparation, serving and storage; pounding and grinding tools;[30] and, ceramic and bone tools for textile production); installations (including a hearth; a stone-lined basin [presumably for olive oil preparation]; and, a lined silo); and, cultic paraphernalia. Ritual objects and mundane household items were also found discarded in Pit 69, just outside the house. The exterior courtyard contained two silos and a cistern. Not only the quantity of quotidian materials but also the quality of some of the small finds point to the continuing wealth of the resident household. These luxury items include a serpentine pendant, bronze beads, ivory pieces, a stamp seal impression, ten stone weights, and knives and other tools made of iron (Frick 2000).

The cultic assemblage is comprised of three caches of astragali (with a total of nearly 200, some of which were worked); three fragmentary clay figurines (2 female, 1 equine); a mould for producing figurines; a highly stylised stone figurine; stone tripod bowls; and, cultic vessels (Frick 2000).[31] Most noteworthy are the ceramic cult stands, especially the two that are elaborately decorated (Frick 2000, 114–29). The imagery on these stands, which includes lions, goddesses, a tree of life, horses, and more, has been the subject of intense scrutiny; the fantastic representations are redolent of a religious culture rich in symbolism and in creative imagination.[32] To summarise, while the 10th century Ta'anach "cultic structure" has commonly been assigned a solely religious function, I would suggest that it was the home of a wealthy family, responsible not only for managing myriad domestic activities, but also for enacting rituals designed to ensure the well-being of the extended family.

At other sites as well, including Tell el-Far'ah (N) (biblical Tirzah; Level 7b = 10th century BCE; Houses 355, 436 and 440 [Chambon 1984]), Tell en-Nasbeh (biblical Mizpah; Str. 3 = Iron II [Brody 2009]), and Lahav/Tel Halif (Field IV, House 1, Str. VIB = 8th century BCE [Hardin 2004; 2010, 124–160]), small shrines have been identified within housing compounds. These shrines, like those at Ta'anach and Beth Shean, were used for community worship by extended families; elders, male and female alike, would have officiated at them. They are identified by the inclusion of some range of built features (alcoves, offering benches, niches, altars, partially sunken vessels for libations, and so forth), and of small finds (tripod mortars, chalices, miniature ceramic vessels, arrowheads and knives, anthropomorphic and/or zoomorphic figurines, miniature vehicles and/or model furniture, and fenestrated or otherwise elaborated ceramic stands) (Nakhai 2011; 2014a). The shrines express the worship patterns delineated in the biblical narratives that purport to describe the era before the Jerusalem Temple, an era that favoured local worship by family leaders and allowed for the participation of family members. While the venue for the biblical rituals was commonly outdoors (see, *inter alia*, Gen 8:20–21; 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 26: 25; 33:20; 35:1, 3, 7; Ex 17:15; Num 23:1–4, 14; Josh 8:30; 22:10; Judg 6:24; 13:20; 21:4; 1 Sam 7:17; 14:35; 2 Sam 24:18; 1 Kgs 18:32), rituals could be enacted at indoor shrines, as well (see Judg 17:5 for a "House of God" [*bêt 'elohîm*] in the hills of Ephraim; in Judg 17:12, its location in "Micah's house" [*bêt mîkâ*] is clarified). The rituals described in these biblical texts replicate the rituals important within the extended family, attended to by its elders and by other family members: ceremonies for naming and renaming, circumcision, acts of thanksgiving, atonement and purification, acknowledgment of theophany, and more. In addition, the responsibilities that the elders bore for ensuring food security for their extended families required ritual engagement at family shrines.[33] These shrines would not have been the only venues for worship. Members of the larger community might also have worshipped at gateway shrines (for Dan, see Biran 1994, 235–249; Blomquist 1999, 57–59, fig. 2a–b; for Jerusalem, see 2 Kgs 23:8 [Keel 2012, 323] and Ezek 8:14, 16: 24, 41 [Blomquist 1999, 163–181]; for further discussion, see Blomquist 1999), at outdoor altars within cities (e.g. Rehov Area E [Mazar 2008, 2016–217]; see also Jer 11:13), on nearby hilltops (Nakhai 1994; 2001, 56–69, 161–168; for Jerusalem, see Keel 2012), or at other easily accessed places (see also Edelman 2010).[34]

Religion in the realm of the personal

To the extent that scholars have been able to identify acts of personal piety in the archaeological record, they have focused on those enacted by women and, primarily, on those related to lifecycle events including pregnancy and childrearing (Willett 1999; 2008; Meyers 2005; 2013, 147–70; van der Toorn 1994, 19–26, 77–92; Albertz 2012b, 269–298; Schmitt 2012c, 387–399; Nakhai 2011; 2014b).[35] That women would seek the Divine at multiple points during their childbearing years seems obvious. Women – and especially women without children – were disadvantaged in Israelite society. This can be seen in the Bible, in the piercing stories of childless women, in the oft-repeated injunction to care for the widow (a woman who lacked not only a husband but also a son to care for her), and in the problems encountered in the transmission of land and other real property in the absence of male heirs (e.g. Sarah [Gen 17–18]; Rachel and Leah [Gen 29–30]; Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah [Num 26:33, 27:1–11]; Hannah [1 Sam 1–2]; see also Schneider 2008). It can be seen, as well, in mortuary statistics, which identify the lifespan of a woman as 30 years, ten less than her male counterpart, due to pregnancy and childbirth related morbidity and mortality, and which indicate that as many as a third of all children died by age 5, and half by age 18. Women were both midwives and healers, of children, of women, and of men; this responsibility had both medical and ritual components (Nakhai 2014b).

Women bore many other responsibilities, for which they would similarly desire Divine intervention and support. That women were fully engaged in all aspects of nutrition – crop and livestock products alike – is obvious. Matters relating to sustenance, to food and drink, farming and herding, processing, preserving, and preparing, were among women's primary responsibilities. So, too, was their engagement in the production of clothing and other textiles, and these required raw materials drawn primarily from the same resources as food. Procuring ample supplies of clean water was similarly within their portfolio. This suggests that women shared the concerns of the extended family and the larger community and would have needed not only personal but also community-based worship, whether at shrines of the elders or at other community shrines in their cities, towns, and villages (Jer 7:17–18, 44:15–21).

Assemblages of women's ritual paraphernalia have been identified at a number of Iron II sites, including Beth Shean, Beersheba, Tell en-Nasbeh, Tell Beit Mirsim, Tel Masos, Lahav/Tel Halif, and Tell el-Far'ah (N) (Holladay 1987, 275–280; Willett 1999, 157–165; 2008; Meyers 2005, 27–35; Nakhai 2011; 2014a; Singer-Avitz 2011). This material evidence for women's religious lives is found interspersed among the ephemera of daily life activities, especially in those parts of the house in which women worked. Most often, these small ritual objects were of little value to anyone other than the women who used them to protect themselves and their families.

Of interest are the smooth, blank ceramic tablets, two of which were discovered at Ta'anach (Frick 2000, 134–135), and two at Beth Shean (Yahalom-Mack and Mazar 2006, 471–473). Although their function remains speculative, I have suggested elsewhere (Nakhai 2014a) that they may relate to women's religious "literacy". According to S. Starr Sered, the physical nature of a sacred text may allow that text to attain a religious value and ritual function that transcend its words and their meanings (1995).[36] According to K. van der Toorn, in the Deuteronomistic vision of the Torah, "…the sacred image and the holy book served the same function: they were each an embodiment of the sacred, and both were perceived as incarnations of God" (van der Toorn 1997, 242). In Iron Age Israel, women, by all odds illiterate, might have made tablets void of either word or image and yet still sacred, replicating the *lamaštu* plaques, inscribed apotropaic plaques designed to bring healing, ensure safe childbirth, and protect women and their babies from demons, which they used for ritual purposes.

Additional apotropaic objects used in women's rituals include beads of specially chosen colors, shells, amulets (including the popular "eye" and Bes amulets); women used, as well, clay figurines, and miniature chairs and lamps (Willett 1999, 292–388; 2008; Meyers 2005, 27–35; Limmer 2007, 160–162, 394–395). Some of these pieces were surely heirlooms, passed down from mother to daughter. While it is not simple to distinguish between women's ritual ephemera and the objects used in shrines of the elders, their positioning in areas in which women worked – rather than within the permanent or semi-permanent installations that situated the family shrines – is helpful in determining ownership and function (Nakhai 2014a).[37]

Conclusions

So, where to worship? For Israelites and Judaeans of the Iron Age II (*c*. 1000–587 BCE), this depended upon one's identity, social status and gender, upon when and where one lived, and with whom. For kings, there was the Jerusalem Temple, and those at Dan and Bethel. Each had its own priesthood, but also, depending on the era, some configuration of priestly networks might interconnect nationally sanctioned places of worship. Over time, public access to the Jerusalem Temple increased; Dan, too, became pilgrimage site. These temples held no monopoly on legitimacy, however.[38] Hilltops, gateways, and common areas in town squares all offered opportunities for formal and informal worship. Easier to substantiate archaeologically is worship that took place within housing compounds, as family elders officiated over worship for their extended families at shrines of the family elders. Women, some of whom were counted among the family elders, worshiped with their families and on their own in their homes, in those places in which they bore and raised their children and performed their daily tasks. Each of these settings was legitimate; each had its own constellation of space, installations and ritual paraphernalia; and, each filled a different need within Israel and Judah's various constituencies.

Overall, it mattered little if one were lord or liege, priest or layperson, elder or youngster, woman or man. For each and all, there was a place to worship, be it dedicated ritual space or profane space made sacred through the performance of ritual acts – and for each and all, there was the wherewithal to worship, utilising ritual objects and sacrificial offerings commensurate with one's means.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank Nicola Laneri, University of Catania, for inviting me to contribute to this important volume. I extend thanks, as well, to William G. Dever, for taking the time to comment on a draft of this article.

Notes

1 For the premier – now classic – articulation of this tripartite model for Israelite religion, see Albertz 1994. See also Holladay 1987; Nakhai 2001, 191; Albertz and Schmitt 2012. Funerary beliefs and rituals, another important component of religion, are not treated here. For the literature on funerary traditions, see, *inter alia*, Bloch-Smith 1992; Lewis 2002; Schmitt 2012a; and references therein. For funerary traditions within the context of family religion, see van der Toorn 1996, 42–65; Olyan 2008; Schmitt 2012a.

2 For Late Bronze and Iron Age temples in Israel, Judah and neighboring lands, see *inter alia*, Dever 1987; 1995; Mazar 1992; Nakhai 2001; Zevit 2001; Hess 2007; Faust 2010; Daviau 2012; Ji 2012; Mierse 2012; Zwickel 2012. For Hazor, see Zuckerman 2012 and references therein. For 'Ain Dara, see Monson 2006; Novák 2012 and references therein. For Tayinat, see Harrison 2012 and references therein.

3 For more on the Jerusalem Temple, see Meyers 1992; Bloch-Smith 1994, 2002; Dever 2006b; Smith 2006; Ussishkin 2009; and the many references therein. Courtyard altars had a rich past in the Levant, as they were found in Canaanite royal temples (for overviews, see Mazar 1992; Nakhai 2001; for the tripartite temple in LB II Hazor Area H, see Yadin 1961, 212–71), and in the Temple in Jerusalem. These courtyards were likely the single component of royal temples to which there was (limited) public access.

4 According to A. Lemaire, it was "a kind of outbuilding of the royal palace" (2011, 195); according to L. Stager, Jerusalem was "the regal-ritual symbolic 'center' of the kingdom and the cosmos" (2003, 66). See also Ahlström 1982.

5 The Bible refers to the golden calves Jeroboam placed at Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12:28–30). The only other reference to the Dan sanctuary is 2 Kgs 10:29. That references to the Bethel sanctuary are more common may be attributed the relatively early loss of Dan to the Aramaeans (*pace* Eran 2008, 37–38). Bethel contained an altar and a *bāmâ* (2 Kgs 23:15), a *miqdaš melek* (king's sanctuary) and a *bêt mamlākâ* (royal palace; Amos 7:13). A (presumably golden) calf is also indicated at a sanctuary at Beth-aven (Hos 10:5; see also Hos 4:15, 10:8). N. Na'aman suggests that this sanctuary should be identified with the sanctuary at Bethel, rather than considered a separate entity (1987).

6 For more on the bovine imagery at Dan and Bethel, see Smith 2007.

7 The Bible indicates, as well, a temple in Samaria, the capital of the northern nation of Israel. Dedicated to the worship of Baal, it was built by Ahab (1 Kgs 16: 32) and destroyed by Jehu (2 Kgs 10: 18–28).

8 Even if, to A. Faust's short list of sacred buildings at Arad, Dan and Jerusalem, one adds those at Beersheba, Megiddo and Lachish, the situation changes not too much. The latter sites, like the former, served administrative needs and were populated by governmental functionaries. It is, therefore, to be anticipated that these sites had formal places for official worship.

9 The many rather small portable altars – horned and otherwise – found at these and other sites were used in rooftop rites that involved the burning of incense (Gitin 2002). Needless to say, the enormous horned altars at Megiddo, Dan and Beersheba stood at ground level.

10 The Dan horn, found in a corner of the 9th–8th century "walled *temenos*" south of the large platform, was in a secondary context, and seems to have originated in the earlier, 10th century stratum (Zevit 2001, 187).

11 *Contra*, see Albertz and Schmitt 2012, which considers Megiddo 2081 to be a domestic or neighborhood shrine (Additional Tables: tables 3.7–3.8).

12 For reconstructions of the original setting for the temple and horned altar, see Aharoni 1975b, 154–156; Herzog *et al.* 1977, 56–58; Yadin 1976, 8.

13 One might think, comparably, of the refrain of a song quite popular in the United States, "America the Beautiful," which was written by Katherine Lee Bates and first published in 1895. It, too, considers the expanse of the country as sacred space:

> America! America!
> God shed His grace on thee,
> And crown thy good with brotherhood
> From sea to shining sea!

14 In this way, the worship of both Yahweh and Asherah is indicated (Dever 2006a, 469; 2008; see also, Dever 2006b and references in fn. 23).

15 In this way, the worship of two deities is indicated (Zevit 2001, 213–218).

16 Of Shishak's campaign, A. D. H. Mayes writes: "In the course of all the major areas affected by the invasion, the Negeb, the international coastal route, the Jezreel valley, and even the area of Gibeon in the highlands, which belongs to the direct route linking the southern coastal region to the Jordan valley, it is clear that it is the protection of trade routes that the invasion was designed to secure. A study of the consequences of the invasion, on the other hand, and especially perhaps its unintended consequences, may give it a significance with wider implications" (2011, 68). Certainly the reframing of patterns of worship in Iron II Israel and Israel and Judah are among those unintended consequences.

17 The caution offered by R. Schmitt (2012d, 241) bears notice: "… we find that the interdependence and coexistence of several layers and realms of cultic activity are perhaps best understood using the concepts of internal religious pluralism, which permitted multiple intersections among the circles of domestic, local, and official religion to meet the entire range of needs in the various levels of social organization involved in these cult practices."

18 A number of these are described as *bāmôt*, commonly understood to have been high or elevated places for worship, especially popular in the Iron I (Zwickel 2012). The *bāmâ* of the Iron II was

an integral to how the people of Israel and Judah worshiped. For further discussion, see Nakhai 1994; 2001, 56–69, 161–168; and references therein. See also Larocca-Pitts 2001; Barrick 2008; and references therein.

19 Stories about Aaron, Eli and Samuel highlight the priest's role as *pater familias*, responsible for the religious and ethical behaviors of his sons. Levites and Zadokites were similarly dynastic.

20 For points of continuity between national and local religious practice, see Olyan 2008.

21 As Faust notes, "However the Israelites practiced their religion, the archaeological evidence suggests that it generally was not performed in temples and other cultic buildings erected for this purpose" (2010, 31). This does not, of course, obviate the fact that Israelites and Judaeans adapted spaces within extant structures for worship, or worshipped in spaces that required no special construction.

22 As I noted in a 2005 review article, those many studies of daily life that do not incorporate women into the discussion cannot be considered successful.

23 For a discussion of Israelite and Judaean settlements in the 10th–9th centuries, including size and population, see Dever 1997, which posits a three-tier settlement hierarchy (cities; towns; villages, hamlets, camps, etc.). His more recent analysis of 8th century Israelite and Judaean sites delineates a more complex, four-tiered settlement hierarchy (Tier 1 = capitals and administrative centres/district capitals; Tier 2 = cities/urban centers; Tier 3 = towns; Tier 4 = villages; and, finally, forts [2012, 47–105]). Faust's recent, comprehensive study identifies different settlement patterns in Israel and in Judah, and highlights social stratification as a particularly urban phenomenon (2012).

24 I exclude the well-known shrine at Kuntillet ʻAjrûd from this discussion, since it was located in a fortress/caravanserai in the Sinai Desert. The site (and especially its cultic finds) has been published and extensively discussed in the literature. See, most recently, Dever 2012, 262–266; Meshel 2012.

25 Albertz and Schmitt distinguish between "neighborhood cult installations or shrines" used by groups ranging from "the nuclear or extended family to the co-residential lineage and the neighborhood," and "village sanctuaries" for the "co-residential lineage and/or the local community" (2012, 480).

26 Tel Rehov's elaborate Building F (Area C; Str. V–IV=10th century–830 BCE) may have been the home of an elite family. Its cultic materials, including a horned ceramic altar, an unusual model shrine, and numerous chalices (Mazar 2008) might derive from a similar shrine. A shrine of the family elders has also been identified at Iron I Tall al-ʻUmayri, on Jordan's Madaba Plain (Herr 2010; Nakhai 2014a). For household shrines at Megiddo and Hazor, see Dever 2012, 266–269.

27 A second one, with blue coloring in one set of the concentric circles carved into its rim, was found nearby, in a slightly later stratum (Yahalom-Mack and Mazar 2006).

28 The ritual function of two of the arrowheads is suggested by the fact that they were fixed to an iron ring.

29 W. G. Dever considers the building to have been a neighborhood shrine in a small village (pers. comm.).

30 Included among these may be three worked stone slabs, not found *in situ* and originally described as *maṣṣebôt* (so Bloch-Smith 2006).

31 One ceramic stand with downturned petals (Rast 1978, 54) resembles a stand from Megiddo 2081 (May 1935, fig. 20).

32 Most scholars agree that the imagery on these stands indicates the worship of Yahweh and Asherah (Hestrin 1987; Taylor 1988; Beck 1994; Dever 2005, 151–154, 176–251).

33 For more on the responsibilities of elders in rural communities for the success of crops and livestock, see Faust 2012, 164–168.

34 See, too, 2 Kgs 17:29, which complains that, subsequent to Assyria's destruction of the nation of Israel and its repopulation of the territory with people from other nations, "…each nation continued to make its own gods and to set them up in the cult places which had been made by the people of Samaria; each nation set them up in the towns in which it lived." This suggests that the people of Israel had constructed community shrines in towns across the land.

35 Even S. Olyan, who cautions against most scholarly efforts to engender ritual activities by placing women at the center of baking cakes for Asherah (Jer 7:18), utilising Judaean pillar base figurines, and more, agrees that in almost all cases, it was women who engaged in rituals surrounding pregnancy and childbirth (2010).

36 See S. Sered's discussion of illiterate Jewish women of Middle Eastern origin living in Jerusalem subsequent to 1948 CE. She writes that, "When the women treat texts as ritual objects, they incorporate the texts into their interpersonal, relationship-oriented religious world: books, mezuzot and pages with Hebrew writing guard over one's home and loved ones" (1995, 211).

37 L. Avitz-Singer notes the difficulty of using the locations in which ceramic figurines were found to determine whether they had been used exclusively by women (2011, 294).

38 Even Jerusalem contained evidence for worship in locations other than the Temple. Domestic cultic materials include a cult stand fragment showing a male divinity (Area G), and two chalices from a "cultic corner" (Area E1 North) (Schmitt 2012b, 108–112; Pioske 2013, 5). O. Keel's recent analysis of glyptic materials from Jerusalem (2012) suggests that it was home to a number of open air sanctuaries (2 Kgs 23:13; Jer 11:13), in addition to a gate shrine (2 Kgs 23:8). For these, as well as "cult caves" or *favissae* containing extensive cultic materials including figurines, see Holladay 1987, 259–261; Nakhai 2001, 190; Zevit 2001, 206–213 and references therein.

Bibliography

Ackerman, S. (2003) Digging Up Deborah: Recent Hebrew Bible Scholarship on Gender and the Contribution of Archaeology. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 66, 172–84.

Ackerman, S. (2008) Household Religion, Family Religion, and Women's Religion in Ancient Israel, 127–58. In J. Bodel and S. M. Olyan (eds) *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity.* Malden, MA, Blackwell.

Aharoni, Y. (1968) Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple. *Biblical Archaeologist* 31, 2–32.

Aharoni, Y. (1975a) Beersheba. In M. Avi-Yonah (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, Vol. 1, 153–68. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society and Massada Press.

Aharoni, Y. (1975b) Excavations at Tell Beer-sheba: Preliminary Report of the Fifth and Sixth Seasons, 1973–1974. *Tel Aviv* 2, 146–168.

Aharoni, Y. (1975c) *Excavations at Lachish: The Sanctuary and The Residency (Lachish V)*. Tel Aviv, Gateway.

Ahlström, G. W. (1982) *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine*. Leiden, Brill.

Albertz, R. (1994) *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period, Volume I: From the Beginnings to the End of the Monarchy*, trans. J. Bowden. Louisville, KY, Westminster/John Knox.

Albertz, R. (2012a) Methodological Reflections. In R. Albertz and R. Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, 21–56. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Albertz, R. (2012b) Personal Names and Family Religion, 245–386. In R. Albertz and R. Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Albertz, R. and Schmitt, R. (2012) *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Anderson, G. A. (1992) Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offerings, 870–886. In D. N. Freedman (ed.) *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 5. New York, Doubleday.

Barrick, W. B. (2008) *BMH as Body Language: A Lexical and Iconographical Study of the Word BMH When Not a Reference to Cultic Phenomena in Biblical and Post-Biblical Hebrew*. New York, T&T Clark.

Beck, P. (1994) The Cult-Stands from Taanach: Aspects of the Iconographic Tradition of Early Iron Age Cult Objects in Palestine. In I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman (eds) *From Nomadism to Monarchy: Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, 352–381. Jerusalem, Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi and Israel Exploration Society and Washington, DC, Biblical Archaeology Society.

Biran, A. (1994) *Biblical Dan*. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Biran, A. (1998) Sacred Spaces: Of Standing Stones, High Places and Cult Objects at Tel Dan. *Biblical Archaeology Review* 24/5, 38–45, 70.

Biran, A. (2001) The High Places of Biblical Dan. In A. Mazar (ed.) *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan*, 148–155. JSOT Supplement 331. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press.

Blenkinsopp, J. (1997) The Family in First Temple Israel. In L. G. Perdue, J. Blenkinsopp, J. J. Collins and C. Meyers (eds) *Families in Ancient Israel*, 48–103. Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox.

Bloch-Smith, E. M. (1992) *Judahite Burial Practices and Beliefs about the Dead*. JSOT Supplement 123. Sheffield, JSOT Press.

Bloch-Smith, E. M. (1994) "Who Is the King of Glory?" Solomon's Temple and Its Symbolism. In M. D. Coogan, J. C. Exum, and L. E. Stager (eds) *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, 18–31. Louisville, KY, Westminster John Knox.

Bloch-Smith, E. M. (2002) Solomon's Temple: The Politics of Ritual Space. In B. M. Gittlen (ed.) *Sacred Time, Sacred Space: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 83–94. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Bloch-Smith, E. M. (2006) Will the Real *Massebot* Please Stand Up: Cases of Real and Mistakenly Identified Standing Stones in Ancient Israel. In G. Beckman and T. J. Lewis (eds) *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, 64–79. Brown Judaic Studies 346. Providence, RI, Brown University.

Bloch-Smith, E. M. (2009) Assyrians Abet Israelite Cultic Reforms: Sennacherib and the Centralization of the Israelite Cult. In J. D. Schloen (ed.) *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, 35–44. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Blomquist, T. H. (1999) *Gates and Gods: Cults in the City Gates of Iron Age Palestine, An Investigation of the Archaeological and Biblical Sources*. Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series 46. Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell International.

Bodel, J. and Olyan, S. M. (eds) (2008) *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*. Malden, MA, Blackwell.

Bruins, H. J., Plicht, van der, J. and Mazar, A. (2003) ^{14}C Dates from Tel Rehov: Iron-Age Chronology, Pharaohs, and Hebrew Kings. *Science* 300, 315–318.

Brody, A. J. (2009) "Those Who Add House to House": Household Archaeology and the Use of Domestic Space in an Iron II Residential Compound at Tell en-Nasbeh. In J. D. Schloen (ed.) *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, 45–56. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Chambon, A. (1984) *Tell el-Far'ah I: l'âge du fer*. Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

Daviau, P. M. M. (2012) Diversity in the Cultic Setting: Temples and Shrines in Central Jordan and the Negev. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.)*, 435–458. ADPV 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Dever, W. G. (1987) The Contribution of Archaeology to the Study of Canaanite and Early Israelite Religion. In P. D. Miller Jr., P. D. Hanson and S. D. McBride (eds) *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, 209–47. Philadelphia, Fortress.

Dever, W. G. (1994) The Silence of the Text: An Archaeological Commentary on 2 Kings 23. In M. D. Coogan, J. C. Exum, and L. E. Stager (eds) *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, 213–238. Louisville, KY, Westminster/John Knox.

Dever, W. G. (1995) Palaces and Temples in Canaan and Ancient Israel. In J. M. Sasson (ed.) *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 1, 605–614. New York, Scribner.

Dever, W. G. (1997) Archaeology and the "Age of Solomon": A Case-Study in Archaeology and Historiography. In L. K. Handy (ed.) *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, 217–251. Leiden, Brill.

Dever, W. G. (2003) *Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans.

Dever, W. G. (2004) Histories and Non-Histories of Ancient Israel: The Question of the United Monarchy. In J. Day (ed.) *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel*, 64–94. JSOT Supplement 406. London, T&T Clark.

Dever, W. G. (2005) *Did God Have a Wife? Archaeology and Folk Religion in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans.

Dever, W. G. (2006a) Archaeology and Ancient Israelite Iconography. In A. M. Maeir and P. de Miroschedji (eds) *"I Will Speak the Riddle of Ancient Times": Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, vol. 2, 461–475. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Dever, W. G. (2006b) Were There Temples in Ancient Israel? The Archaeological Evidence. In G. Beckman and T. J. Lewis (eds) *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, 300–316. Brown Judaic Studies 346. Providence, RI, Brown University.

Dever, W. G. (2008) A Temple Built for Two: Did Yahweh Share a Throne with His Consort Asherah? *Biblical Archaeology Review* 34/2, 54–62, 85.

Dever, W. G. (2012) *The Lives of Ordinary People in Ancient Israel: Where Archaeology and the Bible Intersect*. Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans.

Dever, W. G. (forthcoming) Sheshonq and Solomon: Chronological Considerations.

Ebeling, J. R. (2010) *Women's Lives in Biblical Times*. London, T&T Clark.

Edelman, D. (2010) Cultic Sites and Complexes beyond the Jerusalem Temple. In F. Stavrakopoulou and J. Barton (eds) *Religious Diversity in Ancient Israel and Judah*, 82–101. London, T & T Clark.

Eran, A. (2008) Reconsidering the Iron II Strata at Tel Dan: Archaeological and Historical Implications. *Tel Aviv* 35/1, 6–64.

Faust, A. (2010) The Archaeology of the Israelite Cult: Questioning the Consensus. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 360, 23–35.

Faust, A. (2012) *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II*, trans. R. Ludlum. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Finkelstein, I. (1988) *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.

Frick, F. S. (2000) *Tell Taannek 1963–1968, IV/2: The Iron Age Cultic Structure*. Birzeit, Palestinian Institute of Archaeology at Birzeit University.

Gilmour, G. H. (1997) *Early Israelite Religion during the Period of the Judges: New Evidence from Archaeology*. Occasional Paper Series 1. Cape Town, Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies and Research, University of Cape Town.

Gitin, S. (2002) The Four-Horned Altar and Sacred Space. In B. M. Gittlen (ed.) *Sacred Time, Sacred Space: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 95–123. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Hardin, J. W. (2004) Understanding Domestic Space: An Example from Iron Age Tel Halif. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67/2, 71–84.

Hardin, J. W. (2010) *Lahav II: Households and the Use of Domestic Space at Iron II Tell Halif: An Archaeology of Destruction*. Reports of the Lahav Research Project Excavations at Tell Halif, Israel, Vol. II. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Harrison, T. P. (2012) West Syrian *megaron* or Neo-Assyrian *Langraum*? The Shifting Form and Function of the *Tell Ta'yīnāt (Kunulua)* Temples. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.)*, 3–21. ADPV 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Herzog, Z., Rainey, A. F. and Moshkovitz, S. (1977) The Stratigraphy at Beer-sheba and the Location of the Sanctuary. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 225, 49–58.

Herr, L. G. (2010) The House of the Father at Iron I Tall al-'Umayri. In J. D. Schloen (ed.) *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, 191–198. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Hess, R. S. (2007) *Israelite Religions: An Archaeological and Biblical Survey*. Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic.

Hestrin, R. (1987) The Cult Stand from Ta'anach and Its Religious Background. *Studia Phoenicia* 5, 61–77.

Holladay, J. S., Jr. (1987) Religion in Israel and Judah under the Monarchy: An Explicitly Archaeological Approach. In P. D. Miller Jr., P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride (eds) *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, 249–299. Philadelphia, Fortress.

Hurowitz, V. A. (2005) YHWH's Exalted House – Aspects of the Design and Symbolism of Solomon's Temple. In J. Day (ed.) *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel*, 63–110. London, T&T Clark.

Ji, C.-H. (2012) The Early Iron Age II Temple at *Ḥirbet 'Atārūs* and Its Architecture and Selected Objects. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.)*, 203–221. ADPV 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Keel, O. (2012) Paraphernalia of Jerusalem Sanctuaries and Their Relation to Deities Worshiped Therein during the Iron Age IIA–C. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.)*, 317–342. ADPV 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Lemaire, A. (2011) The Evolution of the 8th-Century B.C.E. Jerusalem Temple. In I. Finkelstein and N. Na'aman (ed.) *The Signal Fires of Lachish: Studies in the Archaeology and History of Israel in the Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Persian Period in Honor of David Ussishkin*, 195–202. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Lamon, R. S. and Shipton, G. M. (1939) *Megiddo I: The Seasons of 1925–35, Strata I–V*. Oriental Institute Publication 42. Chicago, University of Chicago.

LaRocca-Pitts, E. C. (2001) *Of Wood and Stone: The Significance of Israelite Cultic Items in the Bible and Its Early Interpreters*. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Lewis, T. J. (2002) How Far Can Texts Take Us? Evaluating Textual Sources for Reconstructing Ancient Israelite Beliefs about the Dead in B. M. Gittlin (ed.) *Sacred Time, Sacred Space: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 169–217. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Limmer, A. S. (2007) *The Social Functions and Ritual Significance of Jewelry in the Iron Age II Southern Levant*. PhD dissertation, The University of Arizona.

Matthews, V. H. and Benjamin, D. C. (1993) *Social World of Ancient Israel: 1250–587 BCE*. Peabody, MA, Hendrickson.

May, H. G. (1935) *Material Remains of the Megiddo Cult*. The University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications 26. Chicago. The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Mayes, A. D. H. (2011) The Palestinian Campaign of Pharaoh Shishak. In J. K. Aitken, K. J. Dell and B. A. Mastin (eds) *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*, 55–68. Berlin, de Gruyter.

Mazar, A. (1992) Temples of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages and the Iron Age. In A. Kempinski and R. Reich (eds) *The Architecture of Ancient Israel: From the Prehistoric to the Persian Periods*, 161–187. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Mazar, A. (2005) The Debate over the Chronology of the Iron Age in the Southern Levant: Its History, the Current Situation, and A Suggested Resolution. In T. E. Levy and T. Higham (eds) *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science*, 15–30. London, Equinox.

Mazar, A. (2006a) Analysis of Stratum P-7 Building 28636. In A. Mazar (ed.) *Excavations at Tel Beth-Shean 1989–1996, Volume 1: from the Late Bronze Age IIB to the Medieval Period*, 269–86. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Mazar, A. (2006b) The Iron Age II Pottery from Areas S and P. In A. Mazar (ed.) *Excavations at Tel Beth Shean 1989–1996, Volume 1: from the Late Bronze Age IIB to the Medieval Period*, 313–384. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Mazar, A. (2008) Reḥov, Tel. In E. Stern (ed.) *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Supplementary Volume*, Vol. 5, 2013–2018. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society and Washington, DC, Biblical Archaeology Society.

Mazar, A. and Fink, A. S. (2006) Area P: The Stratigraphy and Architecture of Strata P-10-P-1. In A. Mazar (ed.) *Excavations at*

Tel Beth-Shean 1989–1996, Volume 1: from the Late Bronze Age IIB to the Medieval Period, 202–268. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Meshel, Z. (2012) *Kuntillet ʻAjrud (Ḥorvat Teman): An Iron II Religious Site on the Judah-Sinai Border*. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Meyers, C. (1988) *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York, Oxford.

Meyers, C. (1992) Temple, Jerusalem. In D. N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6, 350–369. New York, Doubleday.

Meyers, C. (2005) *Households and Holiness: The Religious Culture of Israelite Women*. Minneapolis, Fortress.

Meyers, C. (2013) *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context*. New York, Oxford.

Mierse, W. E. (2012) *Temples and Sanctuaries from the Early Iron Age Levant: Recovery after Collapse*. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Monson, J. (2006) The ʻAin Dara Temple and the Jerusalem Temple. In G. Beckman and T. J. Lewis (eds) *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion*, 273–299. Brown Judaic Studies 346. Providence, RI, Brown University.

Na'aman, N. (1987) Beth-aven, Bethel, and Early Israelite Sanctuaries. *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 103, 13–21.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (1994) What's a Bamah? How Sacred Space Functioned in Ancient Israel. *Biblical Archaeology Review* 20/3, 18–29, 77–78.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2001) *Archaeology and the Religions of Canaan and Israel.* ASOR Books 7. Atlanta, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2005) Daily Life in the Ancient Near East: New Thoughts on an Old Topic. *Religious Studies Review: A Quarterly Review of Publications in the Field of Religion and Related Disciplines* 31/3–4, 147–153.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2007) Gender and Archaeology in Israelite Religion. *Compass Religion* 1/5, 512–528.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2008a) Female Infanticide in Iron II Israel and Judah. In S. Dolansky (ed.) *Sacred History, Sacred Literature: Essays on Ancient Israel, the Bible and Religion in Honor of R. E. Friedman on His 60th Birthday,* 245–260. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2008b) Introduction. In B. A. Nakhai (ed.) *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East*, ix–xvi. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2011) Varieties of Religious Expression in the Domestic Setting. In A. Yasur-Landau, J. R. Ebeling and L. B. Mazow (eds) *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*, 347–360. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50. Leiden, Brill.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2014a) The Household as Sacred Space. In R. Albertz, B. Alpert Nakhai, S. Olyan and R. Schmitt (eds) *Household Religion: Toward a Synthesis of Old Testament Studies, Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Cultural Studies; Proceedings of the International Conference at Westfälisches Wilhelms-Universität Münster, April 1st–3rd, 2009*, 53–71. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

Nakhai, B. Alpert (2014b) Mother-and-Child Figurines in the Late Bronze – Persian Period Levant. In J. Spencer, R. Mullins and A. Brody (eds) *Material Culture Matters: Essays on the Archaeology of the Southern Levant in Honor of Seymour Gitin*, 165–198. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Negbi, O. (1993) Israelite Cult Elements in Secular Contexts of the 10th Century B.C.E. In A. Biran and J. Aviram (eds) *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, June–July 1990*, 221–230. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society and Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Novák, M. (2013) The Temple of *ʻAin Dāra* in the Context of Imperial and Neo-Hittite Architecture and Art. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1. Mill. B.C.E.)*, 41–54. ADPV 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Olyan, S. M. (2008) Family Religion in Israel and the Wider Levant of the First Millennium BCE. In J. Bodel and S. M. Olyan (eds) *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, 113–126. Malden, MA, Blackwell.

Olyan, S. M. (2010) What Do We Really Know about Women's Rites in the Israelite Family Context? *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 10/1, 55–7.

Pioske, D. D. (2013) David's Jerusalem: A Sense of Place. *Near Eastern* Archaeology 76/1, 4–15.

Rainey, A. F. (2006) Looking for Bethel: An Exercise in Historical Geography. In S. Gitin, J. E. Wright, and J. P. Dessel (eds) *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, 269–273. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Rast, W. (1978) *Taanach I: Studies in the Iron Age Pottery*. Cambridge, MA, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Rast, W. (1994) Priestly Families and the Cultic Structure at Taanach. In M. D. Coogan, J. C. Exum and L. E. Stager (eds) *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, 355–365. Louisville, KY, Westminster/John Knox.

Schloen, J. D. (2001) *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol*. Studies in the Archaeology and History of the Levant 2. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Schmitt, R. (2012a) Care for the Dead in the Context of the Household and Family. In R. Albertz and R. Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, 429–473. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Schmitt, R. (2012b) Elements of Domestic Cult in Ancient Israel. In R. Albertz and R. Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, 57–219. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Schmitt, R. (2012c) Rites of Family and Household Religion. In R. Albertz and R. Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, 387–428. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Schmitt, R. (2012d) Typology of Iron Age Cult Places. In R. Albertz and R. Schmitt, *Family and Household Religion in Ancient Israel and the Levant*, 220–244. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Schneider, T. J. (2008) *Mothers of Promise: Women in the Book of Genesis*. Grand Rapids, MI, Baker Academic.

Sered, S. Starr (1995) Toward an Anthropology of Jewish Women: Sacred Texts and the Religious World of Elderly, Middle-Eastern Women in Jerusalem. In M. Sacks (ed.) *Active Voices: Women in Jewish Culture*, 203–218. Urbana, IL, University of Illinois.

Shiloh, Y. (1979) Iron Age Sanctuaries and Cult Elements in Palestine. In F. M. Cross, Jr. (ed.) *Symposia Celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of ASOR (1900–1975)*, 147–157. Cambridge, MA, American Schools of Oriental Research.

Shortland, A. J. (2005) Shishak, King of Egypt: The Challenges of Egyptian Calendrical Chronology. In T. E. Levy and T. Higham

(eds) *The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating: Archaeology, Text and Science*, 43–54, London, Equinox.

Singer-Avitz, L. (2011) Household Activities at Tel Beersheba. In A. Yasur-Landau, J. R. Ebeling and L. B. Mazow (eds) *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*, 275–301. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50. Leiden, Brill.

Smith, M. S. (2006) In Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 6–7): Between Text and Archaeology. In S. Gitin, J. E. Wright, and J. P. Dessel (eds) *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays on Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever*, 275–282. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Smith, M. S. (2007) Counting Calves at Bethel. In S. White Crawford, A. Ben-Tor, J. P. Dessel, W. G. Dever, A. Mazar and J. Aviram (eds) *"Up to the Gates of Ekron" Essays on the Archaeology and History of the Eastern Mediterranean in Honor of Seymour Gitin*, 382–394. Jerusalem, Albright Institute and Israel Exploration Society.

Stager, L. E. (1985) The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 260, 1–35.

Stager, L. E. (2003) The Patrimonial Kingdom of Solomon. In W. G. Dever and S. Gitin (eds) *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina*, 63–74. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Taylor, J. G. (1988) The Two Earliest Known Representations of Yahweh. In L. Eslinger and J. G. Taylor (eds) *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, 557–566. JSOT Supplement 67. Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press.

Toorn, K. van der (1994) *From Her Cradle to Her Grave: The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and Babylonian Woman*, trans. S. J. Denning-Bolle. Biblical Seminar 23. Sheffield, JSOT.

Toorn, K. van der (1996) *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life*. Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 7. Leiden, Brill.

Toorn, K. van der (1997) The Iconic Book: Analogies between the Babylonian Cult of Images and the Veneration of the Torah. In K. van der Toorn (ed.) *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 229–248. Leuven, Peeters.

Ussishkin, D. (1989) Schumacher's Shrine in Building 338 at Megiddo. *Israel Exploration Journal* 39, 149–72.

Ussishkin, D. (1993) Fresh Examination of Old Excavations: Sanctuaries in the First Temple Period. In A. Biran and J. Aviram (eds) *Biblical Archaeology Today, 1990: Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, June–July 1990*, 67–85. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society and Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities.

Ussishkin, D. (2009) The Temple Mount in Jerusalem during the First Temple Period: An Archaeologist's View. In J. D. Schloen (ed.) *Exploring the Longue Durée: Essays in Honor of Lawrence E. Stager*, 473–483. Winona Lake, IN, Eisenbrauns.

Vaux, R. de (1961) *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, trans. J. McHugh. New York, McGraw Hill.

Willett, E. A. R. (1999) *Women and Household Shrines in Ancient Israel*. PhD dissertation. The University of Arizona.

Willett, E. A. R. (2008) Infant Mortality and Women's Religion in the Biblical Period. In B. A. Nakhai (ed.) *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East*, 79–98. Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Yadin, Y. (1961) *Hazor III–IV: An Account of the Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavations, 1957–1958.* Jerusalem, Magnes.

Yadin, Y. (1976) Beer-sheba: The High Place Destroyed by King Josiah. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 222, 5–17.

Yahalom-Mack, N. and Mazar, A. (2006) Various Finds from the Iron Age II Strata in Areas P and S. In A. Mazar (ed.) *Excavations at Tel Beth-Shean 1989–1996, Volume 1: From the Late Bronze Age IIB to the Medieval Period*, 468–504. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Yasur-Landau, A., Ebeling, J. R. and Mazow, L. B. (eds) (2011) *Household Archaeology in Ancient Israel and Beyond*. Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 50. Leiden, Brill.

Zevit, Z. (2001) *The Religions of Ancient Israel: A Synthesis of Parallactic Approaches*. London and New York, Continuum.

Ziffer, I. (2011) Diminished Sanctuaries for Grassroots Piety – The Case of the Cult Stands from the Repository Pit at Yavneh. In *Eretz-Israel* 30 (Amnon Ben-Tor volume), 380–396. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Zuckerman, S. (2012) The Temples of Canaanite Hazor. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2–1 Mill. B.C.E.)*, 99–125. ADPV 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Zwickel, W. (2012) Cult in the Iron Age I–IIA in the Land of Israel. In G. Galil, A. Gilboa, A. M. Maeir, and D. Kahn (eds) *The Ancient Near East in the 12th–10th Centuries BCE: Culture and History. Proceedings of the International Conference held at the University of Haifa, 2–5 May, 2010*, 581–593. Münster, Ugarit-Verlag.

9

Communal places of worship: ritual activities and ritualised ideology during the Early Bronze Age Jezirah

Stefano Valentini

Introduction

The spread of communal places of worship in the Jezirah (Fig. 9.1)[1] is strongly related to the phenomenon of the regeneration of complex society that characterises the Upper Mesopotamia after the crisis of the Uruk system, at the end of the 4th millennium, and before the middle of the 3rd millennium BC (Schwartz 2006), which marks the peak period of the Jezirah civilisation, coinciding with the so-called Second Urban Revolution (Lebeau 2011b, 368–370) (Fig. 9.2).[2] Here, I investigate how ritual practices are implicated in this process and their relationship with the Jezirah material culture through the analysis of the archaeological elements, more specifically, architecture and ritual objects.

Archaeological data

Architecture

If we consider the religious architecture in Jezirah, as Pfälzner has recently noted (2011, 177), there is not yet any evidence for the Early Jezirah 0 and 1 periods. Instead in the Early Jezirah 2 period, as the studies of Schwartz (2000) and Matthews (2002) have demonstrated, a series of small shrines are attested.

The first discovered was that of Level 3 at Raqa'i (Curvers and Schwartz 1990). It is a freestanding Single-Roomed-Shrine (5 × 4.5 m) erected within an open courtyard surrounded by an enclosure wall (Fig. 9.3). The cella is a bent axis room accessed through a door framed by buttresses. Inside the room there is a bench, an altar with steps, and traces of a fireplace in the center of the floor. Behind the cella, there are two small rooms, where various activities relating to the shrine probably took place.

A Single-Roomed-Shrine (8 × 4.5 m) was also excavated at Brak (Matthews 2003) in level 5 (HS4 building). The position of the entrance is unclear, and the room contains benches along one long and one short side (Fig. 9.3). A freestanding box altar is located along the central axis, and a fireplace is set in front of it on the floor. The level 4 rebuilding was performed after the old room had been intentionally filled with clean soil.

Another example of a freestanding Single-Roomed-Shrine is a building (8 × 6 m) excavated at Kashkashouk III (Suleiman and Taraqji 1995, 179–181). It presents a bent axis entrance with recessed internal entry. Inside the room, along the W side, there is an altar provided with buttresses. Two benches are located along the north and west sides (Fig. 9.3).

The Chagar Bazar example of an early shrine is problematic. Mallowan (1936, 15) interpreted room 1 of level 4 as a Single-Roomed-Shrine, with a recessed entry (Fig. 9.3), but there are few elements to confirm this hypothesis.

The 'Atij building (Fig. 9.3) was considered by Matthews (2002, 188) as a possible example of Single-Roomed-Shrine, but there are no elements to confirm this hypothesis. Fortin and Cooper (1994), the excavators, interpreted this room as a house.

At Khuera, in the *Kranzhugel* region, on the western border of the Jezirah, the *Kleiner Anten-Tempel* attests to this presence of this type of religious architecture (Levels 5–4, Early Jezirah 2 Final–3a) (Pfälzner 2011, 183–187). The cella was accessible through a court/corridor and contains a fireplace, a bench and a steps altar (Fig. 9.3). An important difference with respect to the other shrines, however, is that we are not in a freestanding building – since the shrine was embedded in the dwelling – and that the room was accessible by a frontal entry. This peculiarity seems to anticipate the solution adopted in the proper *Anten-Tempel* of level 1–3, dating to the Early Jezirah 3b and built directly above the structures of level 4. In contrast to Moortgat (1967, 28–32) and Orthmann (1990), the excavator, Pfälzner (2011, 186–187) interpreted phases 4 and 5 of this building as a house with an ancestor altar, and phases 1–3 as an ancestor shrine. He compares the *Kleiner Anten-Tempel* (Levels 5–4) to House IIa, excavated in Area K at Khuera (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 1996). The main room of the house, accessible from a courtyard/corridor, is located on the back of the complex and equipped with a rounded hearth, an altar or podium, and benches along the walls. According to Pfälzner (2011, 152 and 177) this is another Khuera-type house with an ancestor altar or at most a small shrine for the family's ancestors.

The so-called Southern Temple of Arbid (Bieliński 2010) was a rectangle room (8 × 4.5 m) with a bent axis arrangement

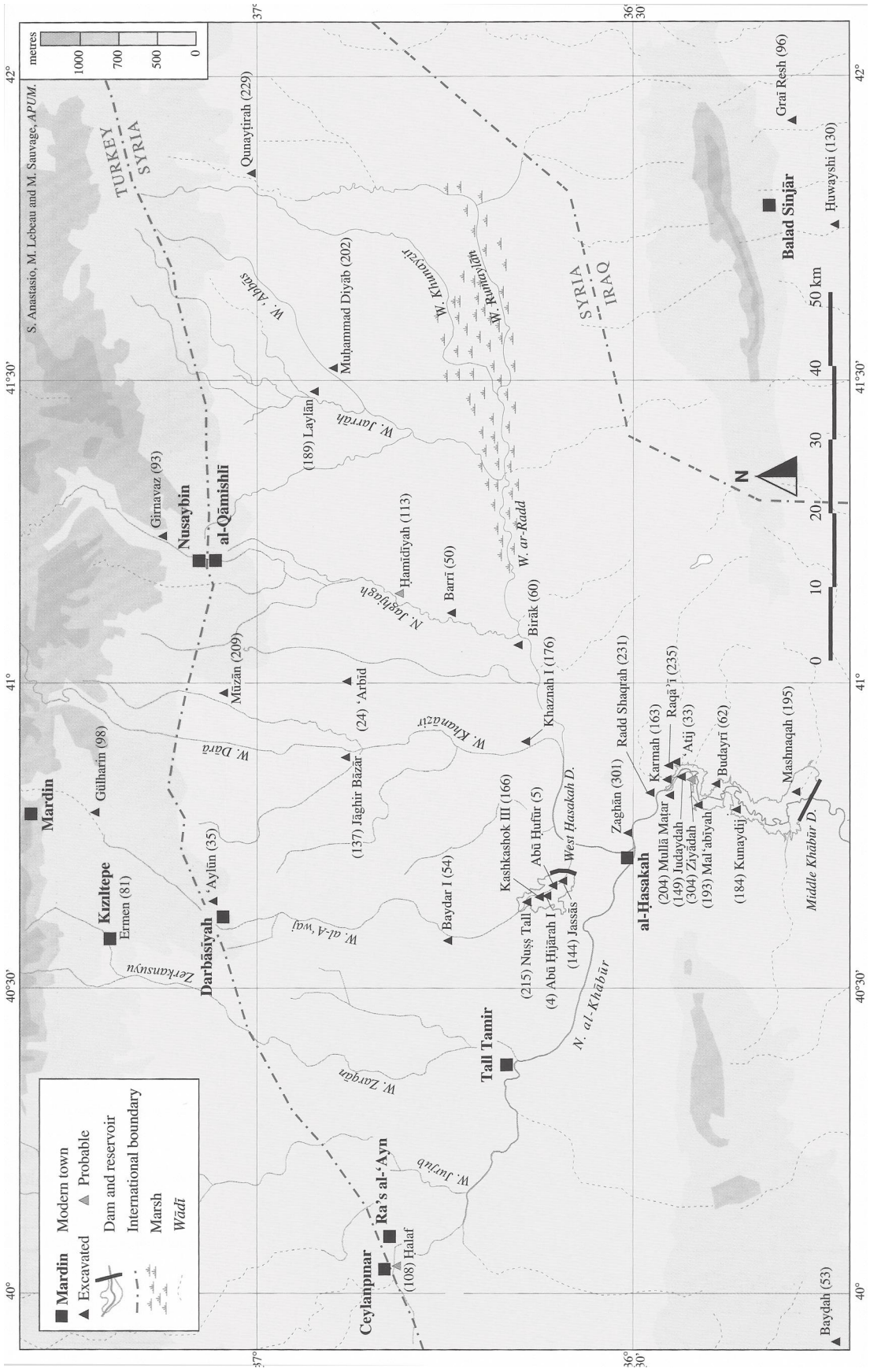


Fig. 9.1: Map of Jezirah (Lebeau 2011a, modified).

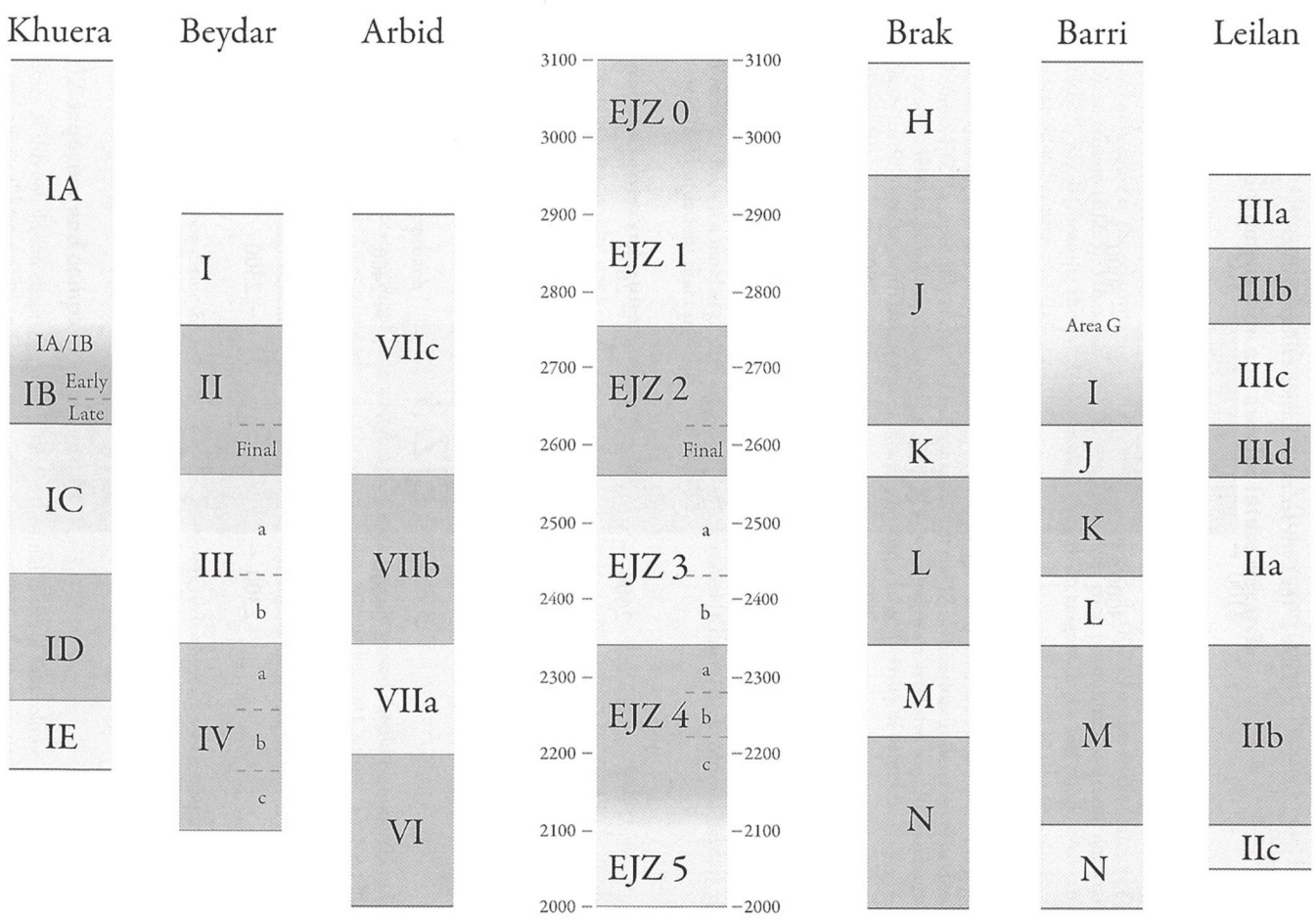


Fig. 9.2: Chronology of Jezirah in the Early Bronze age (Lebeau 2011b, 380).

that includes a finely plastered altar with grooves (Fig. 9.3). A square hearth was located in front of it. On the floor, close to the altar, a nearly complete incense burner, in the shape of a small column, was found. A freestanding partition wall separated the main cella from a kind of sacristy, and to the north and west of the cella there is a rooms interpreted as a granary. The building appears to have been cleared before it was abandoned. The Southern Temple was erected on a mud-brick platform; thus it seems that the builders sought to create an impressive visual approach. The Arbid ritual complex is the best know example of a temple built on the top of a terrace in Early Jezirah 2 period architecture.

The Early Jezirah 2 Monumental Temple of Mozan/*Urkesh* (Fig. 9.3), located on the high tell in the city's centre, constitutes the only other example of this type (Dohmann-Pfälzner and Pfälzner 1999). The existence of a mud-brick ramp substructure leading up to the high mud-brick terrace is clear (so-called Stage I, Pfälzner 2011, 179). In Early Jezirah 2 there is no evidence that the stone-built, oval *temenos* wall that appears in the Early Jezirah 3 period was yet present (Stage II, Pfälzner 2011, 179, fig. 53) and the exact layout of the temple on top of the terrace is not known, although it can be hypothetically assumed that the Early Jezirah 3 cella already existed in this period.

At Khazna the monumental complex (Munchaev and Merpert 1994; Munchaev *et al.* 2004, 477) – a dense cluster of rectangular rooms excavated on the top of the hill and surrounded by a thick fortification wall – has tentatively been interpreted by the excavators as a religious-administrative complex (Fig. 9.3). In particular Buildings 136 and 69 may be temples, but due to the unclear stratigraphy and the lack of religious installations, Pfälzner (2011, 197) interprets the Khazna architecture as a huge communal storage complex.

Before concluding this overview of the religious architecture of the Early Jezirah 2 period, we must consider the Sacred Area of Tell Barri, excavated between 2002 and 2005 (Pecorella and Pierobon 2003; 2005a; Valentini 2006–2007).

At Barri, a long sequence of strata with domestic and storage installations was excavated in Area B. This sequence starts at the very beginning of the 3rd millennium, in the Early Jezirah 0, and continues until the Early Jezirah 2 period, when the Barri

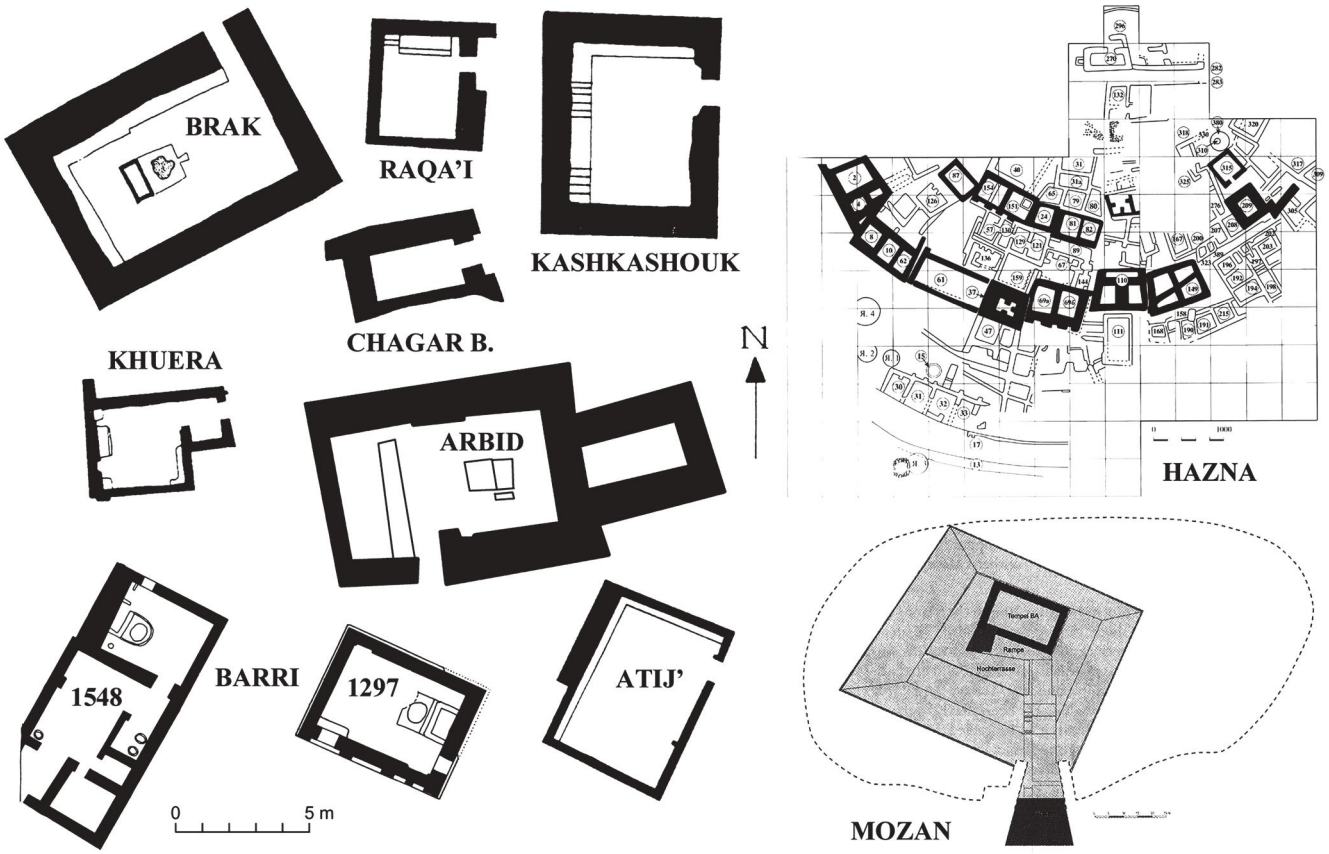


Fig. 9.3: Plans of Jezirah Communal places of worship (Redrawn after Matthews 2002, fig. 1; 2003; Curvers and Schwartz 1990; Suleiman and Taraqji 1995; Mallowan 1936; Moortgat 1967; Bieliński 2010; Pecorella and Pierobon 2005a; Fortin and Cooper 1994; Munchaev et al. *2004; Pfälzner 2011).*

settlement expands from the west to the southeast slope. Here, in Area G, a Sacred Area (Fig. 9.4), dating to the Early Jezirah 2 (stratum 44), was built *ex novo* directly above virgin soil in a sector previously not inhabited. The complex was constituted by two buildings interpreted as temples, a large open space, a *temenos*, and a storage building comprising two *siloi*.

The single Shrine 1297 (Fig. 9.5) was a rectangular room with a bent axis arrangement that was isolated inside the *temenos* above a mud-bricks platform filled with clean soil. It presents a recessed entry and buttresses on the façade. On the short side, a box altar with grooves stood, and in front of it there lay a small bench with an oval fireplace. The presence of the fireplaces indicates that food offerings, probably contained in small pottery vessels, were burnt within the shrines. The box-altar was probably covered by a wooden table and may have been open on the short side so that it could be used for ritual presentation, to store offerings, and to display animal and human clay figurines.

Under the beaten floor, inside a small pit, three incomplete skeletons of one fetus and two newborns were buried. The room was accessible through a small ramp where the entrance to a small kitchen with a fireplace – the so-called Sacristy – was also located. Shrine 1548 (Fig. 9.6) was a Multi-Roomed Complex. The cella was accessible from a court in which a kitchen with two *tannurs* and two small storage rooms were located. As in the other shrine, the short side of the cella had a box altar, and in front of it there was a small bench with a semicircular fireplace. Under the beaten floor, four small pits yielded eight incomplete skeletons of fetuses and newborns.

Newborns and fetus *intra muros* burials are quite common in Jezirah during the first half of the 3rd millennium, but there are no known examples of burials from inside temples. There are two elements that make the Barri burials even more anomalous (Valentini 2009; 2011). First they are pit burials, while most of the newborns in this period are buried in pottery vessels. Secondly they are multiple and progressive burials, while most of the newborn burials in this period are normally single inhumation. In fact each pit normally contains a complete skeleton – probably the last buried – which was added to other incomplete skeletons (Sołtysiak 2008). If we postulate that these rural shrines were an expression of a religious system in an agricultural community, in which seasonal rites are performed

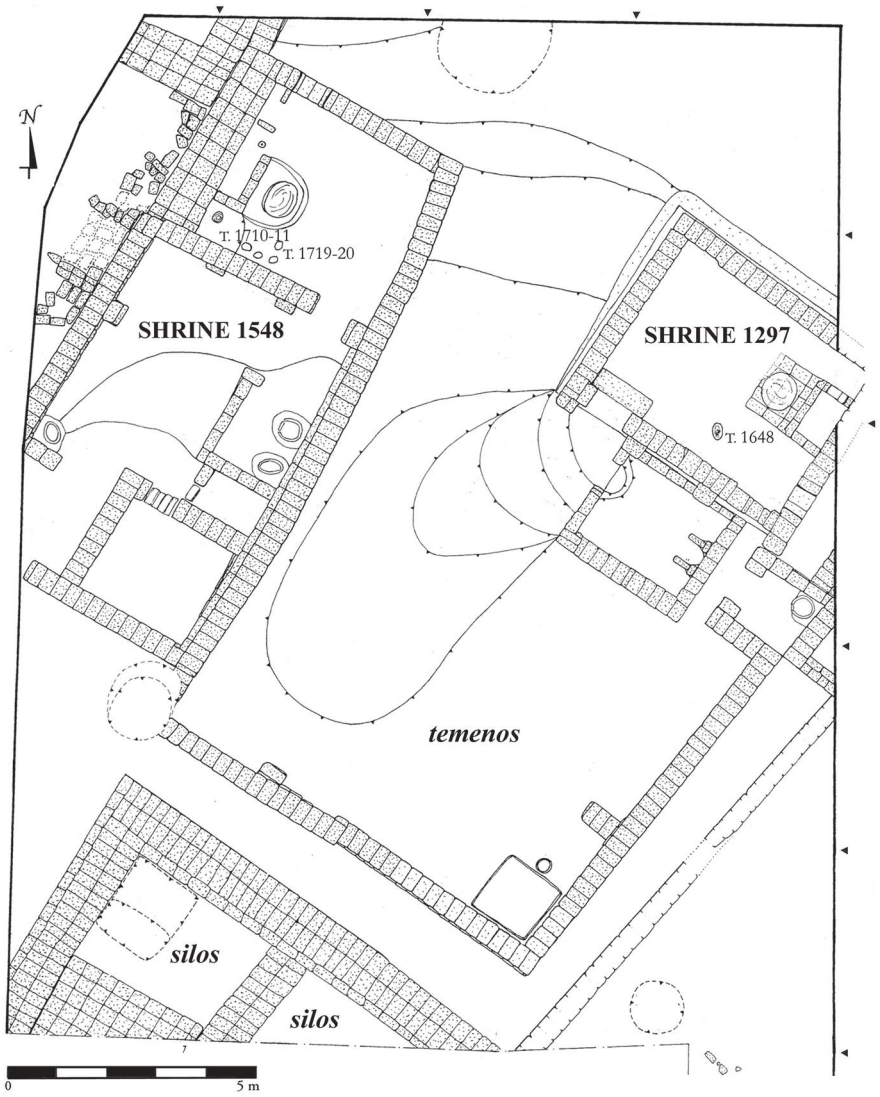


Fig. 9.4: Barri Sacred Area, stratum 44 (Pecorella and Pierobon 2005b, fig. 1. Modified).

with the aim of ensuring good harvests, we can speculate that the burials inside the shrines were symbolically related to the concept of fertility. Perhaps the dead individual was perceived as part of a complex system of debt to the earth, with his death working to assure the fertility of the field. Although there is a lack of textual reference on human sacrificial practices of newborns, *a priori*, the possibility of foundations rituals or propitiatory inhumations cannot be excluded.[3]

The Sacred Area underwent changes over time (Pecorella and Pierobon 2005a, fig. 1). For example, in stratum 43 inside the *temenos*, a *chicane* route was created, probably to provide a kind of processional way during ritual celebrations. Later, in stratum 42, Shrine 1548 was abandoned and replaced with a big open space with two pairs of rooms overlooking the court. During the last phase of Shrine 1297, in stratum 40, the walls of the old room were tiled and covered with new walls and, after a deliberate filling with clean soil of the remaining space, a new building, with the same plan, was built on top. The old altar was reutilised as a pit and a new fireplace was placed in the southeast corner.[4]

As demonstrated by the archaeological evidence, the Sacred Area of Barri – the only example in the Jezirah during the Early Jezirah 2 period – shows the coexistence of two different kinds of religious architecture, the Single-Roomed Shrine (1297) (Fig. 9.5) and the Multi-Roomed Complex (1548) (Fig. 9.6), at the same time in the same context.

In particular, the Barri Multi-Roomed Complex (Figs 9.4, 9.6) encourages further investigation into the possible relationship between the Jezirah and Lower Mesopotamian religious architecture, firstly posited by Schwartz (2000).[5]

Fig. 9.5: Barri Sacred Area, Shrine-Roomed Shrine 1297 (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

Fig. 9.6: Barri Sacred Area, Multi-Roomed Complex 1548 (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

When compared with the Sin Temple (Level VII) of Khafajah (Fig. 9.7), for example, the Barri building resembles a downscaled version of contemporary urban Mesopotamian temples. This is even more evident when the plan of the Barri Shrine 1548 is juxtaposed with contemporary Nippur North Temple (Fig. 9.8). The similarities are remarkable: the cella is located on the opposite side of the entrance, and part of the building is occupied by a court, which other rooms, including kitchens and storage rooms, overlook.

When considering the Jezirah Communal Places of Worship as an assemblage, it is difficult to escape the impression that the builders chose from a recurrent menu of architectural elements. Although most of the elements of the Jezirah buildings derived from a domestic context, their specific arrangement in these contexts represents a clear example of formal architecture adopted for religious purposes. The ritual preparation of foundations, as demonstrated by the Barri and Raqa'i examples, confirms the sacred nature of this architecture. The pit foundation was filled with clean, pure soil, stacks of bricks, or have walls marking their perimeter with the temple proper built on top of this platform. Moreover, as the shrines of Barri, Brak and Raqa'i demonstrate, before the construction of a new temple, the old one was deliberately filled, probably for symbolic and ritual reasons. Finally, the fetus burials excavated inside the Barri shrines that were probably linked with rituals foundation must not be forgotten within this broader context.

Furthermore the platforms of Arbid and Mozan – and to a lesser extent, Barri – demonstrate that the temple was conceived as a separate entity. This is confirmed by the

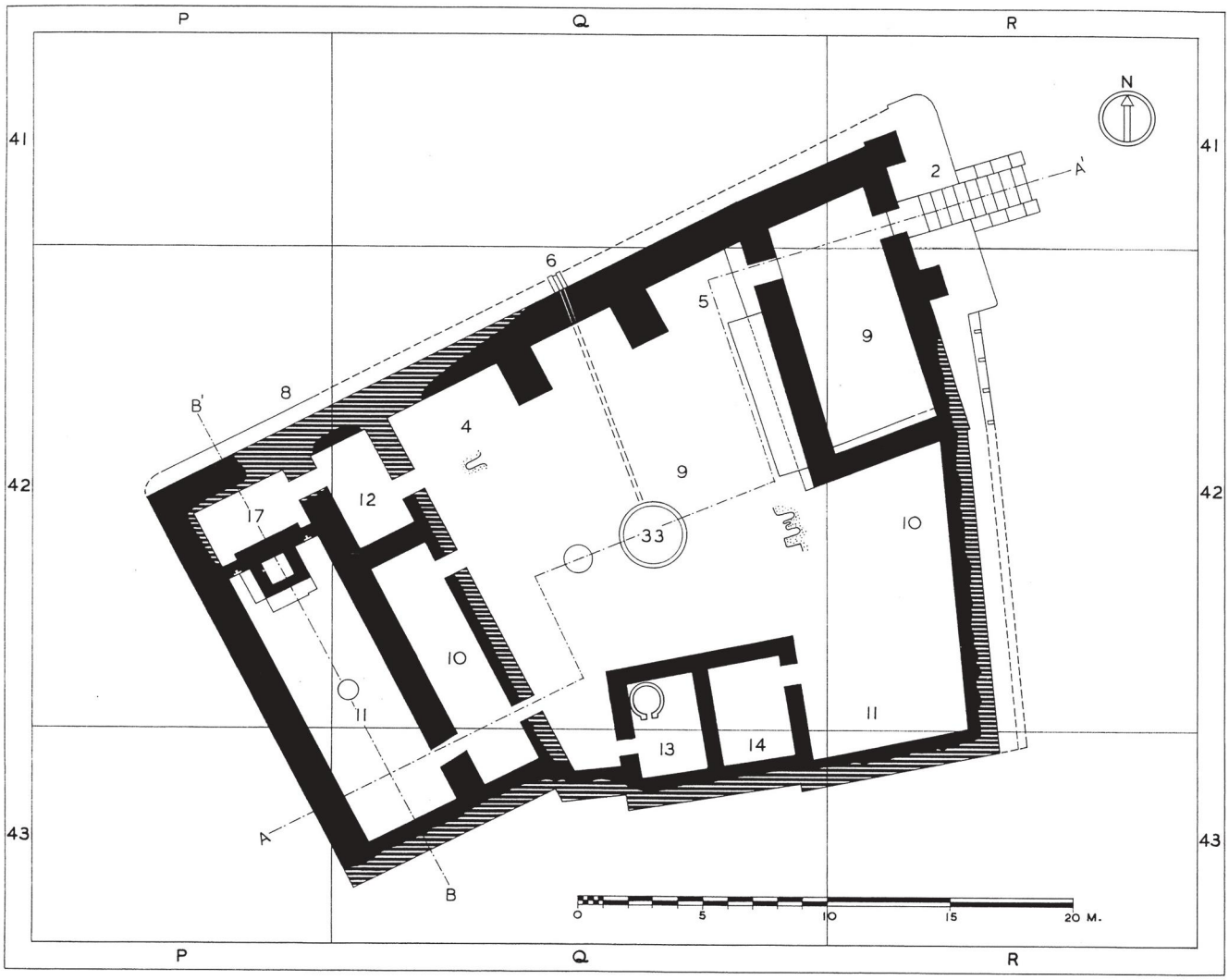


Fig. 9.7: Khafajah, Sin Temple, Level VII (Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, pl. 9).

presence of the *temenos* – what Schwartz (2000) terms the so-called Precinct – as in the case of Barri, Raqai, Mozan and Kashkashok. The enclosure wall isolated the temple from the rest of the buildings, and enabled the control of public access to the sacred area.

In summary, this survey of the Jezirah religious architecture dating to the Early Jezirah 2 period demonstrates the existence of four main architectural types (Fig. 9.3):

- Single-Roomed Shrine: Raqa'i, Brak, Kashkashouk, Chagar Bazar (?), 'Atij (?), Arbid, Barri;
- Multi-Roomed Complex: Barri;
- Proto *Anten-Temple* with frontal entry: Khuera;
- Monumental Temple on high terrace: Mozan, Hazna (?).

The incredible amount of information that has emerged from recent excavations in the Jezirah thus allows us to define, sometimes in unexpected was, the direct filiation and continuity between the religious architecture of the Early Jezirah 2 period and that of the large urbanised centers of the second half of the 3rd millennium (Early Jezirah 3 period). In this context, the similarities between the Single-Shrine with a bent axis arrangement of Brak and the Temple BA of Mozan (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 1988), and between the Multi-Roomed complex of Barri and the Early Jezirah 3 Temples B and C of Beydar (Lebeau 2006) are particularly striking. Regarding the Khuera *Anten-Temple* with a frontal entry, there is clear stratigraphical evidence of continuity between the Proto *Anten-Temple* (level 4–5) and the *Anten-Temple* (level 1–3), as well as with the later monumental architecture of the *Steinbau* I–III and VI (Pfälzner 2011, 184–185).[6] Finally, as regards the South Mesopotamian-style of high terrace temple, as Pfälzner (2011, 189–190) terms it, clear continuity is attested between Stage I and Stages II and III of the Oval Temple of Mozan.

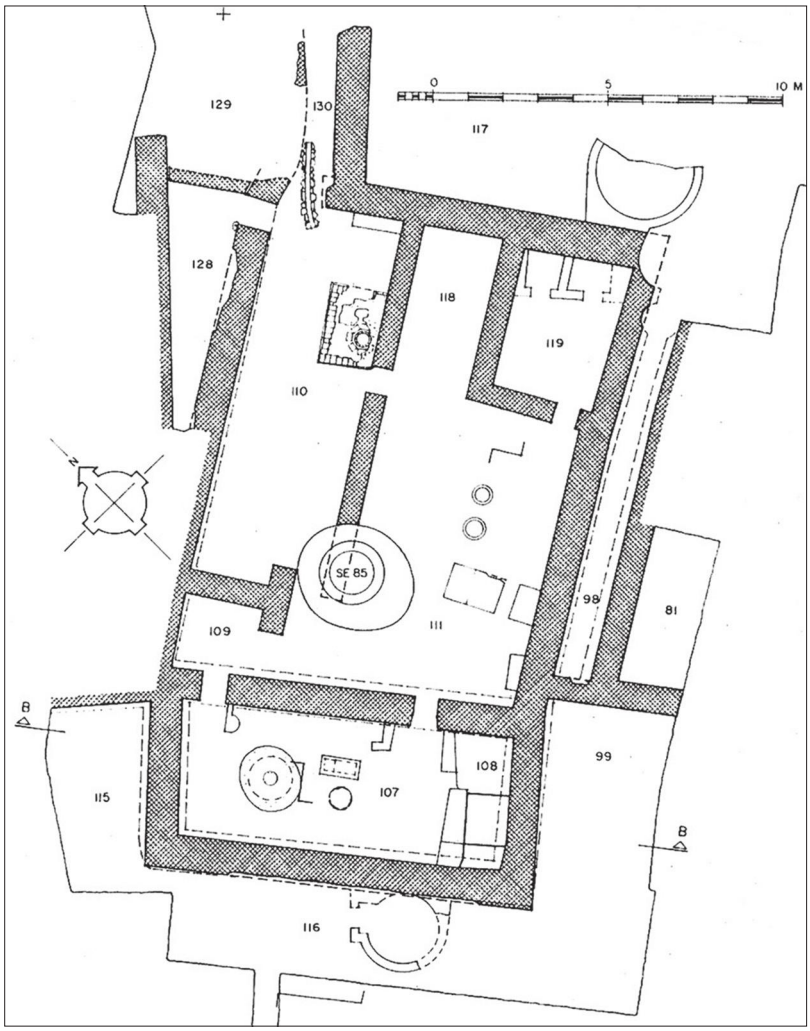


Fig. 9.8: Nippur, North Temple, Level V (McCown et al. *1978, pl. 29).*

Ritual objects

As we move from architecture to ritual objects, we will primarily consider the significant repertoire of material that was found in the Sacred Area of Barri (Valentini 2008a). Although not all of these are ritual objects *per se*, it is often possible to deduce their function from the archaeological context and reconstruct how they may have been used in the cult.

First of all the hand-made miniature stands must be considered (Fig. 9.9). These stands were probably utilised inside the shrines, during the rituals, as supports for bowls and cups containing food offerings.

Then the significant number of fragmentary clay animal and human hand-made figurines coming from the Sacred Area must be emphasised. The human figures are minimalist and all the body elements are stylised and reduced to essential (Fig. 9.10). On the basis of the context, we can recognise these figurines as ritual, but the lack of any definite attributes or clear gestures prevents us from deciding where they are meant as representations of deities, votaries representing worshippers, or offerings in human form. A. Pruss (2011, 240) assumed that these figurines reflect an experimental stage in the production of clay images in which a growing anthropomorphism of the divine image is attested. The animal figurines – both cattle and sheep, except one wild boar (Fig. 9.11) – might be used as substitutes of food offerings during the rituals, or as tokens or amuletic receipts provided in exchange for ritual animal sacrifices (Liebowitz 1988). Additionally, the discovery of clay cartwheels, which may indicate the use of model vehicles for the rituals, is interesting. Most of these objects seem to have been deliberately broken during or after use.[7]

Other peculiar objects include the portable hearts and the andirons (Fig. 9.12). These low-fired ceramic objects belong to three different categories: the horseshoe shaped type (A), the snouted shaped type (B), and the cylindrical shaped type (C). Two examples were found in Barri on the floor of the Shrine 1297, so it can be assumed that they were used above

Fig. 9.9: Barri Sacred Area, miniature stands (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

the fireplaces. Other contemporary parallels come from Brak (Matthews 2003, 111), Arbid (Bieliński 2010) and Hazna (Munchaev and Merpert 1994, 41, fig. 29), and all were found in a ritual context. These objects shown significant similarities with examples coming from Anatolia, and the Jezirah examples may have been inspired by models originally produced in the Highlands (Valentini 2008a; Aquilano and Valentini 2010).[8]

As regard the pottery vessels, in the Sacred Area at Barri the concentration of wares in which both aesthetics and ostentatious value coexist with a practical function must be stressed (Fig. 9.13); this is the case of the Ninevite 5 ware (Forest 1996), the Metallic ware, and especially for Jezirah Burnished ware (Valentini 2008b; Rova 2011, 70). This ware type is defined as pottery excavated in the Jezirah region, particularly at Barri and Arbid, with few other parallels (Smogorzewska 2009). In both cases, this pottery is strongly associated with religious architecture and its use in a ritual context may be related to its function as a medium that communicates a particular concept of identity to the community. As for the andirons, the connection with the Anatolian cultural horizon is also significant in this case.[9]

Finally, in the religious contexts of Barri (Valentini 2008a), Brak (Matthews 2003), Raqa'i (Curvers and Schwartz 1990), Khuera (Moortgat and Moortgat-Correns 1976) and Arbid (Bieliński 2010), it must be considered the relevant presence of administrative tools, such as tokens (Fig. 9.14) and seal

Fig. 9.10: Barri Sacred Area, clay human figurine (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

Fig. 9.11: Barri Sacred Area, clay animal figurines (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

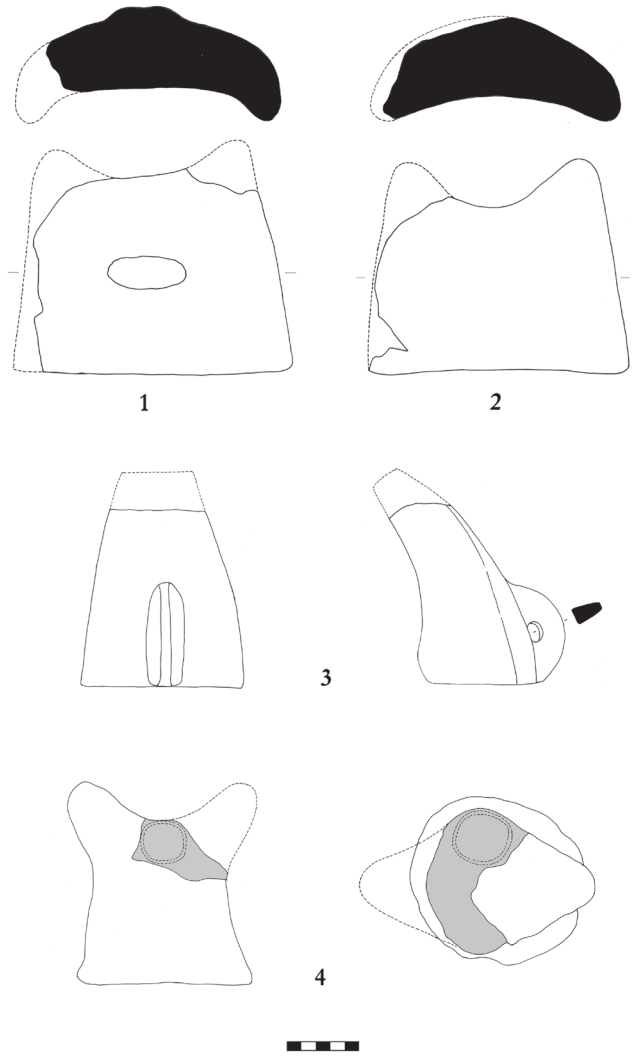


Fig. 9.12: Barri Sacred Area, andirons (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

Fig. 9.13: Barri Sacred Area, pottery (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

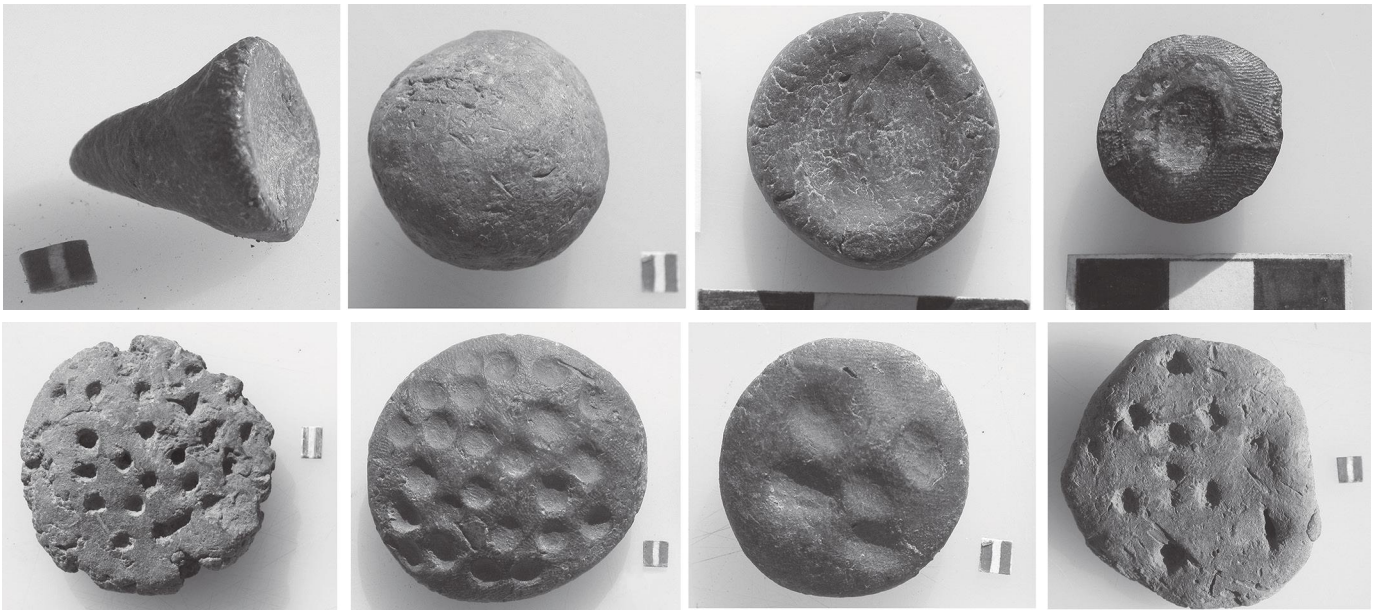


Fig. 9.14: Barri Sacred Area, tokens (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

impressions are also significant in this case (Fig. 9.15). The presence of door, jar and sack *cretulae*, which display animal and human figures, in a ritual context is important. Although the use of seals in this building may partly be explained by material reasons – in order to seal commodities used for the ritual activities and to control the access to the *temenos* and the religious building – it also has important ideological implications. In fact, the use of glyptic attests to the existence of an elite that controlled the ritual and economic activities linked with the temples and that, through the use of glyptic as status marker, transmitted political messages or propaganda. It is emblematic that in most of the seal impressions, the main figure was a man engaged in hunting, killing animals, holding a plough, or attending banquets or other ceremonies. These sealing impressions belong to a new local figurative style – clearly related to southern Mesopotamian models – that characterises the contemporary glyptic in most of the Jezirah settlements, and that is quite different from the earlier and standardised Piedmont Style (Parayre 2003).

Concluding remarks

After the collapse of the Late Uruk system, in the immediately subsequent period corresponding with the 1st quarter of the 3rd millennium (Early Jezirah 0–1), the Jezirah experienced a partial abandonment of settlements and a break down of regional economic system with a diffused ruralisation characterised by a subsistence economy based on small-scale farming (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 211–232; Lebeau 2011b). This scenario clearly begins to change in the Early Jezirah 2 period in which, according to Weiss (1990a; 1990b) and Schwartz (1994a; 1994b) the first signs of the regeneration process can be observed; a phenomenon that ended in the subsequent period (Early Jezirah 3a) in the middle of the 3rd millennium, with the advent of the Second Urban Revolution (Lebeau 2011b, 368–370). In the Jezirah, the disintegration of the old traditional socio-political and ideological structures seems to be part of a continuous process of reconstruction, in which new opportunities for social mobility and individual agency may emerge. Innovative elites, through competition, may find new avenues for the acquisition of power. The final Early Jezirah 2 period, to which the material culture discussed in this contribution can be ascribed almost entirely, represents the turning point of this phenomenon. By contextualising the archaeological data in their historical and cultural dimension, we can imagine the Jezirah settlements as inhabited by small communities in which elites controlled a local economic system based on the exploitation of surplus products from agricultural and stock-raising.[10] Alongside these internal factors, trade may be a decisive external variable associated with this regeneration phenomemon. Elites could increase their power by establishing innovative, beneficial roles as intermediaries of a new system of long-distance trade between southern Mesopotamia and Anatolia.

Surplus derived from the political economy was invested to support elite projects, ranging from the building of shrines for collective ritual to craft activities, to developing and controlling ideological power. As demonstrated by the spread of shrines and the increase in ceremonial display and the consumption of ritual goods, the elite elaborated an intricate system of ritualised ideology to reinforce this new social order. But this new ideology, which was used strategically, might also have

Fig. 9.15: Barri Sacred Area, sealing impression (Archive of the Archaeological Mission at Tell Barri).

been materialised in order to become an effective source of power (DeMarrais *et al.* 1996). In this scenario once, according to Lebeau (2011, 369), a critical mass had been reached, leading to a new social and cultural system, there is clear evidence in the Jezirah for the spread of religious architecture and an escalation of ritual activities.

The expansion and reorganisation of ritual could be interpreted as part of the effort to materialise, communicate and sustain new elite ideologies. As a consequence, the mobilisation of surplus by central authorities would be institutionalised in the form of religious rituals, making this activity part of the natural order of things.

Moreover, while the attestation of a formal religious architecture and the presence and the nature of some ritual objects might help to trace evidence for cultic activities, it is much more difficult to reconstruct their nature and the related religious beliefs, particularly considering the absence of cuneiform texts. Popular religious rituals, probably derived from household and ancestor practices, were probably performed at Khuera and in the smallest shrines. But Mozan, Arbid and the Sacred Area of Barri probably witnessed more structured rituals involving the whole community in an official and/or public capacity.[11]

This dichotomy between popular and official ritual and the similarities between the Diyala and the Jezirah regions encourages us to further investigate Forest's (1996) hypothesis about the Khafajah Temples, in particular his hypothesis about the relationship of the smaller temples to the Temple Oval. The latter was undoubtedly the religious center of the city, both from a topographical and visual point of view. The smaller temples, in contrast, were located between the houses, and were hardly visible. Reflecting on the position of the Jezirah communal places of worship we realise that almost none of these lay at the heart of the settlement, instead, they, often lay practically at the foot of the mound, not in a visually dominant position. Only the monumental temple of Mozan – and the problematic building of Khazna – were located in the core of the settlement in a visible position. So this may be a situation similar to that encountered at Khafajah, where there may be both a central sanctuary, like the temple at Mozan, and a series of small satellite shrines, like those of Brak, Raqa'i or Barri. Furthermore, Forest (1996) hypothesised that the Khafajah temples could be used not only for a deity, but also for a deceased ancestor, or even for a man. As mentioned above, in the Jezirah, the archaeological evidence does not allow us to establishing securely to whom these buildings were dedicated. On one hand it can be assumed that the variability and combination of the architectural typologies were associated with the worship of different deities and different kinds of rituals. But on the other side it can be suggested, as a working hypothesis, that these buildings were multifunctional.[12] And this second option may perhaps better characterise a series of relationships (for example between divinity and faithful, or elites and workers) and above all correspond to different contexts, including both sacred and secular. For this reason it is preferable to use the terminology of communal places of worship – rather than the more specific definitions as temple, shrine or sanctuary – because it can include all of these functional possibilities.

In conclusion, whilst we cannot understand all the different ways in which 'rural-Jezirah versus urban-Mesopotamian elements' (Schwartz and Falconer 1994) intermingled and overlapped with another, we can recognise places of worship as one of the products of this unique interplay, manifested in distinctive forms of artifacts and architecture.

Acknowledgements

This contribution is dedicated to Jean Daniel Forest, whose intuitions has helped spur my own reflections on the archeology of the religion of 3rd millennium Mesopotamia. Here I would also like to warmly thank Nicola Laneri with whom I shared the wonderful experience of excavation at the site of Hirbemerdon Tepe, during which, under the pergola of the expedition house, we have often discussed the topics covered in this paper.

Notes

1 The western and southern borders of the Jezirah are relatively clear: the Balikh and the Euphrates rivers to the west and the Syrian Desert to the south. Its northern limit, which corresponds to the Tur Abdin Mountains beyond the present Syro-Turkish border, is less defined, and is its Eastern limit, which divides the Jezirah from the Tigridian region, is a rather artificial one (Lebeau 2011a, 3–5).

2 In chronological terms, most of archaeological data considered in this paper refer to the Early Jezirah 2 period (2750–2550 BC), as defined in the ARCANE Project (Lebeau 2011b).

3 For an anthropological parallel see Bloch's (1971) studies on the Merina community of Madagascar.

4 When the Sacred Area was abandoned in the Early Jezirah 3a period (stratum 39), the open space corresponding to the old *temenos* remained unbuilt. Two large complexes were constructed around it and a cist-tomb in mud-bricks and two shaft burials were excavated outside the buildings (Pecorella and Pierobon 2005b, 15–21, Valentini 2009). These tombs did not destroy the relationship with the previous phase of the *temenos*. On the contrary – as in the case of the Royal Tomb excavated in the destruction level of the Arslantepe Palace (Palumbi 2004) – a spatial continuity between the Sacred Area and the burials existed. The Barri's nascent elite may have erected the burials in this ancient, sanctified place – the Sacred Area – to forge a link to the revered predecessors. To create a new memory the livings are obliged to consider their own past. This may represent a case of stimulus regeneration in which the mobilisation of social memory, that invokes their relations with kinship and the cycle of life and death provides these communities with the means to absorb change, and uphold continuity.

5 Concerning the Single-Roomed Shrine in Mesopotamia, there are few examples from the first half of the 3rd millennium. One

of these is the Single Shrine in S44 at Khafajah (Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, fig. 105), but it is probably later than the Jezirah Shrines. An earlier example is the Archaic Shrine I of the Abu Temple at Tell Asmar (Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, pl. 19), but it is not a typical Single-room Shrine.

6 The Long-Roomed Temples *in antis* characterize the religious architecture of the Balikh and Euphrates region during the second half of the 3rd millennium (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 246–253).

7 The patterns of breakage can vary, although it was very common for human and animal figurines to have been broken at the neck. Because of their potency, cult figures are often carefully disposed of at the end of their use, but the overwhelming majority of Barri figurines were found in trash layers. A more persuasive suggestion is that the figurines represent vehicles of magic, and it is not uncommon for such artifacts to be deliberately broken (Petty 2004). The figurines may reference some concept or idea: the representation of a wild bull or a sheep does not have to symbolise the life of the animals or even the concept of the fertility of the herds, but could symbolize male virility among humans.

8 The rarity of these artefacts could confirm their important symbolic value. In Anatolia, these kinds of objects are usually associated with the Karaz Ware/Red-Black Burnished Ware and some scholars, on the basis of the interpretations of the Pulur anthropomorphic andirons, assign them ritualistic properties, although they are often found in domestic contexts (Takaoğlu 2000; Smogorzewska 2004). The andirons may be valued differently at the ends of the exchange network, especially because culturally different communities are involved. Objects made originally for utilitarian household rituals may have been incorporated into worship in the Jezirah ceremonial places.

9 A relationship between the Jezirah Burnished ware and the Red-Black Burnished ware can be hypothesised (Valentini 2008b). These two kinds of pottery show the same surface treatment and are attested in the same type of carinated bowls, as demonstrated by the examples excavated in the Upper Euphrates region at Korucutepe, Tepecik, Degirmentepe and Pulur. While the Red-Black Burnished ware was strictly hand made, the Jezirah Burnished ware was well shaped, and this could confirm its local production.

10 While is possible to identify clusters of settlements of varying sizes (big sites as Leilan and Brak, and small sites as Barri, Raqa'i, Kashkashouk) (Wilkinson and Tucker 1995), the aggregation of the settlements does not appear to exhibit rigid, hierarchical structures. This is not defined by central or core cities with all the administrative and organisational apparatus to govern and control the political, economic and religious affairs of the smaller, simpler, agro-pastoral communities that surrounded theme. On the contrary, we observe a more heterarchical web of settlements characterised by a dispersed arrangement of political, economic, and religious authority.

11 The presence at Barri of two shrines with different plans (a peculiarity as regards the other Jezirah sites) could be associated with the worship of two different deities.

12 As regard the definition of Jezirah shrines (Schwartz 2000: 167–170), Pfälzner (2001, 175 and 309; 2011, 177) asserts that this interpretation has been challenged.

Bibliography

Aquilano, M. and Valentini, S. (2011) Andirons and Portable Hearts in the Upper Tigris Valley. *Paper presented at the Symposium, Archaeology of the Ilısu Dam (Mardin, Turkey – October 19th–22nd, 2011*).

Akkermans, M. M. G. and Schwartz, G. M. (2003) *The Archaeology of Syria. From Complex Hunter-gatherers to Early Urban Societies (c. 16,000–300 BC)*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Bieliński, P. (2010) Tell Arbid. Preliminary Report on the Results of the Twelfth Season of Syrian-Polish Excavations. *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* XIX, 537–554.

Bloch, M. (1971) *Placing the Dead: Tombs, Ancestral Villages, and Kingship Organization in Madagascar*. London/New York, Seminar Press.

Buccellati, G. and Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1988) *Mozan 1. The Soundings of the First Two Seasons*. Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 20. Malibu, CA, Undena.

Curvers, H. H. and Schwartz, G. M. (1990) Excavations at Tell er-Raqa'i: a small rural site of Early Urban Northern Mesopotamia. *American Journal of Archaeology* 94/1, 3–23.

Delougaz, P. and Lloyd, S. (1942) *Pre-Sargonid Temples in the Diyala Region*. Oriental Institute Publications 58. Chicago, Oriental Institute.

DeMarrais, E., Castillo, L. J. and Earle, T. (1996) Ideology, materialization and power strategies. *Current Anthropology* 3, 15–31.

Dohmann-Pfälzner, H. and Pfälzner, P. (1996) Untersuchungen zur Urbanisierung Nordmesopotamiens im 3. Jt. V. Chr.: Wohnquartierplanung und städtische Zentrumsgestaltung in Tall Chuera. *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 9, 1–13.

Dohmann-Pfälzner, H. and Pfälzner, P. (1999) Ausgrabungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft in Tal Mozan/Urkeš. Bericht über die Vorkampagne 1998. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellshaft* 131, 17–46.

Forest, J.-D. (1996) *Mésopotamie. L'apparition de l'Etat VII^e–III^e Millénaires*. Paris, Edition Paris-Méditerranée.

Fortin, M. and Cooper, L. (1994) Canadian Excavations at Tell 'Atij (Syria). *Bulletin of the Canadian Society for Mesopotamian Studies* 27, 33–50.

Lebeau, M. (2006) Les Temples de Tell Beydar et leur environnement immédiat à l'époque Early Jezirah IIIb. In P. Butterlin, M. Lebeau, J.-Y. Monchambert, J. L. Montero Fenollòs and B. Muller (eds) *Les espaces Syro-Mésopotamiens. Dimension de l'expérience humaine au Proche-Orient Ancien. Volume d'hommage offert à Jean-Claude Margueron*. Subartu XVII, 101–140. Turnhout, Brepols.

Lebeau, M. (2011a) 1. Introduction. In M. Lebeau with contribution by A. Bianchi, K. A. Franke, A. P. McCarthy, J.-W. Meyer, P. Pfälzner, A. Pruß, Ph. Quenet, L. Ristvet, E. Rova, W. Sallaberger, J. Thomalsky and S. Valentini (eds) *Jezirah*. ARCANE I, 1–17. Turnhout, Brepols.

Lebeau, M. (2011b) 13. Conclusion. In M. Lebeau with contribution by A. Bianchi, K. A. Franke, A. P. McCarthy, J.-W. Meyer, P. Pfälzner, A. Pruß, Ph. Quenet, L. Ristvet, E. Rova, W. Sallaberger, J. Thomalsky and S. Valentini (eds) *Jezirah*. ARCANE I, 343–380. Turnhout, Brepols.

Liebowitz, H. (1988) *Terra-cotta Figurines and Model Vehicles*. Malibu, CA, Undena Publications.

Mallowan, M. E. L. (1936) The Excavations at Tall Chagar Bazar, and an archaeological survey of the Habur region 1934–35. *Iraq* 3, 1–86.

Matthews, R. J. (2002) Seven Shrines of Subartu. In L. Al-Gailani Werr, J. Curtis, H. Martin, A. McMahon, J. Oates and J. Reade (eds) *Of Pots and Plans: Papers on the Archaeology and History of Mesopotamia and Syria presented to David Oates*, 186–190. London, Nabu Publications.

Matthews, R. J. (2003) A Chiefdom on the Northern Plains. Early Third-millenium Investigations: the Ninevite 5 Period. In R. Matthews (ed.) *Excavations at Tell Brak, Vol. 4: Exploring an Upper Mesopotamian centre, 1994–1996*, 97–191. Cambridge, McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research.

McCown, D., Haines, R. C., Biggs, R. D. and Carter, E. F. (1978) *Nippur II. The North Temple and Sounding E.* Oriental Institute Publications 97. Chicago, Oriental Institute.

Moortgat, A. (1967) *Tell Chuera in Nordost-Syrien: Vorläufiger Berich über die fünfte Grabungskampagne 1964*, Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz.

Moortgat, A. and Moortgat-Correns, U. (1976) *Tell Chuera in Nordost-Syrien: Vorläufiger Berich über die Siebente Grabungskampagne 1974*. Berlin, Gebr. Mann.

Munchaev, R. M. and Merpert, N. I. (1994) Da Hassuna a Accad. Scavi della missione russa nella regione di Hassake, Siria di Nord-Est, 1988–1992. *Mesopotamia* 29, 5–48.

Munchaev, R. M., Merpert, N. I. and Amirov, S. N. (2004), *Tell Hazna I. Religious and Administrative Center of IV–III millennium B.C. in North-East Syria*, Moscow, Paleograph.

Orthmann, W. (1990) L'architecture religeuse de Tell Chuera. *Akkadica* 69, 1–18.

Palumbi, G. (2004) La più antica 'Tomba Reale'. Dati archeologici e costruzione delle ipotesi. In M. Frangipane (ed.) *Alle origini del potere. Arslantepe, la collina dei leoni*, 115–119. Milano, Electa.

Parayre, D. (2003) The Ninevite 5 Sequence of Glyptic at Tell Leilan. In E. Rova and H. Weiss (eds) *The Origins of North Mesopotamia Civilization: Ninivite 5 Chronology, Economy, Society*. Subartu IX, 271–310. Turnhout, Brepols.

Pecorella, P. E. and Pierobon, R. (2003) La missione archeologica italiana a Tell Barri – 2002. *Orient Express* 3, 59–62.

Pecorella, P. E. and Pierobon, R. (2005a) Recenti scoperte a Tell Barri in Siria. *Orient Express* 1, 9–13.

Pecorella, P. E. and Pierobon, R. (2005b) *Tell Barri/*Kahat. *La campagna del 2002*. Firenze, Florence University Press.

Petty, A. (2004) *Bronze Age Figurines from Umm el-Marra, Syria: Style and Meaning*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, John Hopkins University.

Pfälzner, P. (2001) *Haus und Haushalt: Wohnformen des dritten Jahrtausends vor Christus in Nordmesopotamien*. Damaszner Forschungen 9. Mainz am Rhein, von Zabern.

Pfälzner, P. (2011) 5. Architecture. In M. Lebeau with contribution by A. Bianchi, K. A. Franke, A. P. McCarthy, J.-W. Meyer, P. Pfälzner, A. Pruß, Ph. Quenet, L. Ristvet, E. Rova, W. Sallaberger, J. Thomalsky and S. Valentini (eds) *Jezirah*. ARCANE I, 137–200. Turnhout, Brepols.

Pruß, A. (2011) 7. Figurines and Model Vehicles. In M. Lebeau with contribution by A. Bianchi, K. A. Franke, A. P. McCarthy, J.-W. Meyer, P. Pfälzner, A. Pruß, Ph. Quenet, L. Ristvet, E. Rova, W. Sallaberger, J. Thomalsky and S. Valentini (eds) *Jezirah*. ARCANE I, 239–254. Turnhout, Brepols.

Rova, E. (2011) 3. Ceramic. In M. Lebeau with contribution by A. Bianchi, K. A. Franke, A. P. McCarthy, J.-W. Meyer, P. Pfälzner, A. Pruß, Ph. Quenet, L. Ristvet, E. Rova, W. Sallaberger, J. Thomalsky and S. Valentini (eds) *Jezirah*. ARCANE I, 49–128. Turnhout, Brepols.

Schwartz, G. M. (1994a) Before Ebla: Models of Pre-State Political Organization in Syria and Northern Mesopotamia. In G. Stein and M. Rothman (eds) *Chiefdom and Early States in the Near East: The Organizational Dynamics of Complexity*. Monographs in World Archaeology 18, 153–174. Madison, Prehistory Press.

Schwartz, G. M. (1994b) Rural Economic Specialization and Early Urbanization in the Khabur Valley, Syria. In G. M. Schwartz and S. E. Falconer (eds) *Archaeological Views from the Countryside: village communities in early complex societies*, 19–36. Washington, Smithsonian Institution Press.

Schwartz, G. M. (2000) Perspectives on Rural Ideologies: the Tell Raqa'i 'Temple'. In O. Rouault and M. Wäfler (eds) *La Djéziré et l'Euphrate Syriens de la Protohistoire à la Fin du Iière millénaire av. J.–C.* Subartu VII, 163–182. Turnhout, Brepols.

Schwartz, G. M. (2006) From Collapse to Regeneration. In G. M. Schwartz and J. J. Nichols (eds) *After Collapse. The Regeneration of Complex Societies*, 3–17. Tucson, The University of Arizona Press.

Schwartz, G. M. and Falconer S. E. (1994) Rural Approach to Social Complexity. In G. M. Schwartz and S. E. Falconer (eds) *Archaeological Views from the Countryside: village communities in early complex societies*, 1–9. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Smogorzewska, A. (2004) Andirons and their role in Early Trancaucasian Culture. *Anatolica* 30, 151–177.

Smogorzewska, A. (2009) Burnished Ware: Ninevite 5 Period Pottery from Tell Arbid. *Orient Express* 1, 35–37.

Sołtysiak, A. (2008) Short Fieldwork Report: Tell Barri (Syria), seasons 1980–2006. *Bioarchaeology of the Near East* 2, 67–71.

Suleiman, A. and Taraqji, A. F. (1995) Tell Kashkashouk III. In M. al-Maqdissi, Chronique des activités archéologique en Syria 2. *Syria 72*, 159–266.

Takaoğlu, T. (2000) Hearth structures in the religious pattern of Early Bronze Age northeast Anatolia. *Anatolian Studies* 50, 11–16.

Valentini, S. (2006–2007) Communal Places of Worship in Jezirah during the EJ II–IIIa period (2750–2550 BC). *ANODOS* 6–7. Special Issue (Proceedings of the International Symposium, Cult and Sanctuary through the Ages. From the Bronze Age to the Late Antiquity. Častá-Papernička, Slovakia 16–19 November 2007), 475–486.

Valentini, S. (2008a) Ritual Objects in the "rural shrines" at Tell Barri, in the Khabur region, during the Ninevite 5 period. In J. M. Córdoba, M. Molist, M. Carmen Pérez, I. Rubio, S. Martìnez (eds) *Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (Madrid, 3–8 April 2006)*, 345–357. Madrid, Centro Superior de Estudìos sobre el Oriente Próximo y Egipto.

Valentini, S. (2008b) The Jezirah Burnished Ware. *Antiguo Oriente* 6, 25–38.

Valentini, S. (2009) Burial practices in the first half of the IIIrd Millennium in the Khabur Region. In A. Foron (ed.) *Troisiemes Rencontres Doctorales Orient Express. Actes du Colloque tenu a Lyon les 10 et 11 Fevrier 2006 a la Maison de l'Orient et de la Mediterranee*, 63–78. Paris, Orient-Express-Archéologie Oriental.

Valentini, S. (2011) 9. Burials and funerary practices. In M. Lebeau with contribution by A. Bianchi, K. A. Franke, A. P. McCarthy, J.-W. Meyer, P. Pfälzner, A. Pruß, Ph. Quenet, L. Ristvet, E.

Rova, W. Sallaberger, J. Thomalsky and S. Valentini (eds) *Jezirah*. ARCANE I, 261–275. Turnhout, Brepols.

Weiss, H. (1990a) 'Civilizing' the Habur Plains: Mid-Third Millennium State Formation at Tell Leilan. In M. van Loon and P. Matthiae (eds) *Resurrecting the Past: a joint tribute to Adnan Bounni*, 387–407. Istanbul, Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut.

Weiss, H. (1990b) Tell Leilan 1989: New Data for Mid-Third Millennium Urbanization and State Formation. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellshaft* 122, 193–218.

Wilkinson, T. J. and Tucker, D. J. (1995) *Settlement Development in the North Jazira, Iraq*. Iraq Archaeological Reports 3. London, British School of Archaeology in Iraq.

10

Open spaces around the temples and their ritual use: archaeological evidence from the Bronze and Iron Age Levant

Stefania Mazzoni

Archaeological materials found in the city temples constitute primary evidence for documenting rites and reconstructing the religious behaviour of Near Eastern communities. One of the intentions of the Tübingen Conference on "Temple Building and Temple Cult in the Levant" (Kamlah 2012) was, in fact, to present and compare architecture and cultic paraphernalia, which can illustrate ritual activities related to the cult. The Colloquium of the Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft held in München in 2009 on "Tempel im Alten Orient" (Kaniut *et al.* 2013) was also aimed at exploring both archaeological and textual sources concerning rituals and temples of the Near East. The interest in temples and the religious behaviour of ancient societies is certainly not new in our field, as shown by the extensive literature on the subject (Heinrich 1982; Wightman 2006) but the recent discovery of new temples with their often outstanding cultic materials in place has prompted once again a reappraisal of the debate on the many open questions relating to cult practices. The archaeological evidence obtained in recent years alone from the cult places and temples of the Levant is quite impressive and concerns a great variety of cases and practices, connected with the many social components interrelating, and occasionally intermingling, in the area. Furthermore, the new data document a process of notable continuity of architectural models, organisation of spaces and types of materials and installations used for the cult over nearly two millennia. The most recent case of Temple XVI at Tell Tainat of Iron Age III, corresponding to the neo-Assyrian period, can be cited as exemplary for the abundance of its well stratified materials found in a primary context inside the cella (Harrison 2012; Harrison and Osborne 2012).

Whilst temples and especially city temples, thanks to their institutional role and the popularity of their tutelary dynastic and state gods, were pre-eminent places of cultic activities, archaeological and textual sources and art monuments give a clear indication of the fact that cults were officiated and rites performed in a variety of spaces and structures, in external spaces adjoining the temples, inside but also outside the towns, in the countryside, near rivers and springs, or on the mountains. The belief that gods embodied natural phenomena and that their epiphany and manifestation occurred in distinct geographical place prompted the emergence and diffusion of regional cult places in the countryside. This is well known and investigated for the case of the Hittite cults officiated in the open-air and in the countryside, in rock sanctuaries, near springs and ponds, and documented by literary and archaeological sources (Taracha 2009, 71; Harmanşah 2011; Ökse 2011). The rich textual and archaeological evidence from Sarissa and its Huwasi sanctuary (Müller-Karpe 2002, 148–149) has provided consistent data regarding this aspect of the Hittite rites. Furthermore, we know that cults in the open-air frequently involved motion: processions were made around the temples, outside their sacred precincts, such ritual circuits often being an essential stage of the rite and also documented by the texts.

On the basis of the textual and archaeological evidence, we can single out different cases of rituals performed in open-air locations and in the countryside: rituals which involved travelling within a territory, such as ritual circuits and processions across the land, rituals performed in sacred open-air settings in the countryside, rituals and processions performed in the plazas and passageways of the citadels, rituals located in spaces outside and around the temples. These might have constituted single occasions or, instead, been interrelated with complex performance including stages spanning a more or less long period of time.

The presence of copious textual evidence and art monuments resulted in great emphasis being placed on investigating the first two cases, and especially the processions and rituals performed in the countryside. Moreover, the impact of Symbolic Landscape Archaeology (Cosgrove 1984; Tilley 1994) has had a great influence on the scope of these cases of research, exploring how the environment may have been exploited for ideological purposes and consequentely transformed into a cultural landscape. Ritual travelling and the emergence of a network of pilgrimage sites in Early Bronze Age Syria and north-Mesopotamia have been explored as a manifestation of regional cultural and political identity (Ristvet 2011).[1] In the same vein, the case of the Hittite open-air cult places and monuments with their images as well as the many

festivals documented by the texts with their processions (Ökse 2011) have been variously addressed both as being the result of political manifestations and in relation to the construction of identity (Bonatz 2007; Glatz 2011; Harmanşah 2011; 2012).

The third case, rituals and processions performed in the cores of the ceremonial citadels, is well documented in the Syro-Hittite towns of the Iron Age. Furthermore, the interpretative model of the Archaeology of Performance (Inomata and Coben 2006) has also enabled us to reassess successfully the ideological relevance of the architectural reliefs of the Syro-Hittite citadels in connection with the religious and kingship rites officiated in the open-air (Gilibert 2011).

The evidence for the fourth case, rituals performed outside the temples, is also appealing for a reconstruction of religious behaviour and ritual performance. The many and various cultic structures and installations found in the sacred compounds with their related offerings can supply reliable data on the nature of the rites; nevertheless, one has to admit that they rarely provide sufficient information for understanding how the rites were carried out, whether they included different stages and times or entailed motion in the space, ritual circuits and trajectories outside and around the temples.

A few case-studies can, however, provide data useful in addressing this problem on an archaeological basis and assessing the ritual use of open spaces around the temples; these concern the traditional free-standing long room temples of the Levant and Northern Mesopotamia that were the prevailing form of sacred building from the 3rd millennium BC on. Temples of this type could be found within walled enclosures or stand in isolation, but they were always provided with adjoining open-areas furnished with cult installations; these outer spaces housed different ritual activities and celebrations for the cult, as has recently been suggested on the basis of a wealth of cogent textual and archaeological documentation (Otto 2013).

I will begin with the case of the Iron Age III Temple AI in Tell Afis, which is, in fact, together with all its materials found in the adjacent open spaces, the occasion for my investigation. Temple AI was a tripartite long room *in antis* temple, provided with side rooms and towers framing the façade, dating to Iron III and the Neo-Assyrian period (Fig. 10.1).[2] The interior was largely demolished and excavated by often deep trenches for quarrying stones; the foundations of Temples AI (Iron Age III) as well as those poorly preserved of the preceding Temple AII (Iron Age II, Aramaean Period) were formed of massive stonework which were levelled by a strata of cobblestone over which the brick walls were laid (this latter, however, only being documented in the left, western side of the AI temple). The interior of Temple AI–II did not, consequently, furnish documents in a primary context. The outer open spaces were, instead, by their very nature, saved from the destructive activities of demolition and quarrying and were, moreover, well preserved under the accumulation of the bricks that had fallen from the outer walls of the building of the last phase of the AI temple.

The outer areas of the temple in both phases included different open air spaces and cultic installations (Fig. 10.2): Plaza F in front, and the streets on the sides of the temple, annex H to the south, terrace J to the east, all provided rich evidence of cultic *paraphernalia*, basalt vats, incense burners, pedestalled vases, *ex-voto* figurines, *astragali*, ashes and burnt bones of sheep and turtle-doves. They testify to the variety of rites taking place outside the temple, in the open-air, along its sides and front. The terrace on the eastern side of the temple was in use in Iron II and gave evidence of cultic installations with ashes and animal bones, for offerings and consumption; it is clear that rituals were performed on its summit in the open air (Cecchini 2014; Carenti 2012). To the south a large plastered altar in the earliest level of Plaza F also furnishes evidence of an open air cultic installation.

Noteworthy among the many find is the presence of funnels, glazed on the rim of one end and furnished with a horn-like handle (Fig. 10.3); they are uncommon and intriguing objects which have been interpreted as decorations of the outer walls (Soldi 2009; 2010), or cultic horned stands (Zukerman 2014 comparing four similar vessels from Hazor). They have been found on the whole circuit of the phase AI temple; a few of them were grouped on the floor of the western and the rear side. Some smaller and unglazed funnels were also found in the Iron II eastern outer areas of Temple AII of that period, in relation with Street D which during this phase separated Terrace J and Temple AII. If we maintain the interpretation of the funnels as a decoration on the façades of the temple, we may infer from their distribution that the whole temple was decorated and that, accordingly, the related spaces were all destined for visual fruition and public circulation; if, instead, they were vases for some as yet undetermined function, it follows that activities requiring their use were performed on the whole circuit of the temple. This quite peculiar documentary case finds a unique comparison in the sacred architecture of Emar.

In the Late Bronze Age Emar was a regional capital being rebuilt and provided with different temples *in antis*, all surrounded by open spaces used for ritual activities. The most interesting case for the purpose of our investigation is offered by the temple *in antis* of Area M (Fig. 10.4), standing 30 m to the southwest of the Temple du Devin, across a square (Werner 1994, 108). A group of architectural *clous* was found in front of the façade of the temple (Fig. 10.5); these long ceramic "nails" were of two types, a trumpet-like type with a pointed closed base and a long funnel open instead at the base, similar to the glazed funnels from Tell Afis (Margueron 1980, 304–308, figs 9–10; 1982, 32–34, figs 9–10) (Fig. 10.6).[3] They were identified as architectural components of the façade of the temple and associated with the decorative nails of the Sumerian temples and the glazed nails from Tchoga Zanbil in southwestern Iran and Nuzi in eastern Mesopotamia; this last comparison suggested to J.-Cl. Margueron a possible Mitannian origin for the Emar examples (Margueron 1980, 305). The nails from Nuzi include two groups or types, one with a broad flat head and one

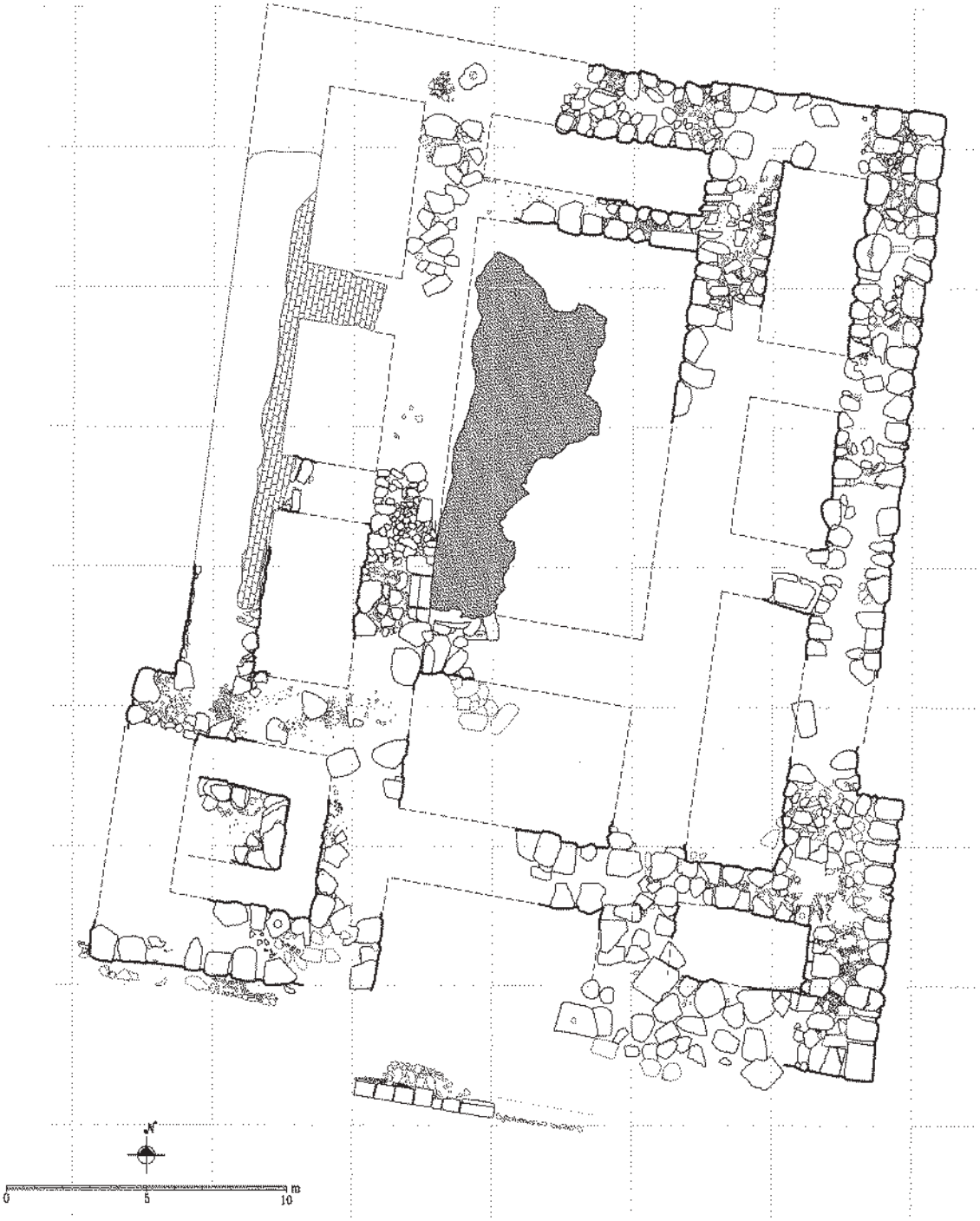


Fig. 10.1: Tell Afis, Temple AI, Iron Age III (drawn by Corrado Alvaro).

with a protruding knob glazed in green colour; this last type was found in the northern room of Temple A and in the palace chapel (L5–L8); two were found inserted in the southeastern wall 1.60 m above the floor and one in the northeastern wall 1.90 m above the floor of the antechamber L5 leading to the palace chapel L6 (Starr 1939, 150, fig. 21; 407–409, pls 97 D–K, 98). The context of the finds at Nuzi indicate that these nails decorated the inner walls of the temples, there apparently being no evidence to suggest that they decorated the façades. It has also been proposed that they could have been architectural elements or some kind of locking or closing devices (Baffi 1990, 143–145). As for the Emar and Afis nails and funnels,

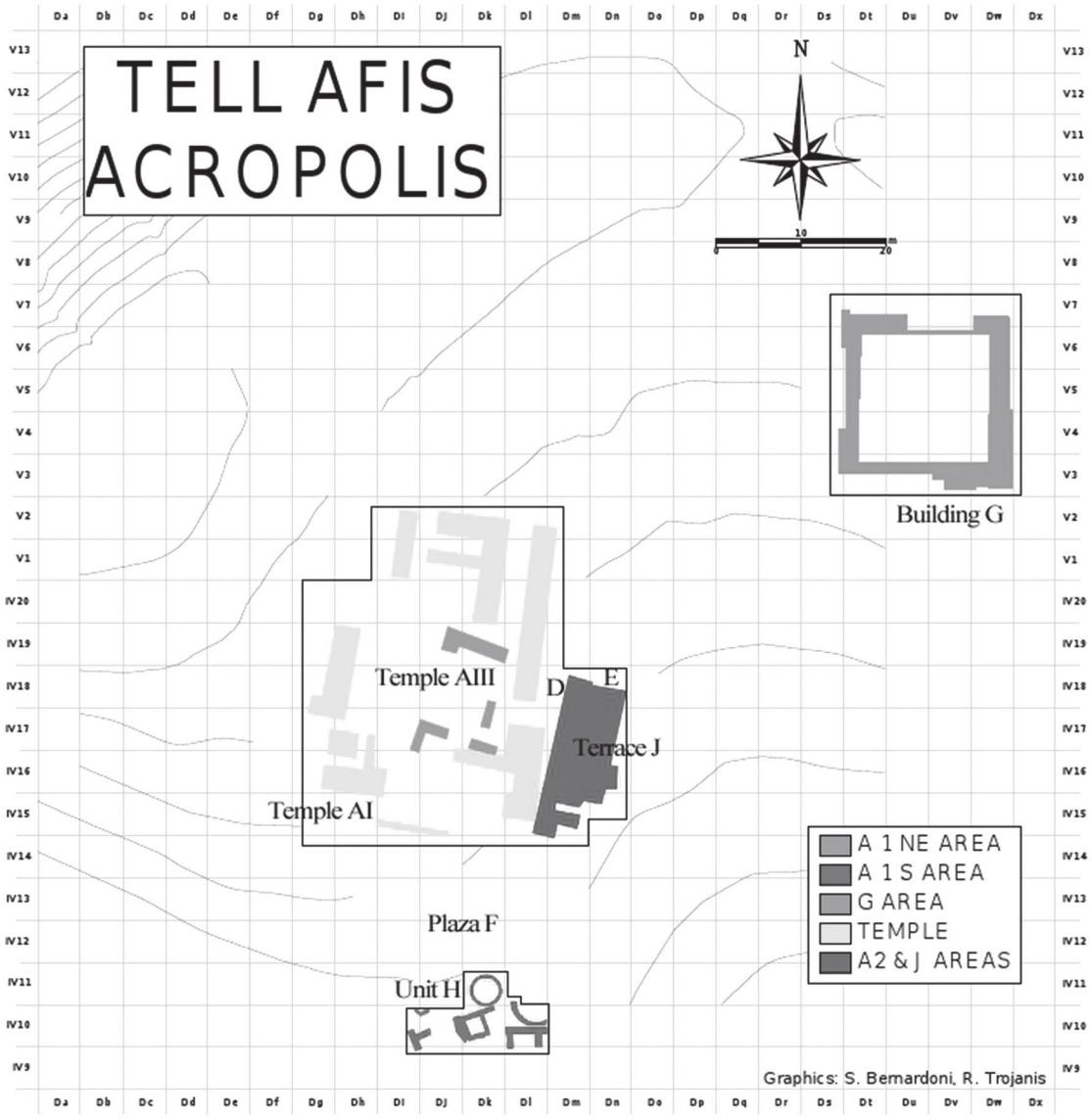


Fig. 10.2: Tell Afis, Tell Afis, the acropolis in the Iron Age (graphics by Silvia Bernardoni and Raffaele Trojanis).

it is to be noted that they are of a large size with a long body and are without the large convex or flat pommel that constitutes the visible and protruding element, often glazed and coloured, decorating the walls of the Middle- and Neo-Assyrian palaces (Moorey 1985, 177–180). Moreover, comparison with the Emar types may indicate a similar function for the funnels of Tell Afis, though whether they were functional architectural elements or decorative components remains open to debate. The fact, in any case, that at Afis they were found along the whole perimeter of the temple, indicates that the entire circuit of the building was open to circulation, fruition and use.

The other three temples of Emar offer further clues for detecting the cultic use of the open spaces surrounding the cultic buildings. The Temple du Devin in Area M with its archive of tablets is well known and investigated; it was also a temple *in antis* but of a distinct plan, being provided with an annex with a row of three rooms on the left and eastern side and a three-room house adjoining its south-eastern corner and rear side (Werner 1994, 108–109) (Fig. 10.4). A further distinct trait is the presence of a *terrasse cultuelle*, built on the rear side of the temple and also adjacent to the three-room house. (Margueron 1984, 28–29, fig. 2). It is important to underline in this case that the terrace lay to the rear of the temple but also midway between it and Temple M. The position of the terrace indicates that it may have served as a cultic installation for both temples, while certainly serving primarily the Temple

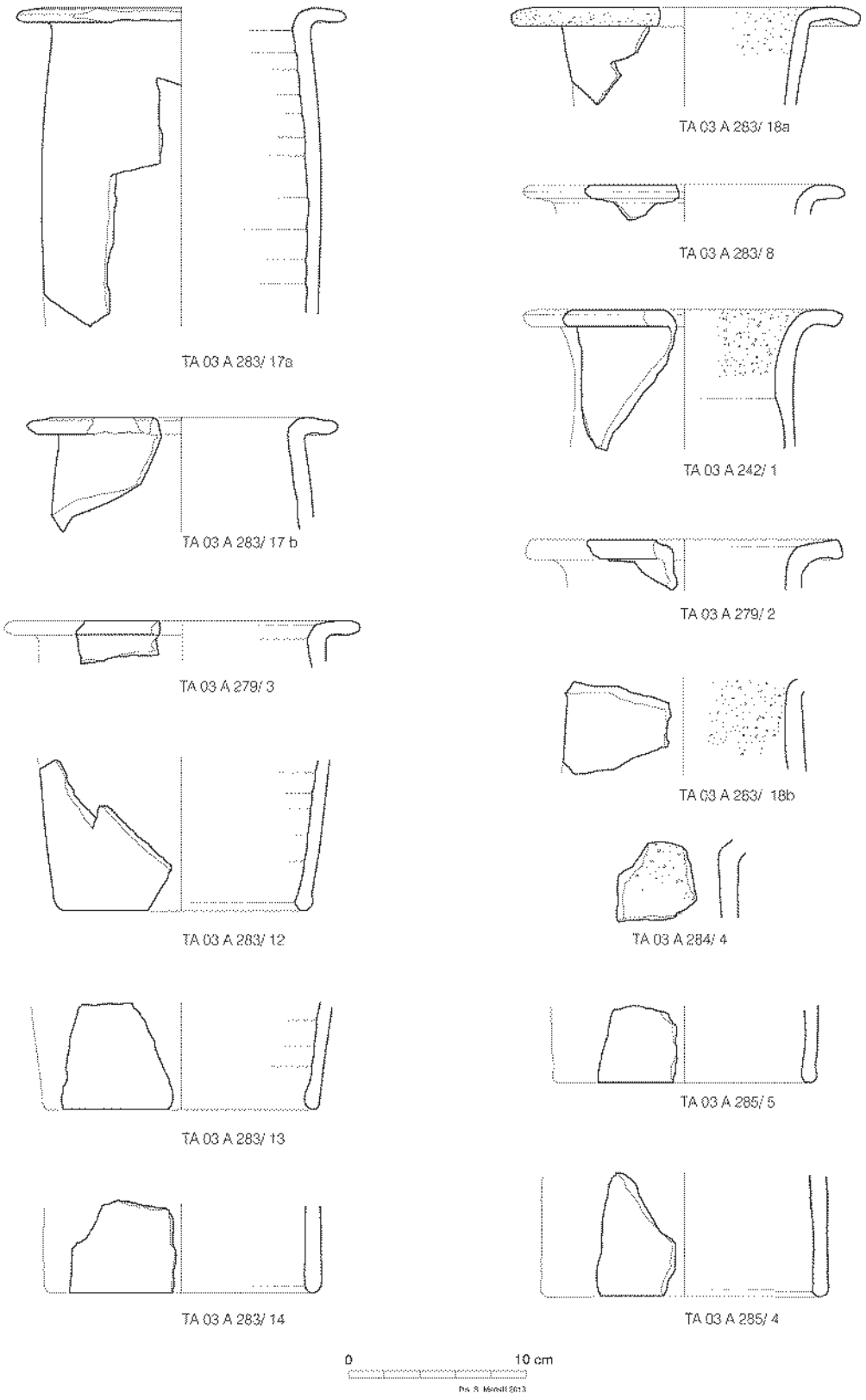


Fig. 10.3: Tell Afis, funnels with glazed rim, Iron Age III (drawn by Sergio Martelli).

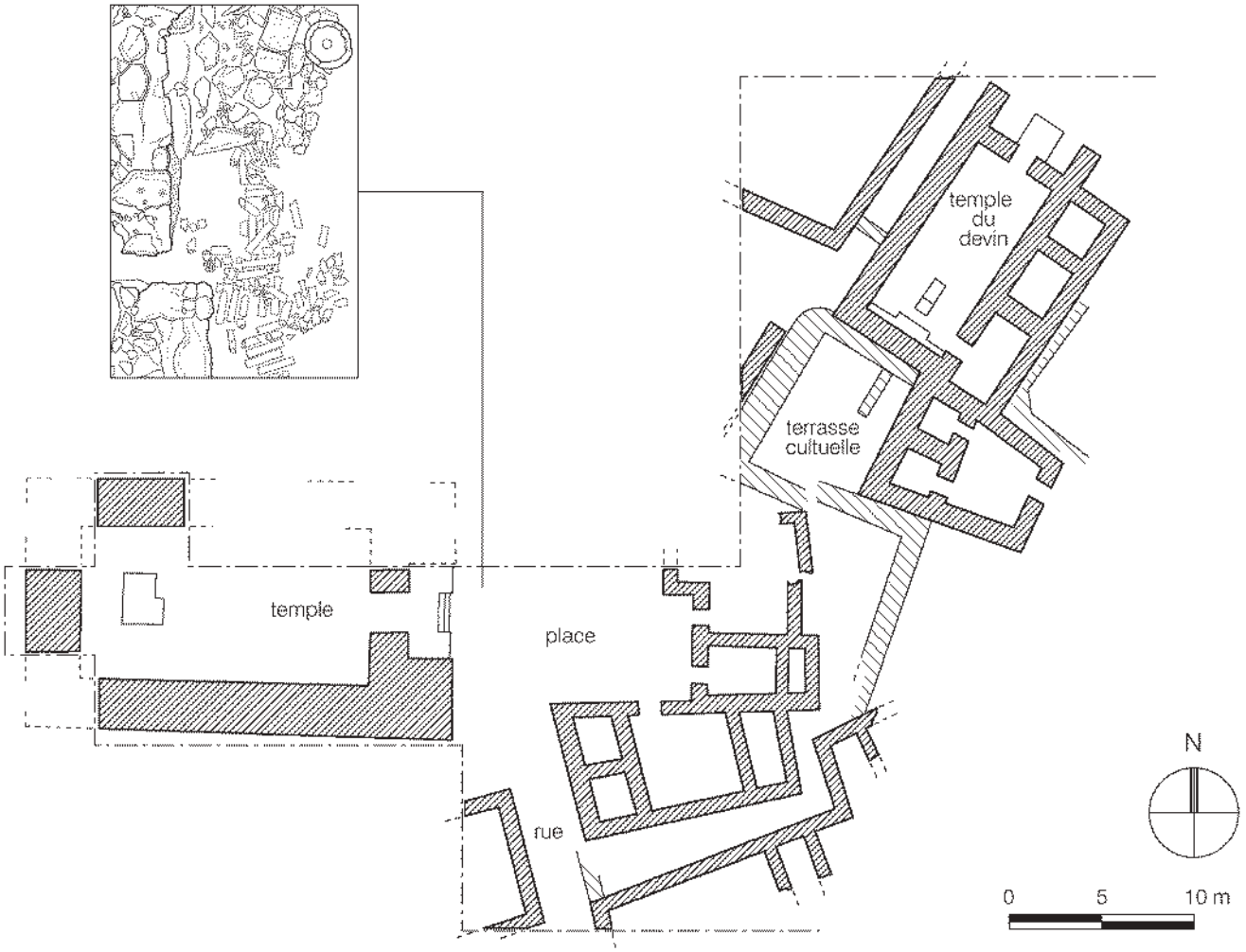


Fig. 10.4: Emar, Temple of Area M and Temple du Devin, Late Bronze Age II (drawn by S. Martelli, after Margueron 1984, fig. 2).

du Devin; this implies also a ritual circulation across the open spaces connecting these structures.

The twin temples of Area E, built on the summit of the mound over the natural south-western hilltop of Emar (Werner 1994, 106–107), were free-standing *in antis* long room buildings (Fig. 10.7). The southern temple was dedicated to Baal, as we know from the texts found inside the temple whilst the attribution of the northern building to the cult of Astarte is more hypothetical (Sakal 2012, 79). The southern temple was built over an older building, also of a long room *in antis* type, dating to an earlier phase of the Late Bronze Age or to the Middle Bronze Age (Sakal 2012, 88); furthermore, the discovery of a bronze bull and a bronze figurine of a god wearing the horned tiara on one of the installations in the rear part of the cella, behind the central podium, has also provided consistent support for the attribution of this temple to a Storm-god (Margueron 1975, 72–73, figs 7–8).[4]

Both temples stood at the sides of a street giving access onto an open space to the rear of the buildings; this was a plaza, or "esplanade", as J.-Cl. Margueron called it, measuring 23 m east–west and 13/15 m south–north in its state of preservation. This open space was provided with *cuvettes* or small circular pits and a stone dais or altar (Margueron 1975, fig. 3; 1984, fig. 1); this altar has been reinterpreted by the new Syrian-German excavations as an older structure belonging to a tower of the Middle Bronze Age fortifications (Sakal 2012, 90–91, fig. 5, pl. 20B). Remains of thick walls at different elevations provide evidence of the presence of a walled enclosure surrounding the sanctuary (Sakal 2012, 83–85, fig. 5); this could be approached by a processional route leading to the front court of both temples which may also have been built on with monumental structures (Sakal 2012, 92). The court in front of the temples was a place for performing rites and it has been postulated that the ceremony of enthroning the

Fig. 10.5: Emar, "Clous" in place in front of the façade of the Temple in antis in Area M, Late Bronze Age II (drawn by S. Martelli, after Margueron 1980, fig. 9).

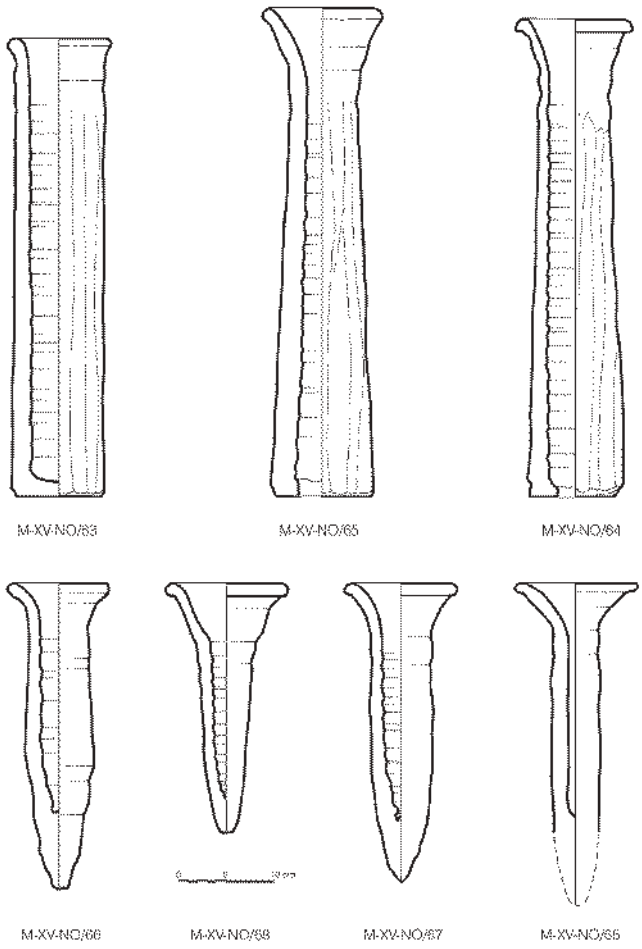


Fig. 10.6: Emar, "Clous" (drawn by S. Martelli, after Margueron 1980, fig. 10).

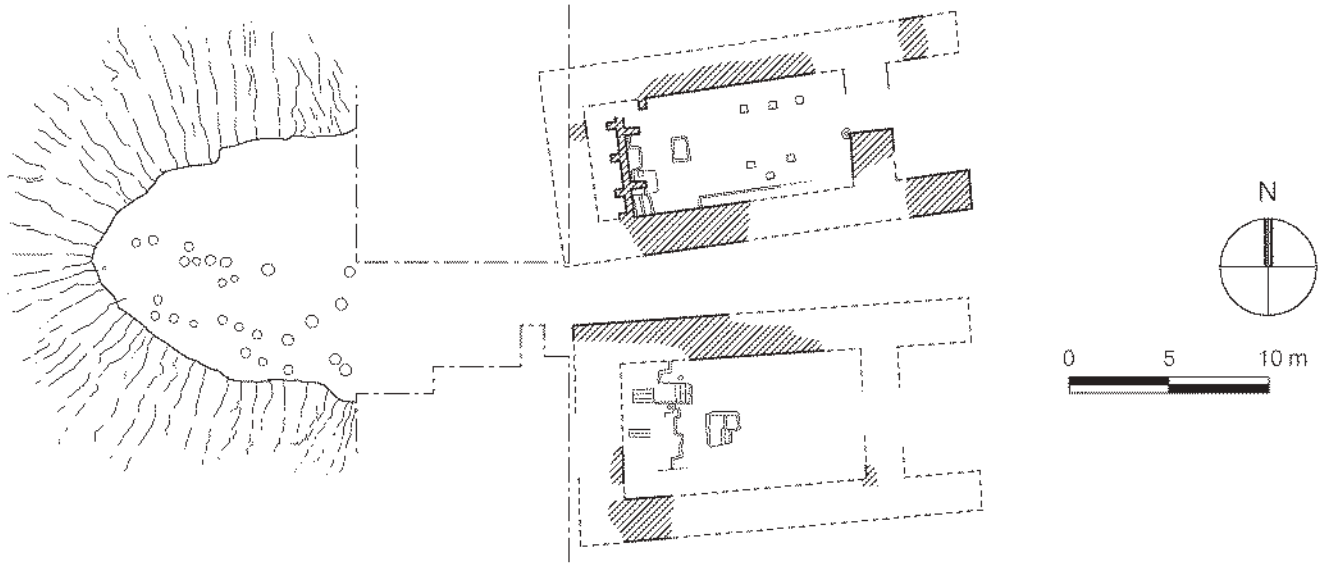


Fig. 10.7: Emar, the Twin Temples of Area E, Late Bronze Age II (drawn by S. Martelli, after Margueron 1980, fig. 11).

Entu-priestess with its communal meals consumed at the gate of the temple of Ba'al may have been performed in this area, in front of the temple and inside the sacred enclosure; and that the enclosure may have included rooms and open spaces housing the personnel belonging to and the activities carried out in the sanctuary (Otto 2013, 367–368). Although the new excavations have reinterpreted the data concerning the presence of the altar and the pits and have consequently dismissed the hypothesis of a use of the rear side of the southern temple for cultic activities, we can still maintain that the distinct position and nature of this open space on the rear side may have accommodated activities and a ritual circulation around these imposing buildings that topped the highest point of the town of Emar.

It is interesting to note that in Tell Munbaqa/Ekalte four temples have been documented of the long room *in antis* type, of large size and massive stone construction (Steinbau) (I–IV) and that three of them stood on the summit of the town, in a clearly visible and dominating position above the Euphrates valley (Werner 1994, 102–106), like the twin temple of Emar. The fourth temple, built south of the town gate, was a complex structure (Blocher *et al.* 2007), which included annexes and rooms for meals and ritual activities as the rich pottery evidence and residuals found in place have clearly documented. The presence of an installation with stone elements and a betyle in front of the staircase leading to the temple (Blocher *et al.* 2007, 104–110: room f) and a further betyle outside the outer wall surrounding the front court (Blocher *et al.* 2007, 111–116) have led to the hypothesis that the open space between the enclosure and the northern gate may also have served as a plaza for ritual activities (Blocher *et al.* 2007, 118–119, room h). It has also been suggested that this might represent a further document for the setting of the festival for the enthronement of the Entu known at Emar (Otto 2013, 369–371) which included a rite of ointment at the betyle.

A similar dominating position over the Euphrates was held by the temple on the high plateau of the citadel at Tell Bazi (Tempel 1) (Otto and Einwag 2007; Einwag und Otto 2012, 91–96; Otto 2013, 372–374), built in the Late Bronze Age over Middle and Early Bronze Age antecedents (Fig. 10.8). Similarly to the temple of Baal in Emar, Tempel 1 was decorated by portal lions (Einwag und Otto 2012, Tab. 1, 110). A large buttress marked the rear side of the cella to the south. In front of the temple the finding of heaps of animal bones and sherds has given evidence of the practice of slaughtering animals and possibly also of communal consumption; in the same place the remains were then ritually discarded (Otto 2012, 188–189).

In Tell Fray two temples of different plans and type have been brought to light (Matthiae 1980), Temple North with its entrance on the long wall and two small rooms on the opposite side, as in the Temple du Devin in Emar, and Temple South (Werner 1994, 109–110) which had a plan similar to the temple of Tell Bazi, with a long room leading to the cella, but being more than half its size (Fig. 10.8). Noteworthy is the fact that, as in the temple of Tell Bazi, the rear side of the temple South of Tell Fray presented a thick buttress in correspondence with the space for the altar, framed by two antae. This was not only a structural feature for strengthening the outer wall, but more probably a device for protecting the most sacred part of the temple with a thicker curtain as well as making it visible from

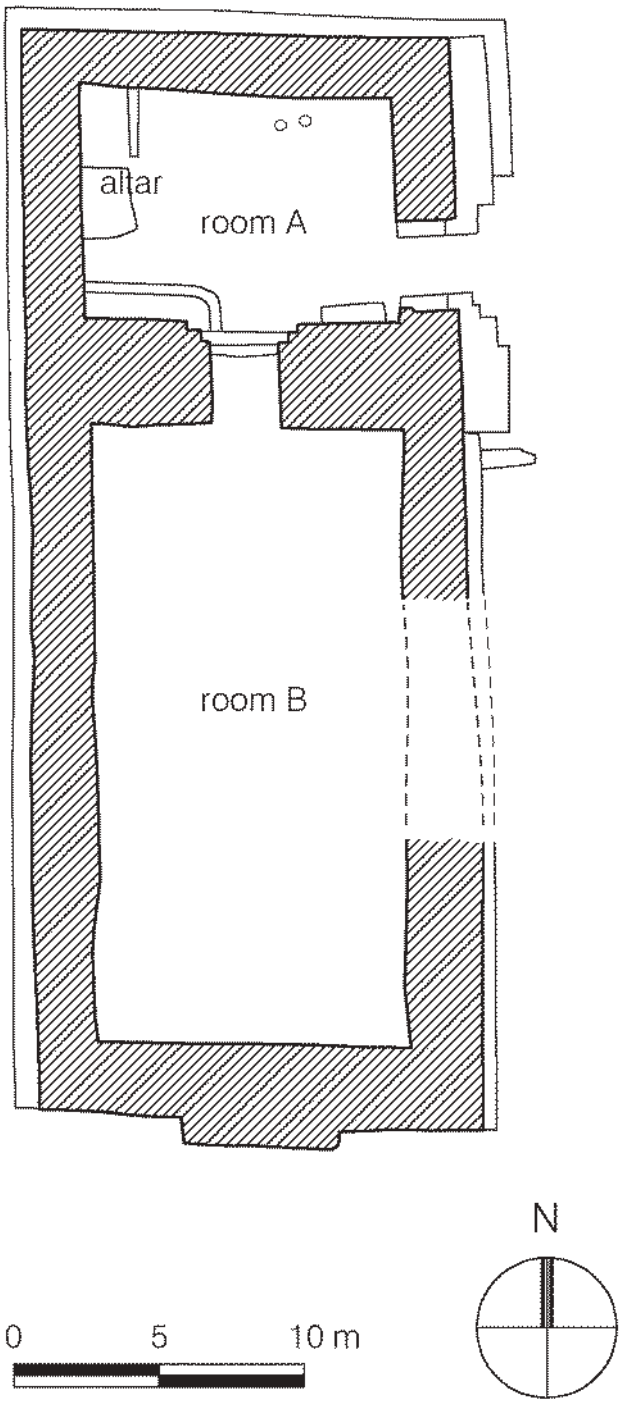


Fig. 10.8: Tell Bazi, Temple 1 on the citadel, Late Bronze II (drawn by S. Martelli, after Otto 2013, fig. 2m).

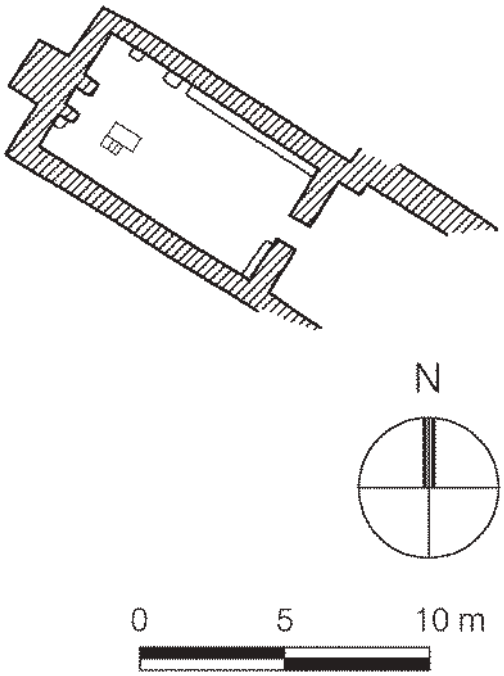


Fig. 10.9: Tell Fray, Temple South, Late Bronze II (drawn by S. Martelli, after Matthiae 1980, fig. 4).

the outside. This lends further support to the hypothesis of the use of and circulation along the rear outer spaces of these free-standing temples, even though we do not possess evidence of installations in place.

J.-Cl. Margueron, comparing the temples of Emar with the Alalakh level II temple, which following his interpretation was provided with a terrace on its side, noted that the use of the open spaces furnished with terraces and other installations was a distinct trait of the ceremonial and sacred architecture of Syria in the Bronze Age (Margueron 1984, p. 29).[5] A. Otto recently (2013) has again pointed out that open spaces, annexes and temples were all destined to cultic activities, being included into the sacred enclosures. We may also note that the rear sides of the free-standing temples more often enjoyed a prominent position over the summit of the cliffs or mounds, while the façades opened towards the gates and routes connecting the sanctuaries to the lower towns. In the case of the twin temple of Emar, the position above the cliff and the exposure and view of the countryside were more probably at the origin of the functional use also of the rear side. This may also be the case for the temples of Tell Bazi and Munbaqa/Ekalte which enjoyed a dominant position over the Euphrates valley and could be looked upon from afar as marked features of the landscape and recognised as places of communal ritual activities.

According to the archaeological evidence, along the perimeter of the free-standing temples there were various installations for performing rites, especially animal sacrifices and the consumption of meals. The courts and plazas in front of the temples, but also the streets and the spaces behind the temples housed terraces and pits and were open to the circulation of people and the fruition of the rites. Although we cannot, on archaeological grounds, document practices of circumambulation as a distinct ritual, the presence of different installations set in various spaces hint at least at different stages, timing and location of the ritual performance which most probably necessitated movement through space as is, in fact, documented by the texts.

The cases of Afis and Emar offer a rather distinctive and unique documentation for the use of the whole perimeter of the temples for ritual, open-air activities. In fact, the available archaeological evidence mostly concerns activities documented in the front of the temples, as the residuals found in the front of the temple of Tell Bazi and the presence of betyles in the front and outer space at Tall Munbaqa/Ekalte have clearly shown. This use, however, was a Levantine well documented trait that goes back to the Middle Bronze Age, as already noted (Pinnock 2008; Otto 2013, 360–365); in this period the free-standing temples *in antis* were often included in sacred precincts which were furnished with a variety of rooms and spaces for different functions. A few exemplary cases with rich materials in context present, in fact, copious and variegated evidence that help to reconstruct the organisation of the open spaces of the temple enclosures; furthermore, they illustrate clearly the long-lasting tradition of architectural models, functional use of spaces and classes of cultic paraphernalia in the Levant throughout the whole Bronze Age.

Among the many temples known from Middle Bronze Age II Palestine, the temple from Tell Haror, in the north-western Negev, is certainly exemplary to our purpose. The temple was *in antis* and surrounded by an enclosure; this contained an open area furnished with many cultic installations, an altar in mud-bricks, favissae and an annex. Material was abundant and spread everywhere, documenting various activities carried out in different places: deposits with human and animal figurines, pedestalled vases, incense burners, and a great quantity of offering residuals, especially bones of birds, puppies ritually killed and buried, and an equid buried with its bit (Oren 1997; Klenck 2002; Katz 2009).[6] This rich evidence provides a vivid illustration of the many and various rites performed in the open-air spaces of this sacred precinct.

It is noteworthy that a comparison for the presence of open areas with cultic installations adjoining the temple is offered by the Hyksos Avaris/Tell el-Dab‘a. The plan of the temples, many features of the cultic equipment and the rituals performed in the open-air with the offerings buried in the area clearly point to a shared Levantine tradition: in AreaA/II, the *plazas* between Temples II and III, and their numerous installations and the court in front of the temple of Area F/I, with its burial of two equids (Bietak 2003; 2008; Müller 1998) find comparisons in the above mentioned temple of Tell Haror.

Two relevant cases, Byblos and Ebla, offer extensive materials of use in reconstructing the organisation of the open areas adjoining the temples during the Middle Bronze Age, as recently suggested (Pinnock 2008); both centres were in fact provided with open cult areas, temples and rich offerings related to these. In Byblos, the sacred compound included the temples of the Obelisk and the Baalat Gebal, the Champ des Offrandes and the Enceinte Sacrée, with their adjoining open-air spaces. They were all furnished with installations and paraphernalia for the rites; besides, numerous and variegated deposits of offerings were spread and buried over the whole area testifying to some ritual circulation among the temples.

At Ebla, a large area of the north-western lower town was dedicated to religious functions and included Temple P2, a monumental long room *in antis* building, Monument P3, a large terrace with an inner hall to the south-western side of the temple,[7] and a service annexed to the eastern side of the temple (priests' barracks). This sacred precinct was walled up and was located in an area between the two palaces of the lower town of Ebla, facing, across a street to the south, the rear side of Palace Q and instead presenting the rear side of the terrace and temple, also across a street, to one side of Palace P, to the north. This position may be indicative of the fact that the sanctuary had to serve primarily the cult activities of the local rulers and their entourage; the presence of statues of rulers and a queen buried in a pit near to the entrance of the temple (possibly for protection after the sack and destruction of the temple) may indicate that the temple housed rituals for the cult of the ancestors and kingship. Moreover, in between the façade of the temple and the terrace, a wide open-air plaza, the Square of the Cisterns, extended to the base of the slope of the walled acropolis. The square was a multi-functional open-area provided with buried and surface installations: three *favissae*, with their rich offerings, facilities, basins and votive pits. They contained residuals of ritual activities; a burial of a dog and probably a human deposition are also documented.[8] The destination of this area to the cult of Ishtar and to rituals connected with the exaltation and legitimacy of kingship has

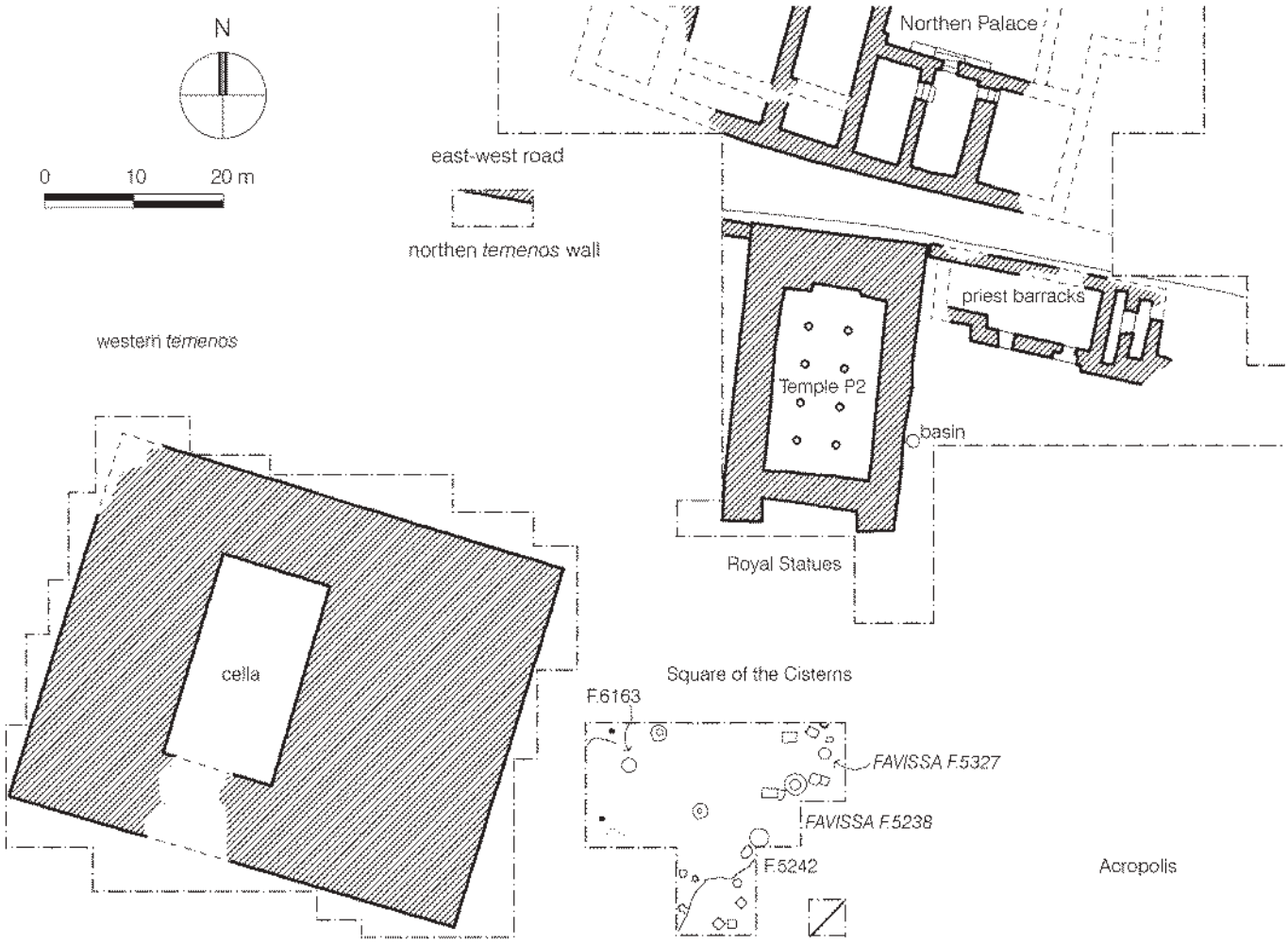


Fig. 10.10: Ebla, The Square of the Cisterns, Middle Bronze II (drawn by S. Martelli, after Marchetti, Nigro 1997, fig. 1).

been proposed on the basis of consistent materials found in the *favissae*, such as figurines and vases decorated with nude females, residuals of dove bones, and the finding of the head of a basalt statue attributed to Ishtar.[9] Whilst this remains a matter for speculation, far clearer is the fact that distinct and diverse rituals were certainly performed in different spaces of this area: above and below ground, in enclosed and open spaces. We can, therefore, raise the issue of whether some sort of ritual procession among the cultic pits and installations and around the terrace and temple might have been performed to fulfill the ritual duties. This is, of course, also a matter of speculation.

Moreover, other temples at Ebla show the presence of cultic areas adjoining the main building and consequently illustrate how deeply embedded in the local context was the practice of using and structuring the areas external to the temples for ritual performance often of a very different nature. The temple of the Rock, on the southeastern side of the the city, near the South-East Steppe Gate (Matthiae 2008; 2009; 2010, 387–391; 2011, 752–762) and the smaller temples HH4 and HH5 built in a mature phase of Early Bronze IVB, and HH3 and HH2 of the Middle Bronze Age I–II, were all long room and in *antis* buildings which overlapped the EB IVA temple, which was *in antis* but of a broad room type. *Bothroi* and *favissae* with deposits and offerings were also associated with the HH2 temple (Matthiae 2009, 719; 2011) and give evidence of a distinct ritual practice with more than 200 unbaked clay figurines deposited as well as other materials. The area was, in fact, a limestone rock terrace with natural caves; these had been used during the Early Bronze and destined to underground cults as indicated by three pits and their offerings dating to the EB IVB that cut into the floor of the cella of the EB IVA temple, connected with a large cavity to the south (Matthiae 2011, 756–758).

Even with its variety of cases, the documentation of the Levantine temples offers quite a homogeneous picture: different rituals were performed in the open-air spaces adjoining the temples, provided with functional installations used during the rites. The variety of these installations, built in an elevated position, such as on terraces or, instead, buried in the ground, in *favissae* or pits, reflected and responded to the variety of rituals and the finalities of the cult and belong to a common tradition of the Levant. There is apparently no clear evidence of a functional use of the entirety of the perimetral spaces of the temples including the rear sides; only the spaces in front of the temples, squares and courts were clearly used for ritual practices. This missing datum does not completely rule out the possibility that the rear sides could also have been used, but we have no consistent elements to prove this. We have instead in the textual sources references to processions across the sacred areas, more often linking the institutional and ceremonial buildings, but this is, as mentioned above in the introductory paragraph, a further case of ritual manifestation which lies outside the scope of our present investigation.[10]

A further case of open-air cultic settings around the temples is offered by Mari and its sacred compound; this was built and continuously redesigned over a lengthy period during the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, and included, in both Ville II and Ville III, temples, terraces and various open spaces provided with cultic installations. The unit of the period of Ville III (Shakkanakku-Amorite Period) consisted of the Temple of the Lions (Temple of Dagan) with its Terrace, the Sahuru, the temple of Ninhursag, and the temple of Shamash (Margueron 2004, 374–393, 501–507). The *Esplanade du temple de Dagan*, and the square connecting these temples contained various installations for the cult, bases for stelae and statues, basins and ritual deposits. Furthermore, the *Voie Sacrée* from the east and the *Grand Voie* from the west both gave access to the compound and constituted a ritual trajectory around the temples. Also in this case, the documentation concentrates in the squares and courts in front of the entrances to the temples; the outer spaces are apparently divided into single compounds which enclose distinct sanctuaries. The whole sacred precinct could apparently be approached by two routes and was open to easy circulation inside, but the organisation of grouping successive open spaces follows the traditional Mesopotamian concentric arrangement of the courts. This is evident with the Temple of Dagan with its terrace and Esplanade on its northern side which finds, however, a comparison in Monument P3 with its terrace and the Square of the Cisterns adjoning it on one side.[11] Ritual circuits may have been performed among the various temples of the sacred precinct and the *Grand Voie* running along on the rear side of the Temple of Dagan may have fitted this purpose (Margueron 2004, 375–393). Besides, the approach to the Haute Terrasse was not by the gate of the Temple of Dagan, nor via the Esplanade, but from the north, following the orientation of the *Grand Voie* and accessible from it through the northern gate (Margueron 2004, 388–392, fig. 379). It is also notable that the rear side of the temple was marked by a large buttress built in correspondence with the centre of the two shrines inside the building. We have seen that this feature also characterised the temple of Tell Bazi and the South Temple of Tell Fray; in Mari, as in the other cases, this was not, or not only, a structural feature, but rather an element of symbolic significance; the *Grand Voie*, in fact, skirted the rear of the temple and ran along the terrace before reaching the northern gate of the sanctuary.

To conclude, these cases of temples with their adjacent open areas, from Tell Haror in the southern Levant, to Mari in north-western Mesopotamia, despite their distinct plans and their being dedicated to the cult of different gods, do share a few general characters. Their precincts included the free-standing temples *in antis* with annexes and installations located in front and on the sides of the temples, consisting of terraces of different heights, altars and underground spaces opening onto the floors of the open-air plazas and courts. Also when offerings were deposited in fact in *bothroi*, *favissae* and pits, the rites concerning these offerings had, in fact, to be celebrated outside the entrances of the underground structures, in the open-air.

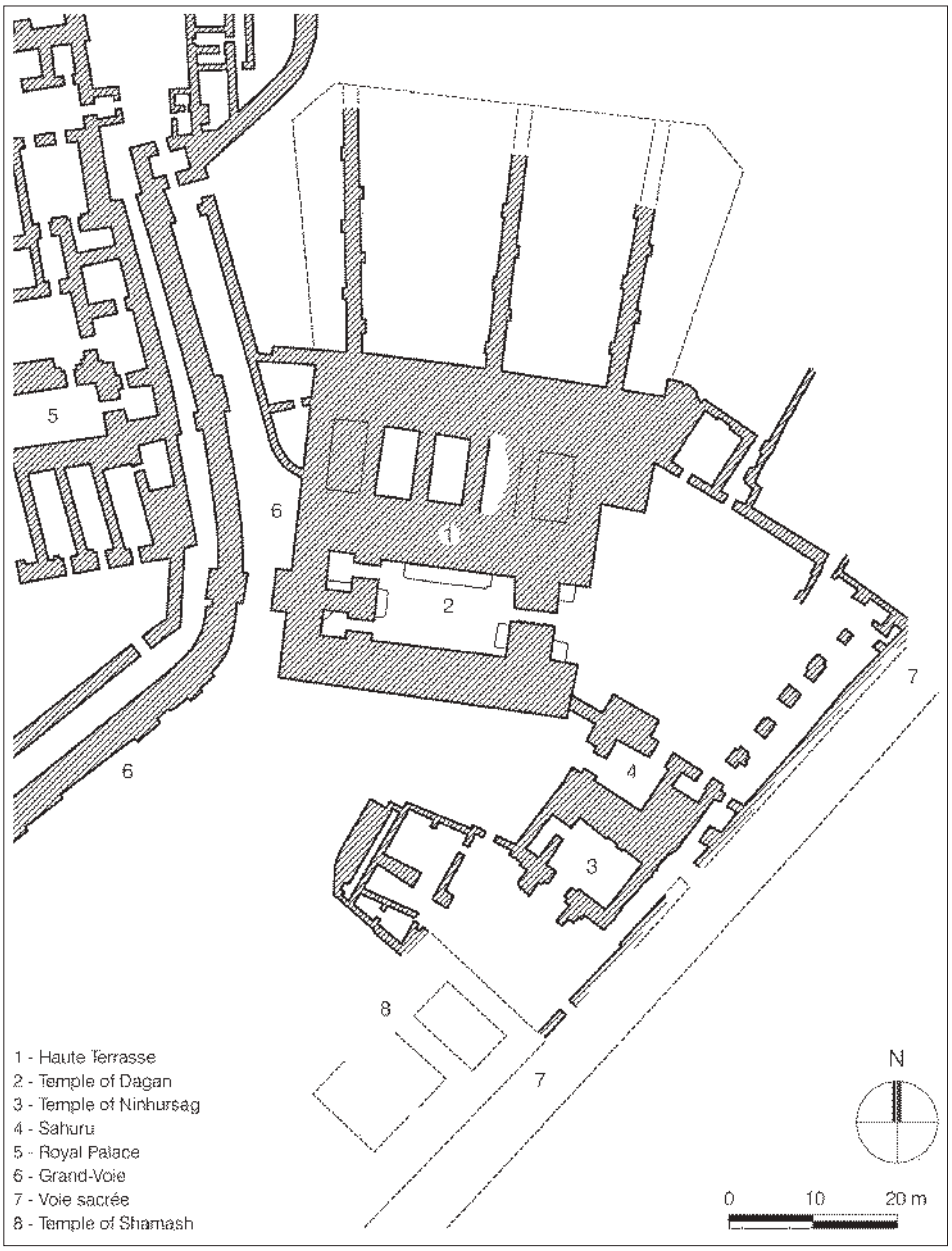


Fig. 10.11: Mari, Sacred Compound, Ville III, Middle Bronze I (drawn by S. Martelli, after Margueron 2004, fig. 379).

It is certainly noteworthy that these sanctuaries all enjoyed a long life, certainly consistent with the political and economic role of the urban centres to which they belonged; the persistence of architectural models and organisation of the outside and inside spaces reflects the strong tradition of ritual behaviour across both time and geo-political borders. This same aspect of continuity is also revealed by other factors, such as by the diffusion of special containers (pedestalled vases, incense burners, theriomorphic vases, *kernoi*, *askoi*, *rhyta*) for liquid and burnt offerings, which have been found in the sacred precincts of the Bronze Age; from these Bronze antecedents descend the Iron Age cultic paraphernalia of similar types.

This continuity is evident in the fact that special sectors of towns were destined for temples and their related religious ceremonies, according to different requirements of the cult, the identity of the deities worshipped and the distinct physical characteristics of the places. This tradition starts in the Early Bronze Age. According to the present archaeological evidence, Mari documents a long period of use of the same area from the Early Dynastic (Ville II) to the Amorite period (Ville III). Ebla documents this same continuous use of the sacred area throughout the Early and Middle Bronze Ages; the sacred compound of Area P was, in fact, founded probably in the final Early Bronze Age (IVB); the EB IV Red Temple in

Area D precedes the MB temple and the Temple of the Rock in Area HH, built in an area of natural caves and limestone hillocks, was rebuilt during these periods (Matthiae 2010, 108). Emar and Tell Bazi enjoyed an even longer continuity from the Early to the Late Bronze Age. Concerning instead the documentation of the use of the open areas outside the temples, we have to admit that for the Early Bronze Age this is still uneven and fragmentary; it is only from the Middle Bronze Age on that we have sufficient data documenting a regular use of the open spaces for rituals and cult. We may ask if this use of the open spaces for the cult was due to practical reasons, to prevent polluting elements from entering the temples as in the case of bloody sacrifices, or whether it mirrored, instead, a social process, and the concern for wider participation in celebrations of the cult by an increasing number of components of the institutional milieu. This fact might also be confirmed by the strategic position of the temples on a high and clearly-visible point of the town so that the free-standing and often high buildings could be easily seen from afar. Their surrounding open spaces may have become appealing areas for public ritual performance allowing the participation of a large number of people, or simply the possibility to observe them from a distance. In Emar, as noted (Sallaberger 2012, 171–172) on the occasion of the main festivals of the tutelary deities of Emar, Išhara and Ninurta, two or three thousand people celebrated the feast and received the bread.

To conclude, the archaeological documentation gives evidence of open spaces furnished with a variety of installations for performing cult rituals, mainly in front of the temples, but also on the sides of the entire perimeter, especially in the case of the free-standing long-room *in antis* type of building. The rear side was also an area for ritual circulation and performance, provided with installations, decorated and furnished with cult paraphernalia and also marked by architectural devices, such as buttresses that not only gave protection but also offered a view of the cella within and its altar. Whether or not rituals were carried out in different stages and at different times, moving amongst the temples, and possibly also circumambulating them, is open to speculation; archaeology, in fact, can only provide us with contexts, fixed in time and space.

Notes

1 The conclusion that these provided ideological justification for the economic network of tribute and gift circulation and that eventually they could serve the interests of both political authority but as well as political resistance (Ritvet 2011, 23–24) is certainly speculative (as admitted by the A., 23), but perfectly matches Tilley's paradigm.

2 Discussion and bibliography in Mazzoni 2000b, 146–148, 152–153; Mazzoni 2010c, 28, with comparisons with the Stadtempel of Tell Halaf (Werner 1994, pl. 10) and Assyrianized Levantine temples such as the 7th century sanctuary 650 at Tell Miqneh/Ekron, see 28, note 1. See now Gitin 2012. Note that Werner 1994, 76–81 connected the outer corridor of Ain Dara to the Assyrian model. For the diffusion of the Assyrian models in the temple architecture of Palestine see Spreafico 2010. As for the towers framing the entrance, the similarity with the tower or *migdal*-temples of the Middle Bronze Age Palestine is only fortuitous owing to the difference of time: see Ottosson 1980, 53–62; Wightman 2007, 150-151, 162–164.

3 Margueron 1980, 305 compares the *clous* of Emar with the glazed ones from Tchoga Zanbil.

4 It is interesting to note that the figurine of the god presents two tenons under the feet for insertion into a base. Dealing with a cylinder seal from Temple AIII.1 at Tell Afis, of Iron I date, which shows a Storm-god on his bull, I noted this particular element of the wedge-shaped end under his feet and compared it with the figurines of smiting gods in metal that have tenons under their feet. The image on the seal should therefore relate to a cult statue of the god: Mazzoni in press.

5 Margueron in 2004, 392 speaks of the level III temple of Alalakh as being furnished with a terrace, quoting Woolley 1955, 73. However Woolley 1955, 74–75, identified the solid structure of the groundwork of temple III (fig. 31) as the base for the stairs (see reconstruction in fig. 32).

6 The practice of sacrificing and burying dogs and equids is documented in Syria from the Early Bronze Age on; deposits of equids are present at Tell Brak and, in particular, at Umm el Marra in a funerary context (Schwartz *et al.* 2006, 624–627, 633–634); the sacrifice of equids is also known from treaties (Schwartz *et al.* 2006, 634) and was established in Middle Bronze Age Palestine as a practice linked to the Hyksos (Wapnish 1997).

7 The interpretation of the function of the large hall and the structure on the western side of the terrace of Monument P is still unclear. There are, in fact, elements that indicate that the construction of this massive building was not achieved before the destruction of Mardikh IIIB, which brought to an end the settlement of the Middle Bronze Age II. Matthiae (2010, 271–275) calls this monument "the Terrace of the lions", the animals sacred to Ishtar which were kept in the large open-air court of this building.

8 See Marchetti, Nigro 1997. The pits have yielded human and animal remains, including caprids, bovines and one or two dogs, as well as small pottery deposits. One pit, in particular, contained both a human and a sheep skull. These would appear to be ritual burials, the animals being sacrificed either to then be consumed as part of the cult or for symbolic purposes as in the case of the dogs, and the human skull probably being a victory trophy or the remains of a possibly ritual sacrifice (Nigro 1998). The area of the square, therefore, functioned as the scene for ritual representations including cruel sacrifices that involved the spilling and pouring of blood and liquids and the burning of varying substances, as well as being the area where ritual deposits of the remains from sacrifical offerings were interred. Comparison with the iconography of two individuals attacking a third, often from either side, in Old Syrian seals and on the reverse of the stela of Ishtar from Ebla, has lead to the hypothesis of ritual human sacrifice, possibly of vanquished enemies and, hence, that these representations formed part of royal propaganda. The exceptional finds from the Square of the Cistern would thus furnish direct archaeological support for this idea (Nigro 1998).

9 Matthiae 2001; 2010: 269–275, 291–293, pl. xxv. Pinnock 2008 has hypothesised that the rituals performed in this square may have been dedicated to the exaltation of kinship so as to ensure protection of the city and its dynasty, which were under the patronage of the goddess in the Middle Bronze Age. She has also proposed, on the basis of comparisons between the materials in the deposit of jar 16694 at Byblos and documents from Ebla, that similar rituals were addressed to the Baalat Gebal and Ishtar with the same aim in both cities.

10 P. Matthiae (2010, 109–110) has suggested that the Temple of the Rock may be identified as the temple of Kura, the main deity of the pantheon of Ebla; in the "ritual of the kingship", the queen performs rituals probably related to the renovation of kingship celebrating the sunset outside the city and then entering into the temple of Kura, near the Gate of Kura.

11 Margueron (2004, 392), compared the terrace with the terraces of Emar, Alalakh III and Ebla.

Bibliography

Baffi Guardata, F. (1990) Architettura. In F. Baffi Guardata and R. Dolce (eds) *Arte ed architettura nell'età medio-assira e cassita*. *archeologica* 88, 141–186. Roma, Giorgio Bretschneider Editore.

Bietak, M. (2003) Temple or "Bêt Marzeah"? In W. G. Dever and S. Gitin (eds) *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past. Canaan, Ancient Israel and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palaestina. Proceedings of the Centennial Symposium W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and American Schools of Oriental Research*, 156–168. Winona Lake IN, Eisenbrauns.

Bietak, M. (2008) Near Eastern Sanctuaries in the Eastern Nile Delta. in *Interconnections in the Eastern Mediterranean. Lebanon in the Bronze and Iron Ages*, 209–228. Beirut, Baal, Hors-Série VI. Liban, Direction Générale des Antiquités.

Blocher, F., Kara, H.-Chr., Machule, D. and Werner, P. (2007) Bericht über die Ausgrabungen in Tall Munbaqa/Ekalte 2005–2007. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orientgesellschaft* 139, 83–130.

Bonatz, D. (2007) The Divine Image of the King: Religious Representation of Political Power in the Hittite Empire. In M. Heinz and M. H. Feldman (eds) *Representations of Political Power. Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, 111–136. Winona Lake IN, Eisenbrauns.

Carenti, G. (2012) Tell Afis (Syria): Ritual Meals and Foundation Ceremonies. Findings from the 2009–2010 Excavation Campaign. In Ch. Lefèvre (ed.) *Proceedings of the General Session of the 11th International Council for Archaeozoology Conference* (Paris, 23–28 August 2010), 183–190. Oxford, British Archaeological Report S2354, Archaeopress.

Cecchini, S. M. (2014) The Official Buildings of the Eastern Acropolis: *Near Eastern Archaeology* 77/1, 58–63.

Cosgrove, D. E. (1984) *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. Beckenham, Wisconsin University Press.

Einwag, B. and Otto, A. (2012) Die Torlöwen an Tempel I von Tall Bazi und ihre Stellung in der Reihe steinerner Löwenorthostaten. In H. D. Baker, K. Kaniuth and A. Otto (eds) *Stories of Long Ago. Festschrift für Michael D. Roaf* (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 397), 91–115. Münster, Ugarit-Verlag.

Gilibert, A. (2011) *Syro-Hittite* M*onumental Art and the Archaeology of Performance: The Stone Reliefs at Carchemish and Zincirli in the Earlier First Millennium BCE*. Berlin and New York, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. Topoi. Berlin Studies of the Ancient World 2.

Gitin, S. (2012) Temple Complex 650 at Ekron. The Impact of Multicultural Influences on Philistine Cult in the Late Iron Age. In J. Kamlah, J. (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult. Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1 Mill. B.C.E.)*, 223–256. Abhandlungen der Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Glatz, C. and Plourde, M. (2011) Landscape Monuments and Political Competition in Late Bronze Age Anatolia: An Investigation of Costly Signaling Theory. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 361, 33–66.

Harmanşah, Ö. (2011) Monuments and Memory: Architecture and Visual Culture in Ancient Anatolian History. In Sh. R. Steadman and G. McMahon (eds) *Cambridge Handbook of the Bronze Age – Iron Age Mediterranean World*, 623–651. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Harmanşah, Ö. (2012) *Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Harrison, T. P. (2012) West Syrian megaron or Neo-Assyrian Langraum? The Shifting Form and Function of the Tell Ta'yīnāt (Kunalua) Temples. In Kamlah, J. (ed.) (2012) *Temple Building and Temple Cult. Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1 Mill. B.C.E.)*, 3–21. Abhandlungen der Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Harrison, T. P. and Osborne, J. F. (2012) Building XVI and the Neo-Assyrian Sacred Precinct at Tell Tayinat. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 64, 125–143.

Heinrich, E. (1982) *Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im Alten Mesopotamien.* Berlin, Denkmäler antiker Architektur 14. Berlin, Walter de Gruyter.

Inomata, T. and Cohen, L. S. (2006) *Archaeology of Performance: Theaters of Power, Community, and Politics*, Lanham, MD, AltaMira Press.

Kaniuth, K., Löhnert, A., Miller, J. L., Otto, A., Roaf, M. and Sallaberger, W. (eds) (2013) *Tempel im Alten Orient. 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 11.13. Oktober 2009, München.* Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 7. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz

Katz, J. C. (2009) *The Archaeology of Cult in Middle Bronze Age Canaan: The Sacred Area at Tell Haror, Israel.* Piscataway NJ, Gorgias Press.

Klenck, J. D. (2002) *The Canaanite Cultic Milieu: the Zooarchaeological Evidence from Tell Haror, Israel.* British Archaeological Report S1029. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Kohlmeyer, K. (2012) Der Tempel des Wettergottes von Aleppo. Baugeschichte und Bautyp, räumliche Bezüge, Inventar und bildliche Ausstattung Kamlah, J. (ed.) (2012) *Temple Building and Temple Cult. Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1 Mill. B.C.E.)*, 55–78. ADPV41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Kamlah, J. (ed.) (2012) *Temple Building and Temple Cult. Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1 Mill. B.C.E.).* ADPV41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Marchetti, N. and Nigro, L. (1997) Cultic Activities in the Sacred Area of Ishtar at Ebla during the Old Syrian Period: The Favissae F.5327 and F.5238. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 49, 1–43.

Margueron, J.-CL. (1975) Quatre campagnes de fouilles à Emar (1972–1974). Un bilan provisoire: *Syria* LII, 53–85.

Margueron, J.-CL. (1980) Emar: un example d'implantation hittite en terre syrienne. In J.-Cl. Margueron (ed.) *Le Moyen Euphrate. Zone de contacts et d'échanges. Actes du Colloque de Strasbourg 10–12 Mars 1977*, 285–312. Strasbourg, Travaux du centre de recherche sur le Proche-Orient et la Grèce antiques 5.

Margueron, J.-CL. (1982) Architecture et urbanisme In D. Beyer (ed.) *A l'occasion d'une exposition Meskéné-Emar. Dix ans des travaux 1972–1982. Mission archéologique de Meskéné-Emar*, 23–39. Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

Margueron, J.-CL. (1984) Prolégomènes à une étude portant sur l'organisation de l'espace sacré en Orient. In G. Roux (ed.) *Temples et Sanctuaires*, 23–36. Lyon, Travaux de la maison de l'Orient 7 et de la Méditerranée.

Margueron, J.-Cl. (1985) Le temple syrien: prototype du temple de Salomon. In *Le grand atlas Universalis de l'archéologie*, 192–193. Paris, Encyclopaedia Universalis.

Margueron, J.-Cl., (2001) De Paestum à Chuera: temple in antis et temenos. In J.-W. Meyer, M. Novak and A. Pruß (eds) *Beiträge zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie Winfried Orthmann gewidmet*, 260–265, Frankfurt am Main, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität.

Margueron, J.-Cl. (2004) *Mari Métropole de l'Euphrate au IIIe et au début du II millénaire av. J.-C.* Paris, Picard.

Matthiae, P. (1980) Ittiti e Assiri a Tell Fray: lo scavo di una città medio-siriana sull'Eufrate. *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* XXII, 35–51.

Matthiae, P. (2001) The Face of Ishtar of Ebla. In J.-W. Meyer, M. Novak and A. Pruß (eds) *Beiträge zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie Wienfried Orthmann gewidmet*, 272–278. Frankfurt am Main, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität.

Matthiae, P. (2008) The Temple of the Rock of Early Bronze IVA–B at Ebla: Structure, chronology, continuity. In J. M. Córdoba, M. Molist, M. Carmen Pérez, I. Rubio and S. Martinez (eds) *Proceedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (3–8 April 2006),* vol. I, 547–558, Madrid, Universidad Autonoma de Madrid Ediciones.

Matthiae, P. (2009) Il tempio della roccia ad Ebla: la residenza mitica del dio Kura e la fondazione della città protosiriana. *Scienze delle Antichità. Storia Archeologia Antropologia* 15, 677–730.

Matthiae, P. (2010) *Ebla. La città del trono*, Torino, Einaudi.

Matthiae, P. (2011) Temples et Reines de l'Ébla Protosyrienne: résultats des fouilles à Tell Mardikh en 2007 et 2008. *Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres, Comptes Rendus des séances de l'année 2009*, 747–792.

Mazzoni, S. (2010a) Syro-Hittite Temples and the Traditional in antis Plan. In J. Becker, R. Hempelmann and E. Rehm (eds) *Kulturlandschaft Syrien. Zentrum und Peripherie. Festschrift für Jan-Waalke Meyer*, 359–371. Münster, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 371, Ugarit-Verlag.

Mazzoni, S. (2010b) Santuari a Tell Afis nell'età del Ferro (I mill.a.C.) e l'architettura templare del Levante. In G. Bartoloni, P. Matthiae, L. Nigro and L. Romano (eds) *Tiro, Cartagine, Lixus: Nuove Acquisizioni. Atti del Convegno Internazionale in onore di Maria Giulia Amadasi*, 143–158. Roma, Quaderni di Vicino Oriente IV.

Mazzoni, S. (2011) Templi e corredi del culto a Tell Afis nell'Età del Ferro e le tradizioni del Levante. In P. De Vita and F. Venturi (eds) *Da Tell Afis a Mozia. Culture a confronto tra Oriente e Occidente, Byrsa VII*I–15/16 (2009), 27–53. Lugano.

Mazzoni, S. (2012) Temples at Tell Āfīs in Iron Age I–III. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult. Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1 Mill. B.C.E.)*, 23–40. Abhandlungen der Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Mazzoni, S. (in press) Storm-gods at Tell Afis and a Syro-Hittite seal. In P. Butterlin, J. Patrier and Ph. Quenet (eds) *Milles et une empreintes. Un Alsacien en Orient. Mélanges en l'honneur du 65e anniversaire de D. Beyer*. Subartu, Turnhout, Brepols.

Moorey, P. R. S. (1985) *Materials and Manufacture in Ancient Mesopotamia. The Evidence of Archaeology and Art.* British Archaeological Report S237. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Müller, V. (1998) Offering Deposits at Tell el-Dab'a. In C. J. Eyre (ed.) *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Egyptologists*, 793–803. Leuven, Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 82.

Müller-Karpe, A. (2002) Kuşakli-Sarissa: A Hittite Town in the "Upper-Land". In A. Yener and H. A. Hoffner Jr. (eds) *Recent Developments in Hittite Archaeology and History: Papers in Memory* of *Hans G. Güterbock*, 145–152. Winona Lake IN, Eisenbrauns.

Nigro, L. (1998) A Human Sacrifice Associated with a Sheep Slaughter in the Sacred Area of Ishtar at MB I Ebla. *Journal of Prehistoric Religion* XI–XII, 22–36.

Ökse, T. (2011) Open-Air Sanctuaries of the Hittites. In H. Genz and D. P. Mielke (eds) *Insights into Hittite History and Archaeology*, 218–240. Leuven/Paris/Walpole MA, Peeters.

Oren, E. D. (1997) The "Kingdom of Sharuhen" and the Hyksos Kingdom. In E. D. Oren (ed.) *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*, 253–283. Philadelphia, University Museum Monograph 96, University Museum Symposium Series 8.

Otto, A. (2012) Defining and Transgressing the Boundaries between Ritual Commensaliti and Daily Commensal Practices: the Case of Late Bronze Age Tall Bazi, in S. Pollock (ed.), *Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Toward an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces* (Topoi, Journal for Ancient Studies: Special Volume 2), 179–195.

Otto, A. (2013) Gotteshaus und Allerheiligstes in Syrien und Nordmesopotamien während des 2.Jts v. Chr. In K. Kaniuth, A. Löhnert, J. L. Miller, A. Otto, M. Roaf and W. Sallaberger (eds) *Tempel im Alten Orient. 7. Internationales Colloquium der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 11.13. Oktober 2009, München*, 355–383. Colloquien der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 7. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Otto, A. and Einwag, B. (2007) Ein Tempel Hoch über dem Euphrattal. *Antike Welt* 4, 39–46.

Ottosson, M. (1980) *Temples and Cult Places in Palestine.* Uppsala, Uppsala Studies in Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Civilizations 12.

Pinnock, F. (2008) Open Cults and Temples in Syria and the Levant Interconnections. In *The Eastern Mediterranean. Lebanon in the Bronze and Iron Ages*, 195–207. Beirut, Baal. Hors-Série VI. Liban, Direction Générale des Antiquités.

Ristvet, L. (2011), Travel and the Making of North Mesopotamian Polities 2011. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 361, 1–31.

Sakal, F. (2012) Der spätbronzezeitliche Tempelkomplex von Emar im Lichte der neuen Ausgrabungen. In J. Kamlah (ed.) *Temple Building and Temple Cult. Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.–1 Mill. B.C.E.)*, 79–96. Abhandlungen der Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 41. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Sallaberger W. (2012) Home-made Bread, Municipal Mutton, Royal Wine. Establishing Social Relations during the Preparation and Consumption of Food in Religious Festivals at Late Bronze Age Emar. In S. Pollock (ed.) *Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Toward*

an Archaeology of Commensal Spaces, 157–177. Topoi, J*ournal for Ancient Studies* Special Volume 2.

Schwartz, G. M. (2012) Era of the Living Dead: Funerary Praxis and Symbol in Third Millennium BC Syria. In P. Pfälzner, H. Niehr, E. Pernicka and A. Wissing (eds) *(Re-)Constructing Funerary Rituals in the Ancient Near East. Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Tübingen Post-Graduate School «Symbols of the Dead»* in May 2009, 159–177. Qaṭna Studien Supplementa. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Schwartz, G. M., Curvers, H. H., Dunham, S. S., Stuart, B. and Weber, J. A. (2006) A Third-Millennium B.C. Elite Mortuary Complex at Umm el-Marra, Syria: 2002 and 2004 Excavations, *American Journal of Archaeology* 110, 603–641.

Soldi, S. (2009) Aramaeans and Assyrians in North-Western Syria: Material Evidence from Tell Afis. In Ch. Kepinski and A. Tenu (eds) *Interaction entre Assyriens et Araméens*, 97–118. *Syria* 86.

Soldi, S. (2012) Notes on the Glazed Funnels from the Iron Age Temple AI at Tell Afis. In R. Matthews and J. Curtis (eds) *Proceedings of the 7th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, 459–477. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Spreafico, G. (2010) Alcuni esempi di adozione di modelli planimetrici neo-assiri nell'architettura sacra della Palestina e della Transgiordania del Ferro IIC. In R. Dolce (ed.) *Quale Oriente? Omaggio a un maestro. Studi di arte e archeologia del Vicino Oriente in memoria di Anton Moortgat a 30 anni dalla sua scomparsa*, 135–163. Palermo, Flaccovio Editore.

Starr, R. F. S. (1939) *Nuzi. Report on the Excavations at Yorgan Tepe near Kirkuk, Iraq conducted by Harvard University in Conjunction with the American Schools of Oriental Research and the University Museum of Philadelphia 1927–1931*. Cambridge, Mass.

Taracha, P. (2009) *Religions of Second Millennium Anatolia*. Dresdner Beiträge zur Hethitologie 27. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Tilley, Y. (1994) *A Phenomenology of Landscapes: Places, Paths, and Monuments. Explorations in Anthropology.* Providence R.I., Berg.

Wapnish, P. (1997) Middle Bronze Equid Burials at Tell Jemmeh and a Re-examination of a Purportedly "Hyksos" Practice. In E. D. Oren (ed.) *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*, 335–367. Philadelphia, University Museum Monograph 96, University Museum Symposium Series 8.

Werner, P. (1994) *Die Entwicklung der Sakralarchitektur in Nordsyrien und Südostkleinasien vom Neolithikum bis in das 1. Jt. v. Chr.* Münchener Universitäts-Schriften. Philosophische Fakultät 12; Münchener Vorderasiatische Studien 15. München, Wien, Profil Verlag.

Wightman, G. J. (2006) *Sacred Spaces. Religious Architecture in the Ancient World.* ANES Supplement 22. Leuven, Peeters.

Zukerman, A. (2014) The Horned Stands from Tell Afis and Hazor and the "Crowns" from Nahal Mishmar. In J. R. Spencer, A. J. Brody and R. A. Mullins (eds), *Material Culture Matters. Essays on the Archaeology of Southern Levant in Honor of Seymour Gitin*, 309–321. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns.

11

Ritual circumambulations in the Syro-Mesopotamian cuneiform texts. An overview

Amalia Catagnoti

1. The term circumambulation refers to the ritual custom of walking in a circle around a holy place, person, or object. It is known as a universal rite that is still practiced today. In general, it may be performed in a processional step or a dance rhythm or by running. Furthermore, it may be accompanied by prayers, by musical performances, by lustrations with water, by fumigations, the use of fire, and by the transportation of sacred objects and sacrificial animals.

Depending on the motivations behind them, apotropaic and greeting circumambulations can usually be distinguished from each other. *Apotropaic circumambulation* is carried out by enclosing something in a sacred or magic circle in order to prevent evil powers from entering it or to expel any of those forces that may have already taken hold of it. Instead, *greeting circumambulation* is performed so that the participants may obtain desirable benefits from the holy object.

In the Hindu tradition, the most extensive clockwise circumambulation is called *pradakṣina*. It concerns all of India: from the north, to the east, to the south, to the west, and back to the north again. Furthermore, the devout Buddhists circumambulate around tombs and sanctuaries. As for the Near East, the Jericho and Mecca circumambulations are famous. The former is reported in the biblical book of Joshua in which Joshua displays the power of the Lord encircling Jericho six times for 6 days, and seven times on the 7th day, causing the fall of the city walls (Joshua 6:14–20). The latter is the circumambulation called *ṭawāf*, still practiced today by Muslims around the Kaʿbah.

Is circumambulation attested to in cuneiform sources? The answer looks positive. In fact, in the entry *Prozession(sstraße)* of the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, Beate Pongratz-Leisten collected several instances of this rite.[1] Their common feature is the occurrence of keywords that show encircling and moving in a circular manner, *nigin in Sumerian, *lawûm* or *saḫārum* in Akkadian.

In the texts, cases of circumambulation performed within a settlement, around the temples, may be distinguished from those performed outside the city, around the walls, and from those performed in the countryside, around fields or along political borders. These peculiar processions are attested by means of a peculiar lexicon in administrative, ritual and legal texts as well as in letters, from Girsu, Umma, Uruk, Mari, Šehna, Kutalla and perhaps Ebla, from the (half of the) 3rd millennium until the Seleucid period. The typology of the sources indicate that these circulambulations, religious in nature, were real historical events.

A slighly different, but by no means less meaningful kind of circulambulation is that which makes reference to the "year in which Šulgi made a round-trip between Ur and Nippur".[2] As pointed out by Piotr Steinkeller, this dating formula, commemorating the 7th regnal year (2087 BC) of the king of the Ur III dynasty, must be related to the famous passages of the Sumerian hymn *Šulgi A* which credit this king with having ran from Nippur to Ur and back, around 160 km in 24 hours: "my hearth prompted me to make a round-trip between Nippur and the brick-work of Ur as if it were one double-hour [...] (by the time) Utu spread daylight over the habitations (i.e., in the early morning), I entered into the Ekišnugal [...] (then) I rose like an owl, like a hawk, and returned to Nippur in my joy [...] before Utu set his face toward his (netherworld) house, I covered the distance of 15 double hours back and forth; my top warriors looked at me (with ashtonishement); in Nippur and at Ur, in one day, I indeed celebrated the *eššešu* festival!".[3]

As Steinkeller suggests, the historical "reality behind Šulgi's 'run' was an official inauguration of the completed highway network (particularly, the Nippur-Ur route [...]), and a test-run of the courier service)".

2. Some Mesopotamian texts of the Ur III period from Girsu,[4] in the Lagaš state, record the circumambulations (nigin) of the main temple in the city, the Eninnu, of the border district called Antasura and of the Girsu city walls. It is not certain that they were performed during a unique ritual. If this was the case, these three specific circumambulations were part of a more general and longer circumambulation, from the religious core of the state (the temple of the city god Ningirsu) to the periphery (An-ta-sur-ra means "upper border") and back to the core (the city gates and the temple area are mentioned).

According to the reconstruction of the rituals suggested by Wolfgang Heimpel and Uri Gabbay, their topographical development may be summarised as follows:

a) The first part of the Eninnu rituals took place in its central court. The second part was a procession from there to the main eastern (Šu-ga-lam) and western (É-unu^{ki}) gates of the temple, where offerings were presented.
b) Then the procession continued outside the city, toward Antasura, probably northwest of Girsu. Various watercourses are mentioned (the canals Pirig-gin$_7$-DU, Ù-sur, NINA(-šè)-DU and Ka-i$_7$-gír, and the river Tigris), together with buildings (the temple called "House of Antasura") and with gardens (that of Kisura) and meadows (that between the Pirig-gin$_7$-DU and the Tigris).
c) During the circumambulation of Girsu a rite called ga-gu$_7$-è-a was performed in association with the city gates (it remains unclear if it refers to a full circumambulation of the four gates or to a semi-circular course only including two or three gates). Possibly, the course of the procession also included the areas outside the city called Igi-é-unu^{ki} and Girnun, a locality called "Small-vine (orchard?)", and the Ningirsu canal.
d) The final part of the rituals refers to the Girsu 'Holy-City' and to the building called "Bird-house".

Given the peculiar landscape within and around Girsu, several segments of the circumambulations were probably traveled by boat (a "Magan-boat" is explicitly mentioned). Runners also participated in the circumambulations.[5] There was the use of musical instruments, notably the balag and the *áb-ér-ra, most likely the "harp" or "lyre" (called "Divinity harp of the storm (dingir balag u$_4$-da)") and the "kettle-drum", for the performance of lament and weeping song, entitled "Tears of the prayer offering (ér sískur-ra-šè)" and performed by a "lamentation priest (gala)". A further main feature of these rituals is the divine and human kings central importance: the rites begin (and probably end) at Ningirsu's temple, while a rite called "Prayer offering of the royal heart-felt wish (sískur šà-ge-guru$_7$ lugal)" and the meal of the king are mentioned.

According to Heimpel, this rite was apotropaic and prophylactic in nature: "the evocation of the destroyed temple and city [implied by the nature of the balaĝ-lament] served to show the gods how much they and their human clients would suffer if they allowed destruction to occur, thus motivating the gods to protect their city".[6] Heimpel explicitly links this Girsu rite to that of Jericho, seeing them as complementary and opposite cases. According to Gabbay, these rituals had a cosmic connotation mirroring the circular motion of the Sun-god.[7]

3. A ritual from Seleucid Uruk, describes the cerimonies to be performed, during the night vigil, in the Bit-Rēš, the temple of the god Anu.[8] They were probably ceremonies for a special occasion and not performed during every vigil.

The ceremonies began inside the Bit-Rēš. The rites were first performed in the Grand Courtyard, then at the top of the Ziqqurat and then once again in the Grand Courtyard, which included several offerings and libations and probably the breaking of a *ḫarû*-container.

The second part of the ceremonies consisted in the circumambulation of the temple itself. The main temple priest, along with exorcists, lamentation priests and singers, lead the divine Torch from the Ziqqurat to the Grand Courtyard, in a procession passing through the Holy Gate, which was behind the Cella.[9] Then, following the divine Torch, the statues of the gods Papsukkal, Nusku and Usmû, the three divine gatekeepers, and the statue of the god Messagunug left the Court-of-the-Assembly, passed through the Grand Gate and reached the street. With Messagunug at the head, the statues were carried in a procession around the temple. After this circumambulation (NIGIN-*ú*)[10] the statues re-entered the temple, each god through his own gate. Lastly, the divine Torch kindled a brushwood pile in front of the divine statues. Furthermore, priests and citizens kindled brushwood piles at the gates of other city temples and near private houses, while city guardians set them alight in the streets and crossroads. The brushwood piles were allowed to burn until dawn and standards were planted to the left and right of the city gates.

According to Pontgraz-Leisten, the use of fire in these rituals "suggests disinfection and decontamination, a procedure for getting rid of bad odors and infecting elements as well as to cleanse the ground for the foundations of a building".[11]

Another two texts from 1st millennium Uruk, document ritual circumambulations of statues and buildings. During a festival for Ištar of the Seleucid period,[12] after a procession two cultic performers – the *kurgarrû*-actor and the *assinnu*-singer – circled around the statues of the gods in the courtyard of the temple of the New Year.[13] A few centuries before, Neo Babylonian rituals[14] report that the statue of the goddess Nanaya circumambulated the Ziqqurat of Ištar after a procession[15] and that a priest circumambulated three times.[16] Also, in these two rituals the circumambulation is referred to with forms of *lamû*.

A further 1st millennium attestation of a circumambulation occurs in a Neo-Assyrian literary text, the *Marduk Ordeal*. Its Assur version bears in l. 67 the following passage: "Finally, Sakkukutu who goes round the city is his wailing woman. She circumambulates the city".[17]

4. In the Mari texts of the 18th century BC, the circumambulations should be indicated by the term *siḫirtum*, a form of the Akkadian verb *saḫārum*, "to go around, turn, turn back".[18]

Unlike the Girsu and Uruk texts discussed above, the combination of the administrative and epistolary Mari documents permit a precise collocation of these circumambulations in clear religious and political contexts.

Until now, four locations have been attested to where circumambulations were held, Mari, Terqa, Der and in a part of the Ḫabur Triangle. However, they make reference to three different years of the reign of the last king of Mari, Zimri-Lim, that is ZL 0, ZL 1 and ZL 6.[19] Even if the texts show that the

circumambulations could be made during regular festivals, the impression is that these rituals were not regularly performed, but rather that they were motived by specific occasions, as a consequence of main changes in the political scene.

ZL 0. Some time after Bannum's conquest of Mari, Zimri-Lim entered his new capital, in 26/ix/ZL 0. The day after, 27/ix/ZL 0, the new king participated in what almost probably was his first public initiative: "une grande cérémonie religieuse fut organisée: le roi fit le tour de tous les sanctuaires de la ville, sacrifiant à chacune des divinités".[20]

This ceremony is reported in the so-called "Panthéon de Mari", an administrative text in which 87 sheep "of the *siḫirtum* of the temples of the gods"[21] are recorded. In doing so, Zimri-Lim's intent was likely twofold: on one side, to pay homage to the city and environs gods by visiting all their sanctuaries; on the other side, to show oneself to the local populations, immediately acting as new ruler in a public ceremony.

According to Jean-Marie Durand,[22] the 25 divine names mentioned in the list of the "Panthéon de Mari", where no geographical names are recorded, suggest the following subsequent locations of the rituals: "Palais royal – Zone de la ziqqurat – Nord-est du tell – Dêr – Šehrum – Canal d'irrigation – Appân – Falaise de l'alvéole – Haute région de Mišlân (?) – Ṣuprum – Mari-Ouest+divinités inviteés – Chapelles mariotes". If so, the topography of this *siḫirtum*[23] should refer to a long procession which started and ended at the intrapalatial shrines, with in-between several stops within Mari, then a stop at the main extra-urban sanctuary (Der), after that near Mari (Šeḫrum), then in the northernmost centers (Appan – Mišlan? – Ṣuprum), and once again inside of Mari. Following this interpretation, it results that the new king and his companions traveled for about 50–60 km, touching all the main settlements of the Mari district along the Euphrates, which may be confidently put on a map.[24] Since the "Panthéon de Mari" is dated 27/ix, this distance had been covered over the course of just one day, most likely on donkeys and in the last part of the journey, by boat. Alternatively, this *siḫirtum* touched sanctuaries in Mari taking *i-na ma-ri*^{ki} literally.

It is in this initial period of *prise du pouvoir*, with the same aim in agenda, to which also belongs the successive circumabulation which Zimri-Lim participated in 2 weeks later, in 13/x/ZL 0. This time the *siḫirtum* was held in a main religious center of the kingdom, Terqa, where he resided for 3 days.[25] It has been suggested that "cette visite à Terqa du 12 au 14/x correspond à la cérémonie de 'couronnement' du nouveau roi"[26]. An administrative text[27] mentions the sacrifice of sheep "when the Mari king entered the city of Terqa". The 33 sheep are "those of the *siḫirtum* of the temples of the gods".[28] As in the previous case, the text only records divine names (11), without accompanying geographical names. According to Durand,[29] this ritual took place at least "dans le temple de Dagan ou le complexe qui l'entoure" at Terqa, but the mention of the divinities of two towns in Terqa's environs, Zurubban and Ḫišamta,[30] must be noted.

Some time after these ceremonies at Terqa, Zimri-Lim also participated in the traditional festival of Eštar Deritum at Der, from 16 to 18/xi. Regarding the relevance of this festival, for the discussion of the Mari circumambulation rites, see hereafter.

Given that they are attested in laconic administrative texts, the actual modalities of these two circumambulations in ZL 0 are not completely clear. However, it is clear that the two circumambulations were strongly connotated from a political point of view, since this specific way of Zimri-Lim's rendering devotion toward the main gods of his kingdom at Mari, Der and Terqa marked his access to the throne.

ZL 1. Other ceremonies including a circumambulation were held during the year ZL 1.

An administrative text,[31] dated 2/x/ZL 1, mentions the king's meal and the ritual of the anointing of the *zurrayâtum* pots[32] on occasion of the "*siḫirtum* of the temples of the gods" at Mari. A monthly account of rations of oil, almost probably refers to the same circumstance, with complementary information, since it mentions "4 wailing women of the king".[33] The motivation of this *siḫirtum* is not apparent.[34]

Some weeks later, another administrative text, dated 18/xi/ZL 1, mentions dancers and singers of the "*siḫirtum* of the city".[35] Also for this record, there is complementary information in a monthly account of rations of oil.[36] Clearly, the circumambulation was part of Ištar's traditional festival which was held for three days at Der. During the first years of his kingdom, frequently Zimri-Lim participated in the Der festival, in ZL 0, ZL 1 and ZL 3.[37] In ZL 1 its highlight was "une procession importante autours des murs de la ville de Dêr",[38] and this circumambulation was characterised by its exceptional guests, his mother, Adduduri, and the king of Sapiratum, Simaḫ-ilane.[39]

ZL 6. A long journey of a divine image, recorded in a Mari letter, could be dated to this year.[40] Zimri-Lim had invited Huziri, king of Hazzikkanum, to come to Mari to participate in a festival. In his response,[41] Huziri writes that the Lady-of-Nagar is traveling inside the country of Apum. He adds details regarding the stops along this journey, but he does not say why the goddess is making this journey. Michael Guichard suggests, however, that: "la déesse pouvait sortir de sa ville pour accomplir des missions particulières comme celle de consacrer des frontières pour les rendre inviolables ... Il peut aussi bien s'agir d'un voyage ponctuel qui marque l'instauration de la paix dans l'Ida-Maraṣ".[42]

In one of the most interesting letters from Tell Leilan, written about 20 years after Ḫuziri's, Ea-malik, most likely a prince of Kaḫat, writes to the king of the country of Apum, Til-abnû: "from this day – fourteen days hence – the goddess (Bēlet-Nagar) will leave her house and the boundary markers will be (re)arranged. And the face of the goddess will be set towards the town Alā".[43] Ea-malik's letter shows that a trip of the Lady-of-Nagar could have to do with setting up boundary markers for estates or villages. This is the oldest attestation of the term *pulukkum* as "boundary marker, boundary stone, boundary".

Later, in Middle Babylonian, Middle Assyrian, Neo Babylonian and Neo Assyrian texts, *pulukkum* is said of fields,

of countries and lands, of city walls and of temples. In fact, *pulukkum* is a synonym of *kudurru*, "boundary stone".[44]

As noted by Jesper Eidem and Jack Sasson, the Mari and Šeḫna letters may be compared. In such a case, the circumambulation of the Lady-of-Nagar, implied by the use of the verb *saḫārum* in the Mari letter, could have the same practical intent of the Šeḫna letter: to consacrate the borders, perhaps with boundary stones.

Three further mentions of circumambulations in Old Babylonian texts deal with different issues.

In a letter written to his king Zimri-Lim,[45] the Mari functionary Abimekim gives an account of the investigation into the dissappearance of five oxen, after the sacrifices that were made to the goddess Deritum. The investigation took the form of a religious procession of the symbols of the city god Itur-Mer. The term used to describe this procession was *ú-sa-aḫ-ḫi-ru*, a derivative form of the verb *saḫārum*, showing that this procession was a circumambulation. Thanks to the moving of the symbols of the god, the investigation was rendered a success when, on the fourth day of the procession, the meat and hide of two oxen were found in the home of one Sumu-Hadu.

This text is reminiscent of another[46] found at Tell-Sifr (ancient Kutalla, a few kilometers east of Larsa), which deal with a dispute over the ownership of a field. The owner of the field takes his case to the judge of Larsa and in the presence of the mayor of Kutalla and the city elders, circles the field carrying a bronze axe symbolising Lugal-kisunna, city god of Kutalla,[47] confirming his ownership of the field. According to Charpin,[48] "la procédure suivie relève des conduites religieuses traditionnelles: circumambulation avec manipulation du symbole divin représentant la divinité poliade". A form of the verb *saḫārum* (kiri$_6$ *is-ḫu-ur-ma*) is used in this case as well.

Records of circumambulations (nígin) of fields and orchards are already attested at the end of the 3rd millennium in Sumerian administrative texts from Girsu and Umma.[49]

5. The most ancient textual attestations of ritual activities that include a circumambulation could be present in Ebla administrative texts (24th century BC). The many mentions of the šu-mu-nígin of the god ^{d}*ʾA$_5$-da-bal* can not be discussed in detail here,[50] but a few remarks about them may be put forward.

The Ebla Sumerogram šu-mu-nígin certainly refers to a verb of motion implying a circular path, but its Eblaite equivalent, attested in the Ebla Bilingual List, is still not completely clear. Possibilities include comparison with Akkadian verbs such as *târum*, "to return, to come back", or *dâlum*, "to wander around something".[51] The latter interpretation seems more likely in my opinion, and for šu-mu-nígin an Eblaite noun *dawlum* could be suggested.

Of special interest are two Ebla administrative texts[52] which at first mention 39 toponyms and then end with the following colophon: 1 u$_4$ mu-DU / 2 u$_4$ *i-ti-bù* / uru^{ki}-uru^{ki} / šu-mu-nígin / ^{d}*ʾA$_5$-da-bal*^{l}(KUL). The toponyms are small villages (the first one, however, is *Lu-ba-an*^{ki}, one of the main seats of the cult of ^{d}*ʾA$_5$-da-bal*, certainly not far from Ebla). Their precise location is uncertain (as it is known, some scholars think that they were in the Orontes River Valley, but this topic cannot be dealt with here). The colophon, on the other hand, remains only partially understood.[53]

We can say that these two parallel texts add an interesting point to the šu-mu-nígin of ^{d}*ʾA$_5$-da-bal* contrapposing mu-DU with *i-ti-bù*. The structure of the sentence suggests that these two terms are antonyms. It can be proposed that mu-DU does not indicate an "income (mu-túm)", as in many other Ebla administrative texts, but rather that it represents a form of the Eblaite verb "to enter (mu-DU)", like in some chancery texts.[54] The term *i-ti-bù* should have a meaning opposite to that of mu-DU and therefore it may be a form *yitbû* from < ***yitbiʿū* of the Eblaite verb *tabāʿum*, corresponding to Akkadian *tebû*(*m*)[55] "to get up, arise, set out", contextually in the sense "to leave in procession (said of gods and divine symbols)". In this way, mu-DU represents the bringing of the divine statue into a settlement while *i-ti-bù* represents the bringing of the divine statue outside a settlement, both the movements being parts of a unique procession, actually a circumambulation šu-mu-nígin. Accordingly, the colophon of the these two Ebla administrative texts can be translated as: "The first day they enter, the second day they leave the settlements of the circumambulation of the god ^{d}*ʾA$_5$-da-bal*".

An additional indication that the above-mentioned šu-mu-nígin was a circumambulation, should be found in an Eblaite letter published by Pelio Fronzaroli. Reference is made of a lamentation rite called "tears" or "cry" (ér),[56] which may actually refer to this journey honoring the statue of the god Hadda-baʿal.

As we have seen, laments (with musical accompaniment) are among the main connotative features of the Syro-Mesopotamian circumambulations, together with their strong connections with the kingship, the use of the spaces inside and outside the temples, the relevance of the perimeters of buildings and city walls, the exploitation of the dichotomy political capital *vs.* religious center of the countryside, runs and other athletic performances.[57]

Acknowledgement

This paper has the limited aim of gathering the attestations of circumabulation rites in the cuneiform sources from Mesopotamia and Syria, with no pretention of exhaustivity; a further study is required in order to place them, with possible other attestations of these kinds of rites in the Hattuša materials, into a broader religious and historical perspective. I wish to thank Stefania Mazzoni who invited me to present at the 8th ICAANE in Warsaw a paper, with complementary observations to her "Open spaces around the temples and their ritual use: archaeological evidence from the Bronze and Iron Age Levant", and Nicola Laneri, organizer of the Workshop "Defining the Sacred: Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion in the Near East". I also thank Marco Bonechi, who read my manuscript and gave various insights.

Notes

1 Pongratz-Leisten 2006–2008, 99, 101.

2 See Steinkeller 2010, 382 (mu Šul-gi lugal-e Úrim^{ki}-ta Nibru^{ki}-šè šu in-/i-nígin).

3 For the *Sitz im Leben* of this Šulgi's exploit, including its historical concreteness, see the discussion of *Šulgi A* ll. 40–78 in Steinkeller 2010, 380-382, (Nibru^{ki}-ta sig$_4$ Úrim^{ki}-ma-šè / danna 1-gim šu-nigin-ta šag$_4$-mu ha-ma-ab-dug$_4$ ... ^{d}Utu á-dam-ma ud dagal-la / É-kiš-nu-gál-šè ha-ba-ku$_4$-re-en ... ^{d}Nin-ninna$_2^{mušen}$ súr-dù^{musen}-gim ha-ba-zi-ge-en / Nibru^{ki}-šè a-la-gá ha-ba-gur-re-en ... ^{d}Utu é-a-ni-šè igi ì-ĝa-gá-dè / kaskal 15 danna-àm šu hu-mu-nigin / sag-ur-sag-mu-ne igi hu-mu-un-du$_8$-uš-àm / ud 1-a Nibru^{ki} Úrim^{ki}-ma èš-èš-bi hu-mu-ak).

4 TCTI 1 796, MVN 2 143, HLC 2 23 and possibly also DAS 240. See the discussions in Sallaberger 1993, 297, Heimpel 1998, 13–16, and Gabbay 2013, 235ff.

5 As for the run as an element characterizing other circumambulations see below n. 39 and also above *Šulgi A*.

6 Heimpel 1998, 16.

7 Gabbay 2013, 238 and 239 ("the daily course of the sun as perceived in ancient Mesopotamian thought, rising in the east and reaching the west in the evening, and then at night making its journey in the netherworld from west to east, rising again at the east on the next morning. If this resemblance is correct and not coincidental, the course of the circumambulation had a cosmic aspect to it, the god leaving and returning to his temple mirroring the setting and rising of the sun", and "it is possible that the procession westward outside the city took place in the evening and the return to the city eastward occurred at sunrise, as in ritual texts of the first millennium B.C.E. [...], thereby mirroring the cosmic journey of the sun not only geographically but temporally as well"). On the daily journey of the Sun-god see Alaura - Bonechi 2012, with literature.

8 TU 41 (AO 6460), see Linssen 2004, 245ff. ("A nocturnal festival in the Rēš-temple") and 122f.

9 Linssen 2004, 248, obv. 33–34.

10 Linssen 2004, 246 and 248, rev. 10–11: ^{d}MES.SAG.UNUG^{KI} *ina pa-ni-šú* ^{d}PAP.SUKKAL ^{d}NUSKU / *ù* ^{d}ARA *it-ti-šú* GIN-*ak*.MEŠ-*ma* É NIGIN-*ú* ("Then, with Messagunug at the head, Papsukkal, Nusku and Usmû will go with him circling the temple").

11 Pongratz-Leisten 2006–2008, 101, adding that "the circumambulation with torches such as described in Gudea's building hymn, can be seen primarly functioning as an exorcism (Sallaberger 1993/I 240f.)".

12 TU 42 (AO 7439 + AO 8648 + AO 8649), see Linssen 2004, 238ff.

13 Linssen 2004, 240, 242, rev. 24'-26': DINGIR.MEŠ *gab-bi* KU$_4$.MEŠ-wa *ina* KISAL É *a-ki-tu*$_4$ *ina pa-ni-šú* GUB-za *šid-di* GADA NIGIN.MEŠ-šú-[(nu(?))]/$^{[lú]}$KUR.GAR.RA ^{lú}UR.MUNUS *šá til-le-e* ^{d}*Na-ru-du rak-su ki-ma mah-ri-i* TA ˹2,30' / [*a*-]*na* XV NIGIN-*šú-nu-tú* ("All the (other) gods will enter and stand before her in the courtyard of the *akītu*-temple. A linen curtain will encircle th[em]. The *kurgarrû*-actor and the *assinnu*-singer, who are girt with the *tillû*-uniform of Narudu, will circle around them (1. 26'), as before, from 1e[ft]/to right)"). See also below n. 39.

14 LKU 51, see Beaulieu 2003, 373–377.

15 Beaulieu 2003, 373 and 376, obv. 22'–23': ˊ^{d}ˋ*na-na-a i-tib-bi-ma a-na* É *te-rit ir-ru-ub-ma il-*˹*lak-ku*˺ [o o o] / ˹É˺.GE$_6$:˹PÀR˺.IMIN.BI *i-lam-ma-am-ma a-na* MIN.EŠ *šá* ^{d}GAŠAN *šá* UNUG^{ki} ("Nanaya proceeds and enters the temple of omens and goes [o o o]; she circumambulates the Egipariminbi and tak[es a seat] to the left of the Lady-of-Uruk").

16 Beaulieu 2003, 375 and 377, rev. 29'–30': [0] *šab* ^{lú}GUB.BA 3-*šú it-ti-šú i-lam-ma-a*[ʾ A].˹MEŠ˺ [ŠU.MIN] ˹*i-nam*˺-*ši i-tib-bi* [o o o] / [o o o] 3-*šú* ^{lú}GUB.BA *it-ti-šú i-lam-*[*ma-a*] ʾ A.MEŠ ŠU.MIN *i-*˹*nam-ši i-tib*!˺-[o o o] ("[o] x; the ecstatic circumambulates three times with(?) her, carries the water basin (and) proceeds [o o o], [o o o] three times the ecstatic circumambulates with(?) her, carries the water basin (and) pro[ceeds o o o]"). See also Stökl 2012, 57.

17 See Livingstone 1989, 86, text 34, 67: *ù* ^{d}*sak-ku-ku-tú ša* TA* URU *ta-lab-ba-an-ni ba-ki-su ši-i* TA* URU *ta-la-bi-a*. Other translations are: "Die Sakkukutu, die um die Stadt herumläuft, ist die Klagefrau für ihn, um die Stadt läuft sie herum." (von Soden 1955, 139); "And the Sakkukutu that surround the outside of the city: that is his mourning promenade that goes around outside the city" (Frymer-Kensky 1983, 136), "And Sakkukutu, who goes round the city. She is his wailing woman an goes round the city" (Livingstone 1986, 242f.). With reference to the Ur III texts discussed by Sallaberger 1993, 282, Livingstone 1996, 310 remarks that "'Klageumzug' for Ningiszida around the city (uru nigin.a) is an early forerunner of an episode in the Marduk Ordeal, SAA III p. 66, 1. 86, where *Sakkukutu* is interpreted as Marduk's wailing women circumambulating the city".

18 In Akkadian this noun *siḫirtu*(*m*), OAkk *saḫartum*, corresponding to Sum. nigin, means "Umkreis, Umgebung, Gesamtheit" (*AHw*, 1040), "circumference, perimeter, (in adverbial use) around; entirety" (*CAD* S, 235–237); "circumference; surroundings; area, district; entirety" (*CDA*^{2}, 322). When used in reference to a circumambulation, *siḫirtum* should have the sense "path made along a perimeter".

19 The general reconstruction of the history of Mari under its last king is found in Charpin and Ziegler 2003, 169ff.

20 Charpin and Zigler 2003, 178; see also Durand 2008, 255 ("le premier acte religieux de Zimrî-Lîm dans sa nouvelle capitale").

21 Dossin 1950:43f., ll. 27–31: šunigin 87 udu-ḫá / *ša sí-ḫi-ir-ti* / é dingir-meš / sískur-re / *i-na ma-ri*^{ki}.

22 Durand 2008, 256.

23 The meaning of *siḫirtum* in this text, debated for a long time, is crucial to the understanding of the Mari circumambulation rites. The editor of the "Pantheon de Mari" translated the term as "totalité des temples de Mari", adding that "la rédaction du document a suivi un certain ordre topographique" (Dossin 1950, 45f.). Later, the connotation of a round trip is evident in Lambert 1985, 525, "87 sheep of the round/totality (*sí-ḫi-ir-ti*) of the temples of the gods, offerings (sískur.re = *niqûm*)" ... this may be a list of all the gods ... *siḫirtum* could conceivably mean 'round' like the English delivery man's 'round', the route he takes to deliver his goods to the various places, ending the 'round' where he began". Jean-Marie Durand discussed the Mari *siḫirtum* in various works: in 1987, 90 and n. 155, he observed that the precise meaning of *siḫirtum* is "ensemble parcouru" and translated "succession des temples des Dieux"; in Durand-Guichard 1997, 27, he translated "le parcours des temples"; in 2005, 29–30, he speaks of a "tour rituel de tous les lieux saints",

adding: "s'il ne désigne ... pas la circumambulation autour d'une idole [*sihirtum*] pourrait representer la série des stations ... et la course qui emmenait les gens d'un lieu saint vers un autre" and wondering if the Mari *siḫirtum* rites have something in common with Mecca *ṭawāf*, indeed a pre-Islamic rite; in 2008, 255ff., he stated that "L'expression «le tour des temples» est à prendre au pied de la lettre, le roi se présentant devant chaque bâtiment sacré et y faisant ses dévotions aux divinités qui s'y trouvent. Cela permet de résoudre une autre difficulté du texte, souvent soulignée: il ne s'agit plus d'en expliquer l'ordre hiérarchique mais d'y rechercher un ordre géographique des temples, dans Mari et à ses alentours. ... les offrandes qui débutent au palais se poursuivent de temple en temples ... le texte énumérant les divinité selon un ordre qui révèle l'emplacement des principaux temples". According to Heimpel (1998, 16), this *siḫirtum* could refer to a procession in which the temples of the gods were circumambulated in succession, while, as we have seen, it refers to "le tour de tous les sanctuaires" for Charpin and Ziegler 2003, 178. On the Mari *siḫirtum* see also Jacquet 2011, 83 and Pappi 2012, 583f., 587.

24 See Charpin and Zigler 2003, 177.

25 Charpin and Zigler 2003, 178f. Zimri-Lim left Mari in 7/x/ZL 0 to go to Ḫišamta for political talks with the Benjaminite kings Yaggiḫ-Addu and Ḫardum, then he returned to Mari and lastly he left Mari to go to Terqa.

26 Charpin and Zigler 2003, 178f.; see also Durand 2008, 341.

27 M.18390 = *ARM* XXIII 264 (Lafont 1984, 256f., Lafont 1987, 381 and 384), lines 17–21: šunigin 33 udu-há / *ša sí-hi-ir-ti* / é dingir-meš sískur-re / *i-nu-ma* lugal *a-na ter-qa*^{ki} / *i-ru-bu*.

28 See Durand 1987, 90 n. 156 and Durand 2008, 264f. ("*sihirti bîtât ilâni*").

29 Durand 2008, 265.

30 See the map in Charpin - Zigler 2003, 177.

31 M.13158, see Duponchel 1997, 218, text 25: 1/2 *qa* ì-giš ˹*hi*˺*-il-ṣú* / *a-na pí-li-i* / nì-gub lugal / 5 su ì-giš / *a-na pa-ša-aš* / *zu-ra-ia-tim* / *i-nu-ma sí-hi-ir-ti* / é dingir-meš, "1/2 *qa* d'huile pressée pour les oeufs du repas du roi; 5 sicles d'huile pour l'onction des *zurayâtum* lors de la procession des temples". According to David Duponchel, *i-nu-ma sí-hi-ir-ti* / é dingir-meš "définit soit une procession, soit l'ensemble des temples".

32 On the pot *zurrāyum* see Guichard 2005, 333.

33 M.13183, see Duponchel 1997, 229ff., text 60 2–3: 1/2 <*qa*> 5 su ì-giš *a-na* 4 *ba-ku-ut* lugal / *ù pí-li lu-ur-mi-im*^{mušen}, "1/2 <*qa*> 5 sicles d'huile pour les 4 *bakûtum* du roi et les oeuf d'autruche". As for *bakkītum*, "wailing woman", see Douponchel 1997, 233, with literature ("S'il s'agit de la même dépense, il faut établir une connexion entre la tenue des rites-*zurayâtum* et l'onction de ces 4 pleureuses. Celles-ci devaient être présentes lors de la procession rituelle"), and CDA^2, 36.

34 Among the main political events of the precedent months there are Zimri-Lim's conquest of the Ḫabur Triangle city of Kaḫat, Bannum's death (month ix), a war against the Benjaminites with troubles in the South (at Yablya, in the Suḫum), and Zimri-Lim's diplomatic contacts with the powerful kings of Ešnunna and Babylon, Ibal-pi-El and Hammu-rabi, see Charpin and Ziegler 2003, 186–190.

35 M.11336, see Duponchel 1997, 238, text 74: 1/3 qa 5 su ì / *a-na pa-ša-aš hu-up-pu*(-)*um*$^{!}$*-me-ni* / lú-nar-meš *ša sí-hi-ir-ti* / *a-li-im* / *ù ia-ri-ib-*^{d}IM / ^{lú}*hu-pí-i* / *i-na di-ir*^{ki}, "1/3 *qa* 5 sicles d'huile pour oindre les *maîtres*-baladins-*ḫuppûm*, les musiciens qui (font le) tour de la ville et Yarîb-Addu, le baladin-*ḫuppûm*; à Dêr".

36 M.5476+M.13233, see Duponchel 1997, 244f., text 95, 1'–10': [*m*]*a-*˹*a*˺*-a-li-*˹*im*˺ *ù* ˹*ha-ar-ga-lim*˺ / [šu-ti-a] *íg-mi-lim* / [0,0.1 5 su ì-giš *a*]*-na pa-ša-aš* ^{giš}*ma-ga-ri ša* giš-gigir / [*x qa* ì-giš] *a-na ša-an-nu-ra-tim ša ma-ha-ar* ^{d}*de-ri-tim ša* $u_4^!$ 3-kam / [*x qa* ì-gi]š *a-na pa-ša-aš* lú *ṣí-id-di* / [1/2 *qa* ì-gi]š *a-na ša-ka-an zi-mi ša* 4 túg *ia-am-ha-di-i*$^{!}$ / [*i-na*] *di-ir*^{ki} / [*x qa* ì-gi]š *a-na pa-ša-aš bu-ṣi-ni ša gi-zi-le-e* / [*ša ma-ha-ar h*]*u-up-pí-i i-nu-ma sà-ka-nim* / [*ia-ri-ib-*^{d}]IM *še-pi-ir-šu i-pu-šu*, "... pour une litière et un grand anneau; reçu par Igmilum; 15 sicles d'huile pour oindre les roues du char; *x qa* d'huile pour les lampes (qui ont brûlé) devant Dêritum, pendant 3 jours; *x qa* d'huile pour oindre le *lutteur*; 1/2 *qa* d'huile pour redonner du lustre à 4 étoffes du Yamhad; à Dêr; *x qa* d'huile pour oindre les mèches des torches en roseaux qui (ont brûlé) devant les baladins-*huppûm* lorsque, dans le *sakkannum*, Yarîb-Addu a accompli son travail".

37 See Charpin and Ziegler, 2003, 247, and, as for ZL 3, 195 n. 204.

38 Duponchel 1997, 214f. See also Charpin and Ziegler, 2003, 189f.

39 As for the political relations between Simaḫ-ilane and Zimri-Lim at the end of ZL 1, see Duponchel 1997, 212–215, Guichard 2002, 134ff. and Charpin and Ziegler, 2003, 189f., with literature. Another interesting feature of this circumambulation is the presence of dancers, singers and wrestlers among the members of the ceremonies; the participation of the cultic performers such as the *kurgarrû*-actor and the *assinnu*-singer in the Seleucid Uruk circumambulation of the Ištar festival TU 42 has been mentioned above, § 3. It seems that Near Eastern circumambulations were connotated by artistic and athletic performances: in the Mari "Rituel d'Eštar" (A.3165, see Durand and Guichard 1997, 52ff.), the passage in iii 6–10 has been translated in Ziegler 2007, 61, as "Les lamentateurs sortiront pour [*accueillir*] la course et il chanteront (le chant) «*Igittendibana*». Lorsque la course aura pénétré dand le temple de la déesse, ils chanteront le chant d'ac[ueil] «*An nuwaše*»" (*a-n*[*a li*]*-is-m*[*i ma-ha-ri-im*] / *ka-lu-ú uṣ*(ŠE.RI)*-ṣ*[*ú-ma* (o o)] / i-gi-it-te-en-di-ba-n[a$^{?}$]/n[u$^{?}$] / *i-za-am-mu-ru* / *iš-tu li-is-mu a-na* ˹é˺ *il-*[*tim*] / *i-te-er-ba-am* / AN-nu-wa-še *še-ra-am ša ma-h*[*a-ri-im*] / *i-za-am-mu-ru*). According to Durand and Guichard 1997, 50, this passage concerns "l'arrivée d'une bande qui avait accompli une circumambulation (la *sihirtum*) non précisée dans le palais, la ville ou la campagne. Les coureurs sont accueillis par un chant sumérien de sens et d'origine non déterminables. L'arrivée de la course est un moment très fort qui coïncide avec la fin du lamento-balag". As for *li-is-mu da-an-nu-tum-ma* in the Old Babylonian literary text "Ištar-Louvre", i 55, see Groneberg 1997, 44f. (86) and 146-148, Durand and Guichard 1997, 50 and n. 193, Groneberg 2005, 16 and Löhnert 2008, 427f.

40 Charpin – Zigler 2003, 209.

41 A.221 see Guichard 1994, 237, text 122, 5–8: ^{d}nin [*n*]*a-ga-ar ... i-na lib-bi ma-a-tim ís-sa-aḫ-ḫu-ur*, "Mais à présent la Dame de Nagar, ... «va accomplir son tour» à l'intérieur du pays" (Guichard 1994, 239).

42 Guichard 1994, 271.

43 L.87-1317, 17-21: *iš-tu* u_4*-mi-im an-ni-im a-na* u_4-14-kam / ^{d}*il-tum iš-tu* é-*ša uṣ-ṣe-em-ma* / *pu-ul-lu-uk-ka-tum iš-ša-ak-ka-na* / *ù pa-an* ^{d}*il-tim a-na* uru *a-la-a*^{ki} / *iš-ša-ak-ka-na* (Sasson 1997, 487–488, 476ff.; Eidem 2008, 326; 2011: 32f. and 99f.).

44 See Charpin 2002, 187.

45 A.2926 (= ARM XXVI/2 458), 10-12: *ḫa-al-qú i-na li-*[*ib-bi*] *a-lim*^{ki} / ^{d}*i-túr-me-er* / *ú-sa-aḫ-ḫi-ru-ú-ma*, see Lackenbacher 1988, 383; Heimpel 2003, 376f. and http://www.archibab.fr.

46 TS 71, 16-19: ^{l}*i-din-*^{d}en-líl *pa-aš-ta ša* ^{d}lugal-ki-sun$_5$-na / *in-na-ši-im-ma* / kiri$_6$ *is-ḫu-ur-ma* / *ú-bi-ir-ma i-qí*, see Charpin 1980, 188, 254, and Charpin 1982, 14f.

47 On Lugal-kisunna see Lambert 1987–1990.

48 Charpin 1982, 15.

49 As for the expressions a-šà a-gàr nígin and ^{giš}kiri$_6$ nígin see Sallaberger 1993, 269 and 302, and Cavigneaux – al-Rawi 2002, 3 and nn. 4–6 (suggesting that the expression (a-šà/a-gàr) nígin "to go around (fields)", references an apotropaic circumambulation, possibly a public ritual involving the entire community similar to the *Ambarvalia* of ancient Rome, during which processions took place around fields to request a good harvest).

50 The materials have been surveyed and discussed in Archi 2002, 26ff. and Archi 2010, 36. See also M. V. Tonietti, *L'offerta delle carni e l'itinerario cultuale del dio Hadda-baʿal di Luban*, in preparation (Milano and Tonietti 2012, 81).

51 As for LL 509, šu-mu-nígin = *da-lum*, see the discussions in Conti 1990, 144 (a form of *târum*, "/tawrum/, 'ritorno'"), and Sallaberger 2003, 621 and n. 23, with literature (a form of *dâlum*, "Prozession", in the sense of "Rundreise"; Sallaberger also takes into account LL 629, á-nígin = *da-wa-lum*, *da-lum*). Sallaberger's interpretation is considered more probable in Milano - Tonietti 2012, 41 and n. 37 ("viaggio cultuale (šu-mu-nígin) [...] il termine indica, dunque, un percorso circolare con partenza e ritorno nel medesimo luogo"). According to Archi 2002, 27, "Several passages from administrative documents [...] require the meaning 'return' for šu-mu-nígin, while the basic meaning of the Semitic verb should be 'to wander around, to move in circles', which agrees with Sumerian nígin". Cf. Pomponio and Xella 1984, 26, n. 8, and 1997, 259; Fronzaroli 1997, 5; Catagnoti and Fronzaroli 2010, 114–115.

52 TM.75.G.2377 and TM.75.G.2379, see Archi 1979.

53 Archi 1979, 107, Archi 1995, 8, n. 5 ("journey, procession (return) of the god I.") and Archi 2002, 27 ("first day: delivery/ies; second day: ... Towns of the god NIdabal's journey"). See also Ristvet 2011, 11f.

54 See *ARET* XI, 161f. and *ARET* XIII, 284.

55 See the attestations in *CAD*, T, p. 306 ff., particularly § 3., p. 311, d).

56 TM.76.G.86, v. IV 11-V 3: *wa* / *si-in* / ^{d}*ʾA$_5$-da-bal*^{l}(KUL) / ér (Fronzaroli 1997, 11 and 19). On this text see Milano and Tonietti 2012, 41f.

57 See also Ragavan 2013, 207: "Both the playing of the šem$_3$-instrument and the circumambulation (niĝin) of temples are well attested in connection with the performance of laments (er$_2$)". It remains to be evaluated whether circumambulations around aniconic religious structures such as betyles did occur in the Ancient Near East (cf. Castel 2011, 85f., as for the Tell Rawda betyl discovered in 2005: "Étant donné l'encastrement de la pierre dans une niche, les rites de circumambulation et de course, particulièrement importants encore aujourd'hui dans les actes rituels autour de la Ka'ba, sont impossibles à al-Rawda").

Bibliography

Alaura, S. and Bonechi, M. (2012) Il carro del dio del sole nei testi cuneiformi dell'Età del Bronzo, *SMEA* 54, 5–115.

Archi, A. (1979) Diffusione del culto di ^{D}NI-*da-kul*, *Studi Eblaiti* 1, 105–113. Roma.

Archi A. (1995) Lists of Tools. In M. Dietrich and O. Loretz (eds) *Vom Alten Orient zum Alten Testament. Festschrift für Wolfram Freiherrn von Soden zum 85. Geburstag am 19. Juni 1993*, 7–10. Alter Orient und Altes Testament 240, Münster, Ugarit-Verlag.

Archi, A. (2002) ŠEŠ-II-IB: A Religious Confraternity. In C. H. Gordon and G. A. Rendsburg (eds) *Eblaitica: Essays on the Ebla Archives and Eblaite Language*, Vol. 4, 23–55. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns.

Archi, A. (2010) Hamath, Niya and Tunip in the 3rd Millennium B.C. According to the Ebla Documents, *SMEA* 52, 33–39.

Beaulieu, P.-A. (2003) *The Pantheon of Uruk during the Neo-Babylonian Period*, *Cuneiform Monographs* 23. Leiden and Boston, Brill-Styx.

Castel, C. (2011) Al-Rawda et le culte des pierres dressées en Syrie à l'âge du Bronze. In T. Steimer-Herbet (ed.) *Pierres levées, stèles anthropomorphes et dolmens/Standing stones, anthropomorphic stelae and dolmens. Actes du colloque international d'Amman 15-17 juin 2007*, 69–88. British Archaeological Report S2317. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Catagnoti, A. and Fronzaroli, F. (2010) *Testi di cancelleria: il re e i funzionari, I (Archivio L.2769)*, *ARET* XVI, Roma.

Cavigneaux, A. and al-Rawi, F. (2002) Liturgies exorcistiques agraires (Textes de Tell Haddad IX), *ZA* 92, 1–59.

Charpin, D. (1980) *Archives familiales et proprieté privée en Babylonie ancienne: Étude des documents de «Tell Sifr»*, Genève, Librairie Droz.

Charpin, D. (1982) Une famille de marchands babyloniens à l'époque d'Hammurabi, *Journal des Savants* 1982–83, 3–17.

Charpin, D. (2002) La commémoration d'actes juridiques: à propos des *kudurru*s babyloniens, *Revue d'Assyriologie* 96, 169–191.

Charpin, D. and Ziegler, N. (2003) *Mari et le Proche-Orient à l'époque amorrite. Essai d'histoire politique*, *Florilegium Marianum* V, *Mémoires de N.A.B.U.* 6, Paris, SEPOA.

Conti, G. (1990) *Il sillabario della quarta fonte della lista lessicale bilingue eblaita*, in Pelio Fronzaroli (ed.) *Miscellanea eblaitica*, 3, *Quaderni di Semitistica*, 17, Firenze, Università di Firenze, Dipartimento di Linguistica.

Dossin, G. (1950) Le panthéon de Mari, *Studia Mariana*, 41–50. *DMOA* 4, Leiden.

Duponchel, D. (1997) Les comptes d'huile du Palais de Mari datés de l'année de Kahat. In D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand (eds) *Florilegium marianum III. Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Marie-Thérèse Barrelet*, *Mémoires de N.A.B.U.* 4, 201–262. Paris, SEPOA.

Durand, J.-M. (1987) L'organisation de l'espace dans le palais de Mari: le témoignage des textes. In E. Lévy (ed.) *Le système palatial en orient, en Gréce et à Rome*, 39–110. Leiden, Brill.

Durand, J.-M. (2005) *Le culte des pierres et les monumets commémoratifs en Syrie amorrite*, *Florilegium marianum VIII, Mémoires de N.A.B.U.* 9. Paris, SEPOA.

Durand, J.-M. (2008) La religion amorrite en Syrie à l'époque des archives de Mari. In G. del Olmo Lete (ed.), *Mythologie et religion des Sémites occidentaux. OLA* 162, 161–703.

Durand, J.-M. and Guichard, M. (1997) Les rituels de Mari. In D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand (eds) *Florilegium marianum III, Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Marie-Thérèse Barrelet*, *Mémoires de N.A.B.U.* 4, 19–78. Paris, SEPOA.

Eidem, J. (2008) Old Assyrian Trade in Northern Syria the Evidence from Tell Leilan. In J. G. Dercksen (ed.) *Anatolia and the Jazira during the Old Assyrian period*, 31–41. *PIHANS* 111. Leiden, The Netherlands Institute for the Near East.

Eidem, J. (2011) *The Royal Archives from Tell Leilan. Old Babylonian Letters and Treaties from Lower Town Palace East*, *PIHANS* 117. Leiden, The Netherlands Institute for the Near East.

Fronzaroli, P. (1997) Divinazione a Ebla (TM.75.G.86). In P. Fronzaroli (ed.) *Miscellanea Eblaitica* 4, *Quaderni di Semitistica* 19, 1–21, Firenze, Dipartimento di Linguistica, Università di Firenze.

Frymer-Kensky, T. (1983) The Tribulations of Marduk. The So-Called "Marduk Ordeal Text", *JAOS* 103, 131–141.

Gabbay, U. (2013) "We Are Going to the House in Prayer": Theology, Cultic Topography, and Cosmology in the Emesal Prayers of Ancient Mesopotamia. In D. Ragavan (ed.) *Heaven on Earth. Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World*, 223–243, *OIS* 9.

Groneberg, B. (1997) *Lob der Ištar*, *Cuneiform Monographs* 8. Maastricht, Brill: Styx.

Groneberg, B. (2005) Ištar Louvre und Ištar Bagdad in B. Groneberg, Lob der Ištar. CM 8. Groningen 1997, *N.A.B.U.* 2005/15, 15–18. Paris.

Guichard, M. (1994) Au pays de la dame de Nagar. In D. Charpin and J.-M. Durand (eds) *Florilegium marianum II, Recueil d'études à la mémoire de Maurice Birot*, *Mémoires de N.A.B.U.* 3, 235–272. Paris, SEPOA.

Guichard, M. (2002) "Les relations diplomatiques entre Ibal-pi-El II et Zimri-Lim: deux étapes vers la discorde", *RA* 96, 109–142.

Guichard, M. (2005) La vaisselle de luxe des rois de Mari, *ARM* XXXI, Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

Heimpel, W. (1998) A Circumambulation Rite, *ASJ* 20, 13–16.

Heimpel, W. (2003) *Letters to the King of Mari. A New Translation, with Historical Introduction, Notes, and Commentary*, Mesopotamian Civilizations 12. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns.

Jacquet, A. (2011), *Documents relatifs aux dépeuses pour le culte*, *Florilegium Marianum* 12, *Mémoires de N.A.B.U.* 13. Paris, SEPOA.

Lackhenbacher, S. (1988) Les lettres d'Abimekim. In D. Charpin, F. Joannès, S. Lackenbacher and B. Lafont, *AEM* I/2, *ARM* XXVI, 371–399. Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

Lafont, B. (1984) Archives administratifs de Mari 1, *ARM* XXIII, 227–326. Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

Lafont, B. (1987) Copies cunéiformes d'ARMT XXIII-3, *MARI* 5, 381–408.

Lambert, W. G. (1985) The Pantheon of Mari, *MARI* 4, 525–539.

Lambert, W. G. (1987–1990) Lugal-kisunna, *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 7, 146–147.

Linssen, M. J. H. (2004) *The Cults of Uruk and Babylon: the Temple Ritual as Evidence for Hellenistic Cult Practices*, Cuneiform Monographs 25. Leiden-Boston, Brill: Styx.

Livingstone, A. (1986) *Mystical and Mythological Explanatory Works of Assyrian and Babylonians Scholars*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Livingstone, A. (1989) *Court Poetry and Literary Miscellanea*, SAA III. Helsinki, Eisenbrauns.

Livingstone, A. (1996) Review of Sallaberger, *JSS* 41, 306–310.

Löhnert, A. (2008) Scribes and Singers of Emesal Lamentations in Ancient Mesopotamia in the Second Millennium BCE. In E. Cingano and L. Milano (eds) *Papers on Ancient Literatures: Greece, Rome and the Near East, Proceedings of the "Advanced Seminar in the Humanities" Venice International University 2004–2005*, 421–447. Padova, S.A.R.G.O.N., Editrice e Libreria.

Milano, L. and Tonietti, M. V. (2012) Cerimonialità alimentare ad Ebla. Offerte, pasti, sacrifici. In L. Milano (ed.) *Mangiare divinamente. Pratiche e simbologie alimentari nell'antico Oriente*, *Eothen* 20, 33–81. Firenze, LoGisma.

Pappi, C. (2012) Religion and Politics at the Divine Table: The Cultic Travels of Zimrī-Līm. In G. Wilhelm (ed.) *Organization, Representation,and Symbols of Power in the Ancient Near East*, Proceedings of the 54th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationaleat Würzburg 20–25 July 2008, 579–590. Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns.

Pomponio, F. and Xella, P. (1984), Ricerche di lessico eblaita. I, *AfO* 31, 25–31.

Pomponio, F. and Xella, P. (1997) *Les dieux d'Ebla. Études analytique des divinités éblaïtes à l'époque des archives royales du IIIe millénaire*, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 245. Münster, Ugarit-Verlag.

Pongratz-Leisten, B. (2006–2008) Prozession(sstraße). *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 11, 98–103.

Ragavan, D. (2013) Entering Other Worlds: Gates, Rituals, and Cosmic Journeys in Sumerian Sources. In D. Ragavan (ed.), *Heaven on Earth. Temples, Ritual, and Cosmic Symbolism in the Ancient World*, *OIS* 9, 201–221, Chicago, The Oriental Institute.

Ristvet, L. (2011) Travel and the Making of North Mesopotamian Polities, *BASOR* 361, 1–31.

Sallaberger, W. (1993) *Der Kultische Kalender der Ur III-Zeit*, *UAVA* 7/1. Berlin and New York, De Gruyter.

Sallaberger, W. (2003) Nachrichten an den Palast von Ebla. Eine Deutung von níĝ-mul-(an). In P. Marrassini *et alii* (eds.), *Semitic and Assyriological Studies Presented to Pelio Fronzaroli by Pupils and Colleagues*, 600–625. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Sasson, J. M. (1997) The Vow of Mutiya, King of Shekhna. In G. D. Young, M. W. Chavalas and R. E. Averbeck (eds), *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons*, *Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour on His 80th Birthday*, 475–490, Bethesda, CDL Press.

Steinkeller, P. (2010), On the Location of the Town of Ur-Zababa and Dimat-Enlil and on the Course of the Arahtum. In J. Fincke (ed.), *Festschrift für Gernot Wilhelm anläßlich seines 65. Geburtstages am 28. Januar 2010*, 369–382. Dresden, ISLET Verlag.

Stökl, J. (2012) *Prophecy in the Ancient Near East. A Philological and Sociological Comparison.* Leiden-Boston, Brill.

von Soden, W. (1955) Gibt es ein Zeugnis dafür, daß die Babylonier an die Wiederauferstehung MärduksT geglaubt haben?, *ZA* 51, 131–166.

Ziegler, N. (2007) *Les musiciens et la musique d'après les archives de Mari*, *Florilegium Marianum* IX, *Mémoires de N.A.B.U.* 10. Paris, SEPOA.

12

A temple lifecycle: rituals of construction, restoration, and destruction of some ED Mesopotamian and Syrian sacred buildings

Licia Romano

Sacred buildings and Temples are par excellence places of ritual actions and, thus, contexts in which it is easier to find traces of religious activities. Nevertheless in this occasion I will try to shed light on those rituals related to the life of the sacred building itself, to its construction, restoration and destruction, analysing different examples from Mesopotamia and Syria dated to the 3rd millennium BC. The rituals including communal sharing of food and drinks will be highlighted thanks to their archaeological visibility. Among the examples, a particular attention will be given to the case of the Eblaic Temple of the Rock and to the ritual following its destruction.[1]

The edification of the Temple

The construction of a Temple was an extremely important act: it was the way for the king to provide and guarantee a house for its god, allowing him to be present inside his community.[2] This action, repeated during centuries by every king, was worth of being remembered not only in the year's names or in the official inscriptions, but also of being tied indissolubly to the same structure of the temple, inscribing the king's name, incised on an adequate support, inside foundations deposits realised in key points of the building. The most typical kind of deposit for the ED III to the UR III Period consisted, in fact, in a foundation nail, often inscribed and connected to stone pierced tables.[3]

Rituals concerning a sacred building should be traced since the first steps of its construction: the determination of its position[4] through mantic arts or on the basis of natural characteristic or astronomic observations, should have involved some ritualised acts. A particular attention for the place's choice and preparation is attested at Uruk and Khafaja. In the Mosaic Temple of Warka (Uruk III c), trough-like trenches were dug parallel to the partitions walls of some rooms. Alongside these trenches shards of four big pots were discovered, three of them containing also traces of food, fish-bones, birds and mammals.[5] Instead, for the foundation of the Khafaja Oval Temple, the soil, consisting in earlier debris and thus considered impure, was dug and removed for being substituted by pure sand, with no traces of potsherds or organic material.[6]

The beginning of edification and not only its end, were worth of being celebrated. It is plausible that a banquet was held during the ceremony of the first brick laying, as shown for the 4th and 3rd Millennium BC by some archaeological proofs. The first evidence of this practice is testified by a deposit in the proto-literate phase (Strata X) of Tepe Gawra: inside an external bench in the western corner of Room 1003 a Wide Flower pot and two other clay cups have been discovered.[7]

At Ur, instead, near the southern corner of the Neo-Babylonian *temenos*, Woolley unearthed some fragments of a wall dated to the ED. In three different points, under this structure and inside its foundation level, some pits have been discovered with vases filled with food remains.[8] Also in the Barbar Temple, discovered in Bahrein, different objects, among which various beakers, were unearthed walled inside the terrace at the base of the ED III Temple[9].

A detailed account of the ceremonies related to the beginning of the Temple Building can be found in the inscription of Gudea's Cylinders A and B.[10] The texts describe the complex ritual for the construction of the House of the god Ningirsu, a ritual performed during the last centuries of the 3rd millennium but conceivably founded on earlier lagashite traditions. It must be highlighted here the importance given by Gudea and the Lagash citizens to the purification of the city and of the place chosen for the construction of the temple. The purification was obtained through the use of fire and incense. Moreover, a particular ritual is described for the creation of the first brick: the king poured clear water into the brick mould and prepared the earth mixed with honey, ghee, precious oil, balsam and essences, then he put a basket near the mould.[11]

It is probable, as said, that a similar ritual took place also in the Lagash of the second half of the 3rd millennium BC. In fact, in the famous plaques portraying Urnanše with his family,[12] the king is represented in the act of carrying the brick basket and while celebrating the end of the works with a cup in his hand.[13]

It is here important to quote some ED seals often interpreted as representing the construction of a sacred building, similar to the Ziqqurat, associated to the consumption of a banquet by a human or sometimes by a divine character.[14] Nevertheless, the dimensions of the objects build up by the men, together with the usual presence of astral symbols such as the so-called *dieu-bateau*, seems to point instead towards an identification of the structure with an altar for offerings. The seals, thus, should represent not a ritual connected to the Ziqqurat edification but a celebration linked to a specific astral and calendric event.

Restoration, destruction and reconstruction of the Temple

Also the construction or reconstruction of specific features or parts of the temples was charged of a particular value, such as the realisation of altars or other structural elements, as perhaps testified by the Šara Temple at Tell Agrab, in the phase of the so-called *Earlier Building*. Here, inside the altar in M 14:15 and inside the closure of an earlier door, a deposit with beads, broken amulets and various cups, have been discovered: some of the vessels had a black substance inside, described by excavators as similar to charcoal but probably to be interpreted as food remains.[15]

In general, the reconstruction of a sacred building was an act of extreme importance: in the Mesopotamian history every king had to re-establish the original condition of the sanctuary of his god, according to the authentic project conceived by his deity.

During the reconstruction or restoration of a sacred building a particular attention was given to the preservation of the older furnishing that were kept inside pits, like for example the famous hoard of the Abu Temple in which the worshippers' statues were buried with extreme attention, thus preserving intact also the inlayed eyes.[16]

As seen, the place chosen for the construction of a Temple should be suitable to host the house of the god and, thus, it should be purified through passage rituals ratifying the new status of the area. This condition of purity had to be maintained during all the life stages of the building. It should be imagined that, if a sacred building underwent to destruction due to a natural or human event, probably every restoration or rebuilding should be preceded by new rituals aiming to re-establish the original integrity of the sacred place.

The Eblaic Temple of the Rock

A clear proof of this kind of practice is testified at Ebla in Syria, in the so-called Temple of the Rock. The sacred building was discovered by Paolo Matthiae in 2004 thanks to a geo-magnetic prospection, indicating the presence of limestone pebbles in the south-eastern part of the Lower Town.[17] The limestone pebbles were, in fact, used to seal the cella of the big Temple after the destruction due to the military activities of Sargon of Akkad.[18] The cella was completely excavated during the 2007 campaign. The pavement of the temple's main room was constituted by the rock surface. In the central part of the cella, towards the

Fig. 12.1: The Temple of the Rock from East (© MAIS).

Fig. 12.2: The Temple of the Rock (© MAIS).

west limit of the room, there was an elliptical cavity (L.9714) cut by three pits: P.9719, P. 9717, P.9713.

Of the three pits, P.9713, was sealed by stones of medium and big-size, while the other two pits were not closed, though the static capacity of the rock was quite precarious. P.9713, the only sealed pit, was clearly in connection with a cavity, running under the perimeter wall of the temple. Only P.9717 and P.9719 have been excavated due to security reasons.[19] The three pits in the middle of the cella were, according to P. Matthiae, water sources connected to the cult of the god worshipped inside the temple, in his opinion, the enigmatic KURA, well-know from the Ritual of the Royalty, whose sacred building was located near the KURA's Gate, the south-eastern gate of the city. The god KURA was a divinity of the El kind, associated thus to the water of the Abzu. On one hand the presence inside the cella of the Temple of the

Rock of three cavities probably connected to water canals running under the Tell surface, on the other hand the proximity of the Temple to the South eastern gate of the city undoubtedly result in an identification of the Temple of the Rock with the Holy House of Kura.

Chronological information about the Sacred building and its destruction come from the door between the vestibule and the cella: some pottery fragments of the Early Bronze IVA were discovered here together with the only burned remains of the destruction. The date, instead, of the cleaning of the cella and, thus, of its sealing is clarified by the pottery discovered inside the pits: they were filled, in fact, by numerous vases of medium dimensions of the well know Early Bronze IVB horizon. It is now clear that, before the reconstruction of the sacred building in the Early Bronze IVB, the temple and in particular its cella, the house of the god, was cleaned and sealed with fourteen courses of bricks and then with a thick layer of limestone pebbles.[20]

The cleaning of the cella was a ritual act of extreme importance, whose traces were preserved inside the Favissae dug into the rock in the middle of the room. The findings of the two excavated pits of the cella testify a complex ritual connected to the purification of the destroyed temple and to the sealing of the burned structure before the building of the new Temples HH4 and HH5.[21] I will analyse the stratigraphy of the two pits trying to clarify the complex purification ritual, starting with the description of the Favissa P.9719.

Favissa P.9719

The first filling level (level f) of P.9719 consisted of compact reddish-brown clay soil with limestone inclusions of medium dimensions, stones of large and medium size, fragments of burned mud-bricks and pottery sherds. The pottery found inside the level consisted of 11 drinking vessels, 2 jugs, 14 normal and 2 miniaturistic jars and 1 teapot. From the study of the pottery and the other findings, it is noteworthy that the presence of sherds of at least four cooking pots, basalt grindstones, a pestel and fragment of a human and of animal figurines (Table 12.1).

The second level (level 7g) consisted of a grey-brown clay-sandy soil, almost compact, with stones of small and medium size. Within this context were discovered 10 drinking vessels, 4 trilobate jugs, 14 jars, and 5 miniaturistic jars.

The third level (level 7h), a clay and grey compact soil, was very rich in pottery sherds. Among these were: 2 trilobate and 2 normal jugs, 1 strainer, 1 miniaturistic and 1 normal jar. Tthe presence of 47 beakers and 3 cups within this level should be highlighted.

The fourth level (level 7l), a light brown, quite friable soil, with rock flakes of small and medium dimensions, contained fewer pottery sherds than the other levels: only 1 Trilobate jug, 1 normal and 2 minaturistic jars.

The last level (level 7m) of the filling was a grey compact and grained soil. Five drinking vessels, 1 trilobate and 1 normal jug, 12 jars, 4 miniaturistic jars and 1 incense burner were discovered scattered in the soil. Moreover we found a steatite bead and a broken animal figurine.

Favissa P.9717

The first filling level (Level 7e) consisted of a light brown sandy and friable soil with pottery fragments and animal bones. Some stones were placed near the walls of the pit next to the enlargement of the rock cavity (Table 12.2).

The second and last level (Level 7i) was filled by a clay, grey soil. In the lower part of the pit a sort of circle of stone was set down.

Analysis of the Two Favissae

From the comparison of the sections of the two pits it is possible to highlight some details of the ritual celebrated.

The first levels of the two pits contained what we can define the refuse, the garbage of the ritual. P.9719 was sealed with the material used for the preparation of the banquet: the grinding-stones and the pestel, that we can suppose were used to crush some foods during the preparation, and some cooking pots, the only shards of this kind found inside both pits. The soil in which the pottery and the objects were discarded was not pure but mixed to bricks and stone fragments.

The same impure soil was used to seal P.9717, mixed with bones, probably the remains of the banquet.[22]

The grey soil immediately under the closure level contained the remains of the pottery used in the banquet: in level 7h of P.9719 a huge amount of drinking vessels have been discovered together with a strainer, probably used to filter the liquids served as beverage.

In P.9719 another brown soil level was used to distinguish the banquet equipment from the rest of what could be interpreted as the remains of the purification ritual, realised with the use of jugs for the pouring of liquids and with an incense burner. As we have already seen, the purification of a place through incense and liquids is attested also in later periods, as testified by Gudea's inscriptions.

Unfortunately, in no case it is possible to specify the function of the miniaturistic vessels discovered in the levels. In general the function of small-scale vessels as containers for particular liquids or substances, or their use for special purposes, can be understood only on the basis of the excavation context.[23] In the case of the two Favissae, it could be possible to suppose that the miniaturistic vessels discovered in levels 7g and 7h of P.9719 were connected to the symposium celebration, thus containing perhaps substances used in small quantities by the banqueters with or without any specific religious value. On

Table 12.1

Level 7f				
Pottery		Objects		
Type	Number	Inv. Num.	Typology	Material
Beakers	5	TM.07.HH.0346	Clay figurine	Clay
Jug	1	TM.07.HH.0308	Clay figurine	Clay
Trilobate jug	1	TM.07.HH.0378	Bead	Steatite
Cups	6	TM.07.HH.0541	Grind-Stone	Basalt
Jars	14	TM.07.HH.0411	Grind-Stone	Basalt
Miniaturisc Jars	2	TM.07.HH.0413	Grind-Stone	Basalt
Cooking pot	4	TM.07.HH.0416	Grind-Stone	Basalt
Teapot	1	TM.07.HH.0417	Grind-Stone	Basalt
Varia	9	TM.07.HH.0305	Pestel	Stone
Level 7g				
Pottery		Objects		
Type	Number	Inv. Num.	Typology	Material
Beakers	7	TM.07.HH.0390	Khol stick	Bone
Trilobate jug	4			
Cups	3			
Jars	14			
Miniaturisc Jars	5			
Varia	5			
Level 7h				
Pottery		Objects		
Type	Number	Inv. Num.	Typology	Material
Beakers	47	TM.07.HH.0402	Perforated shell	Shell
Trilobate jug	2			
Jug	2			
Cups	3			
Strainer	1			
Jars	1			
Miniaturisc Jars	1			
Varia	8			
Level 7l				
Pottery		Objects		
Type	Number	Inv. Num.	Typology	Material
Trilobate jug	1			
Jars	1			
Miniaturisc Jars	2			
Level 7m				
Pottery		Objects		
Type	Number	Inv. Num.	Typology	Material
Beakers	3	TM.07.HH.0436	Clay figurine	Clay
Burners	1	TM.07.HH.0440	Bead	Steatite
Jug	1			
Trilobate jug	1			
Cups	2			
Jars	12			
Miniaturisc Jars	4			
Varia	9			

Table 12.2

Level 7e				
Pottery		Objects		
Type	Number	Inv. Num.	Typology	Material
Beackers	3	TM.07.HH.0401	Clay figurine	Clay
Cups	2			
Jars	6			
Miniaturistic Jars	3			
Cooking pots	1			
Varia	2			
Level 7i				
Pottery		Objects		
Type	Number	Inv. Num.	Typology	Material
Beackers	1	TM.07.HH.0419	Weight	Ematite
Cups	4			
Jar	4			

Fig. 12.3: L.9714 and the three Favissae in the Cella of the Temple of the Rock (© MAIS).

the other side the small jars discovered in level 7m should contain liquids utilised for the temple purification. The small scale vessels in P.9717 could have been used during the food preparation.

The presence in the first and last levels of P.9719 of two steatite beads and of broken human and animal figurines could hide a ritual meaning we are still not able to understand. The presence in the first and last levels of deposition of two identical beads is strange but we cannot exclude the casualness of their position in the filling. It could be also possible to hypothesise a ritual destruction of the clay figurines as a sort of execration ritual or of symbolic sacrifice, but we do not have any concrete proof of their intentional breaking, neither of the figurines present the same kind of fractures.[24] Nevertheless, from the study of the pottery we could hypothesise a ritual breaking of the vessels used in the celebration: few of them are in fact preserved entirely, but it should be considered also that the same deposition inside the pits could have caused the breakage.

A last hint on the ritual procedure could be deduced by the presence of five drinking vessels, thrown separately in P.9717. This separated deposition could hide a particular use of these vessels or could indicate that they were used by special guests or actors of the ritual, perhaps the same involved in the libations and the purification ceremonies.

Conclusions

The ritual attested in the Temple of the Rock consisted in two separated but yet strongly connected moments (Fig. 12.4): first, the purification as a moment of passage from a negative situation (the destruction of the holy building and the consequent loss of purity of the sacred area) to the re-establishment of the pureness of the god's house; secondly, the banquet as a communal moment in which the consumption of food and drinks symbolised the re-unification of the community struck by such a dangerous calamity (a function certainly comparable to that hold by the funerary banquet following the loss of a member of the community). Thus, the ceremony whose traces were preserved inside the favissae could not be defined at all as a "termination" ritual: surely it ratified the final abandonment of the Early Bronze Age sacred building but, in the meanwhile, it removed every trace of impureness of the area, allowing the construction of a new and holy house for the god and the renovation of the normal temple activities.

The analysis of the stages of the Temple's life here attempted has demonstrated once again that the Temple was considered as a living part of the city and the community, a particular member, representing the presence of the god in the city, a member that was celebrated in every passage of its life, from its birth to its renovation and sometimes to its death and reconstruction.

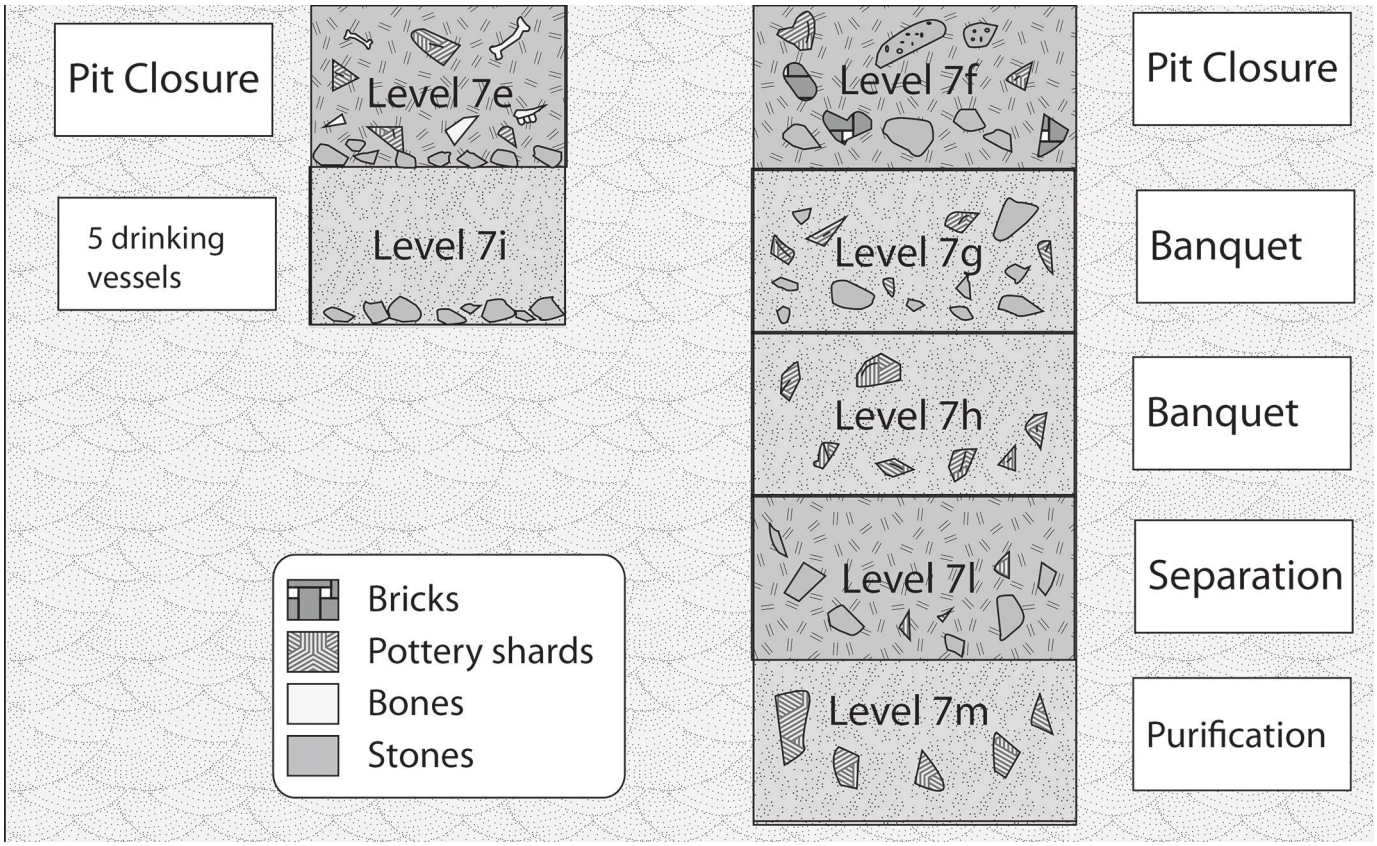


Fig. 12.4: Schematic stratigraphic sequence of P.9717 and P. 9719.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Prof. Paolo Matthiae for the permission of analysing in detail the findings of the two Eblaic Favissae, and Davide Nadali, who excavated the pits with extreme competence.
2 Matthiae 1994, 37. On the Temple foundation and Building rituals see Averbeck 2010.
3 Ellis 1968, 76–77; Rashid 1983; see for the Egyptian evidence Weinstein 1973.
4 Ellis 1968, 8.
5 Van Buren 1952, 78–80, pl. xxviii, 1; Lenzen 1959, 11–12.
6 See Delougaz 1940, 11–17 fig. 11; Ellis 1968, 10.
7 Tobler 1950, 11–12, pls iii–xiii; Ellis 1968, 126–127; Rothman 2002, 116 fig. 5.44.
8 Woolley 1962.
9 Glob 1955, fig. 5; Weidner 1957–58; Ellis 1968, 128.
10 On this topic see: Suter 2000; Averbeck 2010.
11 On Gudea and the building of his Temple see Suter 2000.
12 Romano in press.
13 In Urn.49 (IV 1–4) is the personal god of the king to made the construction work.
14 See for example Amiet 1980, pl. 108 n. 1442; pl. 109 nn. 1444, 1450.
15 Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, 257. On the analysis of the deposit see Ellis 1968, 136 and Tunça 1984, 187.
16 Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, 188 fig. 149. On hoards and in general the ritual burial of objects in the Ancient Near East see the introduction of the contribution of Garfinkel 1994.
17 Matthiae 2006, 458–460, figs 11–13.
18 Matthiae 2009c, 120; 2010, 60–63.
19 Matthiae 2009b, 688.
20 Matthiae 2009a, 754–757; 2009b, 688–691.
21 Matthiae 2009b, 688.
22 Analysis of cut traces on the bones are still in progress.
23 The term "miniature" does not imply any qualitative valuation of an object, indicating only the realisation in a reduced scale. Nevertheless in the literature the term "miniature" is used generally referring to vessel with a particular religious or votive use and value, so it should be possible to prefer locutions such as "of small dimension" to refers to those small scale object realised for a normal use (Zamboni 2009, 11, 22–23). The function of miniature/small dimension vessel should be interpreted on the base of the context (Osborn 2004, 7): they could serve as container for votive offering (Allen 2006, 23) or as part of a temple or burial equipment, they should contain perfumes or precious substances used during rituals or during the daily life, or again they should be interpreted as sort of toys for children (Paz and Shoval 2012, 10; on the identification and interpretation of toys in archaeological context see Baxter 2005, 39–50). Sometimes the presence of large scale exemplars of a miniature vessel could help in the identification of its use (Kohring 2011, 38; Notroff 2011).
24 Moreover, according to L. Peyronel (pers. comm.), the clay figurines discovered inside the favissa seems not to belong to an archaic phase of the EB IVA and show traces of incrustation that are instead not evident in the pottery fragments.

Bibliography

Allen, S. (2006) *Miniature and Model Vessels in Ancient Egypt.* In M. Bárta (ed.) *The Old Kingdom Art and Archaeology Proceedings of the Conference Held in Prague, May 31–June 4, 2004*, 19–24. Prague, Miroslav Bárta, editor.

Amiet, P. (1980) *La glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque*, Paris, Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Averbeck, R. E. (2010) Temple Building Among the Sumerians and Akkadians (Third Millennium). In M. J. Boda and J. Novotny (eds) *From the Foundations to the Crenellations. Essays on Temple Building in the Ancient Near East and Hebrew Bible*, 3–34, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 366. Münster, Ugarit-Verlag.

Baxter, J. E. (2005) *The Archaeology of Childhood. Children, Gender, and Material Culture*, Gender and Archaeology Series 10. New York, AltaMira Press.

Delougaz, P. (1940) *The Temple Oval at Khafajah*, OIP 53. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Delougaz, P. and Lloyd, S. (1942) *Pre-Sargonid Temple in the Diyala Region*, OIP 58. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Ellis, R. S. (1968) *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Mesopotamia.* New Haven and London, Yale University Press.

Garfinkel, Y. (1994) Ritual Burial of Cultic Objects: The Earliest Evidence. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 4:2, 159–188.

Glob, P. V. (1955) The Danish Archaeological Bahrein Expedition's Second Campaign. *Kuml* 1955, 109–191.

Kohring, S. (2011) Bodily Skill and the Aesthetics of Miniaturization, *PALLAS* 88, 31–50.

Lenzen, H. (1959) *XV. Vorläufiger Bericht* über *die von dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut und der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft aus Mitteln der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft unternommen Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka. Winter 1956/57*, Abhandlungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft 4. Berlin, Verlag der Notgemeinschaft.

Matthiae, P. (1994) *Il sovrano e l'opera. Arte e potere nella Mesopotamia Antica.* Roma-Bari, Laterza.

Matthiae, P. (2006) Un grand temple de l'époque des Archives dans l'Ebla protosyrienne: Fouilles à Tell Mardikh 2004–2005. *CRAIBL* 2006, 447–493.

Matthiae, P. (2009a) Temples et reines de l'Ébla protosyrienne: résultats des fouilles à tell mardikh en 2007 et 2008. *CRAIBL* 2009, 747–792.

Matthiae, P. (2009b) Il Tempio della Roccia ad Ebla: la residenza mitica del dio KURA e la fondazione della città protosiriana, *Scienze dell'Antichità* 15, 677–730.

Matthiae, P. (2009c) Temple and Queens at Ebla. Recent Discoveries in a Syrian Metropolis between Mesopotamia, Egypt and Levant. In *Interconnections in the Eastern Mediterranean. Lebanon in the Bronze and Iron Ages*. *Proceedings of the International Symposium Beyrut 2008*, BAAL Hors-Séries VI, 117–139. Beirut, Ministry of Culture of Lebanon.

Matthiae, P. (2010) Recent Excavations at Ebla, 2006–2007. In P. Matthiae, F. Pinnock, L. Nigro, N. Marchetti and L. Romano (eds) *Proceedings of the 6th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East May, 5th–10th 2008, "Sapienza" – Università di Roma, Volume 2, Excavations, Surveys and Restorations: Reports on Recent Field Archaeology in the Near East*, 3–26. Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz.

Notroff, J. (2011) Vom Sinn der kleinen Dinge. Überlegungen zur Ansprache und Deutung von Miniaturgefäßen am Beispiel der Funde von Tall Ḥujayrāt al-Ghuzlān, Jordanien. *ZOrA* 4, 246–260.

Osborne, R. (2004) Hoards, Votives, Offerings: The Archaeology of the Object. *World Archaeology* 36:1, 1–10.

Paz, Y. and Shoval, S. (2012) Miniature Votive Bowls as the Symbolic Defense of Leviah, an Early Bronze Age Fortified Town in the Southern Levant. *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture* 5:1, 7–18.

Rashid, S. A. (1983) *Grundungsfiguren im Iraq*. Munich, Prähistorische Bronzefunde 1/2.

Romano, L. (2014) Urnanshe's Family and the Evolution of its Inside Relationships as Shown by Images. *Proceedings of the 55th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale. "Family in the Ancient Near East: Realities, Symbolisms, and Images"*, 183–192. Winona Lake, Indiana, Eisenbrauns.

Rothman, M. S. (2002) *Tepe Gawra: The Evolution of a Small, Prehistoric Center in Northern Iraq*, University Museum Monograph 112. Philadelphia, Penn Press.

Suter, C. (2000) *Gudea's Temple Building: The Representation of an Early Mesopotamian Ruler in Text and Image*, CM 17. Groningen, Brill.

Tobler, A. J. (1950) *Excavations at Tepe Gawra.* Philadelphia, Penn press.

Tunça, Ö. (1984) *L'architecture Religieuse Protodynatique en Mesopotamie,* Akkadica Supplementum II. Leuven, Peeters.

Van Buren, E. D. (1952) Places of Sacrifice ('Opferstätten'). *Iraq* 14, 76–92.

Weidner, E. (1957–58) Ausgrabungen und Forshungreisen: Bahrein. *AfO* 18, 157–158.

Weinstein, J. M. (1973) *Foundation Deposits in Ancient Egypt*. Ph.D dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Woolley, L. (1962) *Ur Excavations, Volume* IX: *The Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods*. London, British Museum.

Zamboni, L. (2009) Ritualità o utilizzo? Riflessioni sul vasellame "miniaturistico" in Etruria padana: *Pagani E Cristiani. Forme ed attestazioni di religiosità del mondo antico in Emilia* VIII, 9–46. Castelfranco, All'Insegna del Giglio.

PART III

THE MATERIALISATION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

13

Ritual performance and religion in early Neolithic societies

Trevor Watkins

South-west Asia in the last 10 millennia of the Palaeolithic (known regionally as the Epi-palaeolithic) and the early (aceramic) Neolithic saw the emergence of a completely new kind of human social organisation in the form of large, permanently co-resident communities of hundreds, and in some cases of thousands, of people. Monumental architecture, vividly dramatic sculptures, and other sorts of symbolic representation and ritualised performance accompanied that great transformation of society. Having sketched the outline of the social and economic transformation, I will discuss the role of symbolic culture in the formation and maintenance of these earliest sedentary communities. And that will allow us to consider how ritual performance developed in the service of collective memory, collective identity, and the making of ideas about the nature of the world, its superhuman agencies, and the community's place in that world.

The great transformation and its background

Over the Epi-palaeolithic period, covering the 10 millennia of the final Pleistocene (*c.* 22–12,000 years ago), hunter-gatherer groups developed a fundamentally new way of life. Since Flannery (1969) focused attention on what he termed the broad spectrum revolution, researchers have concentrated on the innovations in subsistence strategies; people invested much time, effort and skill in hunting and trapping reptiles, small mammals, birds, fish and amphibians, and they harvested, stored and processed the nutritious seeds of grasses, cereals, and pulses. Alongside these adaptations to subsistence strategy, they lived in larger groups than before, and became less mobile, adopting transhumant, semi-sedentary settlement patterns. Before the beginning of the Neolithic period, some of these hunter-harvester communities were effectively sedentary, and were living permanently together in numbers that were 5–10 times larger than ever before. From at least the beginning of the Neolithic, some of these communities were cultivating selected crops of wheat, barley, lentils and other pulses.

Over many years the broad spectrum revolution scenario outlined by Flannery has been debated, concentrating on the issue of how and why the farming of crops and the herding of animals resulted. Both Flannery and Binford (Binford 1968) argued that farming and herding were the inevitable consequence of increasing population density, itself the consequence of the adoption of sedentary settlement, which was in turn the necessary corollary of an economy based on storage of the harvests of cereals and pulses. More recently, the population pressure scenario has been superseded by an alternative scenario that simply reverses the variables in the population-environmental resources equation: the standard account of the period has exchanged rising population levels with declining wild food resources, blaming the cooler, drier Younger Dryas phase in the last millennium of the Pleistocene (the final Epi-palaeolithic) period.

In common with Mary Stiner (2001) and Melinda Zeder (2012), I do not accept the whole of that story; Zeder in particular has systematically dismantled the current broad spectrum revolution scenario that presents is as a process driven by the inferred regional environmental impact of a global climatic oscillation. In company with Stiner, Zeder and others (Davis 1983; 2005; Davis *et al*. 1994; Stiner and Munro 2002; Stiner *et al.* 1999; 2000), I set the processes that have been observed in the Epi-palaeolithic and early aceramic Neolithic in the longer-term story of the rapid expansion of *Homo sapiens* populations, who in a remarkably short time colonised Eurasia and Australasia. Within south-west Asia from the beginning of the Upper Palaeolithic there is evidence for human population density at levels that steadily depleted the species preferred by hunters. There is emerging evidence that Homo sapiens in the Upper Palaeolithic period in western Europe, too, lived at densities ten times those of their Neanderthal predecessors (Mellars and French 2011). In addition to living at higher overall population densities, the evidence from the Levant is that the size of population units – the number of people living together – was steadily growing throughout the Epi-palaeolithic period, in parallel with the

trend to transhumance and sedentism already mentioned. And that demographic process accelerated even more in the early Neolithic period (Kuijt 2000b), fed by more and more intensive agriculture, shortly followed by the herding of domesticated sheep, goat, pigs and cattle; settlements grew in number and in size, and the density of domestic buildings within settlements increased.

We can make sense of the relentless and exponential population growth, and particularly the growth in size and permanence of co-resident groups, by setting it in the context of the long-term evolutionary history of the hominins among the primates. The trajectory of hominin cognitive and social evolution is defined by Robin Dunbar and his collaborators in terms of the social brain hypothesis (Aiello and Dunbar 1993; Dunbar 1997; 1998; 2004; Dunbar *et al.* 2010). What we see in the Epi-palaeolithic and early Neolithic of south-west Asia is the continuation and amplification of a trend that is observable in the history of the species *Homo sapiens*; and *Homo sapiens* is simply the latest, smartest and fastest evolving species within the genus *Homo* over the last two or three million years. In common with other primates hominins have evolved brains than are larger than physically required by their bodies. Hominin brains and minds deploy cognitive and social skills that enable them to live in larger and more cohesive and cooperative social groups.

Dunbar and his colleagues have been able to chart the strong correlation between the expanding cortex of the hominin brain and increasing social group size. The social brain hypothesis proposes that the growth of the folded outer part of the hominin brain has allowed the expansion of the size of social group that the individual can cope with, keeping check on the social relations between individuals, and allowing the assessment of who can be trusted, and how others may be manipulated. However, the graph of the correlation between social group size and the ratio of the cortex to the whole brain indicates that *Homo sapiens* has the capacity to manage life in a group of up to 150 people (now often referred to as Dunbar's number). Gamble has estimated that *Homo sapiens* societies of the European Upper Palaeolithic consisted of several mobile hunter-gatherer bands, numbering in total perhaps 125 people; for the first time, he argued, such networks of hunter-gatherer bands could maintain social relations by means of symbolic exchange of high-quality raw materials and things like marine shells, that could be pierced and worn (Gamble 1999, chap. 8). He called this new ability to create a community among people who saw each other only very occasionally 'the release from proximity' (Gamble 1998).

The changing nature of community

In the Epi-palaeolithic and early Neolithic of south-west Asia we see this Upper Palaeolithic extension of social networking undergo categorical change. As a first step in describing the nature of the transformation, 'the release from proximity' of the Upper Palaeolithic became the bonds of permanent proximity. The numbers of people who rarely saw one another and were known to one another only through the medium of their social exchange of goods and materials became instead the people who were generally not relatives or close friends, but with whom the settlement was shared, who necessarily cooperated and trusted one another, despite their lack of close personal knowledge. Since this transformation in the scale and nature of social life was not accompanied by any appreciable genetically-controlled evolution of the human brain – it happened far too quickly for biological evolution – it follows that cultural means were essential to allow people to sustain large, permanently co-resident communities. We can assume that the individual living in one of the new, large, permanent communities would know personally only some of his or her fellow-residents (around 150, according to Dunbar's research), but it was essential that he or she was able to recognise that others were members of the same community, and could be trusted to behave in accordance with common norms; and by the same token it was essential that the individual was also able to signal their community membership and trustworthiness to others.

The anthropologist Anthony Cohen has written powerfully about the nature of community and how it functions in the minds of its members by means of symbols; he writes that 'the consciousness of community has to be kept alive through manipulation of its symbols' (Cohen 1985, 15). Psychologists and others emphasise the importance of memory and sense of identity, both for the individual and the community. And the idea of performance is often found embedded, for example, in the continual manipulation of symbols within a community, or in the way that 'the individual plays an active role in performing society and its structures into existence' (Gamble 1999, 33), or in the way that ceremonies and rituals are repeatedly performed in the service of sustaining collective memory and identity.

The key to understanding the nature of collective memory and shared sense of identity is the recognition that collective memory is cultural memory (a term much used by Assmann 1995) that is distributed among individuals, and individual memory consists of acts of remembering; recalling the past takes place in the present, where imagining the future takes place. If the individual's memory and sense of identity is built on acts of remembering, it follows also that the shared, or collective, memory and sense of identity of a community is built on shared acts of remembering. Assmann makes it clear that collective memory must be a cultural phenomenon: cultural memory 'preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity', defining who 'we' are, and how 'they' are different. He discusses how the communicated meaning and shared knowledge is objectified and stabilised in spoken words, ritual actions or in visual (i.e. material) form (Assmann 1995, 130–132).

Another important point concerning our auto-biographical memory and sense of self is that it is founded in episodic memory, not semantic memory, which is a 'what-where-when' kind of factual memory, the kind of facts that we learn at school as 'history'. Episodic memory starts from re-experiencing episodes in the form of images. These episodic images are affective; that is, they stir our feelings and emotions. Pascal Boyer remarks that recalling events in one's personal history, thinking about future events, and thinking about imaginary events or beings involves imagination (Boyer 2009, 3), a capacity that the psychologists Suddendorf and Corballis describe as a capacity for 'mental time travel' (Suddendorf and Corballis 1997; 2007). At a relatively simple level, the capacity to insert experiences from the past into present consciousness, where they can be reviewed and re-evaluated is a form of recursion (Corballis 2011, 83). If the individual's sense of self depends upon autobiographical memory, it follows that shared and collective memory, distributed among the individuals who form the collective, is essential to community identity. And it similarly follows that the collective memory of the community is based on the foundation of shared acts of remembering that are imagistic and affecting.

Connerton, a leading authority on collective memory, particularly emphasises the central role of 'commemorative ceremonies' and 'bodily acts' (Connerton 1989). Thus the values of the community are shared and transmitted in collective actions, ceremonies and rituals, whether religious or not, assuring the collective identity through collective remembering. Like Whitehouse (2004), and Lawson and McCauley (Lawson and McCauley 1990; McCauley and Lawson 2002) with regard to religious rituals, however, Connerton pays little or no attention to the point that very often there is a proper and special place where ceremonies or rituals should take place. I used to think that the monumental buildings and the sculptures were the settings specially designed and equipped for the rituals that took place within them; I wrote of them as 'theatres of memory' (Watkins 2004a), but now I am not so sure.

The material construction of community

I prefer to link these material constructions and instruments to Merlin Donald's idea of systems of external symbolic storage (Donald 1991; 1993; 1998). Following the emergence of fully modern language, which constitutes the second of Donald's three stages in the evolution of human cognition and culture, the emergence of systems of external symbolic storage culminated in the development of efficient, phonetic writing systems. Responding to Donald's concept of systems of external symbolic storage, Renfrew (1998) argued that, prior to the development of written language, there should be an earlier stage when material culture systems fulfilled a non-textual function as external symbolic storage systems. I agree strongly with Renfrew, and have argued that the monumental architecture, sculptures and other, smaller visual representations of the early aceramic Neolithic constituted the material correlates of ideas about the nature of those communities, their lives and their worlds (Watkins 2004a; 2004b; 2006; 2009; 2010). Here, I wish to go further and suggest that the construction of these monuments, the making and placing of the sculptures, and the repeated remaking, refurbishing, and finally the concealing of buildings and the deliberate defacing of sculptures were forms of ritual performance.

Ritual performance, memory and identity are closely related, as was discussed above. At the surface level, rituals consist of a set of actions, or prescribed words, and often associated instruments; but at another level those actions constitute a meaning of another kind. It is not uncommon that washing with water, for example, is the outward and visible sign for ritual purification. The cognitive psychologist Edwin Hutchins would say that the font and the water used in a Christian baptism are 'material anchors' for a 'conceptual blend', supporting the transmission of the metaphysical ideas (Hutchins 2005). Ritual performances are repeated, making them in some sense acts of memory. Rituals consist not only of words and actions, but also of appropriate instruments, or they take place in an appropriate context or place. Ritual performances that involve what Whitehouse describes as 'sensory pageantry' bind together those who have shared the experience. While people can tell stories, and re-tell myths, shared ideas, beliefs and values require material forms. What we see in the early Neolithic settlements is evidence of the assurance of community in the form of shared ritual performance, at different levels, at the level of the household, or a larger group within the settlement, or the whole community.

Even the solid and durable material forms of architecture require that the community or their representatives continue to enact symbolising actions in order to sustain the abstract notion of collective identity that they represent. From my own experience in the excavation of structures at the very early Neolithic settlement of Qermez Dere in north Iraq, it is possible to describe the repeated making, re-making, modifying, maintaining, and finally the burying of the house as ritualised performances that repeatedly made real the idea of the house-as-home (Watkins 1990; Watkins *et al.* 1995). More recently, there has been a series of unexpected discoveries at sites in north Syria and southeast Turkey.

Although the several special-purpose buildings adjacent to the open area at the centre of the settlement of Çayönü, in southeast Turkey, north-west of Diyarbakır, were found in the late 1960s, we learned something about them in detail only much more recently. In addition to two parallel lines of standing stones in the central "plaza", four special-purpose buildings were constructed at different times during the long lifetime of the settlement (Özdoğan 1999; Özdoğan and Özdoğan 1990; 1998; see also Verhoeven 2002). The best documented, the skull-building, itself had a long history, being remodelled or rebuilt two or three times and repeatedly

used (Croucher 2003). The so-called flagstone building at Çayönü, built with its floor below ground level, and its pair of monoliths set upright in its floor, resembles the almost square, subterranean structure in the settlement at Nevalı Çori, in the Euphrates valley in southeast Turkey (Hauptmann 1993; 1999). The houses at Nevalı Çori were very similar in size, plan and monumentality to those of Çayönü, and the special-purpose building at Nevalı Çori, like the flagstone building at Çayönü, was different in almost every way from the stereotyped plans of the houses. Three of the features that are common to the special-purpose buildings is that they were quite different architectural designs from the normal houses, that they were carefully maintained, modified, and even rebuilt, and that, at the end of their lives, they were dismantled and obliterated. The special-purpose building at Nevalı Çori was rebuilt on exactly the same site at least once, and probably twice. It was almost square in plan, its terrazzo floor reached by means of stone steps. Around the base of the walls, there was a low bench made of stone. At intervals around the bench, other monoliths had been set, but they had all been deliberately broken where they protruded from the bench. In the centre of the chamber a pair of tall stone monoliths had stood, although one of them was completely missing when the excavators discovered the building. The surviving monolith was broken, but the top part lay within the building. It was a tall T-shaped slab, with human arms carved on its flat sides, and hands whose finger-tips met below the 'stomach' of the figure.

The Çayönü buildings and the special-purpose building at Nevalı Çori can be dated to the later aceramic Neolithic period. In the Euphrates valley in the far north of Syria salvage excavations have uncovered three settlements that date to the early aceramic Neolithic; each of these communities built special-purpose, communal buildings. At Jerf el Ahmar, the buildings of the settlement cluster around an open area, in the middle of which there was a large, circular, subterranean structure. This was the first of a series of three such circular, subterranean buildings in a settlement that was occupied for more than a thousand years (Stordeur *et al.* 2000). It was less well preserved than the second and third buildings, but was generally like the second building in internal form. Over the centuries the centre of gravity of the settlement drifted, and the second circular, subterranean building was constructed in a cavity that was about seven metres in diameter and three metres deep. It was rebuilt at least once. Like its predecessor, it contained several large, doorless cells. It has been shown that they had been used for communal grain and lentil storage (Willcox and Stordeur 2012), but the building also seems to have had a ceremonial function. At the end of its life, the posts supporting the roof were removed, the roof was collapsed and set on fire. But before that, the decapitated body of a young female was placed in the centre of the floor. Finally the whole space was filled with more than 100 m^3 of soil. The excavation of the cavity for the building, its construction, its rebuilding, and its final destruction and obliteration were certainly major public works that would have involved many of the settlement's inhabitants. But one can also imagine that these were labours that were accompanied by considerable ceremony; and the building must have embodied significant meaning for the community.

The third communal building at Jerf el Ahmar was of a similar size, but of quite different internal plan. It was an open circle, with a low bench around the base of the wall. At the front of the bench was a circle of six large wooden posts that supported the roof; and between the posts large stone slabs, carved with a chevron pattern in relief, fronted the bench. Again, like its predecessors, this subterranean building was finally dismantled and obliterated. The contemporary settlements of Dja'de and Tell 'Abr 3, each about 20 or so kilometres from one another in the Euphrates valley upstream from Jerf el Ahmar, also had circular, subterranean communal buildings, each with its own distinctive features. The circular, subterranean structure at Dja'de is not yet fully excavated (Coqueugniot 2014, 97 and 99); it had three stub walls attached to the peripheral wall, their mud plaster surfaces covered with a white base colour on which complex rectilinear patterns were painted in red and black paint. Three subterranean, circular structures were found at Tell 'Abr 3, though their stratigraphic relationship to one another has not been made clear in the preliminary notices (Yartah 2004; 2005). Two of them were very similar to the latest of the three at Jerf el Ahmar, and they shared the characteristics of their destruction, burning, and obliteration with the Jerf el Ahmar communal buildings. One of the buildings had a number of stone slabs with incised animals and motifs; and there were animal bone deposits concealed within the bench.

Another kind of ritual practice that was common to all the settled communities of the early Neolithic was the burying of bodies within the settlement, or, as at Çatalhöyük, within the house itself. In no settlement are there enough burials to account for the population, and we should not think of the ritual of these burials as the normal ritual disposal of the dead. Rather, using again Hutchins' (2005) metaphor of the anchor, the dead body can be considered as the material anchor that was instrumental in setting and holding the ritual performance in the shared memory of those who took part in, or attended upon, the burial. Especially in the Levant, it became common practice to return to a burial to retrieve the skull. Skulls were curated; sometimes, facial features were modelled onto them; and groups of curated skulls have been found buried in or near houses in caches. Ian Kuijt has written of the cycles of ritual, first involving the burial of the body, then the retrieval and curation of skulls, and a third involving the burial of caches of skulls (Kuijt 2000a; 2001). And Kuijt points out that, while the burial of the corpse in or beside a house may have involved a small circle of people, the collecting, handling, and finally the caching of groups of retrieved skulls is likely to have involved a number of occasions, and a wider group within the community. Although we cannot be clear about why certain bodies received

these special treatments, we can see how collective memory was instituted, shared, reframed and shared again.

For some years after the first retrieved skulls with modelled features were found in the PPN-B strata at Jericho, more examples of single intramural burials in an oval pit, skull retrieval, and occasionally skulls with modelled features, were found at other settlements in the southern Levant. As excavations have taken place in the central and northern Levant in more recent years, it has become clear that there is no uniformity in the way that the practices were carried out. Rather, each community seems to have worked out its own interpretation of the general rules. The anthropologist Richard Wilk has coined the term 'common difference' for this phenomenon, where some general principles are shared 'globally' but are articulated in local communities appropriately to the local context (Wilk 1995; 2004). For example, at Tell Aswad in southern Syria in the later aceramic Neolithic period, at first bodies were placed on the floor of a house, perhaps against the wall, or even partly within a niche in the wall, or perhaps against the outer face of the wall (Stordeur and Khawam 2009). The bodies were covered by a small mound of soil with a plastered surface. Then, at a certain point in time, there was a change in the rules: two mortuary areas were defined by broad, shallow pits at the edge of the built-up area of the settlement. Clutches of modelled skulls were deposited at the edge of each new mortuary pit as a sort of foundation deposit. So the last act in the cycle of skull retrieval, curation and reburial instituted a new cycle of burials. Following the deposition of the clutches of skulls, burials followed in some numbers; some bodies were primary burials, others appeared to be secondary, males and females, children, adolescents and adults are represented.

The shared practice of intramural burial and skull retrieval is one complex element in an extraordinary phenomenon of extensive local, regional and supra-regional networks of sharing and exchange (Watkins 2008). We have known of extended networks of exchange for a long time. We know the extent of the exchange networks that carried central Anatolian obsidian as far as southern Jordan, and east Anatolian obsidian as far west as Çatalhöyük, and southeast to southwest Iran. Now we can add some other materials that were exchanged as symbolic elements in these supra-regional networks through which goods, materials, ideas, techniques and symbolic representations travelled and were shared.

What modern humans have learned to do is to create external media that effectively extend the mind, and through that network of extended minds they extend the network of people constituting the community. That capacity to form extended networks first emerged among archaic modern humans in southern Africa. But it was taken a huge step further in the later Epi-palaeolithic and early Neolithic periods in south-west Asia. Extended minds, using symbols, icons, shared ideas about the value of things, were able to construct, and through exchange, maintain communities of many hundreds, even of several thousand people, and sub-continental scale networks of communities – a community of a different kind, at a larger, wider scale, in which people engaged with people that they did not know and had never met.

Göbekli Tepe, in south-east Turkey, is a candidate for being a 'central place' in such an extended regional network, where many people from a number of communities in the region shared in the building of massive and extraordinary structures and making and erecting sculptures (Schmidt 2006; 2010; 2011; 2012). The circular subterranean enclosures, the extraordinary T-shaped monoliths that were set within the structures, and much of the symbolism carved on the stones are not unique to Göbekli Tepe; elements and aspects have been found at contemporary settlement sites around the region.

Ritual practices and religious concepts

So far I have not mentioned religion and ideas of the supernatural. The rituals and ceremonies that we have encountered were concerned with buildings and the memorialising of collective memory and community identity. There were ritualised practices that involved the burial of bodies, and the retrieval and curation of skulls, but it is unclear whether they involved beliefs in an afterlife. With Göbekli Tepe and sites with similar T-shaped monoliths, the situation changes, however. Pascal Boyer among others has noted that religious ideas of supernatural agents seems to be practically universal among contemporary human societies (Boyer 1994; 2001). Boyer shows how the idea of supernatural agents is at once comprehensible because in many ways they are just like us, and at the same time they are memorable because they possess extraordinary, supernatural qualities (such as immortality, omniscience, invisibility). Shared religious ideas about supernatural agency and systems of religious belief and practice can be argued to be a very recent cognitive ability of *Homo sapiens*; Dunbar shows how shared religious beliefs require minds that are capable of at least four levels of intentionality (the technical term for advanced theory of mind), a facility that only modern human *sapiens* have (Dunbar 2004). At some stage in human cognitive and cultural evolution, ideas of supernatural agents will have begun to emerge. In his last book, Jacques Cauvin (1994; 2000) argued that a revolutionary psycho-cultural facility with symbolism emerged at the beginning of the Neolithic, enabling people for the first time to begin imagining supernatural agents. It is now possible to bring together cognitive psychological evidence that supports his belief that this capacity indeed appeared around that time, 12,000 years ago. Belief systems in which superhuman agents can know what we are thinking, and before whom we can be ashamed of our failures and wrong-doings, are clearly very good for reinforcing norms of good behaviour within society, and Atran and Henrich, for example, can reason persuasively that shared religious belief systems become both possible and useful as large-scale human societies emerge (Atran and Henrich 2010; Henrich 2009).

The T-shaped monoliths at Göbekli Tepe and other sites in the region were highly schematised anthropomorphs, as the arms, hands, fingers, and the wearing of items of clothing and symbolic items show. Yet their highly schematised heads completely lack facial features, especially the eyes. The importance of the face, and particularly the eyes, is a well-established observation in psychology; the face and the eyes are a critically important focus of human attention. Developmental psychologists have shown that human infants in the early months of life not only recognise the mother's voice, but also recognise the mother's face, and in particular the eyes. Thus, if these sculptures are deliberately anthropomorphic, they are equally deliberately inscrutable. As material anchors for a conceptual blend (Hutchins 2005), the monoliths fulfil the characteristics of supernatural agents that Boyer identifies, a combination of counterintuitive components that catch the imagination with plausibly human psychological features that make them agents with intentions that we can imagine.

Discussion

While there may be evidence of ritual practices and ceremonies (and I have omitted consideration of feasting), I have been careful not to make an automatic link between ritual practices and religious belief. In fact, I am sure that many of the repeated rituals and occasional ceremonies had little or nothing to do with service to any supernatural agents, as is the case in our own lives today. There are examples of the representation of un-natural phenomena, but that is not the same as saying that they are supernatural phenomena. For example, there are schematically represented snakes at a number of early aceramic Neolithic sites in the north Levant, but there is at least one representation of a two-headed snake on a small chlorite plaque from Tell Qaramel (shown by Prof. Mazurowski in a lecture). A second kind of unnatural representation is the combination of a large raptor, possibly a vulture, standing on or grasping a human head with its talons, of which there are two examples from Nevalı Çori. The complex sculpture found at Göbekli Tepe, and now in the Urfa Museum, which Schmidt has nicknamed the 'totem-pole', is another example. Since the faces of the humans and animals on the front of this pillar-like stone were deliberately defaced before it was enclosed within a wall, it is difficult to decipher, but it seems that the large head at the top of the pillar is that of an animal with ears like a bear, and rather small eyes on the top of its head. In its arms (if it is a human–animal hybrid) or its forelegs (if it is a bear), it grasps the head of a human figure, which in turn grasps another further down the pillar. However the upper figure is interpreted, whether bear or human–animal hybrid, what is depicted is not a natural scenario. Non-natural representations involve imagination and may be associated with myths, but that is different from the formation of ideas about super-natural agents that in some sense share human characteristics.

If concepts of supernatural agents are as Boyer has characterised them, a combination of recognisably human-style agency with a counterintuitive component that distinguishes them as supernatural and makes them memorable, the only candidates are the inscrutable anthropomorphic monoliths of Göbekli Tepe (including the smaller, later aceramic Neolithic examples from that site), and the similar monoliths from Nevalı Çori, which also date to the later aceramic Neolithic. These schematised anthropomorphic monoliths also illustrate what Hutchins (2005) has described as 'material anchors for conceptual blends'. That these representations occur only at Göbekli Tepe in the early aceramic Neolithic period, when the site may have served as a culturally symbolic 'central place' for the population across a wide region, is particularly interesting in the context of the proposal by Atran and Henrich that gods may become important in binding together groups of people in prosociality as those groups become larger, more extensive and more complex (Atran and Henrich 2010).

There is evidence of the practice of rituals, as we have seen, for example, in the careful practices concerned with the maintenance of houses, and in the treatments of selected bodies and their skulls. But there is no evidence for rituals that could be defined as religious in purpose. In his discussion of the archaeology of religious ritual, Renfrew has argued that we should be able to discern the spaces that were designed for the performance of ritual, even though there may be no surviving trace of figures of the gods or any of the apparatus with which rituals may have been performed (Renfrew 2007). In the circular, subterranean communal buildings set in the centre of settlements of early aceramic Neolithic date in the Euphrates valley of north Syria, there was limited space where ritual performance might have been staged, but there is no evidence of any kind that would indicate what kind of rituals there were, no furniture or instruments that might be associated with ritual performance, and no representations of supernatural agents before whom rituals might be enacted.

In the monumental circular enclosures of early aceramic Neolithic date at Göbekli Tepe, there were pairs of anthropomorphic monoliths that can be argued to be representations of supernatural beings (as there was a pair of anthropomorphic monoliths in the centre of the subterranean rectangular chamber of later aceramic Neolithic date at Nevalı Çori), but the pairs of monoliths, set in their broad pedestals, effectively occupy their space. If the enclosures were designed to accommodate rituals to be enacted before the figures of the deities, one would expect the monoliths to stand with their 'backs' to the wall, overlooking an area where the rituals were carried out. The ritualised treatment of houses, as seen at Qermez Dere in north Iraq, at Çayönü in south-east Turkey, or Çatalhöyük in central Anatolia, suggest that the rituals can be seen as more than symbolic actions that signified the special status of the buildings; rather, they can be better understood as actions that made the special status of the buildings. In the same way, I suggest that the

creation of the Göbekli Tepe monoliths and their erection in their formal places within the enclosures should be understood as the ritual making of the gods. In this way, the rituals were literally make-believe, the actions that were the making of beliefs about the supernatural beings. Religious practice, in fact, was the creating of religious belief.

Bibliography

Aiello, L. and Dunbar, R. I. M. (1993) Neocortex Size, Group Size and the Evolution of Language. *Current Anthropology* 36, 184–193.

Assmann, J. (1995) Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique* 65, 125–133.

Atran, S. and Henrich, J. (2010) The Evolution of Religion: How Cognitive By-Products, Adaptive Learning Heuristics, Ritual Displays, and Group Competition Generate Deep Commitments to Prosocial Religions. *Biology Theory* 5/1, 18–30.

Binford, L. R. (1968) Post-Pleistocene adaptations. In L. R. Binford and S. R. Binford (eds) *New Perspectives in Archaeology*, 313–341. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Boyer, P. (1994) *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: a Cognitive Theory of Religion,* Berkeley, CA and London, University of California Press.

Boyer, P. (2001) *Religion Explained: the Human Instincts that Fashion Gods, Spirits and Ancestors.* London, Heinemann.

Boyer, P. (2009) What are Memories For? Functions of Recall in Cognition and Culture. In P. Boyer and J. W. Wertsch (eds) *Memory in Mind and Culture*, 3–28. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cauvin, J. (1994). *Naissance des divinités, naissance de l'agriculture: la révolution des symboles au Néolithique.* Paris, CNRS editions.

Cauvin, J. (2000) *The Birth of the Gods and the Origins of Agriculture.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, A. P. (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community.* Chichester and London, Ellis Horwood, Tavistock.

Connerton, P. (1989) *How Societies Remember.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Coqueugniot, E., (2014) Dja'de (Syrie) et les représentations symboliques au IXe millénaire cal. BC. In C. Manen, T. Perrin and J. Guilaine (eds) *La transition néolithique en Méditerranée*, 91–108. Paris, Errance.

Corballis, M. C. (2011) *The Recursive Mind: the Origins of Human Language, Thought, and Civilization*. Princeton, Princeton University Press.

Croucher, K. (2003) Death, Display and Performance: a Discussion of the Mortuary Remains at Çayönü Tepesi. In M. Georgiadis and C. Gallou (eds) *The Archaeology of Cult and Death: Proceedings of the Session The Archaeology of Cult and Death Organized for the 9th Annual Meeting of the of the European Association of Archaeologists, 11th September 2003*, 11–44. St Petersburg, Archaeolingua.

Davis, S. J. M. (1983) The Age Profiles of Gazelles Predated by Ancient Man in Israel: Possible Evidence for a Shift from Seasonality to Sedentism in the Natufian. *Paléorient* 9, 55–62.

Davis, S. J. M. (2005) Why domesticate Food Animals? Some Zoo-Archaeological Evidence from the Levant. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 32/9, 1408–1416.

Davis, S. J. M., Lernau, O. and Pichon, J. (1994) The animal Remains: New Light on the Origin of Animal Husbandry. In M. Lechevallier and A. Rosen (eds) *Le gisement de Hatoula en Judée occidentale, Israël*, 83–100, Mémoires et Travaux du Centre de Recherche Français de Jerusalem 8. Paris, Association Paléorient.

Donald, M. (1991) *Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition.* Cambridge MA and London, Harvard University Press.

Donald, M. (1993) Précis of Origins of the Modern Mind: Three Stages in the Evolution of Culture and Cognition. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16/4, 737–748.

Donald, M. (1998) Hominid Enculturation and Cognitive Evolution. In C. Renfrew and C. Scarre (eds) *Cognition and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Symbolic Storage*, 7–17. Cambridge, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Dunbar, R. I. M. (1997) *Grooming, Gossip and the Evolution of Language.* London, Faber.

Dunbar, R. I. M. (1998) The Social Brain Hypothesis. *Evolutionary Anthropology* 6/3 178–190.

Dunbar, R. I. M. (2004) *The Human Story: A New History of Mankind's Evolution.* London, Faber.

Dunbar, R. I. M., Gamble, C. and Gowlett, J. A. J. (2010) The Social Brain and the Distributed Mind. *Proceedings of the British Academy* 158, 3–15.

Flannery, K. V. (1969) The Origins and Ecological Effects of Early Domestication in Iran and the Near East. In P. J. Ucko and G. W. Dimbleby (eds) *The Domestication and Exploitation of Plants and Animals*, 73–100. London, Duckworth.

Gamble, C. (1998) Palaeolithic Society and the Release from Proximity: A Network Approach to Intimate Relations. *World Archaeology* 29/3, 426–449.

Gamble, C. (1999) *The Palaeolithic Societies of Europe.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Hauptmann, H. (1993) Ein Kult Gebaüde in Nevali Çori. In M. Frangipane, H. Hauptmann, M. Liverani, P. Matthiae and M. Mellink (eds) *Between the Rivers and Over the Mountains*, 37–69. Rome, Università di Roma La Sapienza.

Hauptmann, H. (1999) The Urfa Region. In M. Özdoğan and N. Başgelen (eds) *Neolithic in Turkey: The Cradle of Civilization, New Discoveries*, 65–86. Istanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayinlari.

Henrich, J. (2009) The Evolution of Costly Displays, Cooperation and Religion: Credibility Enhancing Displays and their Implications for Cultural Evolution. *Evolution and Human Behavior* 30/4, 244–260.

Hutchins, E. (2005) Material anchors for conceptual blends. *Journal of Pragmatics* 37, 1555–1577.

Kuijt, I. (2000a) Keeping the Peace: Ritual, Skull Caching and Community Integration in the Levantine Neolithic. In I. Kuijt (ed.) *Life in Neolithic Farming Communities: Social Organization, Identity, and Differentiation*, 137–162. New York, Kluwer Academic.

Kuijt, I. (2000b) People and Space in Early Agricultural Villages: Exploring Daily Lives, Community Size and Architecture in the Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 19/1, 75–102.

Kuijt, I. (2001). Meaningful Masks: Place, Death, and the Transmission of Social Memory in Early Agricultural Communities of the Near Eastern Pre-Pottery Neolithic. In M. Chesson (ed.) *Social Memory, Identity, and Death: Intradisciplinary Perspectives on Mortuary Rituals*, 80–99. Washington, DC, American Anthropological Association.

Lawson, E. T. and McCauley, R. N. (1990) *Rethinking Religion: Connecting Cognition and Culture.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

McCauley, R. N. and Lawson, E. T. (2002) *Bringing Ritual to Mind: Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Mellars, P. and French, J. C. (2011) Tenfold Population Increase in Western Europe at the Neandertal/Modern Human Transition. *Science* 333/6042, 623–627.

Özdoğan, A. (1999) Çayönü. In M. Özdoğan and N. Başgelen (eds) *Neolithic in Turkey. The cradle of Civilization, New Discoveries*, 35–63. Istanbul, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları.

Özdoğan, M. and Özdoğan, A. (1990) Çayönü, a Conspectus of Recent Work. In O. Aurenche, M.-C. Cauvin and P. Sanlaville (eds) *Préhistoire du Levant: processus des changements culturels*, 68–77. Paris, Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique.

Özdoğan, M. and Özdoğan, A. (1998) Buildings of cult and the cult of buildings. In M. Mellink, G. Arsebük and W. Schirmer (eds) *Light on Top of the Black Hill, Studies Presented to Halet Çambel*, 581–593. Istanbul, Ege Yayınları.

Renfrew, C. (1998) Mind and Matter: Cognitive Archaeology and External Symbolic Storage. In C. Renfrew and C. Scarre (eds) *Cognition and Material Culture: the Archaeology of Symbolic Storage*, 1–6. Cambridge, McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.

Renfrew, C. (2007) The Archaeology of Ritual, of Cult, and of Religion. In E. Kyriakidis (ed.) *The Archaeology of Ritual*, 109–122. Los Angeles CA, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA

Schmidt, K. (2006) *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel. Das rätselhafte Heiligtum der Steinzeitjäger.* Munich, Beck.

Schmidt, K. (2010) Göbekli Tepe – the Stone Age Sanctuaries. New Results of Ongoing Excavations with a Special Focus on Sculptures and High Reliefs. *Documenta Praehistorica* 37, 239–256.

Schmidt, K. (2011) Göbekli Tepe. In M. Özdoğan, N. Başgelen and P. Kuniholm (eds) *The Neolithic in Turkey. New Excavations and New Research – The Euphrates Basin*, 41–83. Istanbul, Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayinlari.

Schmidt, K. (2012) *Göbekli Tepe. A Stone Age Sanctuary in South-Eastern Anatolia.* Berlin, ex oriente & ArchaeNova e.V.

Stiner, M. and Munro, N. D. (2002) Approaches to Prehistoric Diet Breadth, Demography, and Prey Ranking Systems in Time and Space. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 9/2, 175–208.

Stiner, M. C. (2001) Thirty Years on the "Broad Spectrum Revolution" and Paleolithic Demography. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 98/13, 6993–6996.

Stiner, M. C., Munro, N. D. and Surovell, T. A. (2000) The Tortoise and the Hare – Small-game Use, the Broad-spectrum Revolution, and Paleolithic Demography. *Current Anthropology* 41/1, 39–73.

Stiner, M. C., Munro, N. D., Surovell, T. A., Tchernov E. and Bar-Yosef, O. (1999) Paleolithic Population Growth Pulses Evidenced by Small Animal Exploitation. *Science* 283/5399, 190–194.

Stordeur, D., Brenet, M., Der Aprahamian, G. and Roux, J.-C. (2000) Les bâtiments communautaires de Jerf el Ahmar et Mureybet, horizon PPNA (Syrie). *Paléorient* 26/1, 29–44.

Stordeur, D. and Khawam, R. (2009) Une place pour les morts dans les maisons de Tell Aswad (Syrie). (Horizon PPNB Ancien et PPNB Moyen). In J. Córdoba, M. Molist, C. Pérez, I. Rubio and S. Martínez (eds) *Procedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, 561–590. Madrid, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

Suddendorf, T. and Corballis, M. (2007) The Evolution of Foresight: What is Mental Time Travel, and is it Unique to Humans? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 30/3, 299–313.

Suddendorf, T. and Corballis, M. C. (1997) Mental Time Travel and the Evolution of the Human Mind. *Genetic Social and General Psychology Monographs* 123/2, 133–167.

Verhoeven, M. (2002). Ritual and its Investigation in Prehistory. In H. G. K. Gebel, B. D. Hermansen and C. H. Jensen (eds) *Magic Practices and Ritual in the Near Eastern Neolithic*, 5–40. Berlin, Ex oriente.

Watkins, T. (1990) The Origins of House and Home? *World Archaeology* 21/3, 336–347.

Watkins, T. (2004a). Architecture and 'Theatres of Memory' in the Neolithic South West Asia. In E. DeMarrais, C. Gosden and C. Renfrew (eds) *Rethinking Materiality: the Engagement of Mind with the Material World*, 97–106. Cambridge, McDonald Institute of Archaeological Research.

Watkins, T. (2004b) Building Houses, Framing Concepts, Constructing Worlds. *Paléorient* 30/1, 5–24.

Watkins, T. (2006) Architecture and the Symbolic Construction of New Worlds. In E. B. Banning and M. Chazan (eds) *Domesticating Space: Construction, Community, and Cosmology in the Late Prehistoric Near East*, 15–24. Berlin, ex oriente.

Watkins, T. (2008) Supra-Regional Networks in the Neolithic of Southwest Asia. *Journal of World Prehistory* 21/1, 139–71.

Watkins, T. (2009) Ordering Time and Space: Creating a Cultural World. In J. Córdoba, M. Molist, C. Pérez, I. Rubio and S. Martínez (eds) *Procedings of the 5th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, 647–659. Madrid: Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

Watkins, T. (2010) Changing People, Changing Environments: How Hunter-Gatherers Became Communities that Changed the World. In B. Finlayson and G. Warren (eds) *Landscapes in Transition: Understanding Hunter-Gatherer and Farming Landscapes in the Early Holocene of Europe and the Levant*, 104–112, Levant Supplementary Series 8. London, Council for British Research in the Levant.

Watkins, T., Dobney, K. and Nesbitt, R. M. (1995) *Qermez Dere, Tel Afar; Interim Report 3*. Edinburgh, Department of Archaeology, University of Edinburgh.

Whitehouse, H. (2004) *Modes of Religiosity: a Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission.* Walnut Creek CA, AltaMira Press.

Wilk, R. (1995) Learning to Be Local in Belize: Global Systems of Common Difference. In D. Miller (ed.) *Worlds Apart: Modernity Through the Prism of the Local*, 110–33. London, Routledge.

Wilk, R. (2004) Miss Universe, the Olmec and the Valley of Oaxaca. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 4/1, 81–98.

Willcox, G. and Stordeur, D. (2012) Large-scale Cereal Processing Before Domestication During the Tenth Millennium Cal BC in Northern Syria. *Antiquity* 86/331, 99–114.

Yartah, T. (2004) Tell 'Abr 3, un village du Néolithique précéramique (PPNA) sur le Moyen-Euphrate. Première approche. *Paléorient* 30, 141–158.

Yartah, T. (2005) Les bâtiments communautaires de Tell 'Abr 3 (PPNA, Syrie). *Neo-lithics: a Newsletter of Southwest Asia Neolithic Research* 1/5, 3–9.

Zeder, M. A. (2012) The Broad Spectrum Revolution at 40: Resource Diversity, Intensification, and an Alternative to Optimal Foraging Explanations. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 31/3, 241–264.

14

Casting the sacred: Chalcolithic metallurgy and ritual in the southern Levant

Milena Gošić and Isaac Gilead

Introduction

The Ghassulian culture emerged in the mid-5th millennium BC and lasted roughly till the end of the millennium (Gilead 2011, 14). Neuville (1930) and Albright (1932) named the culture after the site of Teleilat Ghassul, located north-east of the Dead Sea, not far from its northernmost tip. Ghassulian sites are distributed mainly in the Northern Negev, the Dead Sea basin, the southern and the central Coastal Plain, the Shephella and the Jordan Valley (Gilead 2011, 13; Rowan and Golden 2009) (Fig. 14.1). It is the best documented Chalcolithic culture in the southern Levant and also the only metalworking cultural entity, considering that there is no evidence for metallurgy in either the Besorian, a predecessor of the Ghassulian (Gilead 2007), in the Timnian or the Golanian cultures.

The research of the Ghassulian copper metallurgy can be informally divided into a number of aspects. Smelting and production of copper artifacts have been studied from the technological and socio-economic aspects (Levy and Shalev 1989), while finished artefacts have been the subject of symbolic and stylistic analyses (e.g. Bar-Adon 1980; Beck 1989; Gilead *et al.* 1992; Golden *et al.* 2001; Golden 2009b; 2009a; Goren 2008; Ilani and Rosenfeld 1994; Moorey 1988; Shalev and Northover 1987; 1993; Shugar 2000; Shugar and Gohm 2011). The ritual aspects of the metalworking, ritualised procedures of smelting and casting for example, have been largely overlooked. Our intention is to examine the probable protocol of Ghassulian copper production and the nature of the finished artifacts and their symbols from the perspectives of ritual. We argue that Ghassulian copper artefacts were produced for ritual purposes and not for practical use. We wish to understand how the introduction of metallurgy modified the ritual life of the Ghassulian community and how it was related to the transition between early to late Ghassulian. We conclude by discussing the Nahal Mishmar hoard from the perspective of ritualised metallurgy and secondary burials.

The phases of the Ghassulian culture

The Ghassulian sites and artefactual assemblages have been extensively studied since the late 1920s and are relatively well known (e.g. Bourke *et al.* 2001; Elliot 1977; Gilead 1988; 1993; 1994; 2011; Levy 1986b; Rowan and Golden 2009). The Ghassulian as a cultural entity is characterised by underground and surface architecture, rectangular rooms, pottery vessels such as churns, cornets, hole-mouth jars and V-shaped bowls and flint tools such as bifacials, sickle blades and fan-scrapers. Worth noting are also the bone tools, the ground stone industry, ivory carving, spinning and weaving. Most significant, however, and the subject matter of the current paper is the Ghassulian copper metallurgy and its products.

The Ghassulian may be divided in two phases. The earlier phase consists of the bulk of the Ghassulian strata at Teleilat Ghassul, and of sites in the north-western Negev such as Gilat, a few of the Nahal Besor sites and Grar. This phase is radiometrically dated to about 4500–4300 cal. BC. It is followed by a later Ghassulian phase, *c*. 4200–4000 cal. BC, which is best represented by sites along the Nahal Beer Sheva, such as Abu Matar, Bir es-Safadi, Horvat Beter, Shiqmim (Gilead 2011, 20).There are clear differences between the two phases (Gilead 2011, 19), but, for the time being we will focus on two. Metallurgy is practically unknown in early Ghassulian sites. It has even been suggested to label this phase *"Pre-metallic*" (Golden 1998, 58; 2009b, 47). Metallurgy and copper artifacts characterise the late Ghassulian as is clearly indicated by the abundant remains related to metallurgy that were unearthed in the Nahal Beer Sheva sites. The second difference relates to burial customs. We suggest that the custom of secondary burials in formal off-site cemeteries – in caves and above-ground structures – characterise the late Ghassulian.

The radiometric dating of the secondary burial sites is still limited and problematic Currently, radiocarbon dates are available only for Shoham (North) (Carmi and Segal 2005), Nahal Qanah (Carmi 1996) and Peqi'in (Segal *et al.*

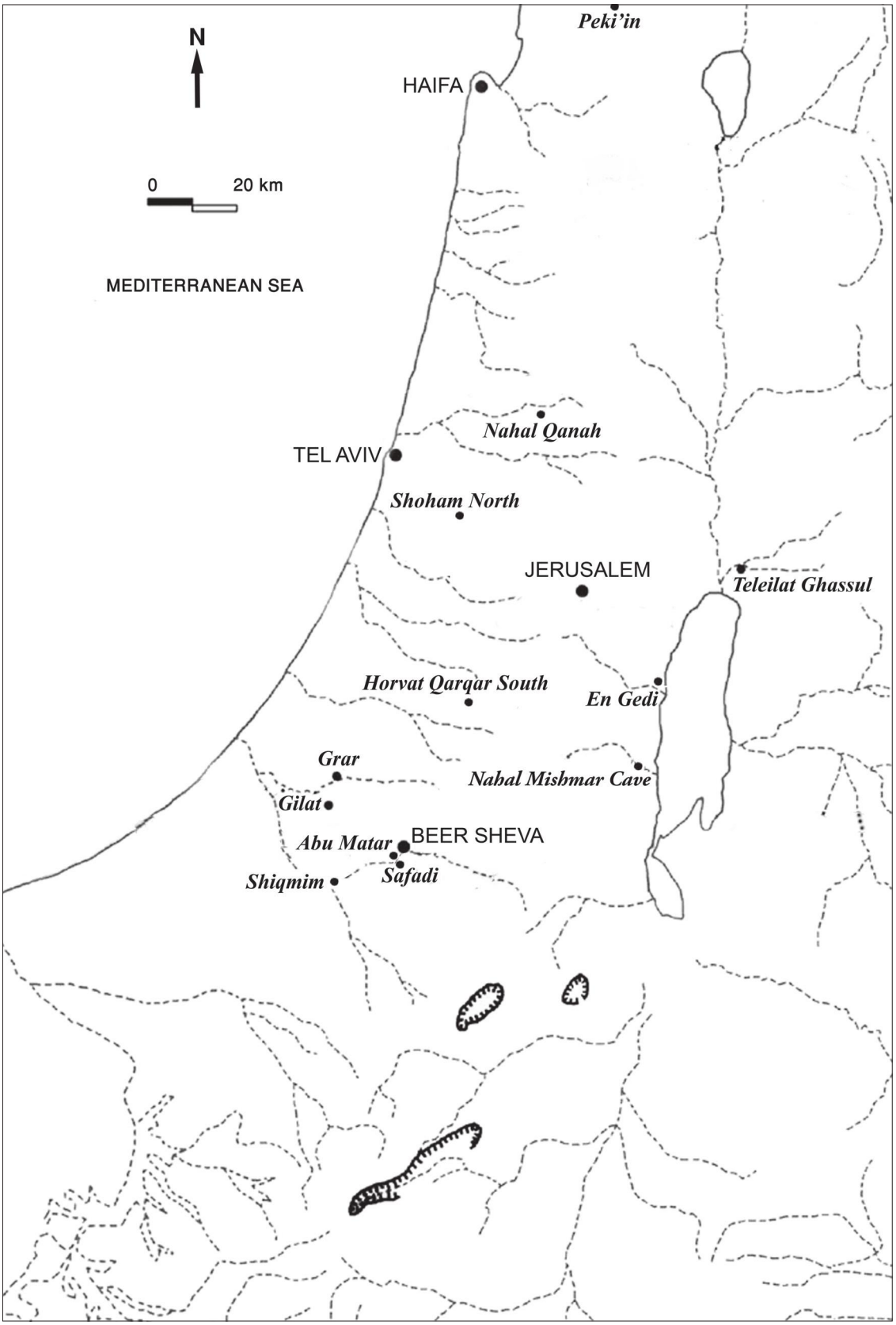


Fig. 14.1: Map of the Southern Levant with major archaeological sites mentioned in the text.

1998). Their 2-sigma distributions are presented in Figure 14.2. The two Shoham (North) dates fall neatly into the late Ghassulian and their average range (72.8%) is 4042–3930 cal. BC (calibrations here and below are based on OxCal 4.1: Bronk Ramsey 2009). Almost of an identical range are the yet unpublished dates from the Horvat Qarqar South cemetery in the southern Shephella, recently excavated by Peter Fabian. The four dates from this site have a 2-sigma range (70.3%) of 4076–3975 cal. BC (Fabian 2012; pers. comm.).

Of the eight Nahal Qanah dates, three were associated with Neolithic occurrences and five come from the Passage (Carmi 1996, 206). The latter were associated with the gold and other Ghassulian artefacts (RT-861A, B, C, E and RT-1545), although one of them, RT-861B, is centuries earlier and we exclude it from the discussion. The ranges of the four Passage dates (Fig. 14.2) indicate that they represent more than one occupational event, but they indicate that the main Chalcolithic occupation of the cave is of late Ghassulian times.

From the Peqi'in cemetery in the higher Galilee, 22 radiocarbon samples are available, but only three of them are considered here (Fig. 14.2) since they are the only ones from the burial phase (Segal *et al.* 1998, table 2). The three dates

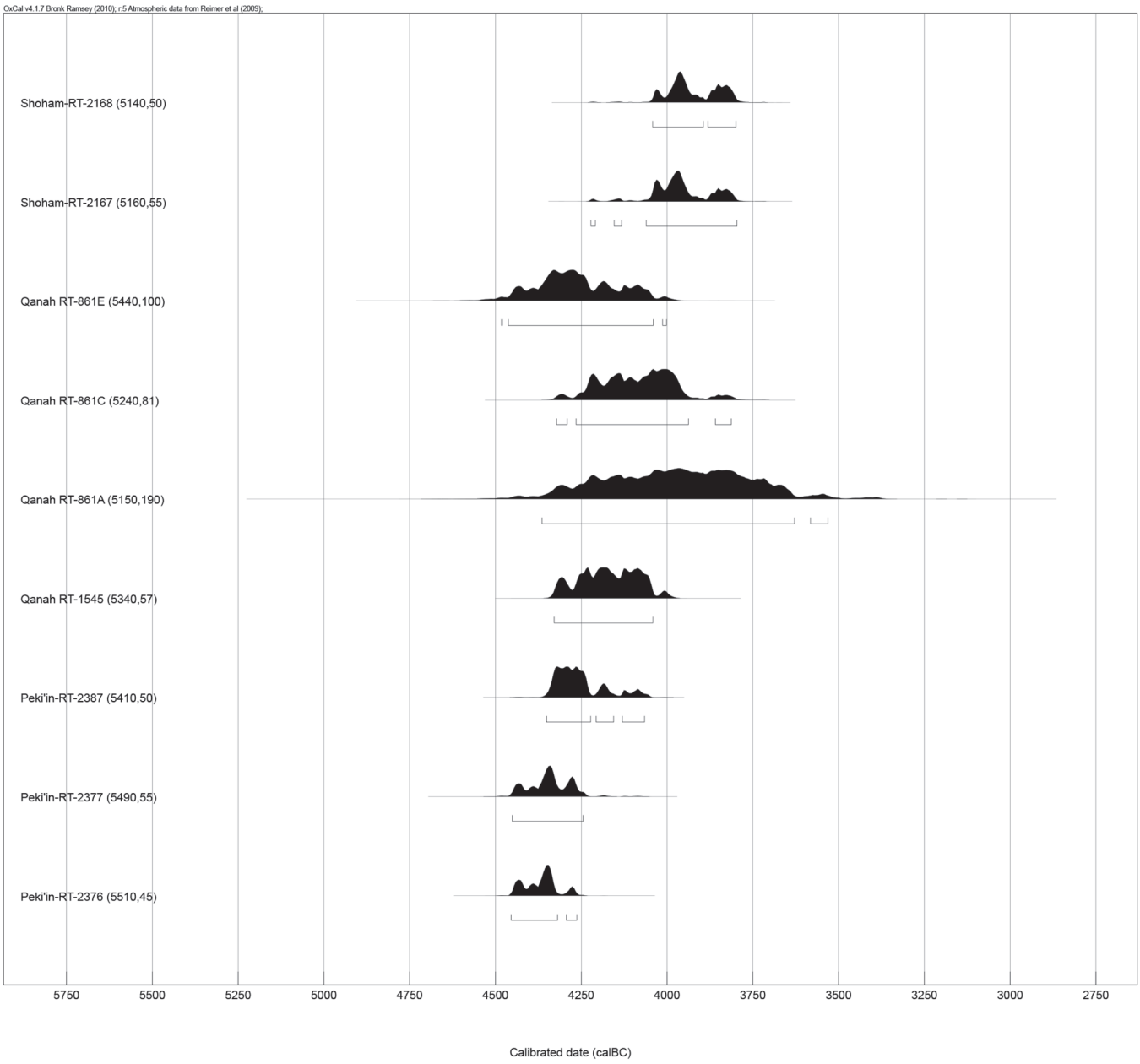


Fig. 14.2: Selected radiocarbon dates from secondary burial caves.

have an average 2-sigma range (62%) of 4363–4312 cal. BC which signifies an early Ghassulian use of the cave and seems not to support our above claim. However, the fact that there are no late Ghassulian dates from the cave has already been noticed by the excavators who suggest that additional research will be needed to understand the chronological implications of the Peqi'in (Segal *et al*. 1998, 711). And, indeed, additional dates are now available and they indicate that the cave was used as burial a ground during the late Ghassulian too (Dina Shalem, personal communication). Since the dates of all the other burial caves clearly indicate a late Ghassulian use, and since additional research is needed to better understand the chronology of Peki'in, it seems that our contention that the secondary burial is a late Ghassulian custom can be maintained.

Ghassulian metallurgy

Metallurgical remains such as production debris and finished artefacts, have been discovered at many late Ghassulian sites, including settlements in the Northern Negev (Eldar and Baumgarten 1985; Gilead *et al*. 1992; Namdar *et al*. 2004; Perrot 1955; Shalev and Northover 1987), burial caves (Gal *et al*. 1997, 145; Gopher and Tsuk 1996, 114–115; Gophna and Lifshitz 1980, 8; Perrot and Ladiray 1980, 41, fig. 142.1; Segal 2002) and at Nahal Mishmar (Bar-Adon 1980, 24–133). Nahal Qanah is unique, since it is the only site where Ghassulian gold has been found, along with copper artifacts

Metalworking practices

Traces of metalworking have been found in number of sites, including Abu Matar (Gilead *et al*. 1992; Perrot 1955), Bir es-Safadi (Eldar and Baumgarten 1985), Shiqmim (Shalev and Northover 1987) and Nevatim (Gilead and Fabian 2001), and the finds include crucible fragments, furnace remains, ores, slag and finished artifacts.

Two distinct casting technologies were used: open mould and lost wax casting. The process of copper smelting and open mould casting is best documented at Abu Matar (Golden 2009b; Shugar 2000) and Shiqmim (Golden *et al*. 2001; Shalev and Northover 1987), where several kinds of ore, mostly from Feinan, have been used (Hauptmann 1989; Shugar 1998, 114). Evidence of both smelting and casting is scattered in numerous loci across these sites. At Abu Matar, archaeometallurgical debris has been documented in numerous units (Gilead *et al*. 1992; Perrot 1955, 25, 29, 33–34, 79), with particular units described as a workshops (Golden 2009b, 126; Shugar 2000, 244–252). Metallurgy-related artefacts and materials, including ore, slag, crucible fragments and finished artefacts, were also spread out over the entire excavated area of Shiqmim (Shalev and Northover 1987, 366).

Suggested loci of lost wax casting are the Beer Sheva sites (Moorey 1988, 186; Shugar 2000, 216). This is supported by the arsenic detected in the furnace and the crucible slag in Abu Matar (Shugar 2000, 204), the possible ingot from Bir es-Safadi (Golden 2009b, 144) and the finished artefacts (e.g. Eldar and Baumgarten 1985; Namdar *et al*. 2004; Shalev and Northover 1987; Shalev *et al*. 1992). Goren's (2008) recent suggestion that a copper industry operated in the En Gedi shrine or nearby cannot be supported since no metallurgical remains are known from there.

Provenance of the complex metal ores used for lost wax casting (Shalev and Northover 1993; Tadmor *et al*. 1995) is unknown, although several locations have been suggested, including Anatolia, Caucasus, Iranian Plateau, Sinai and Zagros mountains (Ilani and Rosenfeld 1994; Key 1980, 242; Rothenberg 1991, 7; Tadmor *et al*. 1995, 141–142). It is possible that metal was smelted using ores from different origins (Shalev and Northover 1993). No ingots have been found so far and the small amorphous lump of arsenic rich metal found at Nahal Qanah resembles a byproduct of production rather than ingot (Golden 1998, 78; 2009b, 56). A possible exception is a rectangular object made of copper rich in arsenic, antimony and lead, discovered at Bir es-Safadi (Golden 1998, 259; 2009b, 144).

Ghassulian copper artefacts

Ever since the publication of the Nahal Mishmar hoard, the copper artefacts of the Ghassulian culture have been divided into two groups: utilitarian and prestigious (Potaszkin and Bar-Avi 1980, 235). According to this division, utilitarian artefacts were cast in open moulds from pure copper, and the prestigious ones were cast in the lost wax technique from alloyed metals. The division is not entirely consistent and lost wax castings have been made from pure copper in few instances and *vice versa* (Key 1980, 239; Moorey 1988, 185). Dividing copper artefacts into prestigious/ritual on the one hand and utilitarian on the other hand, seems even less valid. First, flint tools such as axes and adzes were widely used throughout the Ghassulian (Gonen 1992, 56–58). Second, the so-called utilitarian copper tools, lack use-wear and are either too thin or too long to be practically used (Tadmor *et al*. 1995, 97). In addition, copper artefacts of both groups are found in the same archaeological contexts: production sites, burial caves (Gal *et al*. 1997, 145; Gopher and Tsuk 1996; Gophna and Lifshitz 1980, 8; Perrot and Ladiray 1980, 41, fig. 142.1; Segal 2002) and in Nahal Mishmar (Bar-Adon 1980, 24–133). In fact, the Nahal Mishmar hoard, with its 423 copper objects, constitutes most of the currently known Ghassulian copper artefacts, which is why most studies (e.g. Bar-Adon 1980; Beck 1989; Elliot 1977; Epstein 1978; Gates 1992; Tadmor 1989; Tadmor *et al*. 1995), both of technology and style, have been conducted on the objects from the hoard.

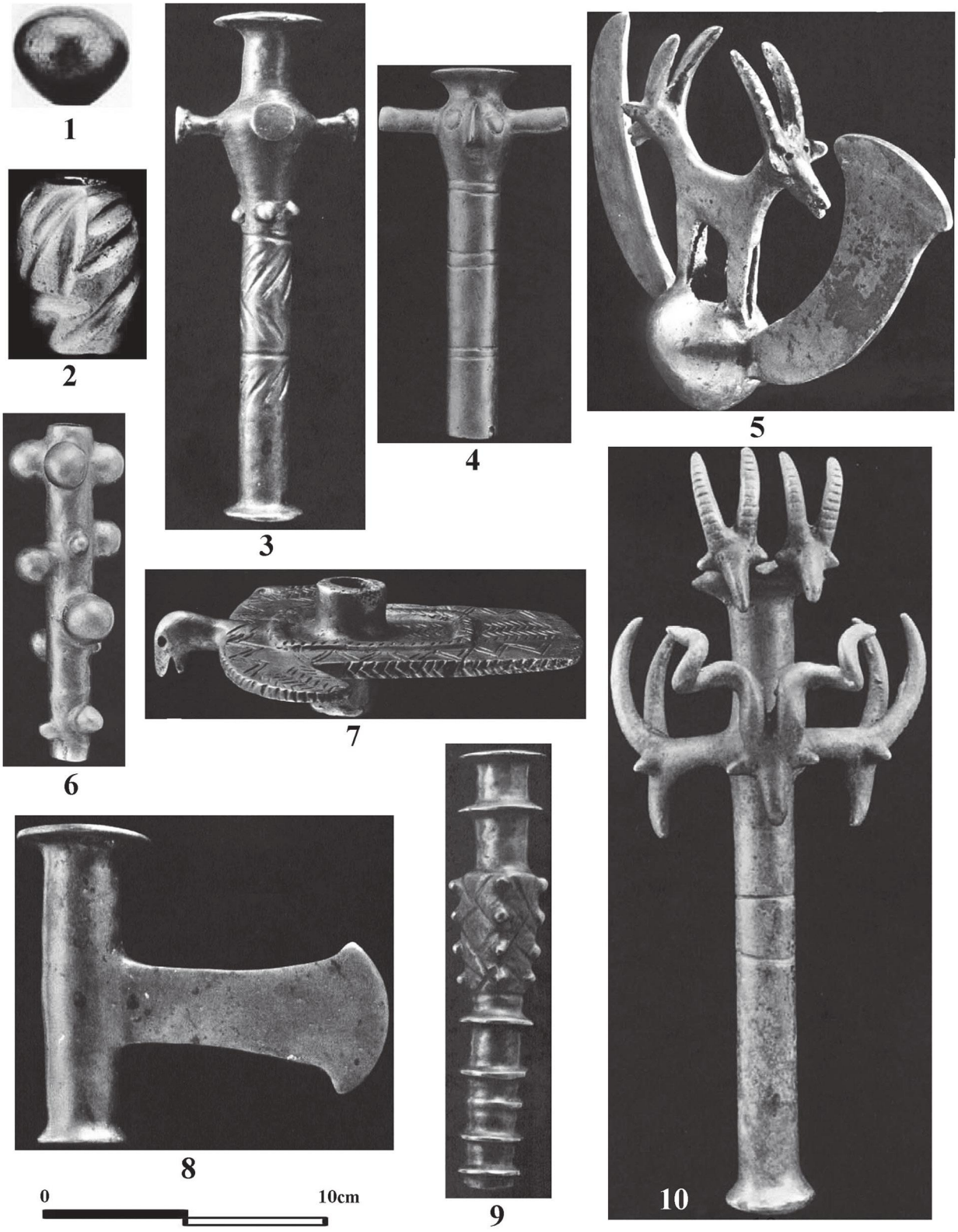


Fig. 14.3: Copper artefacts from the Nahal Mishmar hoard. 1. Macehead (Bar-Adon 1980, 120, no. 184); 2. Macehead (ibid., 118, no. 180); 3. Standard (ibid., 85, no. 110); 4. Standard (ibid., 49, no. 21); 5. Standard (ibid., 101, no. 153); 6. Standard (ibid., 48, no. 20); 7. Standard (ibid., 103, no. 154); 8. Standard (ibid., 98, no. 148); 9. Standard (ibid., 93, no. 129); 10. Standard (ibid., 45, no. 17). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society.

Maceheads

The most frequent Ghassulian copper object is the macehead, with over 240 discovered in the Nahal Mishmar hoard (Bar-Adon 1980, 116–131) and several from other sites (Gopher and Tsuk 1996; Shalev *et al*. 1992). Maceheads have a hole for a shaft and can be spherical, piriform, discoid, triangular and flattened. They are mostly undecorated (Fig. 14.3, 1) and few feature grooves (Fig. 14.3, 2) and vertical lines (Bar-Adon 1980, 118). The interpretation of these decorations might be overly speculative. It is probable they were attached to a shaft and displayed, either in a specific location or in a procession. A macehead was an apparent symbol of political or military power, especially on the basis of comparative Egyptian iconography (Baines 1994, 111).

Standards

Standards (Fig. 14.3, 3–10), the second most frequent artefact type, were also fixed on a shaft, but are composite and more diverse in terms of symbols. Most known Ghassulian standards come from Nahal Mishmar (Bar-Adon 1980, 40–102), but they are known from other sites as well, such as Peqi'in, Nahal Qanah, Palmahim and Giva't HaOranim (Gal *et al*. 1997, 151; Gopher and Tsuk 1991, 19; Gophna and Lifshitz 1980, 8; Namdar *et al*. 2004). Since remains of wood were found inside few of them, (Bar-Adon 1980, 40) suggests that standards were carried on staffs, probably in processions.

Sceptres

Sceptres (Fig. 14.4, 1) are similar in shape and composition to standards, but tend to be elongated, narrower and without a shaft (Bar-Adon 1980, 90–93).

Cylinders – "Crowns"

Copper cylinders (Fig. 14.4, 6) better known as "crowns", have been discovered only in Nahal Mishmar (Bar-Adon 1980, 24–39). The purpose the cylinders were used for is unknown, though it has been suggested that they were used to assemble a portable drum-like altar (Amiran 1985). Ziffer (2007, 54) suggests that they were symbols of political power, used in similar manner as standards and maceheads.

Horns

Three horns were found in the Nahal Mishmar cave (Fig. 14.4, 2). Their shape resembles the horns of plenty from later period (Bar-Adon 1980, 104–105),

Jars

Nahal Mishmar yielded a number of jars, including one with an elongated neck, three basket-like jars and one wide-mouthed jar (Bar-Adon 1980, 106–111).

Open cast mouldings

Objects cast in open mould are adzes, awls, axes, chisels (Fig. 14.4, 4–5) and a hammer (e.g. Bar-Adon 1980; Eldar and Baumgarten 1985; Gal *et al*. 1997; Namdar *et al*. 2004; Shalev and Northover 1987). As has been mentioned, it is likely that these were never used, based on their design, lack of use-wear and abundance of the flint tools in the artefact assemblages.

Skeuomorphic axe

One axe from the Nahal Mishmar hoard stands out in terms of design. The axe (Fig. 14.4, 3) features one sharp and one dull edge and a hole for a shaft in the thickest part of the body (Bar-Adon 1980, 112). Around the hole there is an image of the rope that ties the shaft to the axe. It is a typical example of a skeuomorph: the rope image has no function and only mimics the way a stone axe was tied to a handle. We consider this axe to be of crucial importance for the understanding of the Ghassulian copper metallurgy and we will return to it shortly.

Decoration of the Ghassulian copper artefacts

The symbolic motifs that appear on the Ghassulian copper artefact can be divided into the following categories: (1) anthropomorphic; (2) zoomorphic; (3) floral; (4) tools and weapons as motifs in composite artifacts; (5) abstract; (6) architectural. While the first and the second group are relatively easily identifiable, the definitions of the other groups are somewhat ambiguous.

Anthropomorphic motifs

The first group is relatively easily recognisable (Figs 14.3, 4, Fig. 14.4, 2). The most common anthropomorphic motif is a protruding nose, often shown with two knobs representing eyes. They appear on standards, crowns and horns.

Zoomorphic motifs

The common zoomorphic motifs are ibexes and ibex horns (Figs 14.3, 5 and 10, Fig. 14.4, 2 and 6) and birds (Fig. 14.3, 7, Fig. 14.4, 2 and 6). Some of the animals with shorter horns have been interpreted as goats (Epstein 1978, 29), which would suggest that both wild and domesticated animals are represented. The animal with twisted horns from the Nahal Mishmar standard no. 17 (Fig. 14.3, 10) is possibly Addax or Kudu antelope (Haas in Bar-Adon 1980, 42).

Floral motifs, tools and weapons as motifs and abstract motifs

We choose to present these groups together, as there is yet no consensus for the meaning of all motifs found on the artefacts. Several motifs have been described by Merhav (1993, 41) as floral, who suggests that the bubble-shaped projections on

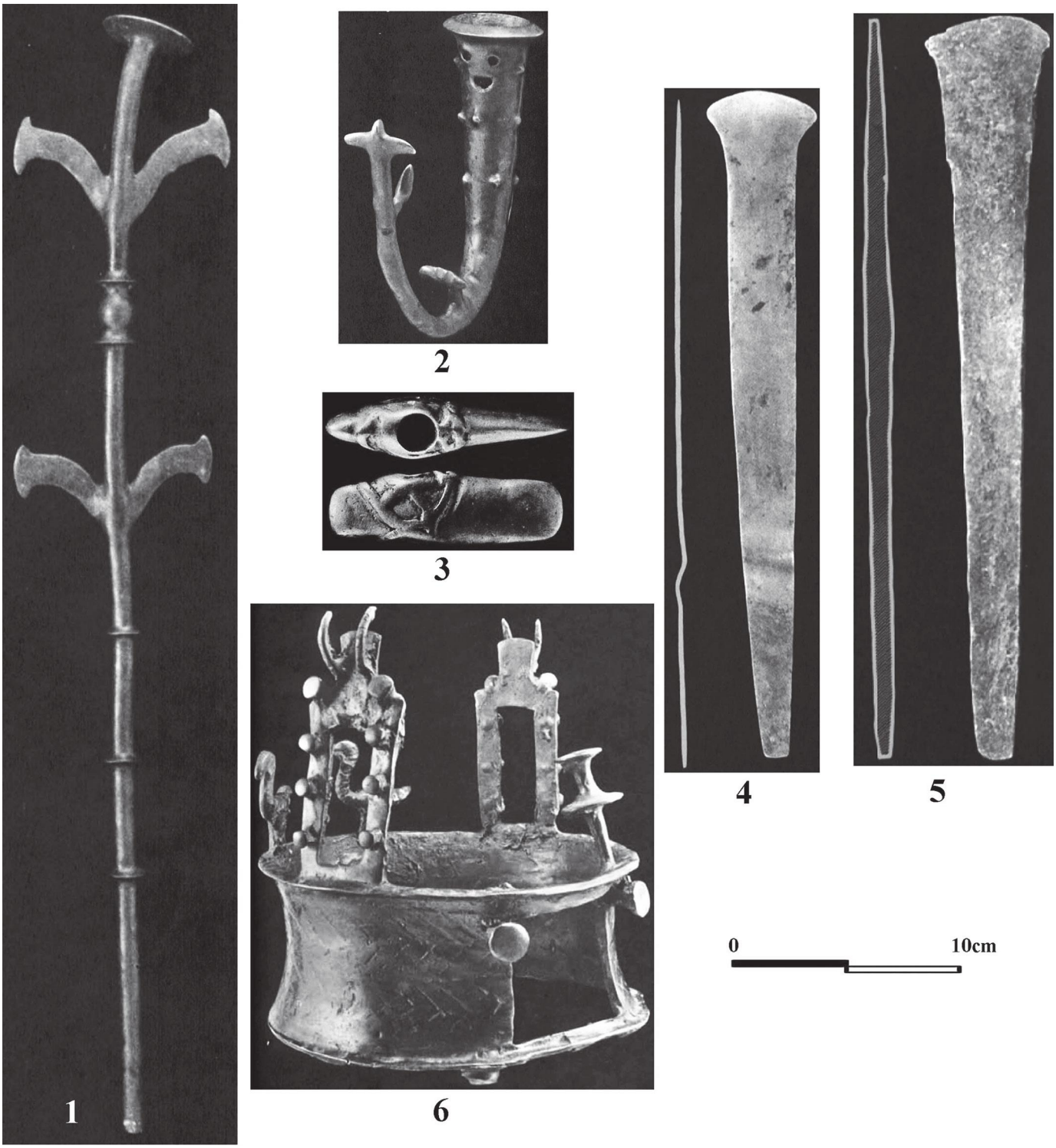


Fig. 14.4. Copper artefacts from the Nahal Mishmar hoard. 1. Sceptre (Bar-Adon 1980, 91, no. 126); 2. Horn (ibid., 104, no. 155); 3. Axe (ibid., 112, no. 163); 4. Chisel (ibid., 113, no. 168); 5. Chisel (ibid., 113, no. 167); 6. Cylinder (ibid., 25, no. 7). Courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society.

standard no. 20 (Fig. 14.3, 6) are grafts on a tree. Merhav (1993, 35) also suggests that the knobs found on several standards (Fig. 14.3, 9) and scepters represent buds. The problem with interpreting knobs as buds, other than the abstractness of the form, is that they are also found on a standard with three ibexes on top, instead of the expected flower, (Bar-Adon 1980, 47). Tools, as parts of the design of standards, constitute the last type of symbols, and include mostly chisels (Fig. 14.3, 5 and 8) and maceheads (Fig. 14.3, 3).

While it is very likely that some standards, such as no. 148 (Fig. 14.3, 8) (Bar-Adon 1980, 98) and no. 153 (Fig. 14.3, 5) (Bar-Adon 1980, 100), are decorated with chisels and a blade, we have shown that similar motifs (Fig. 14.4, 1) have been interpreted either as blades (Merhav 1993, 23) or floral motifs, and even as a branching tree (Epstein 1978, 29). In addition, the discoid image found on many standards and interpreted as a part of a floral motif (Merhav 1993, 35), may represents discoid macehead.

Probably the most frequently repeated symbol on standards and sceptres is a macehead (Fig. 14.3, 3–5), which is also found as an independent copper artefact. Although only several maceheads are decorated, it is frequently the decorated part of a standard and includes also knobs, spiraling curves, diagonal and horizontal ridges, horizontal lines and protrusions similar to the flaring endings of standards (Bar-Adon 1980, 52–87). Other abstract motifs include herring bone (Fig. 14.3, 3 and 7, Fig. 14.4, 6), vertical and diagonal grooves (Fig. 14.3, 2) and ridges. Buds and bulbs interpreted by Merhav as floral motifs could easily be considered abstract as well.

Architectural motifs

Although there are more claims for architectural motifs (Merhav 1993, 35), we discuss here only the "doorways" on the aforementioned cylinder (Fig. 14.4, 6). These have been interpreted as gates of either a temple (Bar-Adon 1980, 133; Epstein 1978, 26; Merhav 1993) or a palace (Ziffer 2007, 53). The fact that there are no palaces in the Ghassulian architecture, even though numerous sites have been excavated, makes the latter interpretation hard to accept.

The situation is somewhat more complex with temples. Architectural elements at Gilat (Alon and Levy 1989; Levy 2006, 835–844), Teleilat Ghassul (Bourke *et al*. 2001; Elliot 1977; Hennessy 1982; Seaton 2008), and En Gedi (Ussishkin 1980), have been interpreted as temples-shrines-sanctuaries. However, it has been shown that this interpretation is problematic for Gilat and some of the structures at Teleilat Ghassul (Gilead 2002). The En Gedi complex (Ussishkin 1980) and structures in Area E at Teleilat Ghassul (Seaton 2008) were likely used for ritual purposes, although "temple" is not the adequate term.

The representations of the door might also signify an entrance to a house. Alternatively, they could also be related to the door representations on ossuaries, which, as we will see soon, are quite common.

Similar motifs in ivory, ceramics and stone

All of the above mentioned motifs are found on Ghassulian artefacts made of other raw materials such as pottery, stone and ivory. These motifs are found on ossuaries, pottery vessels and the Teleilat Ghassul paintings and ivory figurines. Common symbols include what we described above as abstract, anthropomorphic, zoomorphic and architectural elements.

Ceramic ossuaries offer the greatest variety of analogies. They have been found in numerous burial caves, such as Azor (Perrot and Ladiray 1980), Nahal Qanah (Gopher and Tsuk 1996), Peqi'in (Gal *et al*. 1997), and Palmahim (Gophna and Lifshitz 1980). Considering their use and frequent representation of doors, ossuaries can be understood as houses for the deceased that, deposited in a burial cave, represent an ideal village (Elliot 1977, 23). However, they have been interpreted also as temples (Bar-Adon 1980, 132–133; Epstein 1978, 29) and as barns (Bar-Yosef and Ayalon 2001)

Common motifs on ossuaries include anthropomorphic (Epstein 1978, 29, pl. 6c–d; Gal *et al*. 1997, 149, fig. 3; Merhav 1993, 33, fig. 4.5) and zoomorphic motifs (Merhav 1993, 33, fig. 4.3; Milevski 2002, 138–140) as well as doorways (Epstein 1978, 30, pl. 6d; Gophna and Lifshitz 1980, 3, fig. 3; Merhav 1993, 33, fig. 4.3).

Protruding noses found both on ossuaries and on copper artefacts are a common motif of what Epstein (Epstein 1978, 22–23) labels the Golan idols made of basalt. Thus, although the Golanian is an independent cultural entity (Epstein 1998), it is related to the Ghassulian from the chronological (Gilead 2011) and symbolic aspects.

Motifs found in copper artefacts are also found on pottery vessels other than ossuaries. Representations of ibexes has been found on a crater from Qarqar (Fabian 2012). Two unique bird shaped vessels have been found at Palmahim (Gophna and Lifshitz 1980, 4–6) and the spread out wings of the birds resemble the so called bird-shaped standard (Bar-Adon 1980, 102). Two birds are also found on a pottery vessel discovered in Northern Negev (Amiran 1986). The vessel has the same basket handle found on copper jars in Nahal Mishmar. A pottery version of the copper jar is also known from the mortuary site of Kissufim Road (Goren and Fabian 2002, fig. 4.2).

Ceramic figurines with the protruding nose have also been found (Gal *et al*. 1997, 153). The "The Gilat Woman" ceramic figurine (Commenge *et al*. 2006, 742–746; Joffe *et al*. 2001) is sitting on an object similar in shape to a copper crown. Ivory figurines (Perrot 1959) discovered in Bir es-Safadi also have the characteristic Ghassulian nose.

The complete list of analogies between motifs found in copper artefacts and rest of the Ghassulian material culture is too lengthy to be present here, and what we offer is an overview of commonly shared motifs. However, the overview clearly demonstrates that no other medium exhibits the variety of motifs found in copper artefacts.

These common motifs not only connect the copper artefacts with the rest of the Ghassulian material culture world views,

but also affirm that metallurgy should be treated from symbolic and ritual perspectives. In the following section, we will discuss symbolic meanings and ritual significance of these artifacts and the probable process of their production.

The Ghassulian copper symbols in socio-ritual context

The motifs on the copper artefacts represent all aspects of the world of the 5th millennium Southern Levant: people, wildlife, domestic animals, tools, weapons, probably flora, and numerous other abstract motifs, some of which may signify abstract concepts. Admittedly, interpretations of floral motifs, which are of less obvious shape, are more problematic than others, but it is likely that some of the identifications of motifs are correct. In addition, the horns might have been used for liquids, adding other aspects of surrounding biological and material world. Even if we exclude the floral motif and the liquids, the variety of symbols found in copper artifacts is far greater than in any other medium.

We turn now to the axe (Fig. 14.4, 3) mentioned above and the concept of skeuomorphism. Skeuomorph is an artefact, or a part of an artefact, designed to mimic material or appearance other than the one of which the artefact is made. There are different reasons for producing a skeuomorph such as production of ceramic vessels that imitate more valuable metal vessels (Frieman 2010, 37), which is hardly case in the case of a Ghassulian copper axe. Another explanation of skeuomorphism is sympathetic magic (Knappett 2002, 111). The object is made to look like another object, so that it would have magic power over that object, like in the case of voodoo-dolls, suggesting that the person producing such objects is a magician.

In case of Nahal Mishmar axe, a new material and technology are used to produce an artefact in a shape of the well familiar flint axe, which mimics a more common raw material. It is, indeed, a representation of a flint axe in a new medium. Through the creation of this axe, and the creation of axes, chisels and the other artefacts described above, the Ghassulian metal-workers produced ceremonial tools, symbols, and not utilitarian artefacts. In this context in is worth mentioning another ceremonial tool, the sickle made of ivory uncovered at Bir es-Safadi (Perrot 1964, 92, pl. 3.1). In producing the copper artefacts, the smiths demonstrated their power of material transformation, their unprecedented control over the new technology, and through it, symbolically, over the physical world.

The socio-ritual context of Ghassulian metallurgy

Why did the Ghassulians choose copper as the medium in which to express, so diversely, different aspects of their world? Considering the amount and variety of copper objects, as well as the sophistication of their production, we should not assume that this was accidental, but rather look for reasons behind this conscious choice. Copper metallurgy was a newly developed and highly sophisticated technology of the later phase of the Chalcolithic period. It is unknown whether the technology was locally developed since there are no earlier examples of the lost wax technique and the no plausible sources from where the copper-working technology could arrive. Even though there are earlier dates for copper smelting in south-eastern Europe and Iran (Frame 2004; Radivojević *et al*. 2010), the finds are not comparable to the Ghassulian metallurgy in the scale of production, sophistication of the casting techniques and the abundance of artefacts,.

It has been suggested (Goren 2008, 393) that when a new technology develops, it goes through a phase of intensive ritualisation, while the practical use of the products of the technique are only subsequently explored and developed. The Ghassulian metallurgy reflects this phase, both in the nature of the artefacts and their early date. Everyday practical use tends to involve extensive production of simple forms and, while it might appear so in case of maceheads, it is not comparable to the quantities of flint tools. It is problematic to restrict the explanation of prehistoric metalworking to aspects of craft specialisation and economy (e.g. Craddock 1995; 2001; Levy and Shalev 1989; Shugar 2000), since it overlooks the ritual significance of the craft (Budd and Taylor 1995). In addition, the role of ritual in coordinating production is fairly common in pre-industrial societies (Pfaffenberger 1992, 501).

The Ghassulian copper assemblage readily suggests that metallurgy was highly significant for the build-up of the communal identity. Through identity, people perceive themselves and one another as belonging to certain group in which they play an active part (Díaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005, 1). Individuals trace their sense of belonging to a certain group through shared practice and material culture (Casella and Fowler 2005, 7–8). On the one hand, copper artefacts have a potential to serve as the symbols of communal and ritual identity, while on the other hand, a group of individuals, metal-workers, establishes its role and identity within the society through producing such symbols. We have already mentioned the potential magical value of symbolic artefacts, and this probably qualified the Ghassulian metal-worker as a magician. The symbolic role of artefacts suggests that the technology was understood not only in practical terms, but also conceived in the realm of ideas, symbols and beliefs. The active role of artefacts in social interactions, especially ritual, has been discussed extensively, both through study of symbols (Hodder 1982) and material agency (Gell 1998; Knappett and Malafouris 2008). According to Costin (1998, 3), it is during the creation of these artefacts that they become invested with the meaning and power. In other words, if objects are ritual, it is highly probable their production was ceremonial.

This is why we argue that the technology itself – the production process, from preparing the smelting to the finished artefacts – was ritualised. There is ample ethno-historical evidence to support this proposition. The ritual artefacts were

not merely physical products; they were invested with meaning and power to act and communicate during rituals.

Considering in terms of ritualised production the abundant evidence of metalworking at the Nahal Beer Sheva sites, we suggest that those sites emerged not only as the centers of new technology, but also as centers of new ritual practices incorporated in metalworking. Moreover, the distribution of archaeometallurgical debris in the features of the sites, indicate that the ritualised production was not secretive as has been suggested (Levy and Shalev 1989, 366). Even though some metallurgical activities were conducted in the subterranean units (Perrot 1955), there are numerous indications of above-ground activities, including smelting furnaces (Gilead *et al*. 1992; Shalev and Northover 1987). No fencing or isolation of metallurgical installations, which would suggest that the metal-workers intended to keep their practice secret, was reported. Instead, it is more likely that the ritualised production of metals and metal artefacts was a significant ritual event, important for the community in general. The diversity of Ghassulian ritual practices, beyond gods and temples, has been shown (Gilead 2002; Rowan and Ilan 2007) and the metalworking rituals re-affirms this diversity.

Ghassulian metal-workers and copper artefacts as agents

It is common for ritual objects to be conceived as powerful, as being invested with a magical potential and thus, as having a life of their own, as having agency – the ability to influence and contribute significantly to the ritual and its success. Although initially defined as the intentional or unintentional acting power of humans (Giddens 1984, 9), it is considered that artefacts can poses agency too. Gell (1998, 17–21) makes a distinction between *primary* agency of human social agents and *secondary* social agents – objects. This division emphasises both hierarchy and interdependence between different agents; while primary agents have the power to act and affect the world and society, either intentionally or unintentionally, they do so in a material world – a world of objects. Secondary agents provide the medium for action. If a ritual artefact is considered a secondary agent of ritual agency, than the master of ritual – be it a priest, shaman or chief – is the primary agent, who exercises its power through ability to control and direct the ritual.

In case of the Ghassulian copper metallurgy, the most apparent control is in the hands of the smith, who transforms the ore – rock – to metal and casts it into symbols with ritual agency. The artefacts did not suddenly turn out to be ritual during the ceremony – they were made ritual. Investing them with the ritual and magic agency was part of their production and we suggest that the Ghassulians used copper solely for rituals. Although pottery and lime-plaster have been produced earlier, these transformations are neither as striking nor as obvious as turning stone into metal. The heath and the vivid colours of the smelting furnace must have dramatised the process, making it an even more extraordinary event. The research of Ghassulian metallurgy concentrates mainly on rational-technological aspects of the craft although it has been shown that the ritual-rational dichotomy, so embedded in the contemporary western thought, is not universal but rather a modern social construct (Brück 1999).

Ritualisation of metalworking

The transformational nature of metallurgy has been often emphasised as the reason for its frequent ritualisation. Looking at it this way, it is not surprising that in many societies – from Siberia to Africa – there are cases of smiths being either closely related to shamans or priests, or of smiths being religious figures (Cline 1937, 131–139). The problem is that it is impossible to excavate the ritual, and the archaeological materials are somewhat limited on their own, which is why we turn to ethnography.

Metallurgy can be ritualised either through myths and legends, through ritualisation of the actual metalworking, or both. Examples that demonstrate this have been documented around the world, and the most numerous and detailed reports come from Africa. We will offer here only a brief overview of the aspects of ritualisation.

Among the peoples of Siberia metallurgy is ritualised and the famous saying "Smith and shaman come from the same nest" comes from the Siberian Yakuts (Eliade 1978, 81). Their initiation rites of novice smiths have been documented (Popov 1933, 262) as well as myths relating the smith not only to the shaman, but also to the civilising hero (Eliade 1978, 82). The role of the smith as the civilising hero, who brought agriculture, metalworking and social organisation, prevails in numerous African mythologies (Eliade 1978, 93; Herbert 1993, 32, 151–155; Richards 1981, 226–227, 232). Smiths are also frequent participants of ancient Greek myths (Blakely 2006; Sawyer 1986) and in Canaanite and Sumerian myths (Dietrich and Loretz 1999; Hallo 1971; Kramer and Maier 1989). Famous smiths are known from the Bible as well (Lewy 1950–1951; Sawyer 1986).

Rituals start with the preparation for smelting and are too elaborate to be described in detail. Most common is the engendering of metallurgy, making it a process where metal is borne out of a sexual intercourse between female and male entities (Eliade 1978; Goucher and Herbert 1996; Herbert 1993; Richards 1981; Schmidt 1996b; 1997; 2009). Thus, objects such as furnaces, bellows, tuyères, etc, acquire the role of female, male or specific reproductive organs. Connection with ancestors is often considered important and is mostly exercised through chants and prayers during the process (Herbert 1993, 60–70; Richards 1981, 229) or in the contents of medicines used. Medicines are substances used during the smelting to ensure the successful outcome of the process. The lists of medicines are long (e.g. Cline 1937, 130–139; Goucher and Herbert 1996,

44; van der Merve and Avery 1986, 253–254, 256–257) and commonly include anything from slag leftovers from ancestral smelts to blood and body parts of scarified animals and plants otherwise used to treat infertility or other conditions. Taboos are also an important part of the metallurgical ritualisation and relate, mostly but not exclusively, to the exclusion of women from the process (Brandon 1996, 69; Goucher and Herbert 1996, 46; Herbert 1993, 92–94; Schmidt 1996a, 78–93; van der Merve and Avery 1986, 254).

There is a consensus concerning the magical quality of those rituals (Herbert 1984; Richards 1981; Schmidt 2009; van der Merve and Avery 1986) and it has been noted (Gilead 2002, 122), that it is sensible to assume that magic, considering its universal nature, was practiced by the Ghassulians as well. The aforementioned examples support our idea that Ghassulian metallurgy, which was a newly adopted practice, was conceived in the realm of magic and ritual. The purpose of looking into these ethnographic examples is not to draw direct analogies, but to look for the common aspects of magic and ritual in traditional metallurgies.

Metallurgy, Nahal Beer Sheva and secondary burials: late Ghassulian developments

We discussed earlier the Chalcolithic metallurgy of the Southern Levant as a late Ghassulian phenomenon. We have also emphasised that the introduction of metallurgy was not the only change that occurred in the transition between the early and late Ghassulian.

The shift of the bulk of the northern Negev settlements towards the Nahal Beer Sheva area (Gilead 2011, 19–20) is worth noting. This is reflected in the fact that the phase is sometimes referred to as the Ghassul-Beersheba culture (Perrot 1955, 183). While it is difficult to argue that the Nahal Beer Sheva sites owe their establishment to metallurgy, it is plausible that major sites, such as Gilat and Teleilat Ghassul, declined due to the new technology practiced in the Nahal Beer Sheva sites. Copper metallurgy became a new manifestation of Ghassulian spirit and ritual behavior, and the smiths attained a ritual status and power. Petrographic analyses of pottery assemblages from different sites carried out by Goren (1995) show that the pottery assemblage of Nahal Mishmar is the most diversified in this part of the country since it included ceramics that originated from a number of regions. This observation not only refutes the relations between Nahal Mishmar and En Gedi, as suggested by Ussishkin (1971) and Goren (2008), but also establish the hoard as a ritual assemblage that represented different regional Ghassulians settlement.

Ghassulian metallurgy introduced a new ritual behavior, starting with metal-smelting, through shaping of the artefact, to the use of the finished artefacts in rituals. Its transformational quality demonstrated the unprecedented control of the smiths over the material world and suggests that they were most influential members in their communities. Levy (1986a, 1998) defines the social organisation of the Ghassulians "chiefdom" with a group or an individual in power imposing control over smiths and their production. However, there is no clear evidence of such a society in Chalcolithic times (Gilead 1988, 434). Furthermore, the abovementioned examples of metal-workers being also masters of rituals make it more likely that the smiths were masters of their craft and masters of ritual.

Copper working and secondary burials: two aspects of ritual change

Beyond the introduction of metallurgy and its related rituals, burial customs also changed in late Ghassulian times. There are 91 primary burials at Gilat, an early Ghassulian site (Gilead 2011). They are located in an open space in the southern part of the site, near the alleged sanctuary (Smith *et al*. 2006, 337). Even though inhumations and dislocated burial have been found in Nahal Beer Sheva late Ghassulian settlements, such as Abu Matar (Perrot 1955, 173), they differ from those of Gilat since burials were found in variety of contexts, including burials below walls (Perrot 1955, 173–174) and small burials in stone construction (Perrot 1955, 176).

The only place in the Nahal Beer Sheva that is associated with cemeteries is the late Ghassulian site of Shiqmim, where mortuary customs are quite different from those of Gilat. Cemetery 1, located near Mezad Aluf (Levy and Alon 1982, 42–46), features 22 mortuary stone circles. Skeletal remains consist of disarticulated limb and cranial bones of minimum 49 individuals, indicative of secondary burials. Cemetery 3 (Levy and Alon 1987) features both cists and grave circles. Cists were used as receptacles for the decaying bodies and were located in the close proximity to the grave circles. Like Cemetery 1, grave circles contained mostly limb and cranial bones, typical of secondary burial. Fragments of ossuaries that were found in Grave Circle 23 at Cemetery 3 further demonstrate the similarity of burial practices at the Shiqmim cemeteries and in the secondary burial caves.

We discuss above the late Ghassulian date of the off-site cemeteries for secondary burial, mostly in caves. These cemeteries feature ossuaries with the above mentioned architectural, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic motifs, signifying close symbolic ties to copper artefacts, few of which found in these burial grounds. The secondary burials and the copper artifacts are of the same cultural phase; share the same set of symbols and, frequently, the same archaeological context. They are two facets of a wider ritual change that occurred in Ghassulian.

The connection between metallurgy and burial-related rituals is may be best illustrated by Nahal Mishmar and its hoard. The Nahal Mishmar hoard was discovered in a niche in a cave chamber (Bar-Adon 1980) and it does not seem that the hoard comes from a burial (Ilan in Golden 2009b, 63). Nonetheless, its location in the cave points to the significance of the cave as a ritual/sacred place.

Several hypotheses attempt to explain the origin and the meaning of the hoard. It has been suggested that the hoard originated in En Gedi (Goren 2008; Ussishkin 1971), although a previous study negated such an option (Goren 1995). Tadmor (1989) suggests that the hoard belonged to traders since the artefacts were made of different alloys which implies that objects were produced by different craftsmen who had access to various ores. Gates' (1992) explanation, fairly similar to that of Tadmor's, suggests that the hoard belonged to nomadic pastoralists who were also the craftsmen. Her explanation focuses on the repair patches found on some of the artefacts (e.g. Bar-Adon 1980, 35, 38, 75). Garfinkel (1994, 176) suggests by that the hoard is an intentional burial of worn out ritual paraphernalia. However, most of the artefacts are not damaged and other reasons for their disposal must be sought.

We suggest that the copper artefacts should be understood in terms of their "life histories" and the ritual behavior of their makers. It is probable that as a ritual cycle has come to an end, so did the "life" of the objects. Whatever the reason, artifacts were laid to rest and their concealed disposal in a cave signifies their vanishing from the community of living, similar to the custom of concealing the dead in the secondary burial caves,

Conclusions

We have shown that the Ghassulian copper artefacts exhibit a variety of symbols such as zoomorphic, architectural, abstract and probably floral and political. Those symbols should not be understood as signifying deities, either unknown (e.g. Elliot 1977) or deities from later periods in the Near East, such as Inanna, Domuzi, etc. (e.g. Merhav 1993), but rather as symbols of the Ghassulian physical and spiritual worlds. Copper artefacts such as chisels and adzes should not be regarded as utilitarian tools but rather as symbolic signifiers of a yet unknown nature. As we have mentioned, they have no use-wear and were unfit for practical usage. The most illustrative example of a tool symbol is the axe with decoration resembling a rope that tied a stone axe to its handle. The shaft-hole suggests that it was displayed in a ritual in a manner similar to the way maceheads and standards were displayed.

Beyond their symbolic decoration, the actual processes of smelting and casting these artefacts should be understood in terms of ritual behavior. The contemporary western understanding of metallurgy is fairly recent and it cannot reflect the way metalworking was practiced and conceived by the Ghassulians. The symbolic and ritual nature of the artifacts supports this claim. Understanding metallurgy, beyond its technical aspects, as a ritual practice, has implications on our understanding of the ritual practices of the late Ghassulians. We assume that metalworking, in the Nahal Beer Sheva sites for example, was a ritual practice of its own right. The master of the craft created copper artefacts as a master of ritual. By transforming the stone into metal and further casting it into sacred symbols, he demonstrated his unprecedented control over the material world.

Several features characterise the late phase of the Ghassulian, after centres such as Gilat and Teleilat Ghassul declined: sites along the Nahal Beer Sheva were established, metallurgy emerged and secondary burial becomes predominant. Even though the late Ghassulian continues in many aspects the early Ghassulian, the transition to the late phase signifies a dramatic change in world views and ritual.

It is difficult to relate the introduction of metallurgy to the emergence of secondary burial in off-site cemeteries and to the prominence of the Nahal Beer Sheva sites. However, it seems that this change was most pronounced in the ritual sphere and it might be that controlling the new ritual behavior – the metalworking – was crucial for the growing importance of the Nahal Beer Sheva sites.

Secondary burials sites, mostly in caves, are also a late Ghassulian feature. This custom can be tied to the copper artefacts on two grounds. To start, copper artifacts are found in the caves with secondary burials. In addition, we have demonstrated the close symbolic ties between the ossuaries, funerary offerings and copper artefacts. In this context, we regard the Nahal Mishmar hoard as an intentional cave burial of copper artefacts. Even though we cannot yet explain the relationship between metallurgy and secondary burials, both signify a clear ritual shift between early and late Ghassulian.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Dr Nicola Laneri for inviting us to participate in the workshop "Defining the Sacred: Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion in the Near East" at the 8th ICAANE meetings, Warsaw 2012. We are also most thankful to the Israel Exploration Society on granting us the permissions to use the photographs of the copper artifacts and to Patrice Kaminski, who arranged the photographs into figures. We would like to thank Janet Levy and Karni Golan for their useful comments.

Bibliography

Albright, W. F. (1932) The Chalcolithic Age in Palestine. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 48, 10-13.

Alon, D. and Levy, T. E. (1989) The Archaeology of Cult and the Chalcolithic Sanctuary at Gilat. *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 2, 163–221.

Amiran, R. (1985) A Suggestion to See the Copper 'Crowns' of the Judean Desert Treasure as Drums of Stand-like Altars. In J. N. Tubb (ed.) *Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages: Papers in Honour of Olga Tufnell*, 10–14. London, Institute of Archaeology.

Amiran, R. (1986) A New Type of Chalcolithic Ritual Vessel and Some Implications for the Nahal Mishmar Hoard. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 262, 83–87.

Baines, J. (1994) Origins of Egyptian Kingship. In D. O'Connor and D. P. Silverman (eds) *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*, 95–156. Leiden, New York and Köln, E. J. Brill.

Bar-Adon, P. (1980) *The Cave of the Treasure.* Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Bar-Yosef, O. and Ayalon, E. (2001) The Chalcolithic Ossuaries – What Are They and What Do They Imitate (in Hebrew). *Qadmoniot* 38–39, 34–43.

Beck, P. (1989) Notes on the Style and Iconography of the Chalcolithic Hoard from Nahal Mishmar. In A. Jr. Leonard and B. B. Williams (eds) *Essays in Ancient Civilizations Presented to J. Helene Kantor*, 39–54. Chicago, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Blakely, S. (2006) *Myth, Ritual, and Metallurgy in Ancient Greece and Recent Africa*. Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press.

Bourke, S., Lawson, E., Lovell, J., Hua, Q., Zoppi, U. and Barbetti, M. (2001) The Chronology of the Ghassulian Period in the Southern Levant: New ^{14}C Determinations from Teleilat Ghassul, Jordan. *Radiocarbon* 43, 1217–1222.

Brandon, R. (1996) Fipa Ironworking and Its Technological Style. In P. R. Schmidt (ed.), *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production*, 58–73. Gainesville, University Press of Florida.

Bronk Ramsey, C. (2009) Bayesian Analysis of Radiocarbon Dates. *Radiocarbon* 51/1, 337–360.

Brück, J. (1999) Ritual and Rationality: Some Problems of Interpretation in European Archaeology. *European Journal of Archaeology* 2, 313–344.

Budd, P. and Taylor, T. (1995) The Faerie Smith Meets the Bronze Industry: Magic Versus Science in the Interpretation of Prehistoric Metal-making. *World Archaeology* 27, 133–143.

Carmi, I. (1996) Radiocarbon Dates. In A. Gopher and T. Tsuk*, The Nahal Qanah Cave, Earliest Gold in the Southern Levant*, 205–208. Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University.

Carmi, I. and Segal, D. (2005) The Radiocarbon Dates from Cave 4. In E. C. M. van den Brink and R. Gophna*, Shoham (North). Late Chalcolithic Burial Cave in the Lod Valley, Israel*, 163. Jerusalem, Israel Antiquities Authority.

Casella, E. C. and Fowler, C. (2005) Beyond Identification: An Introduction. In E. C. Casella and C. Fowler (eds) *The Archaeology of Plural And Changing Identities Beyond Identification*, 1–8. New York, Springer.

Cline, W. (1937) *Mining and Metallurgy in Negro Africa*. Mewnasha WI, Gorge Banta.

Commenge, C., Levy, T. E., Alon, D. and Kansa, E. (2006) Gilat's Figurines: Exploring the Social and Symbolic Dimesions of Representation. in T. E. Levy (ed.) *Archaeology, Anthropology and Cult. The Sanctuary at Gilat, Israel*, 739–830. London, Equinox.

Costine, C. L. (1998) Introduction: Craft and Social Identity. *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 8/1, 3–16.

Craddock, P. T. (1995) *Early Metal Mining and Production.* Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.

Craddock, P. T. (2001) From Hearth to Furnace: Evidences for the Earliest Metal Smelting Technologies in the Eastern Mediterranean. *Paléorient* 26, 151–165.

Díaz-Andreu, M. and Lucy, S. (2005) Introduction. In M. Díaz-Andreu, S. Lucy, S. Babic and D. Edwards (eds) *The Archaeology of Identity. Approaches to Gender, Age, Status, Ethnicity and Religion*, 1–12. London and New York, Routledge.

Dietrich, M. and Loretz, O. (1999) Das ugaritische Gottesattribut ḫrš "Weiser, handwerklich Tüchtiger." Eine Studie über die Götter El, Ea/Enki, Kṯr-w-ḫss und Hyn. *Ugarit Forschungen* 31, 165–173.

Eldar, I. and Baumgarten, Y. (1985) Neve Noy, a Chalcolithic Site of the Beer Sheba Culture. *Biblical Archaeologist* 48, 134–139.

Eliade, M. (1978) *The Forge and the Crucible,* 2nd edn. Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press.

Elliot, C. (1977) The Religious Beliefs of the Ghassulians *c.* 4000–3100 B.C. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 109, 3–25.

Epstein, C. (1978) Aspects of Symbolism in Chalcolithic Palestine Essays for Kathleen Kenyon. In R. Moorey and P. Parr (eds) *Archaeology in the Levant*, 23–35. Warminster, Aris and Phillips.

Epstein, C. (1998) *The Chalcolithic Culture of the Golan*, Israel Antiquities Authority Report 4. Jerusalem, Israel Antiquity Authority.

Fabian, P. (2012) Horbat Qarqar. Preliminary Report. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 124. accessed 18 September 2012.

Frame, L. (2004) 'Investigations at Tal-i Iblis: Evidence for Copper Smelting During the Chalcolithic Period. Massachusetts, Institute of Technology.

Frieman, C. (2010) Imitation, Identity and Communication: The Presence and Problems of Skeuomorphs. In B. V. Eriksen (ed.) *Lithic Technology in the Metal Using Societies. Proceedings of the UISPP Workshop, Lisbon, September 2006*, 33–44. Højbjerg, Jutland Archaeological Society.

Gal, Z., Smithline, H. and Shalem, D. (1997) A Chalcolithic Burial Cave in Peqi'in, Upper Galilee. *Israel Exploration Journal* 47, 145–154.

Garfinkel, Y. (1994) Ritual Burial of Cultic Objects: The Earliest Evidence. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 4/2, 159–188.

Gates, M.-H. (1992) Nomadic Pastoralists and the Chalcolithic Hoard from Nahal Mishmar *Levant* XXIV, 131–139.

Gell, A. (1998) *Art and Agency. An Anthropological Theory.* Oxford, Clarendon Press.

Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration.* Cambridge, Polity Press.

Gilead, I. (1988) The Chalcolithic Period in the Levant. *Journal of World Prehistory* 2/4, 397–443.

Gilead, I. (1993) Sociopolitical Organization in the Northern Negev at the End of the Chalcolithic Period. In A. Biran and J. Aviram (eds) *Biblical Archaeology Today, Supplement*, 82–97. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Gilead, I. (1994) The History of the Chalcolithic Settlement in the Nahal Beer Sheva Area: the Radiocarbon Aspect. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 296, 1–13.

Gilead, I. (2002) Religio-magic Behavior in the Chalcolithic Period of Palestine. In S. Ahituv and E. D. Oren (eds) *Aaron Kempinski Memorial Volume, Studies in Archaeology and Related Disciplines*, 103–28, Beer Sheva, Studies by the Department of Bible and Ancient Near East, XV. Beer Sheva, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press.

Gilead, I. (2007) The Besorian: A Pre-Ghassulian Cultural Entity. *Paléorient* 33, 33–49.

Gilead, I. (2011) Chalcolithic Culture History: the Ghassulian and Other Entities in the Southern Levant. In J. L. Lovell and Y. M Rowan (eds), *Culture, Chronology and the Chalcolithic. Theory and Transition*, 12–24, Levant Supplementary Series. Oxford, Council for British Research in the Levant.

Gilead, I. and Fabian, P. (2001) Nevatim: a site of the Chalcolithic period in the Northern Negev. In A. M. Maeir and E. Baruch (eds) *Settlement, Civilization and Culture; Proceedings of the Conference in Memory of David Alon*, 67–86 (in Hebrew). Ramat-Gan, Bar-Ilan University.

Gilead, I., Rosen, S. and Fabian, P. (1992) New archaeo-Metallurgical Evidence for the Beginning of Metallurgy in the Southern Levant. Excavations at Tell Abu Matar Beersheba (Israel) 1990/1991. *Institute for Archaeo-Metallurgical Studies* 18, 11–14.

Golden, J. M. (1998). The Dawn of the Metal Age. Doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania.

Golden, J. M. (2009a) New Light on the Development of Chalcolithic Metal Technology in the Southern Levant. *Journal of World Prehistory* 22/3, 283–300.

Golden, J. M. (2009b) *Dawn of the Metal Age. Technology and Society During the Levantine Chalcolithic.* London and Oakville, Equinox.

Golden, J. M., Levy, T. E. and Hauptmann, A. (2001). Recent Discoveries Concerning Chalcolithic Metallurgy at Shiqmim, Israel. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 28/9, 951–963.

Gonen, R. (1992) The Chalcolithic Period. In A. Ben-Tor (ed.) *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, 40–80. New Haven, Yale University Press.

Gopher, A. and Tsuk, T. (1991) *Ancient Gold. Rare Finds from the Nahal Qanah Cave.* Jerusalem, The Israel Museum.

Gopher, A. and Tsuk, T. (1996) *The Nahal Qanah Cave, Earliest Gold in the Southern Levant* (Monographs Series of the Institute of Archaeology 12. Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University.

Gophna, R. and Lifshitz, S. (1980) A Chalcolithic Burial Cave at Palmahim. *'Atiqot* 14, 1–8.

Goren, Y. (1995) Shrines and Ceramics in Chalcolithic Israel: the View Through the Petrographic Microscope. *Archaeometry* 37, 287–305.

Goren, Y. (2008) The Location of Specialized Copper Production by the Lost Wax Technique in the Chalcolithic Southern Levant. *Geoarchaeology* 23/3, 374–397.

Goren, Y. and Fabian, P. (2002) *The Chalcolithic Mortuary Site at Kissufim Road, Israel* (ed. Israel Antiquities Authority, Israel Antiquities Authority Report 16). Jerusalem, Israel Antiquities Authority.

Goucher, C. L. and Herbert, E. W. (1996) The Blooms of Banjeli: Technology and Gender in West African Iron Making. In P. R. Schmidt (ed.) *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production*, 40–57. Gainesville, University Press of Florida.

Hallo, W. W. (1971) Antediluvian Cities. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 23/3, 57–67.

Hauptmann, A. (1989) The Earliest Periods of Copper Metallurgy in Feinan/Jordan. In A. Hauptmann, E. Pernicka and G. A. Wagner (eds), *Old World Archaeometallurgy: Proceedings of the International Symposium "Old World Archaeometallurgy", Heidelberg 1987*, 119–136. Bochum, Selbstverlag des Deutschen Bergbau-Museums.

Hennessy, J. B. (1982) Teleilat Ghassul: its place in the Archaeology of Jordan. In A. Hadidi (ed.) *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* I, 55–58. Amman, Department of Antiquities.

Herbert, E. W. (1984) *Red Gold in Africa, Copper in Precolonial History and Culture.* Madison WI, University of Wisconsin Press.

Herbert, E. W. (1993) *Iron, Gender and Power: Rituals and Transformation in African Societies.* Bloomington and Indianapolis IN, Indiana University Press.

Hodder, I. (1982) *Symbols in Action: Ethnoarchaeological Studies of Material Culture.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Ilani, S. and Rosenfeld, A. (1994). Ore Source of Arsenic Copper Tools from Israel during Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age.*Terra Nova* 6, 177–179.

Joffe, A. H., Dessel, J. P. and Hallote, R. S. (2001) The "Gilat Woman" Female Iconography, Chalcolithic Cult and the End of Southern Levantine Prehistory. *Near Eastern Archaeology* 64, 9–23.

Key, C. A. (1980) The Trace-Element Composition of the Copper and Copper Alloy Artifacts of the Nahal Mishmar Hoars. In P. Bar-Adon, 238–43. *The Cave of the Treasures.* Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Knappett, C. (2002) Photographs, Skeuomorphs and Marionettes. Some Thoughts on Mind, Agency and Object. *Journal of Material Culture* 7/1, 97–117.

Knappett, C. and Malafouris, L. (eds) (2008) *Material Agency. Towards a Non-Anthropocentric Approach.* New York, Springer.

Kramer, S. N. and Maier, J. R. (1989) *Myths of Enki, the Crafty God.* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Levy, T. E. (1986a) Social Archaeology and the Chalcolithic Period: Explaining Social Organizational Change during the 4th Millennium in Israel. *Michmanim* 3, 5–20.

Levy, T. E. (1986b) The Chalcolithic Period. *Biblical Archaeologist* 49, 82–108.

Levy, T. E. (1998) Cult, Metallurgy and Ranked Societies – the Chalcolithic Period (ca. 4500–3500 BCE). In T. E. Levy (ed.) *The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, 226–245. London, Leicester University Press.

Levy, T. E. (2006) Conclusion: The Evolution of a Levantine Prehistoric Regional Cult Center. In T. E. Levy (ed.) *Archaeology, Anthropology and Cult. The Sanctuary at Gilat, Israel*, 831–46. London, Equinox.

Levy, T. E. and Alon, D. (1982) The Chalcolithic Mortuary Site near Mezad Aluf, Northern Negev Desert: A Preliminary Study. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 248, 37–59.

Levy, T. E. and Shalev, S. (1989) 'Prehistoric Metalworking in the Southern Levant: Archaeometallurgical and Social Perspectives. *World Archaeology* 20, 352–372.

Levy, T. E. and Alon, D. (1987) Excavations in Shiqmim Cemetery 3: Final Report on the 1982 Season. In T. E. Levy (ed.) *Shiqmim I. Studies Concerning Chalcolithic Societies in the Northern Negev Desert, Israel (1982–1984)*, 333–355, British Archaeological Report International Series 256. Oxford, British Archaeological Reports.

Lewy, J. (1950–1951) Tabor, Tibar, Atabyros. *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23/1, 357–386.

Merhav, R. (1993) Scepters of the Divine from the Cave of the Treasure at Nahal Mishmar'. In M. Heltzer, A. Segal, and D. Kaufman (eds) *Studies in the Archaeology and History of Ancient Israel in Honour of Moshe Dothan*, 21–42 (in Hebrew). Haifa, Haifa University Press.

Milevski, I (2002) A New Fertility Figurine and New Animal Motifs from the Chalcolithic in the Southern Levant: Finds from Cave K-1 at Quleh, Israel. *Paléorient* 28, 133–141.

Moorey, P. R. S. (1988) 'The Chalcolithic Hoard from Nahal Mishmar, Israel, in Context. *World Archaeology* 20, 171–189.

Namdar, D., Segal, I., Goren, Y. and Shalev, S. (2004) Chalcolithic Copper Artifacts. In N. Scheftelowitz and R. Oren (eds) *Giv'at ha-Oranim. A Chalcolithic Site*, 70–8. Tel Aviv, Tel Aviv University Press.

Neuville, R. (1930) Notes de Préhistore Palestinienne. *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* X, 193–221.

Perrot, J. (1955) The Excavations at Tell Abu Matar near Beersheba. *Israel Exploration Journal* 5, 17–40, 73–84, 167–189.

Perrot, J. (1959) Les statuettes en ivoire de Beershéva. *Syria* 34, 6–19.

Perrot, J. (1964) Les ivoires de la 7e campagne a Safadi près de Beershéva. *Eretz-Israel* 7, 92*–93*.

Perrot, J. and Ladiray, D. (1980), *Tombes à ossuaries de la région côtiere palestinienne au IV^e millénaire avant l'ère chrétiene.* Paris, Association Paléorient.

Pfaffenberger, B. (1992) Social Anthropology of Technology. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21, 491–516.

Popov, A. (1933) Consecrational ritual for Blacksmith Novice Among the Yakuts. *Journal of American Folk-Lore,* 46/181, 257–171.

Potaszkin, R. and Bar-Avi, K. (1980) A Material Investigation of the Metal Objects from the Nahal Mishmar Treasure. In P. Bar-Adon*, The Cave of the Treasure*, 235–237. Jerusalem, Israel Exploration Society.

Radivojević, M., Rehren, Th., Pernicka, E., Sljivar, D., Brauns, M. and Boric, D. (2010) On the Origins of Extractive Metallurgy: New Evidence from Europe. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 37/11, 2775–2287.

Richards, D. (1981) The Nyama of the Blacksmith: The Metaphysical Significance of the Metallurgy in Africa. *Journal of Black Studies* 12/2, 218–238.

Rothenberg, B. (1991) The Ghassulian-Beersheva Chalcolithic Enigma. *Institute for Archaeo-Metallurgical Studies* 17, 6–7.

Rowan, Y. M. and Ilan, D. (2007) The Meaning of Ritual Diversity in the Chalcolithic of the Southern Levant. In D. A. Barrowclough and C. Malone (eds), *Cult in Context. Reconsidering Ritual in Archaeology*, 249–256 Oxford, Oxbow Books.

Rowan, Y. M. and Golden, J. M. (2009) The Chalcolithic Period of the Southern Levant: A Synthetic Review. *Journal of World Prehistory* 22/1, 1–92.

Sawyer, J. F. A. (1986) Cain and Hephaestus. *Abr-Nahrain* 24, 155–166.

Schmidt, P. R. (1996a) Reconfiguring the Barongo: Reproductive Symbolism and Reproduction among a Work Association of Iron Smelters. In P. R. Schmidt (ed.), *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production*, 74–127. Gainesville, University Press of Florida.

Schmidt, P. R. (1997) *Iron Technology in East Africa: Symbolism, Science, and Archaeology.* Bloomington IN, Indiana University Press.

Schmidt, P. R. (2009) Tropes, Materiality and Ritual Embodiment of African Iron Smelting Furnaces as Human Figures. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 16, 262–282.

Schmidt, P. R. (ed.) (1996b) *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production.* Gainesville FL, University Press of Florida.

Seaton, P. (2008) *Chalcolithic Cult and Risk Management at Teleilat Ghassul. The Area E Sanctuary*, British Archaeological Report International Series 1864. Oxford, Archaeopress.

Segal, D., Carmi, I. Gal, Z., Smithlinei, H. and Shalemi, D. (1998) Dating a Chalcolithic Burial Cave in Peqi'in, Upper Galilee, Israel. *Radiocarbon* 40/2, 707–712.

Segal, I. (2002) The Copper Axe at Cave V/49, Jebel Quruntul. *Atiqot* 41, 99–100.

Shalev, S. and Northover, P. J. (1987) Chalcolithic Metalworking from Shiqmim. In T. E. Levy (ed.), *Shiqmim I, Studies Concerning Chalcolithic Societies in the Northern Negev Desert, Israel (1982–1984)*, 357–371, British Archaeological Report International Series 359. Oxford, British Archaeological Reports.

Shalev, S. and Northover, P. J. (1993) The Metallurgy of the Nahal Mishmar Hoard Reconsidered. *Archaeometry* 34, 35–41.

Shalev, S., Goren, Y., Levy, T. E. and Northover, J. P. (1992) A Chalcolithic Mace Head from the Negev, Israel: Technological Aspects and Cultural Implications. *Archaeometry* 34, 63–71.

Shugar, A. N. (1998) Recent Research in Chalcolithic Metallurgy: Investigation of Abu Matar, Israel. *International Mining and Minerals* 1/5, 114–116.

Shugar, A. N (2000) Archaeometallurgical Investigation of the Chalcolithic Site of Abu Matar, Israel: a Reassessment of Technology and its Implications for the Ghassulian Culture. Ph.D. thesis University College London.

Shugar, A. N. and Gohm, C. J. (2011) Developmental Trends in Chalcolithic Copper Metallurgy: A Radiometric Perspective. In J. Lovell and Y. M. Rowan (eds) *Culture, Chronology and the Chalcolithic. Theory and Transition,* 133–148. Oxford, Oxbow Books.

Smith, P. Zagerson, T., Sabari P., Golden, J. M., Levy, T. E. and Dawson, L. (2006) Death and the Sanctuary: the Human Remains from Gilat. In T. E. Levy (ed.) *Archaeology, Anthropology and Cult, the Sanctuary at Gilat*, 327–366. London, Equinox.

Tadmor, M. (1989) The Judean Desert Treasure from Nahal Mishmar: A Chalcolithic Traders' Hoard? In A. Jr. Leonard and B. B. Williams (eds) *Essays in Ancient Civilization presented to Helen J. Kantor*, 249–261. Chicago, Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

Tadmor, M., Kedem, B., Begemann, F., Hauptmann, A., Pernicka, E. and Schmitt-Strecker, S. (1995) The Nahal Mishmar Hoard from the Judean Desert: Technology, Composition, and Provenance. *'Atiqot* 27, 96–148.

Ussishkin, D. (1971) The "Ghassulian" Temple in Ein Gedi and the Origin of the Hoard from Nahal Mishmar. *Biblical Archaeologist* 34, 23–39.

Ussishkin, D. (1980) The Ghassulian Shrine at En-Gedi. *Tel Aviv* 7, 1– 44.

van der Merve, N. and Avery, D. A. (1986) Science and Magic in African Technology: Traditional Iron Smelting in Malawi. In R. Maddin (ed.) *The Beginning of Use of Metals and Alloys*, 245–260. Cambridge and Massachusetts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Ziffer, I. (2007) A Note on the Nahal Mishmar "Crowns". In J. Cheng and M. H. Feldman (eds) *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context. Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Student*s, 47–67. Boston and Leiden, Brill.

15

How better understanding of ritual practices can help the comprehension of religious feelings

Laura Battini

Ritual practices are not easy to be understood, even if when written material is known. On one hand the official practices can be better known than private ones, because the ancient texts concern practices in the temples, not in the houses. On the other, ritual practices are very different from one community to another one, and also they are different in the different moments and in the special goals they want to get. A tentative analysis from furniture, objects and iconography could give some lights for understanding rituals better.[1] Furniture and objects found in temples or in houses could give some indications about how people move inside of the temple enclosure, where and how rituals were executed, which elements are necessary for making the rituals. Iconographical sources demonstrate the existence of rituals of which nothing has been left, so nothing could be supposed, but they concern official religion, not private one.[2] On the other, ritual practices are very different from one community to another, and also they are different in the different moments and in the special goals they want to get.

This paper will deal first with the possibilities of reconstructing rituals from different sources, then with the tentative comprehension of human spirituality. There were three problems hidden in my subject matter: 1) how to have an adequate understanding of official religious rites, 2) how to reconstruct private beliefs, and 3) how to link both.

In literature it is often asserted that official religion is far from personal beliefs.[3] I wanted to test this hypothesis. Private beliefs as spirituality do not come directly from rituals, even if the belief in rituals corresponds to a certain type of behaviour and meaning of life. What is under research here is human needs, human explanations of life's difficulties and human responses to these difficulties.

Introduction

I thus attempt to consider four kinds of sources to understand both official religion and private thinking: furniture, objects, iconography and written data.[4] The study of the, long forgotten, placement and characteristics of fittings and objects constitutes a very important element in reconstruction of rituals. Iconographical sources come, for the most part, from official objects, but popular objects are often spiritually charged, and respond to specific needs of people. They can thus offer some insights into the mental sphere and the human religious needs and sometimes reflect ritual acts.[5] Texts contribute further to our understanding of rituals, sometimes in a very descriptive manner, sometimes less so.

There is not room here to present a full analysis, so this paper will focus on three points: 1) the importance of an analysis a multi-disciplinary approaches: archaeological, iconographical as well as textual, 2) the differences between modern and ancient perceptions of the sacred and lastly 3) the conclusion that there is no separation between official religion and private beliefs.

For the first point, one limitation is that we have lost the gestures and words that accompanied rituals in which formal words and gestures were normally stereotyped and specified for each occasion to attain specific goals and enhance the sense of participating in a community. In addition, our perception of ancient religious architecture is limited by the loss, removal or decay of artefacts, tapestry, and colours, as well as that of music, sounds and odours. For example, only the imprints of human and animal feet remain on the floor of the Oval Temple in Khafajah.

Official rites

Furniture

The analysis of fittings and objects from the Oval Temple in Khafajah allows the reconstruction of people movements within the temple as they carried out their rituals. Before studying the placement of artefacts one must also observe their structure because modern words are not enough to suggest ancient reality. For example, the definition of "altars" in Khafajah suggests different structures,[6] most of which probably supported a divine statue, although some were "altars empty".[7] And those supporting a statue had others functions, those of table offerings and of libations (Fig. 15.1). This is demonstrated by the fact that all altars have a projection that is too low to sit on, but

Fig. 15.1: Example of a Khafagjah's altar with vessels (Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, fig. 37).

large enough to support some kinds of offerings. Some altars preserved vessels at their corners,[8] so they received different kinds of liquids; I would suggest water in the open vessels or oil, wine or beer in closed vessels.[9] Some altars have a stripe and an asphalt coating[10] on the small frontal projection, intended perhaps for blood sacrifice. The functions of these so-called altars imply several rituals: adoration, prostration and praying before the statue, making libations of different liquids, giving offerings and perhaps others. An incorrect interpretation of fittings would prevent an understanding of rituals.

From their functions and position furniture can help in reconstructing how people moved in temple and which rites were practised. For example, in the great court of the Oval Temple (Fig. 15.2) I propose[11] to identify the south-west corner of the court, which is without fittings,[12] as a place where people entered and as a rubbish dump (probably of organic materials because of the yellow-grey colour, perhaps indicating animal sacrifices). The north-west and north-east corners, with a great number of square and large artefacts, a well and a large basin, indicate areas for rituals concerning water and for support points. So, a) the room L 44:7 coated with asphalt seems to have played a part in these water rituals (it is not a granary); and b) the northern rooms, full of objects like maces, statues, nails, etc., served to house objects used in rituals, not to store but to keep them arranged; one such room (N 45: 1–2) had an oven. In the middle of the court a line of 11 rectangular artefacts is considered as the basis for a colonnade[13] – distant 2 m, built on a same axis – and is perhaps a kind of barrier to limit access to the south part of the court only to people having performed water rituals in the northern part. Only after these rituals were people sufficiently "purified" to enter the most sacred part of the temple (the south part) where either they could ascend the ziqqurat or go to the court altar.[14] The south-west area has five rooms (K 45:6, K 46:5 and 4, L 46:4 and 5) characterised by a unique entry from the courtyard and full of bowls and sickles but empty of statues or sacred objects.[15] These rooms served as working places perhaps for food preparation. This part also gives entry to the open air altar and so to performance of rituals before the divine image (adoration, prostration and praying in front of the statue, making libations of different liquids, giving offerings). The south-east corner was the entrance to the ziqqurat, and was concerned with cultic acts. An analysis of all artefacts of temples discovered until now – which exceeds the limits of this paper – will allow the discovery of new rituals and perhaps open a new interpretation of artefacts.

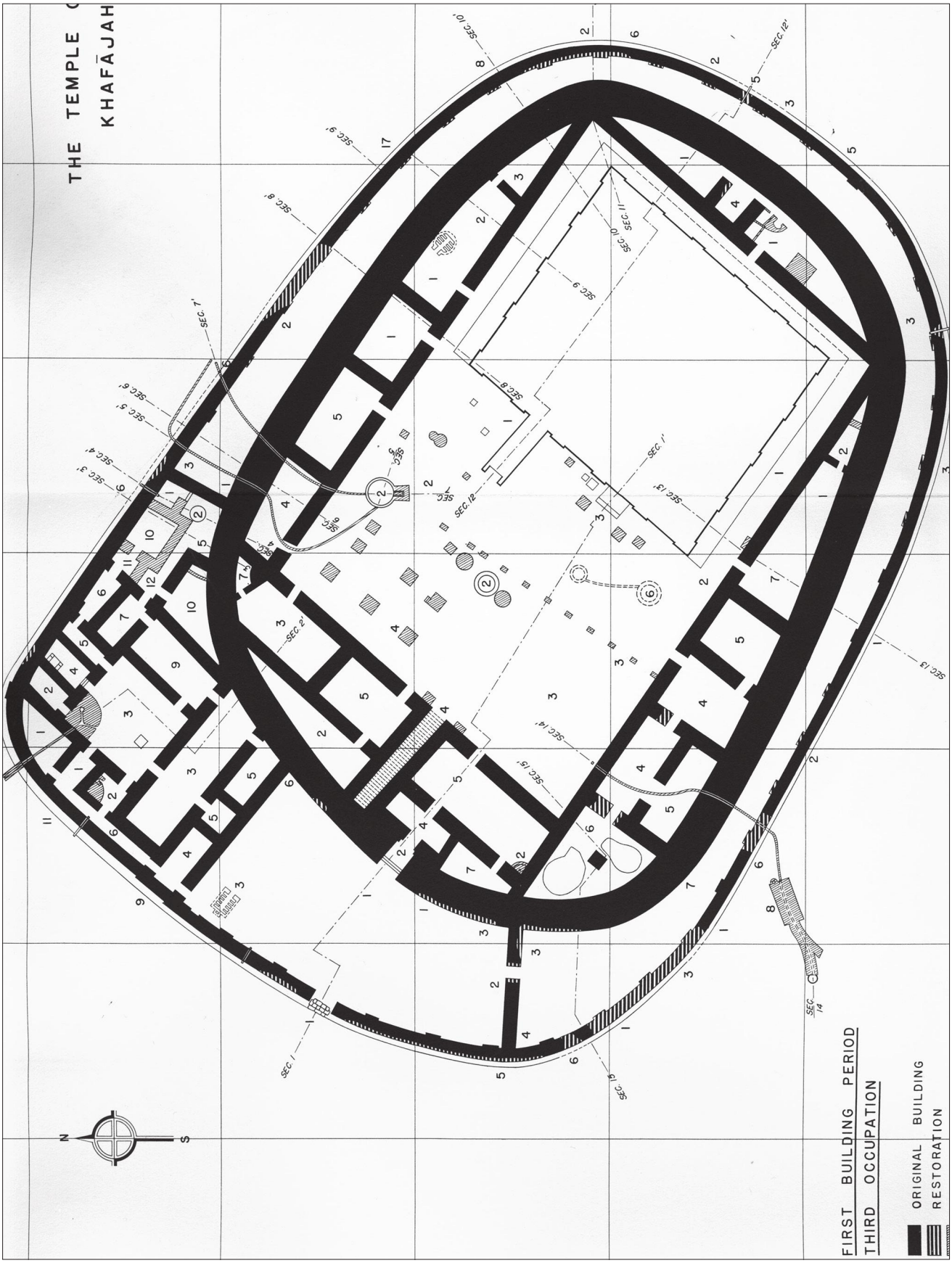


Fig. 15.2: Oval Temple in Khafagiah (Delougaz 1940, pl. iv).

Objects

The court of the big temple was used for rituals but also for other activities that, according to our modern point of view, are pagan, but nevertheless considered sacred by ancient people: economical and "domestic". If these activities appear clearer in the Sin and Oval Temples in Khafajah because of the number of items of furniture and objects found there, it is only the analysis of objects that could help in reconstructing the economic and religious activities held in the temple of Nintu, where only one oven was found: too little to understand rites and activities. All objects found here[16] consist of three types: *cultic* objects like statues, maces, stone vessels; *utilitarian* objects like weights, bone tools, sickle, kiln, spindle whorl; and objects of *different functions* (shells, beads, clay models, pins, pendants, seals, amulets).[17] In spite of the great variety of economic activities revealed by these objects (agriculture, weaving, flour production, food cooking), the predominance of cultic objects versus utilitarian attests that cultic activity was more important than economic. So, the proportion of objects could also be interesting in a study intended for a general comprehension of use of space. The objects of different function found in the Nintu court temple consist of either offerings, or perhaps of objects of fashion, lost in the temple during the performance of the different activities.

Iconography

Several steles, seals, votive plaques and reliefs concern ritual acts. Rituals represented are often libations and introduction scenes, sometimes processions accompanied by music, seldom sacrifices of animals or other rituals that are difficult to understand. The clearest act is libation, attested in steles, votive plaques, Enheduanna discs, cylinder seals and Neo-Assyrian bas reliefs.[18] A man standing in front of the god is pouring liquid from a small spouted jar into a high vessel, with flaring sides (Fig. 15.3). The discovery of spouted vessels in the temple areas

Fig. 15.3: Detail of Ur-Nammu's stele (Börker Klähn 1982, pl. 39).

will constitute a good manner to judge rituals performed there.

The appreciation of gestures and actions from iconographical sources is meaningful but often difficult to understand. For example, there were different kinds of hand gestures used in approaching the god – hands crossed at the height of the chest, the right over the left; one hand raised; two hands raised at the height of the mouth – but their significance is still debated.[19]

Private spirituality

In the second part of the paper I suggest a new way of research in checking the presence of a spirituality, of private religious beliefs. For this, analysis of texts, objects and iconography of clay production found in houses is very important.

Iconography from objects

Several objects found in houses shed some light on human needs and questions about life, and sometimes they can even help to picture ritual procedures. One of the main reasons for making figures and plaques depicting generalised human forms relates to the imaginary world sustained by "existential" life questions and needs; in other words, the spiritual world. Thus, when clay objects found in houses present figures wearing horned crowns,[20] symbol of divinity, it is clear these are divine images and the cultic value of the clay object cannot be dismissed. Other clay items are more difficult to be judged as having a spiritual or religious purpose, because of their complexity and of our loss of understanding of cultural and spiritual ancient mentality (Fig. 15.4). But these subjects appear only in what can be called "popular production", not in the official production; the idea of grouping different kinds of divine/supernatural beings in popular production, and of combining human and animal characteristics in a single being, suggests a perception of a world where everything is due to supernatural beings and where man has to protect himself as well as possible, calling on spiritual beings to do so.[21]

Objects

Sometimes objects can also provide information about ritual procedure. This is the case, for example, of the clay reproduction of the entrance to a temple, reproduced in a three-dimensional model (Fig. 15.5), in two dimensional plaques, and on the back of chariots or chairs. In a recent article I presented a study of their significance and the ritual actions they imply:[22] if offerings could be inserted into a three-dimensional model, the god figurine could be taken out, making the sanctuary more attractive, whereas the rectangular plaque does not allow such a broad spectrum of actions. In a two-dimensional plaque, ritual acts must be more limited, because one could only touch the surface of the god or the temple but not surround him/it or insert offerings: the more likely actions were prayers and homage. Models of chairs or of other objects are either two- or three-dimensional sculptures: one cannot perform the same actions as in three-dimensional models, but one can do more than one can in front of rectangular plaques. Other cultic rituals performed in houses are confirmed by the discovery of clay offering tables in a domestic context as, for example, those of Nuzi, one in the shape of a glazed ring supporting at least five cups, one in the shape of an animal supporting a vessel.[23] I do not think that there was really what can be called a "chapel" (*asirtum*) in a houses if we talk about the largest room in the house and if we believe that it was used only for performing rituals.[24] Perhaps one part of the house, used for other actions, was also intended for occasionally performing rites. The performance of the *kispum* ritual in dwellings is another example of a form of spirituality:[25] it consists of several actions: break the bread, sacrifice an animal (male sheep, bird, other), "call the name" of dead people and anoint a table of oil. None of these acts leaves remains (except occasional animal bones) but they all involve hands and voices in their execution: anointing a table, sacrificing an animal, breaking the bread, calling. In this last case, it is worth mentioning the strong power of words

Fig. 15.4: Clay object endowed with spiritual aim (Barrelet 1968, n. 818).

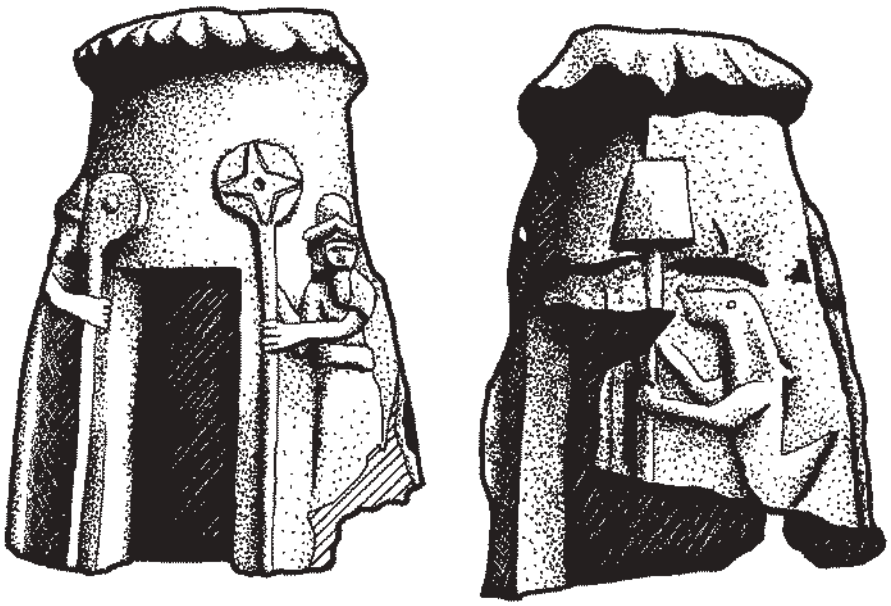


Fig. 15.5: Three-dimensional model in clay reproducing the entrance of a temple (Reuther 1926, taf. 7 a).

because only their pronunciation serves to recreate the life of the dead. *Ludlul bel Nemeqi* increases our understanding of funerary rituals: in a passage in tablet II (l.114–5; Lambert 1996, 46) there is a reference to the existence of a grave and of paraphernalia ready to be used widely before a real danger of death arises, so it must have been common place to think about one's own death and to prepare oneself for it within the limits of one's own wealth.

Textual data

Texts attest to the existence of several entities responsible for human life, like a guardian spirit, a personal god, dead people, as well as principal gods, *sedu* (spirits), *lamassu* (guardians), apart from evil's spirits.[26] According to textual sources, humans had several rituals available for all life situations – for constructions, inauguration of cities, religious practices, recording kings' actions – indeed all moments of human common life: birth, marriage, illnesses, death. All difficult situations can be resolved by rituals performed either directly by believers without a priest (*Ludlul bel nemeqi* ivth tablet; Lambert 1996, 58–61): in this case one can distinguish between acts with the voice (prayers and supplications, calling the gods) and acts with the body (kiss the foot of god, place incense before the statue, present an offering or gift or cumulated donations, make libations). Sometimes rituals were performed by believers with the help of a specialised priest (*Ludlul bel nemeqi*, ivth tablet; Lambert 1996, 58–61): take omens, make purification rituals, sacrifice animals. So one can say that Mesopotamian life attitude is "magic" in the sense that everything happening is attributed to spirits[27] and so they can believe that words and acts could impact on reality, or as Foster said "few cultures are so rich in demonic lore as the Mesopotamians".[28] This is very far away from modern society, and also gives us also the perception of a constant feeling of worry among ancient Mesopotamians. A passage of the *Ludlul bel nemeqi* (tablet iv, l.79–90; Lambert 1996, 60–61) can give an idea of the research of positive queries: the entrances of Esagila are called from human aspirations, like prosperity, guardian spirit, well-being, "release from guilt", worship, pure water, exuberance. Mesopotamian people felt, more than we do today, the need for a divine presence in their lives, for respecting rituals, for acts and words to protect their lives. The implication is that of a population stressed by death, illness and all hazards, but above all having a strong trust in gods. *Ludlul bel Nemeqi* provides the correct behaviour a man must adopt before the gods (tablet ii, l.12–32; Lambert 1996, 38–41), that is: 1) to prostrate himself and bow down, 2) to supplicate and pray, 3) to perform rites on holy days (take a part in the divine procession, give reverence to the gods, pray, assist in the king's prayers and in the procession accompanying music); 4) to talk to people about reverence and worship, 5) to invoke his god before eating, to make offerings; 6) to swear respectfully a solemn oath before his god.

Final remarks

At the end of this paper, after having demonstrated the importance of an analysis with several points of view, I would like to stress the differences existing between our perception of the sacred and that of ancient people – our modern view being rationalistic and too far away from nature, that of ancients being animistic and magic.

Lastly I do not think that official religion is far away from

popular and private beliefs. This distinction is typically modern, not ancient: people seem to be as equally involved in official celebrations as in more familiar or personal ones, and now I tend to follow an opposite direction: I think that people did not distinguish between official and popular because it did not matter for them, the importance was that all was made by gods, spirits, guardians, and that correct behaviour was a basis, even though insufficient, to elude dangerous situations. Participations in official processions, calling great gods, praying to them, presenting them with offerings and gifts, examining omens in their name, were tasks performed by all common men having good behaviour and respecting gods So there was no separation from the official religion, only different kinds of adoration, submission, and acceptance of human life. On the other hand, even the king not only had to take part in official rituals, but he also had to perform for himself and for his life private rituals as a common human.[29]

Notes

1 Winter 1999; 2000; 2008. Battini forthcoming a
2 There is, however, an iconographical source of some popular objects (see section IIa).
3 For example Bottéro 1985; 1989; 56–59; Foster 1993, 35; Matsushima 1993.
4 I analysed also grave deposits, but data are less revealing about rites. It is better perhaps to analyse graves (cf. Valentini 2011), but I had not here the time.
5 Battini, forthcoming b.
6 Battini, forthcoming a; Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, 42, 55, 63–64, 82, 93–95; Delougaz 1940, 40–41, 80.
7 Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, photos n.37 and 38.
8 Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, 40–42 (Sin VI), 100 (Nintu III), 81–82 (Nintu V), 111 (0 43 level VIII).
9 Oil is often cited in text referring to rituals. In the exorcist's list of books, there is probably one concerning oil (Bottéro 1985, 67). Beer was often used in rituals (Bottéro 1985, 179).
10 Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, 93–95.
11 Cf. Battini forthcoming a
12 Delougaz 1940, 37.
13 Delougaz 1940, 61–63.
14 Delougaz 1940, 61–64.
15 Delougaz 1940, 25–27.
16 Delougaz and Lloyd 1942, 79–101.
17 Cf. Battini, forthcoming a.
18 Börker Klähn 1982; Boese, 1971; Collon 1982; 1987.
19 Salutation (Gordon 1938, 10 and 18; Buchanan 1981, 253; Bergamini 1987, 44–45), adoration (Buchanan 1981, 191, 210, Legrain 1925, 196–197, 203), deference (Parrot 1954, 24–27, 47), supplication (Bergamini 1987, 47, Parrot 1954, 25–27), intercession (Gordon 1939, 9, Mazzoni 1972, 417).
20 For example Barrelet 1964, n. 509–514, 554–564, 623–625, 717, 784 *bis*, 787–789, 791–793; Legrain 1930, n. 98; van Buren 1931, n. 100–103, 27, 130, 132.
21 Abusch 2002, Abusch T. and van der Toorn K. 1999; Cunningham 1999; Bottéro 1985; 1987; 1987–1990.
22 Battini, forthcoming b with references.
23 Starr 1937, pl.115 A.
24 On the contrary see van der Toorn 2008, 26–27.
25 Of family religion according to van der Toorn 2008, 21, p. 26.
26 The bibliography is very rich. See for example Abusch 1987–1990; 2002; Cunningham 1997; Maul 1994; Geller 1985; 2007; Wiggerman 1983; 1986; 1992; Caplice 1974; Reiner 1960; Lambert 1974; 1996. For the gods of the house see: van der Toorn 1996; 2008; Scurlock 2003; Stol 2003; Groneberg 1986.
27 I take here the significance of "magic" from Goff 1963, 162–163.
28 Foster 1993, 34. See also Abusch 2002; Abusch T. and van der Toorn K. 1999; Cunningham 1999; Bottéro 1987; 1987–1990; Limet 1986, 67–90; Kinnier-Wilson 1965, 289–298.
29 Cf. royal dedication of small and inscribed objects, like beads, eye-stone, cylinder seals, pendants, stones, similar to those of common people, and especially similar in aim – the protection of the human life – even if richer in material choice.

Bibliography

Abusch, T. (1987–1990) Maqlû. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 7, 346–351.

Abusch, T. (2002) *Mesopotamian Witchcraft*. Winona Lake IN, Eisenbrauns.

Abusch, T. and van der Toorn, K. (eds) (1999) *Mesopotamian Magic: Textual, Historical, and Interpretive Perspectives*. Groningen, Styx.

Barrelet, M.-Th. (1968) *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la Mésopotamie antique*. Paris.

Battini, L. (forthcoming a) Les temples protodynastiques de Khafadjé: approche fonctionnelle. In A. Gutsfeld and P. Villard (eds) *Prêtres et sanctuaries*. Actes du colloque de Clermont-Ferrand 18–19 juin 2005. Hossenberg.

Battini, L. (forthcoming b) L'épiphanie divine en Mésopotamie à travers les terres cuites. *Akkadica*.

Bergamini, G. (1987) *Sigillo a cilindro. Glittica mesopotamica dai Sumeri agli Assiri*, Milano.

Boese, J. (1971) *Altmesopotamische Weihplatten*. Berlin.

Börker Klähn, J. (1982) *Altvorderasiatische Bildstelen*. Mainz.

Bottéro, J. (1985) *Mythes et rites de Babylone*. Paris.

Bottéro, J. (1989) *Lorsque les dieux fesaient l'homme*. Paris.

Bottéro, J. (1987–1990) Magie. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 7, 228–231.

Bottéro, J. (1987) *Mésopotamie, l'écriture, la raison et les dieux*. Paris.

Caplice, R. (1974) An Apotropaïon against Fungus. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 54, 344–349.

Collon, D. (1987) *First Impression of Cylinder Seals*. London.

Collon, D. (1982) *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic Seals in the British Museum. Cylinder Seals II. Akkadian, Post-Akkadian, Ur III Periods*. London.

Cunningham, G. (1997) *Deliever me from Evil Mesopotamian Incantations 2500–1500*. Winona Lake IN.

Cunningham, G. (1999) *Religion and Magic Approaches and Theories*. Winona Lake IN

Delougaz, P. (1940) *The Oval Temple in Khafagiah*. Chicago.

Delougaz, P. and Lloyd, S. (1942) *Pre-Sargonid Temples in the Diyala Region*. Chicago.

Ebeling, E. (1938) Dämonen. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie* 2, 107–113.

Foster, B. R. (1993) *Before the Muses*, Ann Arbor.

Geller, M. J. (1985) *Forerunners to Udug-Hul Sumerian Exorcistic Incantations*. Winona Lake IN.

Geller, M. J. (2007) *Evil Demons Canonical Utukku- Lemnu-tu Incantations*. Winona Lake IN.

Goff, B. L. (1963) *Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia*. New Haven and London.

Gordon, C. H. (1939) Western Asiatic Seal in the Walters Art Gallery. *Iraq* 6, 3–34.

Groneberg, B. (1986) Eine Einführungsszene in der altbabylonische Literatur Bemerkung zum personalischen Gott. In K. Hecker and W. Sommerfeld (eds), *Keilschriftliche Literaturen*, 93–108. Munster.

Hamilton, N. (1996) Can We Interpret Figurines? *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 6/2, 281–307.

Kinnier-Wilson, J. (1965) An Introduction to Babylonian Psychiatry. *Assyriological Studies* 16, Güterbock H. G. and Jacobsen Th.(eds), Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-fifth Birthday, April 21, 1963, Chicago, 1965. 16, 289–298.

Lambert, W. G. (1996) *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Winona Lake IN.

Lambert, W. G. (1974) DINGIR.ŠA.DIB.BA Incantations. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 33, 267–322.

Legrain, L. 1925, *The Culture of the Babylonians from Their Seals in the Collections of the Museum.* Philadelphia.

Legrain, L. 1930 *Terra-Cottas from Nippur*, Publications of the Babylonian Section Ser. 16, Philadelphia, Univ Museum Pubns.

Limet, H. (1986) Croyances, superstitions et débuts de la science en Mésopotamie ancienne. *Oikumene* 5, 67–90.

Matsushima, E. (ed) (1993) *Official Cult and Private Religion*. Heidelberg.

Maul, S. M. (1994) *Zukunftsbewältigung eine Untersuchung altorientalischen Denkens anhand der babylonisch-assyrischen Löserituale* (*Namburbi*). Mainz am Rhein.

Mazzoni, S. (1972) Sigilli cilindrici dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli. *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 32, 417–451

Moortgat, A. (1940) *Vorderasiatische Rollsiegel, Berlin.*

Opificius, R. (1961) *Das altbabylonische Terrakottarelief*. Berlin.

Parrot, A. (1954) *Glyptique mésopotamienne. Fouilles de Lagash (Tello) et de Larsa (Senkereh), 1931–1933*. Paris.

Porada, E. (1948) *Corpus of Ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American Collection, Pierpont Morgan Library*. Washington DC.

Reiner E., (1960) Plague Amulet and House Blessings. *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 19, 148–155.

Reuther, O. (1926) *Die Innenstadt von Babylon (Merkes)*. Berlin.

Scurlock, J. A. (2003) Ancient Mesopotamian House Gods. *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion* 3, 99–106.

Starr, R. F. S. (1937) *Nuzi. Report on the Excavations at Yorgan Tepa near Kirkuk, Iraq*. Vol. II Plates. Massachusetts.

Stol, M. (2003) Die Heiligtum einer Familie. In W. Sallaberger, K. Volk K. and A Zgoll (eds) *Literatur, Politik und Rech in Mesopotamien*, 293–300. Wiesbaden.

Valentini, S. (2011) Burials and Funerary Practice. In M. Lebeau (ed.) *Associated Regional Chronologies for the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean. Jezirah*, 261–275. Turnhout.

van Buren, E. (1930) *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria*. New Haven.

Van der Toorn, K. (2008) Family Religion in Second Millennium West Asia (Mesopotamia, Emar, Nuzi. In J. Bodel and S. M. Olyan (eds) *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*, 20–36. Malden/Oxford.

Wiggermann, F. A. M. (1983) Exit Talim! Studies in Babylonian Demonology. *Jaarbericht ex Oriente Lux* 27, 90–105.

Wiggermann, F. A. M. (1986) *Babylonian Prophylactic Figures: the Ritual Texts*. Amsterdam.

Wiggermann, F. A. M. (1992) *Mesopotamian Protective Spirits: the Ritual Texts*. Groningen.

Winter, I. (1999) Reading Ritual in the Archaeological Record: Deposition Pattern and Function of two Artifact Types from the Royal Cemetery of Ur. In H. Kühne, R. Bernbeck and K. Bartl (eds) *Fluchtpunkt Uruk: Archäologische Einheit aus methodischen Veilfalt. Aufsätze für Hans J. Nissen*, 229–256. Espelkamp.

Winter, I. (2000) Opening the Eyes and Opening the Mouth: The Utility of Comparing Images in Worship in India and the Ancient Near East. In M. W. Meister (ed.) *Ethnography and Personhood: Notes from the Field*, 129–162. Jaipur/New Delhi.

Winter, I. (2010) *On Art in the Ancient Near East*. Leiden/Boston.

16

Archaeological correlates of pious societies

Daniel C. Snell

Magic is dying out, although the heights
Still pulse with its vast force …
Above our modern heads the dark's still dark, …
Wisława Szymborska (1998), 112.

My title is a riff on Peebles and Kus (1977), who sought to find whether some people had more stuff than others had. Our question is how some people use their stuff. The 1977 article focused on the still hot topic of how and whether chiefdoms operated in the North American Mississippian Culture, which expired just as Europeans reached North America for the second and decisive time around 1500 CE.

Norman, Oklahoma, is a pious society. There are lots of churches, which you could see in the archaeological record. And in houses there are lots of Bibles, and though they might or might not be preserved, the time spent perusing them does seem exceptional. We could try to measure piety by statistical measures, such as length of marriages and infrequency of divorce, and there we would find that people in my state do not particularly practise those aspects of piety as much as they get preached at to do. From the perspective of a pious society, it is hard to say that the piety is all-pervasive.

We have been taught to look for temples, and yet I am not alone in wondering if large buildings with some religious paraphernalia should be primarily understood as religious places. Everywhere they were, and are, also places for the redistribution of wealth. The ample storerooms usually associated with such buildings attest to that, and this function is an expression of a central tenet of many types of piety. God and the gods do not cotton to hoarding wealth, and they bless its sharing, especially in ways that enhance particular institutions which have key functions in society. Merely giving to a beggar may be seen as a pious act, but funneling one's giving through a temple agency gives recognition and clout and not just a feeling of well-being.

In the history of Mesopotamian archaeology we have Sir Leonard Woolley's reconstruction of the wayside chapels where the correlates of worship appear to be on display (1965, 188–191). And lacking textual indications the presence of small finds that tend toward religious expression may be taken as indicators of religious interest at least of a basic kind. Amulets and seals seem especially indicative of a desire to connect to powers outside the usual range of everyday experience, and votive objects and especially statues attest to important interactions with the higher powers.

I felt a major gap in my exposition of *Religions of the Ancient Near East* was the lack of a clear and cross-culturally valid definition of piety. I used the term, as do most students of religions of the past. But do we really know what we mean by the term? Rulers in royal inscriptions did not hesitate to identify themselves as "god-fearing," *pāliḫ ili*, equated to Sumerian n í . t e and n í . t u k u, both meaning "having fear."

The word piety in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, p. 1378 a, as *pietas* is "An attitude of dutiful respect toward those to whom one is bound by ties of religion, consanguity, etc. … and between people and gods and among human beings, for example of troops toward their commander." *The Oxford English Dictionary* p. 843 P has *Pietie* from 1604, deriving from Old French *piete*, already found in the 12th century, as "habitual reverence and obedience to God." The adjective *pious* p. 892 is also first found in the early 1600s, but in French from 1539. When the Protestant Reformation raised the question of what was proper religion, then you needed a vocabulary to talk about that.

A rough and ready definition of heightened religious activity used by modern opinion surveyors is whether you go to church more than once a week, meaning twice on Sunday or once on Sunday and once later in the week. But what would the archaeological sign of such activities be? I must imagine that use of religious edifices might show up in more quickly deteriorated facilities, but I could be wrong about that. And sanctuaries in which such activities occurred are not really different from those in which there is celebrated only one service a week. This difference will probably not show up in the archaeological record.

But the sheer volume of houses of worship in Norman, Oklahoma, might. A problem is their variety. Near where I live is a former funeral home the large room of which has become the chancel for a new congregation of Maronite Christians, the body from Lebanon which is in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. I imagine that there are still traces of its

previous function in the form of traces of cold storage for bodies, and perhaps other devices. An enormous parking lot remains. This is a relic of funeral directors organising motorcades of tens of cars to drive from the mortuary to the cemetery, which could be at least several kilometres away. Future archaeologists might imagine the parking lot was attached to a megachurch which would need to accommodate thousands on a Sunday. But the relatively small sanctuary would argue against that.

And in this society there are deviant houses of worship. There are storefront churches, places that used to be retail stores but have been cleared of shelves and furniture and now, pretty much as empty auditoria, serve as church meeting places. Also there are not a few formerly private houses that have been reworked, sometimes lightly, into church meeting places. Norman's longtime mosque too started as two private houses, but has recently been rebuilt with a dome and even a minaret. How will these things look when they are ruins?

Perhaps we who write of religion mean by piety usually an active interest in and support of religious institutions. We cannot for the ancients gauge the attitudes of people but only their behaviours. And an emphasis on what people physically do rather than on belief is a reasonable approach. I have argued that belief was not even a category in the ancient world, and that no one even had the vocabulary to talk about what people thought was true, except in a very practical sense (Snell 2010, 150–151).

Let us examine one ancient site for relevant evidence. Tell Taya, a northern Iraqi archaeological site dug in the 1960s and 1970s by J. R. Reade (1973) is in rainfall agricultural land. It has the advantage of offering a site occupied in the late 3rd millennium BCE which has been almost totally exposed since it was abandoned after a few periods of occupation and has been eroding since. Its attractiveness for the study of urban centres has recently been emphasised by a Danish thesis which explored a number of its features on the basis of sociological ideas about cities. Lind-Bjerregaard (2006) did establish that there was no clustering of large houses, either in terms of area of the houses or street front exposure. The idea is, then, as seen in Elizabeth Stone's work on *Nippur Neighborhoods*, that the rich and the poor lived cheek by jowl in Mesopotamian cities (1987, 126–127). Lind-Bjerregaard did not address religious buildings, but she did emphasise that apparently administrative structures were more prominent, and perhaps more centrally located, on possible streams for ease of communication. She posits that, in contrast to more southern Mesopotamia, where temples played an important role in organising households about them, here in the north the key may have been the organisational power of secular lords who may have been in competition with each other.

There were only three temples identified (Reade 1973). Temple 1 is on the citadel and right near another major structure which was interpreted as an administrative building. Temple 2 is some distance to the north, located on a slight mound, and Temple 3 is further west located on the Wadi Taya which was an important source of water in some seasons. None of the temples is as big as the administrative centres, which again cluster along a wadi.

We may conclude perhaps that Tell Taya was not a particularly pious community in the narrow sense we have defined above. There are no obvious candidates for wayside chapels or other shrines in the warren of private houses. Reade's catalogue of small finds, however, does have interesting objects which probably should be interpreted as objects of religious value (Reade 1973, pls lxvii–lvii).

These reflections lead us to consider who decides to build temples and who decides to participate in religious activities. Often in the past we have assumed that city leaders were decisive in this, and yet they were hardly significant in making sure their clients had enough small religious objects. This was much more likely to be an activity pursued household by household and may have been connected to the craft skills and the individual concerns of the households at particular times. Old people would not be interested in fertility charms, and young people do not usually worry about arthritis or demon possession.

The secularising trend in U.S. culture continues unabated, in spite of what we may have read about the U.S. Presidential elections. Surveys show non-church identification and atheism growing, along with indifference to religion. But within the U.S. there is lots of regional variation, and in the Bible belt in the South, though secularism is rising in adherents, it is still hard to see its influences. A recent volume on *Red State Religion* argues that the apparent political tack of religious people in America's Middle West has not dominated politics in so widespread a way as might appear in the media (Wuthnow 2012). And what further would be its physical manifestations? At best perhaps a litter of campaign buttons on a church floor. But in Mesopotamia nobody voted for king.

Perhaps, as Laneri has indicated in *Performing Death*, the most likely locus for physical manifestations of piety is burials and other funerary arrangements. But cemeteries are rarely found in Mesopotamian sites, and because of that they present problems of typology and variation which are hard to study. What one should be looking for is deviation from established clichés of burial. This gets us into the fascinating area of epitaphs, and what people say about the dead, including what the dead said about themselves, but again, these are rare in Mesopotamia (Alster 1980; Bottéro 1982).

Let me end with a suggestive obituary. William Hughes Hamilton III, born in 1924, died recently at 87 years old and was notable as the instigator of a 1966 *Time* magazine cover story on the question "Is God Dead?" His point was that secularism had overtaken American life and that belief in eternal damnation or salvation was waning; his argument was that such views of God were not defensible any more, and that Christian theology should advance with its ethical teachings without making claims about God's roles or God's approval of what modern churches did. This stance led him to find his traditional Presbyterian church uncomfortable, but it did not keep him from arguing he was still a Christian (*New York Times* 11 March 2012, 20). From

Hamilton's courageous probing I think we can conclude that piety actually takes many forms in our societies and probably did in the ancient world too. I do not know whether Hamilton had lots of crucifixes or amulets around when he died; I am fairly certain he died surrounded by lots of Bibles. Archaeologically the latter would not usually survive, while trinkets might.

Archaeology allows us to think along with the long dead, but never as fully or as complexly as they actually lived. As Szymborska reminds us, the clouds above our modern heads remain as dark as ever.

Bibliography

Alster, B. (ed.) (1980) *Death in Mesopotamia. XXVI Rencontre Assyriologique International,* Copenhagen: Akademisk.

J. Bottéro (1982) Les inscriptions cunéiforms funéraires. In G. Gnoli and J.-P. Vernant (eds) *La Mort, les morts dans les societies anciennes*, 373–406, Cambridge and Paris, Cambridge University Press and Sciences humaines.

Laneri, N. (2007) An Archaeology of Funerary Rituals. In N. Laneri, *Performing Death*, 1–13. Chicago, Oriental Institute.

Lind-Bjerregaard, M. (2006) *Stadt-Form und Gesellschaft. Eine Untersuchung der Beziehung zwischen Stadtstruktur und Gesellschaftsstruktur durch eine Analyse der Stadtplan von Tell Taya anhand soziologischer Stadttheorien.* Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen.

Peebles, C. S. and Kus, S. M. (1977) Archaeological Correlates of Ranked Societies. *American Antiquity* 42, 421–448

Reade, J. E. (1973) Tell Taya (1972–73): Summary Report. *Iraq* 35,155–185, pls lvii–lxii.

Snell, D. (2010) *Religions of the Ancient Near East.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Stone, E. (1987) *Nippur Neighborhoods* Chicago, Oriental Institute.

Szymborska, W. (1998) *Poems New and Collected*. New York, Harcourt.

Woolley, L. (1965) *Excavations at Ur.* New York, Thomas Crowell.

Wuthnow, R. (2012) *Red State Religion. Faith and Politics in America's Heartland.* Princeton, Princeton University Press.