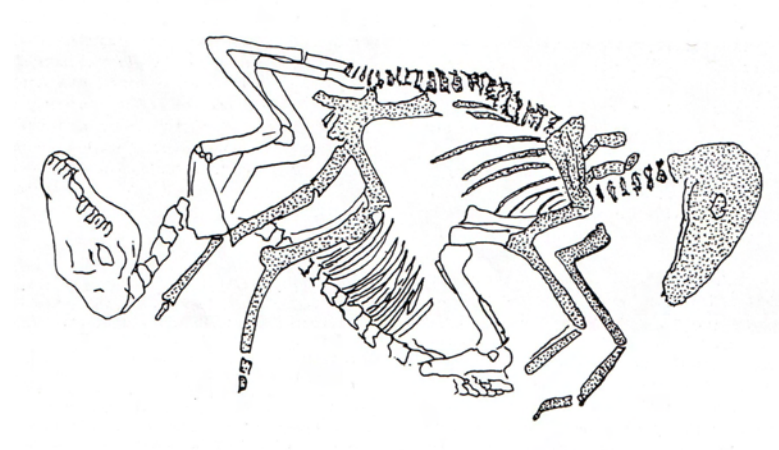


SACRIFICE IN THE BRONZE AGE  
AEGEAN AND NEAR EAST  
A POSTSTRUCTURALIST APPROACH

VOL. I: TEXT



This Thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of doctor in  
Philosophy

2011

LAERKE RECHT

Trinity College Dublin



# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not previously been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other University, and that it is entirely my own work. I agree that the Library may lend or copy the thesis upon request. This permission covers only single copies made for study purposes, subject to normal conditions of acknowledgement.



# SUMMARY

## METHODS AND FINDINGS

The goal of this study is a better understanding of the practice of ‘sacrifice’ in the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East. This includes animal and human sacrifice, but not inanimate offerings. This has been done through collection and analysis of ‘primary’ material from all types of sources and data in order to gain as complete an understanding as possible: archaeological, iconographic and textual material. Electronic databases have been created, and the material has all been entered into these, which thus form the basis for further analyses, statistics and conclusions. These databases, both in their printed form as appendices, and as attached electronic (interactive) versions, are a substantial part of this thesis. They bring together all the known evidence for animal and human sacrifice from the two geographical areas, from the three different types of material. Further, they can be used independent of the main text of the study: the reader can make their own searches, conclusions and use the many references to gain further information on a specific archaeological site, object or tablet.

The study of sacrifice has a very long history, and another major goal of this study has been to explore how this history influences the way the material is interpreted and what kind of assumptions lie behind specific interpretations. In order to reveal such influences and assumptions, a poststructuralist approach is applied. This means not only a discussion of some of the theories concerning sacrifice, beginning with Edward Tylor and ending with Nancy Jay, but also a careful reading of the modern texts of archaeologists and scholars. Through this approach, assumptions and hierarchical binary oppositions which are often based on modern perceptions rather than the ancient material, are uncovered and discussed. Specific poststructuralist ideas from the

works of René Girard and Jean Baudrillard, are also applied to certain features of the material, suggesting new avenues of interpretation.

More than anything, the material suggests that sacrifice was part of a great variety of rituals, performed for many different purposes – these include religious festivals and feasting, divination, treaties, the construction, reconstruction and destruction of buildings, and, not least, rituals associated with burials and the dead. The rituals involve many different species of animals, with sheep/goats emerging as the most commonly sacrificed animals. The treatment of sacrificed animals and humans also indicate great variety, perhaps based on species or the kind of ritual that the sacrifice was part of. Equids, dogs and humans, in particular, were often sacrificed whole, while in other instances, the head of the sacrificed animal appears to have had special importance.

In modern interpretations, there is a tendency to view the material either in light of later, better known practices (such as those of later Greece or those known from the Bible) or of modern perceptions of social structures. Hierarchical oppositions, with one side being valued higher than the other, can be detected in some interpretations, based on such notions as burnt – unburnt, whole – partial, life – death, animal – human, and male – female. Without a basis in the primary material, such oppositions can lead to serious misunderstandings of ancient practices, and it is hoped that this study creates an increased awareness not only of the assumptions we bring to the material, but also of the way in which they colour our interpretations.

Lastly, the application of Baudrillard's analysis of the relationship between the living and the dead to sacrifice in mortuary contexts, and of Girard's notions of the double to the many occurrences of heads, the depiction of frontal heads and the frequent mirroring of animals in images, provide a novel way of 'reading' the material. It should not, however, be seen as a final or as the only way of interpreting these features: clearly, the practice of sacrifice in the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East was too complex for a single, over-arching explanation.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Christine Morris, for her support, advice and encouragement throughout the writing of this thesis. Great thanks also goes to my readers, who have gone through many hours of corrections and suggestions: Dr. Joanna Day, Dr. Peter Mackay, Aoife Fitzgerald and Dr. Assaf Yasur-Landau. The following people have kindly responded to specific questions about the material and offered advice and help concerning my work: Prof. Yannis Hamilakis, Prof. Alan S. Gilbert, Jonny Geber, Dr. Jan Driessen, Dr. Erik Hallager, Heather Graybehl, Dr. Walter Müller and Prof. Ingo Pini. Kalypso Allen and Sofia Iraklidis have helped me with translations when my own language skills did not suffice.

I am very grateful for the financial support I have received in the form of postgraduate scholarships and travel grants from Trinity College Dublin, the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences and the Danish Institute at Athens, as well as grants from Trinity College Dublin and the Biblical Archaeology Society, allowing me to gain essential fieldwork experience.

Finally, this thesis could not have been written without the love and support of my family and friends: my parents, my brother and sisters, my friends Dikke Nielsen, Eva Christensen, and in particular Katarzyna Zeman-Wiśniewska and Dr. Emma Saunders for putting up with me during the last few months of my research and providing valuable conversations not only about my work, but also about life in general. Most of all, I would like to thank Tibi Daróczy, for his never-ending love and for always keeping me challenged.





# CONTENTS

<b>Vol. I:</b>	
Declaration	3
Summary	5
Acknowledgements	7
Contents	9
List of maps, tables and figures	11
Introduction	13
Research questions	17
The geographical areas	18
Chronology	19
Poststructuralism	22
Material and sources	25
Tables and appendices	27
Outline	30
Chapter 1: Theories of sacrifice	33
Edward Burnett Tylor	35
William Robertson Smith	38
Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss	42
Émile Durkheim	46
Walter Burkert	49
René Girard	54
Jonathan Zittell Smith	58
Nancy Jay	61
Theories specific to the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East	64
Defining sacrifice	70
Chapter 2: Sacrifice in the Bronze Age Aegean	77
Sacrifice and burials	82
Burials with complete animal skeletons	97
Sacrificial space	107
Sacrificial activities and practice	117
Foundation deposits	127
Sacrificial representations	128
Human sacrifice	138
Conclusions	147

Chapter 3: Sacrifice in the Bronze Age Near East	151
Sacrifice and burials	157
Burials with complete animal skeletons	171
Sacrificial space	179
Sacrificial activities	185
Foundation deposits	201
Sacrifice representations	204
Human sacrifice	213
Conclusions	225
Chapter 4: Comparisons and poststructuralism	227
Sacrifice and burials	230
Sacrificial space and activities	237
Foundation deposits	240
Treaties	244
Substitution	244
Human sacrifice	246
Sacrificial iconography	248
Types of animals sacrificed	250
Human-animal interfaces	256
Poststructuralist contributions	258
Death, liminality and poststructuralism	270
Sacrifice in the Aegean and Near East	285
Conclusions	289
Bibliography	297

**Vol. II:**

Maps
Tables
Figures
Explanatory note to the appendices and databases
Appendix A: Aegean Burials
Appendix B: Aegean Sacred Space
Appendix C: Aegean Glyptic
Appendix D: Aegean Iconography
Appendix E: Aegean Texts

**Vol. III:**

Appendix F: Near Eastern Burials
Appendix G: Near Eastern Sacred Space
Appendix H: Near Eastern Glyptic
Appendix I: Near Eastern Iconography
Appendix J: Near Eastern Texts

**Attached: Disc with full pdf version and electronic databases.**

# LIST OF MAPS, TABLES AND FIGURES

**Map 1.** Crete and Thera

**Map 2.** The Greek Mainland

**Map 3.** The Near East

**Table 1.** Aegean chronology

**Table 2.** Near Eastern chronology

**Table 3.** Whole animal skeletons in burials

**Table 4.** Sites of possible human sacrifice

**Table 5.** Types of sacrifice according to material

**Figure 1.** Database template (in text)

**Figure 2.** Types of animal bones in Aegean burials

**Figure 3.** Binary oppositions (in text)

**Figure 4.** Types of animals in Near Eastern burials

**Figure 5.** Binary oppositions (in text)



# INTRODUCTION

*Sacrifice contains an element of mystery ... The ancient mystery remains as impenetrable as ever.*

(Girard 2005: 2)

*It is evident that we cannot hope here to sketch out an abstract scheme of sacrifice comprehensive enough to suit all known cases; the variety of facts is too great.*

(Hubert & Mauss 1964: 19)

*The division [of sacrifice into human and animal] is based in effect on a value judgement, on the preconception that one category of victim – the human being – is quite unsuitable for sacrificial purposes, while another – the animal – is eminently sacrificable. We encounter here a survival of the sacrificial mode of thinking that perpetuates a misunderstanding about the institution as a whole.*

(Girard 2005: 11)

*The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric.*

(Girard 2005: 8)

*Blood. Death. Violence. Killing. God. Gods. Fire. Animals. Jesus. Mystery. Giving. Giving up. Missing out. Lent. Mass. Ramadan. Renounce. Being a parent. Alms. Altruism. Forfeit. Religion. Honour. Victim. Lamb. History. Offering. Gift. Cannibalism. Evil. Group pressure.*<sup>1</sup>

These are some of the common modern associations with the word ‘sacrifice’. But what is sacrifice? As the quotes suggest, this question has been answered in many different ways. In modern everyday usage, it need not be religious – one of the more interesting associations in this context is perhaps ‘being a parent’, indicating an association with giving up something in one’s personal life. The concept of sacrifice has attracted enormous attention. In the long history of research on the topic, sacrifice has been used as a means of explaining the origins of religion, as the archetypal ritual, and as a way of understanding humans’ relationship with the supernatural. These ideas attribute far-reaching significance and centrality to a still mostly enigmatic practice. The associations with the word, though immediate and untheorised, reveal the evocative nature of the concept, involving some of the extremes of human existences: death and religion. Although it does not answer the basic question of definition, this goes a long way towards explaining the enduring history of fascination with the subject.

Sacrifice is also seen as having the potential to be a powerful tool for manipulation and for creating strong bonds within groups – manipulation not simply of power or people but also of deities, enticing them through ‘bribes’ to act in certain ways, and creating bonds not simply by participation in the kill, but also through shared consumption of the sacrificial meal. It is often interpreted in completely theistic terms, placing deities at the heart of the ritual action (and religious beliefs). Any one of these interpretations remain to limited in their scope and concept of what constitutes ‘sacrifice’, excluding certain practices a priori. One of the main themes running

---

<sup>1</sup> These came from playing an ‘association game’ with various people. That is, saying the word ‘sacrifice’ and asking for the first words that come to mind. I have included all but the ones that were related to me personally.

throughout this study is an inclusive approach where other dynamics, relations and functions are considered in conjunction with those proposed in previous scholarship. This reveals a tantalising variety in rituals, practices, functions and contexts, not to mention social dynamics and ways of negotiating identity and ways of relating to such diverse entities as animals, buildings, other humans of various backgrounds and statuses, fantastic creatures, the dead, and indeed, deities.

This study is not concerned with sacrifice as a universal concept, but with its features specifically in the context of the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East, where sacrifice has been studied in various monographs and articles, but no extensive work exists incorporating all types of material or the complete area included here. Nor have the two main geographical areas of this study been carefully discussed in conjunction with each other. One of the unique features of this study is the use of all types of available material from the Bronze Age: archaeological, iconographic and textual. Each of these may with caution be termed ‘primary’ material, but they are of course ‘re-presented’ to us in a certain way, through excavation reports, museums, catalogues and even on-site displays. The modern perceptions and assumptions related to these representations have serious implications for how the material is interpreted, and are highlighted and discussed as a major issue throughout this study. The primary material has been collected and catalogued in databases created specifically for the purpose, which are to be used in conjunction with the discussions that follow. All this material is presented in the appendices at the back of the thesis, as well as on the accompanying DVD, where the extended entries can be inter-actively searched.

The main argument of the study is that ‘sacrifice’ is an extremely varied and complex practice, which is almost always part of broader processes and rituals. The variation may in fact be so wide the people of the ancient Aegean and Near East did not have a single, corresponding concept that is the equivalent of the English word ‘sacrifice’. The definition as used in this study will be discussed in Chapter 1, but here a brief example from modern languages may help illustrate the issue. In German, there is no exact equivalent of the English word ‘sacrifice’. It would most likely be translated as ‘Opfer’. This term, although also not used in the same uniform manner by all writers, is somewhat broader than ‘sacrifice’, being etymologically closer to the word

‘offering’. The difference here is slight, and relatively easily explained, but this becomes much more difficult with ancient languages and the increase in the number of terms being discussed. In this light, it is fully acknowledged that what we may perceive as a fairly coherent category of action and/or intentionality may have been constructed differently by the cultures in question. The modern category is applied in order to approach the material in through a coherent framework, but with a continued awareness of its instability and openness to changes guided by engagement with the material itself.

The variety and complexity come in many forms – in terms of the animal/human sacrificed, the occasion, the place and the purpose. No one theory proposed so far can explain all these types of sacrifice in a universal manner. Not only are the practices too varied, but the ‘functions’ at work within a single ritual may also be manifold. Any one sacrificial ritual may for example be intended to appease a deity, to appeal to a supernatural agent, to obtain knowledge, but may also work at more complex or hidden levels, involving the negotiation of power and social relations (and not just between humans), social remembering and forgetting, the creation of bonds within a group (to the exclusion of others) and the alleviation of violence.

It is also argued that a poststructuralist approach may help reveal modern assumptions and perceptions about ancient practices, thereby paving the way to improved analyses and understanding of the material at hand. Other approaches would undoubtedly reveal significant insights as well, but the poststructuralist one has appeared the most inclusive, being able to incorporate and highlight features in relation both to the ancient material and to modern assumptions across the board. It is also the most fundamental approach, in the sense that the argument is that all research should *start* with this self-reflective and critical stance, and build on the conclusions, caution, limitations and possibilities pointed out by it. It is maintained that the different types of material and the historical background of the disciplines greatly affect interpretation, and that this is something to pay careful attention to. Lastly, selected poststructuralist ideas are applied in order to demonstrate the value of alternative ways of approaching the material. This is something which can be developed by further



research if proven useful, but also something which in itself should show the potential of such an approach.

## **Research questions**

The aims of this study are threefold. At the more ‘basic’ level, the purpose is to arrive at a better understanding of the practice of ‘sacrifice’ in the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East. That is, within the definition as outlined in Chapter 1, what can be discovered about sacrifice? What kinds were there, what occasions, what purposes, what rituals and/or actions were involved? What kinds of creatures (humans, animals, which humans and animals) were sacrificed, and how were they treated in the process? Who might have taken part, and where might the action have taken place? How do the two geographical areas compare? To what extent do modern ideas of sacrifice comply with ancient ones? Are any of the theories of sacrifice disproved or supported by the material evidence? In short, what is the material evidence and what can be concluded from it? In order to even begin to answer these questions, the ‘primary’ material has been gathered into databases, according to the type of evidence. This is a substantial piece of work in itself, and can be used on its own.

However, as the second introductory quotation from Girard suggests, the answers to these questions are largely clouded by modern perceptions, assumptions, personal beliefs and agendas, even if these are not always known to the individual scholar. A second main aim of this study is thus to create an awareness of these assumptions – that is, how is the material interpreted by modern scholars and what assumptions are made about the practice of sacrifice? The argument presented is that assumptions may be based on unjustified prioritisation of one category of evidence over another, by the influence of other, better known practices (e.g. later Greek sacrifice or sacrifice as recorded in the Bible), by specific theoretical outlooks and/or by the history of research in the area. Further, it is investigated how scholars in the two areas approach the different kinds of material, and how an awareness of this can help us to analyse the material in a more careful and fruitful manner in the future.

Thirdly, as the sub-title of the thesis suggests, the study makes use of poststructuralist ways of approaching texts and material as text - how might poststructuralism contribute new insights into the study? I explore how a poststructuralist approach to the re-presentations of the material can help highlight problems and perceptions that belong more properly in modern than in ancient times. Through this, it is hoped that an increased awareness of such perceptions can aid in minimising their effect on interpretations, though it is fully recognised that they cannot be completely eliminated. In the final chapter more specific poststructuralist ideas are applied in order to develop new avenues of understanding the material.

## **The geographical areas**

The two main areas of focus are what is referred to as the ‘Aegean’ and the ‘Near East’ throughout the study<sup>2</sup> – the geographical areas and sites mentioned in the text and appendices are shown on Maps 1-3.<sup>3</sup> Almost all the Aegean material comes from Crete and the Greek Mainland; the only material from the Cyclades comes from Thera. The term the ‘Near East’ is used by scholars in a variety of ways, not always referring to the same areas.<sup>4</sup> In this study it comprises what is roughly modern-day Iraq and Syria (see map for more detail). Undoubtedly other areas could be included in the study with great benefit. That would, for example, be the case for Anatolia, the Levant and Egypt, all of which have interesting evidence of sacrificial practices, with the Levant, in particular, having strong connections with the Aegean in the Late Bronze Age. However, that would constitute a very large study, and unfortunately is beyond the scope of this thesis.

---

<sup>2</sup> For the people inhabiting these areas I use conventional terms, e.g. ‘Minoan’, ‘Mycenaean’, ‘Sumerian’, ‘Babylonian’, ‘Assyrian’, ‘Hurrian’ and so on. This in no way assumes ethnic identities or that the ‘groups’ each used these names to designate themselves. Rather, they are used to refer to specific material cultures, and in some cases, to specific languages. Discussions of some of the problems in relation to for example the term ‘Minoan’ can be found in Hamilakis 2002 and Whitley 2006.

<sup>3</sup> I thank Tibor-Tamás Daróczy for help creating the maps.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Bieńkowski and Millard include Mesopotamia, Iran, Anatolia, the Caucasus, the Levant and Arabia (Bieńkowski and Millard 2000: ix), whereas Hallo and Simpson’s study includes Egypt and Mesopotamia/Syria (Hallo and Simpson 1998).

It is not the aim of this study to propose direct influences in one or the other direction of the different sacrificial practices, but to understand what similarities and differences occurred, without making inferences about origins: indeed, the material would not adequately support such conclusions. These specific regions were chosen because initial observations revealed intriguing similarities and equally intriguing differences – for example in the case of equids sacrificed in connection with burials. This, furthermore, suggested differences in the types of evidence available and, as a consequence, differences in how the material is approached by modern scholars. These differences in material provide an excellent opportunity to explore how such factors might guide interpretations or assumptions and thus make the first step towards minimising such influences.

## **Chronology** (Tables 1 and 2)

### **The Aegean**

The chronological sequences for the Aegean are very complicated and heavily disputed, both in detail and on major points. On Crete, two main terminologies are in use; one based on ceramic sequences, divided into Early Minoan (EM), Middle Minoan (MM) and Late Minoan (LM), each with their own sub-phases; and one based on architectural remains, in particular the appearance and development of palaces across the island, divided into Prepalatial, Protopalatial/Old Palace period, Neopalatial/New Palace period and Postpalatial (Knossos is an exception, since the palace there continues after the fall of the other palaces on the island – also known as the Final or Monopalatial period). On the Mainland, the chronologies are mostly based on ceramic sequences, and are divided into Early Helladic (EH), Middle Helladic (MH) and Late Helladic (LH), again each with sub-phases. The terminology ‘Mycenaean’ with sub-phases can also be encountered – these correspond to the LH period. The suggested correspondences between Minoan Crete and the Mainland are shown on Table 1.

Much is being done to give these relative chronologies an absolute grounding. There are two main ways of doing this – either through correlations with more established chronologies or through scientific methods such as radiocarbon dating and ice-core data. Neither of these has so far been able to lead to a consensus among scholars. Most commonly, it is the Egyptian, Cypriot and Levantine chronologies that the Minoan and Mycenaean chronologies are correlated to (contributions in Cline and Harris-Cline 1998, Bietak 2003 and Warburton 2009). However, such attempts have failed to resolve the issue – problems remain due to issues of the internal chronologies, the archaeological contexts, not to mention the question of the difference in time between when an object was made and when it was placed in the context found by archaeologists, which is perhaps even greater concerning imported items.<sup>5</sup> The dating of the eruption of the volcano on Thera promises to solve these issues, not only for the Aegean, but also for at least parts of the Near East, and has been the subject of much scholarly research (see e.g. contributions in Bietak 2003 and Warburton 2009a for the latest research in the area). An absolute date from radiocarbon and ice-core data has been attempted (Manning 1999, Hammer *et al.* 2003, Manning and Ramsey 2003, Friedrich and Heinemeier 2009, Heinemeier *et al.* 2009). Yet the issues remain – not only have three different, conflicting dates been obtained through such methods,<sup>6</sup> but the correlation of the results to archaeological data is also fraught with difficulties (see e.g. Bietak 2003b for some of the problems with accepting the ‘high’ chronology as a consequence of the suggested Thera eruption dates).

### **The Near East**

In the area included in this study in the Near East there are two main chronological terminologies in use. For the Syrian sites, the chronology is divided into Early Bronze (EB), Middle Bronze (MB), and Late Bronze (LB), again, each with their sub-phases. Many sites naturally also have their own chronologies based on the stratigraphy of the site, and these chronologies are then usually correlated to the above categories or to absolute dates (e.g. Woolley 1955 for Alalakh and Matthiae 1980a for Ebla, see also

---

<sup>5</sup> A very interesting and promising project led by Albert Leonard called ‘MycIndex’, a searchable database of Aegean pottery found in Syria-Palestine, may shed light on some of the issues, especially with the addition for each piece of their archaeological context (Leonard 1994 and 2003).

<sup>6</sup> 1628± BC in Manning 1999, 1645± BC in Hammer *et al.* 2003, and 1613± BC by Friedrich and Heinemeier 2009.

Schwartz and Weiss 1992 for a summary). The sub-phases, as in the Aegean, are the subject of much debate. For seals and seal impressions, a different terminology is in use, mostly based on style. Slightly different versions are used by different authors (e.g. Frankfort 1939, Buchanan 1966, Collon 1990); this study refers to the scheme presented by Porada (Porada 1985: 102), who is one of the main scholars on Near Eastern seals.

For Mesopotamia, a very different terminology is in use, which, because of the greater access to textual records, is based more on political events than on ceramic or architectural sequences (see e.g. Porada *et al.* 1992 for an outline until c. 1500 BC). Thus, the periods are conventionally referred to as Early Dynastic (ED) I-III, Akkadian/Sargonic, Ur III, Isin-Larsa/Old Babylonian (OB)/Old Assyrian (OA), and Kassite/Mitanni/Middle Babylonian/Middle Assyrian. This chronology is considered more secure than the others because of the evidence from textual records. These records provide ‘king-lists’ which can be used to correlate the reigns of certain rulers to absolute years, and references to astronomical events which can theoretically be used in the same manner. Even with this data at hand, there are major problems, for example because of discrepancies between different king-lists, problems of having to fill in gaps where the lists do not cover the period and problems of choosing between possible astronomical occurrences that would fit the events as referred to. This is further complicated by data from ceramic sequences, which does not concur with the comparatively high dates suggested by the study of the textual records (for a good summary of these issues, see Hunger 2009). These discrepancies have led to three main chronologies being used by scholars, the ‘high’, ‘middle’ and ‘low’ chronologies,<sup>7</sup> centred around the date of the accession of Ammisaduqa: 1702 BC, 1646 BC and 1582 BC, respectively (Bienkowski and Millard 2000: 73).

### **Correlations**

Considering the many problems of absolute dating, both in the Aegean and the Near East, it would be unwise to put too much emphasis on a correlation of the different areas through absolute dates. Unfortunately, not many direct correlations have been

---

<sup>7</sup> A fourth chronology has also been suggested, based on ceramic sequences, which is even lower than the ‘low’ chronology here (Gasche *et al.* 1998).

made between Aegean and Near Eastern relative chronologies; in consequence, the scheme used here is presented in very broad terms. The first table shows the relative chronologies of the Aegean, their relationship to each other, and, to provide some guideline, suggested relative dates, based on Warren and Hankey 1989, which is what will be used throughout this study. The second table shows the relative chronologies of the Near East and their relationship with each other, also with suggested but tentative absolute dates. These are based on the Middle chronology, since this is the chronology still used by most scholars.<sup>8</sup> As mentioned, very few direct correlations have been made between Syria/Mesopotamia and the Aegean. Some of the possibilities are outlined in Warren and Hankey 1989 (115-118),<sup>9</sup> but their dispersed nature means that not too many conclusions should be based on them. The complexity of these issues is well-illustrated in the summary chronological table in Warburton 2009, which includes chronologies from Mesopotamia, Syria-Palestine, Egypt, Cyprus and the Aegean.

However, my concern in this study is not so much with careful correspondences in chronology between the different cultures, which in itself is already a vast and complicated area of study, as can be gleaned from the short outline above. The data is, as far and as carefully as possible, correlated, but the chief interest of this study lies in the similarities, differences and variations of a specific religious activity, under the broad modern category of ‘sacrifice’.

## **Poststructuralism**

As the sub-title of this study indicates, a poststructuralist approach is used. What, then is poststructuralism, what is it doing in a mainly archaeological study and how is it used? One of the first things that most works on poststructuralism mention is that it is

---

<sup>8</sup> It has, however, proved problematic – see e.g. discussion in Reade 2001.

<sup>9</sup> They include: MM IA – EC IIIB – MB I (EB IVB/C), MM IB – MC I mid to late – MB IIA, MM IIA – MB IIA, MM III – MC III – MB IIA-B, LM IA – Alalakh VIB, LH I – Alalakh VA, LH/LM IIIB – destruction of Ugarit. More correlations may be possible through careful studies of the Minoan and Mycenaean pottery found in stratigraphically well-defined Near Eastern contexts, for example some of the material presented in Leonard 1994 and Yon *et al.* 2000.

difficult to define, that a variety of authors engage in it, but it is not an organised theory as such: “Deconstruction is neither a theory nor a philosophy. It is neither a school nor a method. It is not even a discourse, nor an act, nor a practice” (Derrida 1990: 85). The relation of ‘deconstruction’ to ‘poststructuralism’ is nicely phrased by Barry:

The post-structuralist literary critic is engaged in the task of ‘deconstructing’ the text. This process is given the name ‘deconstruction’, which can roughly be defined as applied post-structuralism. (Barry 2002: 70).

The reason given for poststructuralism not being a theory in the traditional sense is that it lacks a fundamental feature: what Iser calls ‘closure’ (2006: 119). What is meant by this is that poststructuralism makes “no claim to comprehensive explanation, no panoramic view of the human condition” (Iser 2006: 121). Or put differently, it does not offer a meta-narrative, but seeks to uncover differences, discontinuities and internal contradictions in a text. Moreover, everything is understood as ‘text’, meaning everything is interpretation; there is not a single universal ‘fact’ on which to base everything else. The notion of ‘decentring’ is often associated with poststructuralism, because what was previously understood as the centre around which a perception or text was constructed is undermined in the deconstruction (Barry 2002: 62).

Poststructuralism searches for inconsistencies within a text, often basing the analysis on single words or sentences, their etymology or definition through reference to other words, and thereby destabilising pre-conceived binary structures upon which a text may be built. The process of a deconstructive reading is described by Johnson as

not synonymous with *destruction*, however. It is in fact much closer to the original meaning of the word *analysis*, which etymologically means “to undo” – a virtual synonym for “to de-construct”. The deconstruction of a text does not proceed by random doubt or arbitrary subversion, but by the careful teasing out of warring forces of signification within the text itself (Johnson 1980: 5).

It is particularly the uncovering and unfolding of binary structures in the texts and perceptions of modern scholars that are analysed in this study. Most pertinent to

sacrifice are notions of binary oppositions concerning eating and burning, whole and partial, and head and body – and associated with these, other oppositions occur including male and female, up and down, and hunting and domestication. The purpose is to interrogate to what extent such hierarchical oppositions assumed in modern literature can be justified according to the ancient material. This approach is taken throughout the study to modern interpretations of the material.

In the final chapter, some ideas proposed by thinkers who may be termed poststructuralist, such as René Girard and Jean Baudrillard, are applied to specific features of the material. These ideas include Girard's analysis of the double (the idea that others are seen as equal 'doubles' and hence potential sacrificial 'victims') and the dissolution of differences and identities, and Baudrillard's interpretation of the relationship between the living and the dead, and how this relationship can be manipulated for the sake of power. The details of the ideas will be discussed in the relevant sections, and their application is suggested as ways of looking at the material from new perspectives and gaining new insights, rather than as a final or single explanation.

The poststructuralist approach has been chosen because it seemed the most appropriate and has an advantage over most other approaches in that it does not focus on specific aspects of the material. Rather, ideas, concepts or focal points of other approaches can be adapted and incorporated where relevant. For example, parts of this study draws heavily on the feminist critiques, but still through poststructuralist analyses. Other ideas concerning animal/environment-human interfaces, power dynamics and its social construction, in particular at feasting occasions, have been discussed and integrated. Some theories have been deemed almost completely irrelevant and therefore not used at all (it would not seem, for example, that a postcolonial or a psychoanalytical approach would be very pertinent) while yet others, typically with structuralist tendencies, are argued to be unhelpful for interpreting the material.

'Poststructuralism' is used in this study in a fairly loose manner, which is completely within its own spirit, if such a thing can be said to exist. That is, the approach taken resembles most closely what is commonly called poststructuralism, or deconstruction,



in the way the material and modern interpretations are analysed. But, as mentioned, other ideas are taken on where they appear useful. The two main thinkers whose work is drawn upon towards the end of the study are equally not simply ‘poststructuralist’: Girard can at times be referred to as either structuralist or poststructuralist, while Baudrillard is more commonly placed in the postmodern tradition – postmodernism and poststructuralism are in this sense closely related. The ideas applied here, with their emphasis on a dissipation of differences, fluidity of identity and critique of modern treatment of the dead and symbolism are best described as poststructuralist, with all the instability and différance that that entails, and hence that is the term applied to this study.

## **Material and sources**

Throughout the study, there is an emphasis on the importance of including all available sources of material from the period, emphasising the importance of variety, complexity and context. The material is analysed according to what I have termed ‘archaeological’, ‘iconographic’ and ‘textual’ categories. The archaeological material consists of architectural, faunal and human remains, while iconography includes not only the more obvious artefacts with imagery such as seals and wall-paintings, but also figures, figurines, models, vessels, plaques, stelae and inlays. The ‘textual’ material mostly comprises clay tablets, but also includes inscriptions on other kinds of objects. I use the term ‘textual’ instead of literary, because very few of the tablets from the Near East used here are actually literary (e.g. epics or poems), and the term is hardly applicable to the Linear B tablets of the Mainland and Crete.

The selected material comes from all periods of the Bronze Age, and all known examples that may suggest sacrifice have been collected in the appendices. Not all of the examples are certainly related to sacrifice, but may be, or have suggested to be, and have therefore been included for consideration. There may, of course, be further examples, and almost certainly more will come to light with future excavations and publications. Although the material is spread across the whole period, careful attention suggests that in the Near East, the material tends to cluster in the earlier periods,

whereas in the Aegean, the majority comes from the Late Bronze Age. That should not be taken as evidence that sacrifice was less frequent in the later periods of the Near East and the early periods of the Aegean. The reasons for this asymmetry may be manifold and not fully understood – including accident of discovery, differences in social structures, or in structures that leave material that would survive,<sup>10</sup> differences in the kinds of material available, a tendency in scholarship to be more interested in certain periods or features, and problems of chronology.

The material used in this study includes both provenanced and unprovenanced finds. The unprovenanced finds are, of course, problematic and must be used with more care than finds from proper archaeological contexts. Nevertheless, they comprise a large body of material and evidence and do contribute significantly to the subject. For example, for the seals collected in the impressive *CMS (Corpus der minoischen und mykenischen Siegel)*, 500 or so of the c. 900 seals are from excavations, but only c. 200 of these are in any way published (Niemeier 1981: 93)<sup>11</sup> – Krzyszkowska estimates that something like 50% of Aegean seals are unprovenanced (Krzyszkowska 2005: 329). Although no specific statistics have been produced, a similar percentage, if not higher, applies to the Near Eastern seals. In order to make the ‘biography’ of a seal or sealing as clear as possible, each entry in the catalogue has a field containing information with what is known – or not known – concerning its provenance (if a field is blank, the data was not available at the time of writing).

The exclusion of certain material may, at first glance, cause surprise. For example, no references are made to Homer. The temptation here is to put too much emphasis on a work whose exact relationship to the Bronze Age is uncertain. Although at least some elements of the epic are very likely to originate in the Bronze Age societies of the Aegean (Bloedow 1999b and Sherratt 2004), it is very uncertain to what degree the whole account can then be taken as a reflection of the period. It is far safer to stick to material from that period only, in order to avoid projecting back later practices.

---

<sup>10</sup> For example, relevant textual material in the form of Linear B only appears in the LBA in the Aegean. For whatever reason, the textual records (hieroglyphic and Linear A) produced before this time appear to have been less extensive, and their content, as far as it is known, is not relevant to this study.

<sup>11</sup> The lack of publication is of course adding to the problem, but may in many cases have at least the potential to be remedied with future publications, if the records of contexts are still available.

Anything that *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey* can add to secure Bronze Age archaeological evidence cannot be taken as certainly being a feature of that period, and may be the cause of further misconceptions. A similar issue arises for the Near East with the Bible, which does record an extensive amount of sacrificial practices (e.g. Day 1989 for human sacrifice). However, not only do these practices mostly refer to the Levant / Palestine, they are also often assigned too much importance against other kinds of material, probably partly for modern religious/political reasons; to avoid, as far as possible, the problems and assumptions associated with this kind of material, it too has been excluded. Thus, only material securely within the geographical and chronological limits of the study has been admitted.

## **Tables and appendices**

The ‘primary’ material has been collected in catalogues. These are presented here in two forms: as appendices at the back of the study, and in electronic form as Filemaker Pro databases. The printed format is a condensed version of the electronic one, where the entries can be searched in more fields, and the reader can explore the data and make their own statistics. This data is thus conceived as usable on its own. References are made to these appendices throughout the study, and the reader can therefore not only view images of plans, objects and read the contents of tablets, but find further references to publications and learn precise details concerning osteological and faunal material, insofar as it is available.

The appendices, both in the printed and the electronic versions, are as follows:

**Appendix A: Aegean Burials**

**Appendix B: Aegean Sacrificial Space**

**Appendix C: Aegean Glyptic**

**Appendix D: Aegean Iconography**

**Appendix E: Aegean Tablets**

**Appendix F: Near Eastern Burials**

**Appendix G: Near Eastern Sacrificial Space**

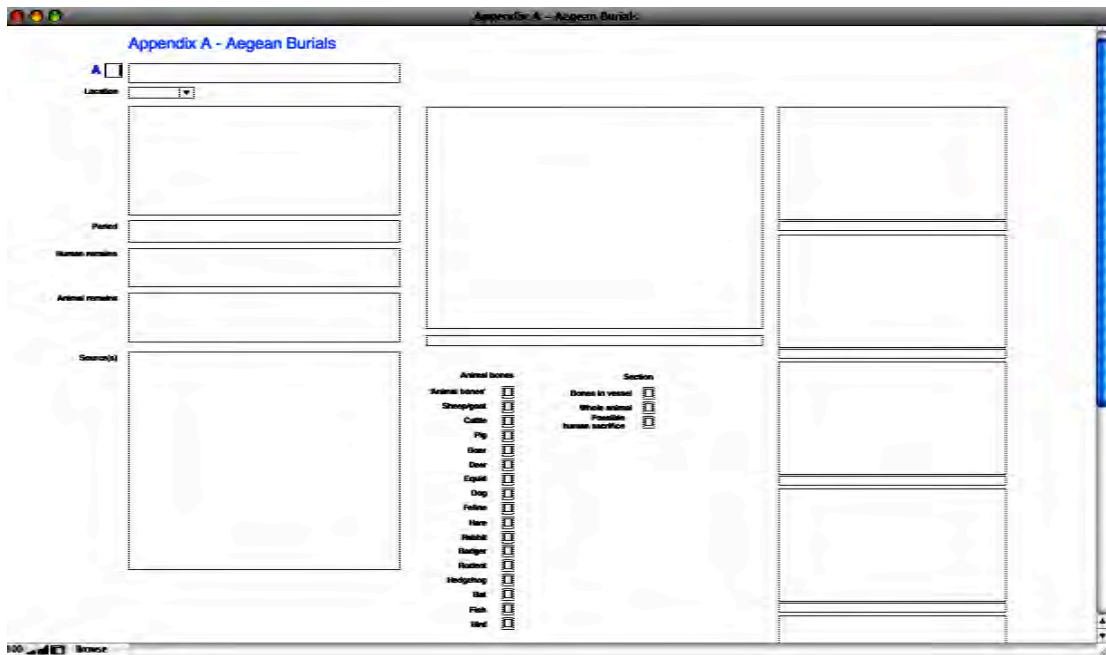
## **Appendix H: Near Eastern Glyptic**

## **Appendix I: Near Eastern Iconography**

## **Appendix J: Near Eastern Tablets**

References to these are given in brackets in the relevant places – for example, ‘F16’ refers to Appendix F, number 16, and is in this case Abu Salabikh Grave 162. The data has been collected from various publications (excavation reports, object catalogues, subject-specific studies, websites), museums and archaeological sites. The catalogues include all the examples known to the author. However, it is important to stress here that not all the entries are certain instances or references to sacrifice. For the archaeological material, cases with animal bones in a possible religious context have been included, as well as certain instances where installations strongly point to sacrifice. Entries involving human sacrifice include both those that have been proposed by previous scholars and cases where the context suggests that such sacrifices may have taken place. The iconographic material includes not only more immediately obvious images of animals as part of the sacrificial process, but also associated symbols, associated animals, and ‘themed groups’ that have been interpreted as sacrifice, which close examination may confirm, reject or leave as unresolved. Although these images display associations with sacrifice, they are not necessarily depictions of the ritual in and of themselves; they are part of a complex network of iconography where motifs do not have single or set ‘meanings’ independent of their context. The textual material includes any record where the killing of animals or humans for religious purposes may be mentioned; these are also not all certain cases of sacrifice, because the context is not always clear.

The electronic database is built up using fields which record basic information concerning sites, artefacts and tablets. For example, the template used for Appendix A looks as follows:



**Figure 1. Database template.**

This specific template contains the following fields: the reference number (A – meaning Appendix A, Aegean Burials), the site name, the location (Crete or the Mainland), a short description, its date, the human remains, the faunal remains, the sources, one main picture container and several smaller ones, boxes referring to what kinds of animal bones were found, and boxes with other features. If a field is empty, it is because it has not been possible to obtain that information. All the fields except the picture containers are searchable. For example, if a list of all the burials with pig bones from Crete is desired, simply press the ‘find’ button (in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen), then choose ‘Crete’ in the location field, and tick the ‘pig’ box. This search would deliver six sites, which can be browsed, or viewed as a list for a better overview. A search can be as complex as the number of fields. Each of the other catalogues uses similar templates that are adapted to the kind of material included.

The tables and figures all use the material from these catalogues, and any statistics used are based on searches done in them: they can thus easily be checked, or different statistics can be generated that may not have been included or considered in the tables.

## Outline

The first chapter discusses a selection of the numerous theories of sacrifice that have been proposed through time, including recent ones. The great interest in this topic means that the theories included are very select, and many more could have been added; the ones discussed are those thought most relevant and insightful when applied or partly applied to the material, as well as studies concerning sacrifice specific to the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East. Towards the end of this chapter, the important issue of how the word ‘sacrifice’ is used in this study is addressed, providing a working definition. This should not be taken as a definitive answer to what sacrifice is; on the contrary, the term should continue to be scrutinised, refined and discussed, and it should always be kept in mind that the term may not map directly onto ancient concepts.

Chapters 2 and 3 examine the material evidence for sacrifice in the Aegean and Near East, respectively. This includes careful attention to how the material has previously been interpreted. The material is analysed through themes such as sacrifice in connection with burials, the possible physical locations of sacrifice, some of the types of sacrificial activities and practices, sacrifice only found in the iconography and human sacrifice. These themes should not be understood as distinct or separate from each other; they very much overlap, and to some extent, the themes are different ways of approaching some of the same material. Each section analyses the material according to the different categories – archaeological, iconographic and textual. Not all sections include all three categories: this is because, at the present status of research, such material does not exist.

The final chapter compares the material from the two study areas – that is, how the material both converges and differs, but also how the nature of the material guides or colours the way modern scholars tackle it. Issues such as assumptions concerning gender (both of humans and animals) and the types of animals sacrificed are problematised, and ways of improving our understanding of the subject are suggested. Further, certain features occurring in the material are explored through specific poststructuralist ideas, including René Girard’s notion of the doubling and merging of

identities in sacrificial practice. These are not intended as single or universal explanations of the material; they are meant to provide a new perspective and to draw attention to elements that have not so far been thoroughly examined.

With all these preliminary notes and pre-cautions in mind, it is now time to turn to the 'mysterious', 'bloody' and 'violent' practice that we call sacrifice; the thoughts it has provoked throughout human history and the traces it has left in the remains of the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East.





# CHAPTER 1

## THEORIES OF SACRIFICE

The study of the concept of sacrifice goes as far back as the study of religion itself, and as the survey of research in this chapter shows, it is often seen as the very heart of religion; as the archetypal ritual. Examined here are some of the most influential theories of sacrifice, beginning with Edward Tylor and ending with some works specific to the geographical area of the study. They represent a great variety of approaches, at times even contradictory. This ‘background’ of theories is important because these theories shape modern assumptions and writings on the subject, down to the simplest archaeological report or museum catalogue, and such assumptions or theoretical backgrounds are mostly unstated (perhaps because they are often not deliberate or conscious on the part of the writers). Even when studies are explicitly theoretical works (as is the case with most of the works reviewed in this chapter), it can be difficult to disentangle the perceptual background of the author from their theory, and when a study is not an explicitly theoretical work, it can be even harder to

discern the precise meaning intended by the author. Comprehension of the historiography of sacrifice contributes to a better overall understanding of how and why the material is interpreted as it is by scholars.

On a more positive note, taken together, these different approaches may each offer a different insight into a certain practice, something which any single theory may not discover by itself. What sometimes appear as contradictory theories can each contribute important aspects to our understanding of certain sacrificial practices. This is possible because most of the theories work at the level of intention, which in a sense it is not actually possible to recover fully. It is not possible to know exactly what the ancient people of the Aegean and Near East thought they were doing when performing sacrifice. Several of the theories are not only concerned with conscious intention, or known reasons for performing sacrifice, but also emphasise sociological, psychological and ideological mechanisms as important elements in sacrificial practices. These elements can be more or less known by different participants in the ritual, but at times are also explained as necessarily unconscious (see e.g. René Girard). Theories working at these levels cannot be demonstrated empirically, but they can be used to make sense of certain practices and suggest interpretations. Other theories or parts of theories work at a more ‘practical’ level – that is, they are concerned with the physical practicalities of what constitutes sacrifice, for example whether or not it should include burning, an altar, or offerings of cereals. My working definition of sacrifice, as outlined at the end of this chapter, works at this level, because although certain intentions and functions may be discernable in some cases, they cannot be certain or known entirely. This is also why the word ‘sacrifice’ in this study is an artificial category, because it is based on a set of practical acts, with no assumptions about their meaning in the minds of ancient people.

Throughout this chapter, and indeed the study as a whole, certain concepts closely associated with sacrifice appear repeatedly, many of which carry with them theoretical baggage at least as problematic as the word ‘sacrifice’. These include such concepts as ‘offering’, ‘religion/religious’, ‘ritual’, ‘sacred’, ‘profane’, ‘secular’, ‘divine’, ‘supernatural’, and ‘holy’. Many more could be added, and I have attempted, as far as possible, to discuss the problems involved when such concepts appear as fundamental

elements in a specific theory – as with, for example, the use of the sacred and the profane in the writings of Durkheim, Hubert and Mauss (I have also tried to do the same for my own usage, at the first appearance of such concepts). This can hardly do justice to the ideas and theories associated with each, as the literature is extensive, and my focus is on only one of the many terms, sacrifice.

The scholarship on sacrifice is of course immense,<sup>12</sup> and only very few major thinkers are discussed in this chapter: those precise writers have been selected because they, in relation to the material studied here, have been the most influential, have the most wide-ranging ideas, or are the main names behind a specific idea. The absence of other well-known names may seem conspicuous;<sup>13</sup> that is not because they do not contribute to the study of sacrifice, but because their ideas are either well-covered by those here or because their specific theories do not appear to significantly help the understanding of sacrifice in the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East.

### **Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917)**

British anthropologist, sometimes called the “Father of Anthropology”. Born in London, he became fascinated with other cultures, and in his writings was influenced by Darwinian ideas of evolution and progress. He worked as a professor in Oxford, and was knighted in 1912. His main work treating the subject of sacrifice is *Primitive culture: researches in the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, arts and custom* (2010, first published in 1871).

I begin with Edward Burnett Tylor’s theory of sacrifice in his *Primitive culture*, which has been hugely influential with later thinkers, with minor aspects being adopted and developed throughout the decades since 1871, when the work was first published. In the Darwinian spirit of his time, Tylor sees three stages of sacrifice, each a progression of the one that came before it. Despite this progression, the first stage may still be seen among certain people today (or at least at the time of his writing): this is due to their

---

<sup>12</sup> As, of course, are the commentaries and discussions of the different theories. Carter 2003 provides a good selection of readings from many major thinkers, with a short introduction to each, and Mizruchi 1998 has a lengthy discussion concerning many of the theories.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Edward Evans-Pritchard (1954), James Frazer (1993), Sigmund Freud (1950), Victor Turner (1977), Bruce Lincoln (1991) and Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant (1989).

‘primitive’ stage of religion. The third and latest stage is thus also understood as the ‘highest’ development of the rite of sacrifice. Disregarding Tylor’s emphasis on origin, ‘primitive’ people, positive progression and prioritisation of ritual, which is only to be expected for a work of that period, I will examine his notions of the nature of sacrifice. When Tylor speaks of ‘sacrifice’, he clearly includes all kinds of objects, including non-animal food items, as well as any other object given to a deity, and nowhere is there any indication that the present need have been destroyed for it to be considered a ‘sacrifice’.

The three stages of sacrifice each have their own characteristics, as seen in the names given to them by Tylor: ‘gift theory’, ‘homage theory’ and ‘abnegation theory’, developed and occurring in that order. The first stage is the original and “most rudimentary” one, in which sacrifice is simply a gift, with no definite thought of how the deity is capable of receiving it – what Tylor calls “unshaped intention” (Tylor 2010: 341). In this kind of sacrifice, the gift is often given to the element with which a deity is associated, so a sacrifice to a deity of the sea would be thrown into the sea, and one to the Earth or an earth-deity might be buried in the ground, making it more consumable for the deity. Furthermore, blood is often understood as life, and as consumable by all sorts of spirits, with the remaining meat often left for the human donors, and with the priest as having a certain privilege in eating or receiving the larger part of the meat, if not all of it (Tylor 2010: 345-346). At this stage, the gift is seen as “acceptable and beneficial” to the deity, and Tylor pays no attention to the intention of the donor in giving such gifts. Incidentally, one should note here the possibility of types of sacrifice which cannot be detected archaeologically: sacrifices thrown into the sea, and blood poured into the soil (at least in most circumstances) – thus, the lack of such evidence does not allow the definitive conclusion that such sacrifices did not take place.

An implicit but important feature of Tylor’s notion of gift-giving, outside its sacrificial relevance, appears to be that a gift is given to someone superior – he likens sacrificial gifts to such ‘earthly’ concepts as “tribute” and “royalty” (Tylor 2010: 357). If this is so, there is already an asymmetrical system in place when speaking of “that most childlike offering” or “earthly gifts” (Tylor 2010: 341 and 356). This is far from a

simple relationship, and as such, the giving of a human, animal or object to a deity is anything but an expression of “unshaped intention” – if gift-giving entails giving to someone superior, it is at the very least an acknowledgement on behalf of the donor of the asymmetrical relationship between them and the receiver.<sup>14</sup>

In the second stage of the development of sacrifice, ‘homage’, the gift has the “higher significance of devout homage or expiation for sin” (Tylor 2010: 350). The donors in this stage thus attach a stronger meaning to the gift not simply as a gift, but as expressing their devotion to the deity – since the gift already had in the first stage the feature of expressing acknowledgement of an asymmetrical relationship, the difference is here very subtle, and appears to be one of strength, and perhaps of the level of realisation on behalf of the donor. That the gift can further function as expiation of sin is a new feature in this stage, and Tylor seems to associate this with Jewish religion and the Old Testament (Tylor 2010: 350). Sacrifice is often performed as a feast in this stage, which, as Tylor writes, may seem frivolous: “A banquet where the deity has but the pretence and the worshippers the reality, may seem to us a mere mockery of sacrifice” (Tylor 2010: 358). This scenario, where it is the humans that are actually partaking of the food, and the gods only ‘pretend’ to, is possible because the ‘soul’ of the offering is thought to be transmitted to the gods; in other words, spirits eat spiritual food.

The final and ‘highest’ stage of sacrifice is that of ‘abnegation’, where the value of the gift to the donor is the measure of acceptableness or efficacy – that is, the more the gift is worth to the donor personally, the better. Thus, a gift may be of much higher value to the donor than to the receiver – the story of the sacrifice of Agamemnon’s daughter Iphigenia is one such example. The goddess Artemis simply receives a human being – this could have been a slave girl or prisoner of war with less personal importance to Agamemnon, but the value lies precisely in the extent to which the sacrifice is a loss, an abnegation, to the donor. This is probably also the closest to the everyday modern usage of the term sacrifice, in which the emphasis is on what the person is

---

<sup>14</sup> Mauss, of course, wrote about the exchange mechanisms in gift-giving – i.e. as a *reciprocal* relationship, which he also identifies in certain instances of sacrifice, suggesting that a theory and history of “contract sacrifice” may be formulated (Mauss 1990: 17).

surrendering at a personal level, not on what value the thing surrendered has to a deity. In what seems a conflicting development, for this last stage, Tylor also notes the appearance of modes of substitution. Mock sacrifices may be performed, with one life given for another or a part for a whole (a *pars pro toto*) with, for example, just the head given instead of the whole body.

In order for Tylor's theories to be useful for this study, it is important to abstract the historical and linear elements that he attaches to the different stages, because there is no evidence or reason to believe that any sort of hierarchy should be attached to the different stages. However, if the 'stages' are not thought of as linear developments, but simply as different (but equal) types of sacrifice, or rather, as expressing different but significant features of the practice of sacrifice, they could be very helpful tools for understanding sacrifice as represented in the material in the next few chapters. Further, Tylor's ideas are perhaps the broadest, and as such, have been highly influential on later thinkers, and many of these pick up on a specific trait that Tylor points out, and use this as a basis for further elaboration; as will be seen, this is, for example, the case with the ideas of the elements of feasting, expiation and substitution.

### **William Robertson Smith (1846-1894)**

Brought up in Scotland, Robertson Smith studied the Bible and the religion of the Semites, seeking to explain modern religion through its origins in Semitic culture. He taught at Aberdeen and Cambridge, and, like his father, became a minister of the Free Church in 1870. His most famous work on religion and sacrifice is *Religion of the Semites* (2002, first published in 1894 as *Lectures on the religion of the Semites*). He was also well-known for his entries in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, which include 'the Bible' and 'sacrifice' (Carter 2003: 53).

William Robertson Smith approaches the subject of sacrifice through Semitic religion, and his goal is ultimately to understand his own Protestant religion by going back to what he sees as its origin. His agenda should certainly be kept in mind, and becomes ever more explicit when he creates a framework of opposition with 'religion' on one side, and 'magic' on the other (a distinction which is incidentally also vigorously upheld by James Frazer who, however, sees them more as phases of the same

phenomenon than as opposites – see Frazer 1993). In this opposition, Robertson Smith sees religion, “in the true sense” as positive; that is, it appeals to friendly beings and benevolent gods, while magic appeals to fear (Smith 2002: 54-55). Religion is further understood as communal, whereas magic is individual, and the roots of religion, in this supposedly ‘true’ sense, is associated with ancient Israel, where “we find the suppression of magical rites to be one of the first cares of the founder of the kingdom, or see the introduction of foreign worships treated as a heinous crime. In both respects the law of Israel is the law of every well-ordered ancient community” (Smith 2002: 55). Words such as ‘heathen’, ‘savage’ and ‘primitive’ are freely used throughout *Religion of the Semites*, generally referring to practices associated with magic, while the words usually used for the people practicing religion are simply ‘men’ or ‘Semites’ (though careful reading reveals that there is significant slippage of especially the former terms).

Further, Robertson Smith’s geographic or ethnographic area of study should be noted. He begins by including “the Arabs, the Hebrews and Phoenicians, the Aramaeans, the Babylonians and Assyrians, which in ancient times occupied the great Arabian Peninsula, with the more fertile lands of Syria Mesopotamia and Irac, from the Mediterranean coast to the base of the mountains of Iran and Armenia” (Smith 2002: 1). This clearly includes the area of the present study, but later comments do not in general correspond to this very large area, and since most of the material used by Robertson Smith comes from the Bible, it does not offer much evidence for sacrificial practice in Mesopotamia. What is more, most of the practices described by Robertson Smith are not recognisable in the Mesopotamian material, though they are perhaps slightly more so in Syrian practices: the emphasis on blood and burnt offerings found in Israel is, for example, not found in Mesopotamia.

When Robertson Smith refers to ‘sacrifice’ he includes both “bloody and bloodless oblations” (Smith 2002: 214), that is, offerings other than slaughtered animals are included. Interestingly, however, he rejects the word ‘offering’ as a description because it “is somewhat too wide, as it may properly include not only sacrifices but votive offerings, of treasure images and the like, which form a distinct class from offerings at the altar” (Smith 2002: 214). It appears, then, that a criterion involving an

altar is part of Robertson Smith's idea of sacrifice. In fact, Robertson Smith sees the altar as the ultimate place of sacrifice, and it is through control of access to the altar that a priestly class can be created and maintained (Smith 2002: 216). In direct contrast to Tylor, Robertson Smith does not think sacrifice is a mere gift: "The leading idea in the animal sacrifices of the Semites, as we shall see by and by, was not that of a gift made over to the god, but an act of communion, in which the god and his worshippers unite by partaking together of the flesh and blood of a sacred victim" (Smith 2002: 226-227). So although the simple idea of the gift is rejected, the communal eating theme is picked up, and Robertson Smith sees this as creating a shared space and experience between deity and worshipper.

The rejection of sacrifice as a gift is tied up with Robertson Smith's idea of property – he contends that in order for a sacrifice to be a gift, the thing given must belong in the first place to the worshipper, so that the worshipper actually has the right to hand something over to the deity which belonged to them. As Robertson Smith sees it, this cannot be the case, for which he seems to give two reasons. Firstly, sacrifice is probably "older than the idea of property" (Smith 2002: 385), and secondly, "Sacrifices of this sort [involving sacred animals] could never fall under the gift-theory, for creatures naturally holy are not man's property, but, so far as they have an owner at all, are the property of the god" (Smith 2002: 398). The first reason makes little sense, and is of course completely unprovable. The second is an interesting one, but one whose logic cannot be applied to the people of the ancient Near East without some indication from the actual data that those were their beliefs.

Robertson Smith identifies three types of Levitical sacrifice - whole burnt offerings, sacrifice with eating of the victim and the sin-offering (Smith 2002: 216) - as well as three distinctions made in Hebrew sacrifice: between animal and vegetable; between burnt and set forth on a table; and between given wholly and given partly (Smith 2002: 217). Although it would be possible to classify the material investigated in this study in such a manner, there is no indication that the ancient people themselves made distinctions based on such criteria, and some of these types are rarely found. Robertson Smith strongly emphasises the importance of sacrifice and sacrificial communion as a feast where worshipper and deity partakes of the same food, with the



meat of the animal being especially important. In line with his positivistic view of religion, religious feasts are repeatedly described as joyous occasions, as the following example shows:

A sacrifice was a public ceremony of a township or of a clan, and private householders were accustomed to reserve their offerings for the annual feasts, satisfying their religious feelings in the interval by vows to be discharged when the festal season came round. Then the crowd streamed into the sanctuary from all sides, dressed in their gayest attire, marching joyfully to the sound of music, and bearing with them not only the victims appointed for sacrifice, but store of bread and wine to set forth the feast. The law of the feast was open-handed hospitality; no sacrifice was complete without guests, and portions were freely distributed to rich and poor within the circle of a man's acquaintance. Universal hilarity prevailed, men ate drank and were merry together, rejoicing before their God. (Smith 2002: 254).

Elsewhere, Robertson Smith further uses words like “intoxication” and “orgiastic” to describe the sacrificial feast, and points out that in this happy and fearless feast all members of a group should participate (Smith 2002: 261). The function is to create a kind of contract between worshippers and deity, because the act of eating and drinking together ties them “to one another by a bond of friendship and mutual obligation” (Smith 2002: 265). As will be seen below and in the next chapters, this understanding of sacrificial feasting as idyllic and untroubled, with everybody participating, is far removed from many other interpretations, where issues of guilt, ruler ideology and fear are brought to the foreground. Even in Robertson Smith's happy images, however, a sense of inequality can be detected, disturbing the carefree feast – that is, there are guests and there are hosts, there are rich and poor. The role of women is also unclear. Although not mentioned in the above passage, they elsewhere seem excluded; Robertson Smith speaks of “men”, “fellows”, “brethren” and “brotherhood” (Smith 2002: 265), and later on he goes on to talk about the importance of kinship bonds as above family bonds, with men eating with their kinsmen rather than their wives and

children (Smith 2002: 274-284). Such inequalities may be thought to extend to the relationship between deity and human, and as such the ‘bond’ created cannot be a simple one of equal friendship and mutual obligation.

Sacrifice thus has the capacity to create artificial “brotherhoods” and blood-bonds where they do not exist through natural family bonds. Robertson Smith does not perhaps himself realise or at least emphasise the powerful ideological potential of such a structure, but it is later picked up by Nancy Jay (see below for discussion of her work), who highlights how such artificial blood-bonds are used to create powerful groups to the exclusion of others – in her case, she specifically looks at the exclusion of women from sacrifice (and by extension many other things). Atonement may be part of sacrifice, but only as a secondary and later function of the communion, “atonement being simply an act of communion designed to wipe out all memory of previous estrangement” (Smith 2002: 320). Thus, sacrifice is not primarily meant to be expiatory, according to Robertson Smith, but it may have that function as well through the renewal of kinship, which itself excludes any animosity (Smith 2002: 398).

### **Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1872-1927 and 1872-1950)**

French sociologists, closely linked to the Durkheimian tradition where religion is understood in its social/communal context. They both contributed to the beginning of the important French sociological journal, *L'Année sociologique*, where their seminal work, “Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice” first appeared in 1899 (first translated into English in 1964 as *Sacrifice: its nature and functions*).

Although heavily indebted to and drawing on the work of previous writers, Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss depart from these approaches by no longer focussing on the origins of sacrifice and, as such, move away from a hierarchy where origins are valued more highly. They find fault in the tendency of previous writers to look for universals in sacrificial practice: “The great flaw in this system [here specifically referring to Frazer] is that it seeks to bring the multiplicity of sacrificial forms within the unity of

an arbitrarily chosen principle” (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 5).<sup>15</sup> This is indeed a valid criticism, and one that can be aimed at almost every writer that will appear in this chapter, including Hubert and Mauss themselves. It once again refers to the very basic problem of what sacrifice is, what its (universal) characteristics and definition are. The multiplicity of sacrificial practices is something that will be emphasised again and again throughout this study, and should certainly be taken seriously. However, with this in mind, it is impossible to make any study of sacrifice without some idea of what is meant by it, and the cases presented must have something in common, even at a minimal level. This is of course also what is done by Hubert and Mauss (as they themselves explicitly acknowledge), who present their own version of what this common element is.

Their specific take on sacrifice highlights the role of the ‘victim’ (i.e. what is sacrificed<sup>16</sup>) as an intermediary, a link between humans and the divine:

Sacrifice is a religious act which, through the consecration of a victim, modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it or that of certain objects with which he is concerned<sup>17</sup> (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 13).

In Hubert and Mauss’ scheme, the function of the thing sacrificed is what is important in the ritual. This does not necessarily have to be a living being; it includes “any oblation, even of vegetable matter, whenever the offering or part of it is destroyed”<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> “Le grand défaut de ce système est de vouloir ramener les formes si multiples du sacrifice à l'unité d'un principe arbitrairement choisi” (Mauss and Hubert 2002: 8).

<sup>16</sup> The word ‘victim’ is another problematic term. It implies violence, crime and, by extension, guilt. All concepts which may be mostly modern and reveal an obsession with violence, at the heart of many theories, as discussed. However, the alternatives are not appealing. ‘Object of sacrifice’ clearly implies objectification of the animal/human, and has connotations of the gaze – making it an equally loaded term. ‘The animal/human/thing sacrificed’ is too heavy for general use. As the best current solution, I have put ‘victim’ in quotation marks (unless the term is used as a reference to how other writers have used it), but with the qualification noted here, that it is merely a conventional term, not intended as implying any of the above connotations.

<sup>17</sup> “*Le sacrifice est un acte religieux qui, par la consécration d'une victime, modifie l'état de la personne morale qui l'accomplit ou de certains objets auxquels elle s'intéresse*” (Mauss and Hubert 2002: 14).

<sup>18</sup> “on doit appeler sacrifice toute oblation même végétale, toutes les fois que l'offrande, ou qu'une partie

(Hubert and Mauss 1964: 12). So one of their criteria for sacrifice is the destruction of the object offered. The difference between a sacrifice and an offering appears to be only one of degree of solemnity, efficacy and strength of religious energy for Hubert and Mauss (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 12), with sacrifice as the stronger of the two. The victim is needed as an intermediary because the sacred is too forceful and dangerous for humans to access directly. A tripartite system is set up, with humans as profane on one side, opposed to the divine as sacred on the other side, and in between these is the victim, “drawing together”<sup>19</sup> the sacred and the profane (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 32), at the same time separating and uniting the two sides.

This ‘function’ of the victim is for Hubert and Mauss the universal element of sacrifice – as they say, without the victim, there can be no sacrifice. The victim is the vital part of a procedure which can be found in all sacrifice:

This procedure consists in establishing a means of communication between the sacred and the profane worlds through the mediation of a victim, that is, of a thing that in the course of the ceremony is destroyed<sup>20</sup> (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 97).

Hubert and Mauss identify two ‘types’ of sacrifice: sacralization and desacralization. That is, to either add or subtract sanctity to something, through an intermediary victim. Although the two rituals may seem opposed, they are inter-dependent, and a ritual of sacralization will always contain an element of desacralization and vice versa. In this context it is perhaps odd that the word “communication” is used about the procedure, because Hubert and Mauss do not seem to refer to any actual communication between the sacred and profane, unless by communication they simply mean ‘contact’.

---

de l'offrande, est détruite” (Mauss and Hubert 2002: 13).

<sup>19</sup> “rapprochement” (Mauss and Hubert 2002: 34).

<sup>20</sup> “*Ce procédé consiste à établir une communication entre le monde sacré et le monde profane par l'intermédiaire d'une victime, c'est-à-dire d'une chose détruite au cours de la cérémonie.*” (Mauss and Hubert 2002: 83)

The distinction between sacred and profane is essential for Hubert and Mauss, as it is these two worlds that merge in the victim. As will be seen, this distinction is used as the foundation for Durkheim's entire theory of religion, and as such, needs some clarification. Hubert and Mauss do not attempt to explain the two poles, but take them for granted, but some comments may give clues to their understanding of the two terms: the sacred is related to the religious, consecration and the divine, though apparently not identical to them – "it is no longer necessary for the sacrificer to become divine, but he must still become sacred"<sup>21</sup> (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 21) - and things can have varying degrees of sanctity (e.g. Hubert and Mauss 1964: 32). Further, the sacred itself is ambiguous, and the sacred and profane each needs the other, and may merge. The profane is given even less explanation, but seems to be associated with the ordinary or the common: "in every sacrifice an object passes from the common into the religious domain"<sup>22</sup> (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 9). The French 'commun', here translated as 'common', also has the meaning of 'shared' or 'joint' (even 'communal'), suggesting that when something moves into the sphere of the sacred it also becomes less accessible.

Hubert and Mauss' persistent use of the word 'victim' to designate the animal offered, in conjunction with words such as 'destruction/destroyed/destructive'<sup>23</sup> (throughout the work, but see Hubert and Mauss 1964: 97-99 in particular) situates the ritual in the realm of violence, something which is later made the main focus of the study of sacrifice in, for example, the work of Walter Burkert and René Girard. Such studies have their own merit, but the inevitable gap between modern and ancient perception should be kept in mind. We may perceive sacrificial ritual as a violent practice, but ancient people may have had a different perspective. Although this perspective is not possible to discover completely, certain things can be extracted. In fact, a word for 'victim' was never used in connection with sacrificial animals. In the ancient texts used in this study, animals are most commonly referred to simply as 'offering' or

---

<sup>21</sup> "Dans ce cas, il n'est plus nécessaire que le sacrificant soit divinisé ; mais il faut toujours qu'il devienne sacré" (Mauss and Hubert 2002: 21).

<sup>22</sup> "dans tout sacrifice, un objet passe du domaine commun dans le domaine religieux" (Mauss and Hubert 2002: 11).

<sup>23</sup> The French words used being 'victime' and 'détruite/destrutifs/destruction' (Mauss and Hubert 2002: throughout, see e.g. 83-84).

‘sacrifice’ (for a discussion of the ancient words for these, see the following chapters). Some sense of ‘violence’ may be discerned in words like ‘killing’ or ‘slaughtering’ an animal, but these refer more to the meat and entrails of the animal than to the violence of the act. In this way, we may get some sense of the importance of the ritual as perceived by ancient people.

Hubert and Mauss’ theory of sacrifice as mediation is particularly interesting in terms of divination as evidenced in the ancient Near East. There, divination is a clear example of communication between humans and deities through animals. This is, however, already obvious, since that is the purpose of the ritual, but the question is whether or not Hubert and Mauss’ theory really adds to the understanding of this ritual with their analysis of the sacred and the profane, the danger of the sacred and the destruction of the victim – only the context of the material can reveal this.

### **Émile Durkheim** (1858-1917)

Highly influential French professor of sociology and education, Durkheim emphasised the social character of religion (including sacrifice), and was the founder of *L’Année sociologique*. His main work on religion that includes a discussion of sacrifice is *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912, first translated into English in 1915 as *The elementary forms of the religious life*).

Émile Durkheim came from a similar background to Hubert and Mauss, and on several occasions personally cooperated with his nephew Marcel Mauss (Durkheim and Mauss 1903; Mauss and Durkheim 1910 and 1913). Durkheim uses the division of the world into sacred and profane as outlined by Hubert and Mauss. However, his thoughts on sacrifice, though not opposed to that of Hubert and Mauss, take a different angle, and are an extension of his vision of religion. In *The elementary forms of the religious life* Durkheim sees religion as a fundamentally social institution. Religion and gods are created by humans, “Sacred beings exist only when they are represented as such in the mind. When we cease to believe in them, it is as though they did not

exist”<sup>24</sup> (Durkheim 1971: 345). Further, they must be periodically reaffirmed in order to secure their continuous existence, “If we think of [sacred beings] less forcefully, they amount to less for us and we count less upon them; they exist to a lesser degree”<sup>25</sup> (Durkheim 1971: 345).

Durkheim famously goes as far as to say that the sacred is society itself: “The effect of the cult really is to recreate periodically a moral being upon which we depend as it depends upon us. Now this being does exist: it is society”<sup>26</sup> (Durkheim 1971: 348). Within this framework of religion, two types of cult are identified – the negative and the positive. The negative cult is to do with interdictions, and its rites are in a general sense designed to separate the sacred and the profane. The rites of the positive cult, on the other hand, are designed to merge the two (this is complementary to, but not the same as, the division of rites into sacralization and desacralization made by Hubert and Mauss). Sacrifice is part of the positive cult, as a religious ceremony which puts the group into action, brings individuals together, multiplies relations and makes them more intimate.

In agreement with Robertson Smith, Durkheim sees communion as an essential part of sacrifice, also commenting on the importance of the bond created when food is shared. In contrast to Robertson Smith, he does not see the idea of the gift or oblation in sacrifice as a secondary or later addition, but rather as an equally important element. He refutes Robertson Smith’s logic that there would be no point in offering food to sacred beings because they themselves are seen as the providers of food to humans. Durkheim instead, in line with his view of religion as socially constituted, understands the necessity in providing the gods with sustenance, since they are dependent on humans for their existence in the first place. Thus, Durkheim sees sacrifice as containing two elements: “Of course the sacrifice is partially a communion; but it is

---

<sup>24</sup> “Les êtres sacrés ne sont que parce qu’ils sont représentés comme tels dans les esprits. Que nous cessions d’y croire, et ils seront comme s’ils n’étaient pas” (Durkheim 1968: 492).

<sup>25</sup> “Si nous les pensons moins fortement ils comptent moins pour nous et nous comptons moins avec eux; ils sont à un moindre degré” (Durkheim 1968: 493).

<sup>26</sup> “il faut pouvoir établir que le culte a réellement pour effet de recréer périodiquement un être moral dont nous dépendons comme il dépend de nous. Or cet être existe: c’est la société” (Durkheim 1968: 497).

also, and no less essentially, a gift and an act of renouncement. It always presupposes that the worshipper gives some of his substance or his goods to his gods"<sup>27</sup> (Durkheim 1971: 343).

This whole scheme depends, of course, on Durkheim's binary opposition of the sacred and the profane. As such, the definitions of these terms are essential in evaluating his theories of religion in general and of sacrifice specifically, and they have been the subject of much dispute among scholars (e.g. Pickering 2001a and 2001b, Hamnett 2001, Hunt 2001, Ôno 2001 and Mellor 2001). Durkheim understands the sacred as "something added to and above the real"<sup>28</sup> (Durkheim 1971: 422), and Pickering further elaborates on some of the features attributed to the sacred: it is inviolable, irreducible and consisting of things set apart (Pickering 1984: 115-118). It is not intrinsic to anything, however – anything can be or become sacred - and varies from context to context.

Moreover, as noted by several writers on the subject, the sacred itself is a binary opposition, sometimes referred to as "the ambiguity of the sacred" (Mellor 2001: 177): that is, the sacred can be both benevolent and malevolent, life-giving and violent, pure and impure. This does not in itself create any major problems, but it means that the opposite of the sacred, the profane, is not defined in these terms. Yet, its definition is even more difficult to pin down than that of the sacred. Durkheim only seems to define it in negative terms – i.e. as the negation / opposite of the sacred. Yet it is not any of the above, and neither is it simply the ordinary or the secular, but something stronger, more potent. Pickering once again attempts to identify Durkheim's definition, but in the end does not reach any real positive results (Pickering 1984: 133-139). What does, however, seem to undermine Durkheim's coherent system is his insistence, on the one hand, on upholding the total separation of the two binary terms, and, on the other hand, allowing that objects can have varying degrees of sanctity, but not varying degrees of profanity.

---

<sup>27</sup> "Sans doute, le sacrifice, est, en partie, un procédé de communion; mais c'est aussi, et non moins essentiellement, un don, un acte de renouncement. Il suppose toujours que le fidèle abandonne aux dieux quelque chose de sa substance ou de ses biens" (Durkheim 1968: 490).

<sup>28</sup> "Car ce qui définit de sacré, c'est qu'il est surajouté au réel" (Durkheim 1968: 602).



Durkheim's main contribution to the study of religion and sacrifice is his emphasis on the power of the social element,

The very act of congregating is an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once the individuals are gathered together, a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation<sup>29</sup> (Durkheim 1995: 217).

It is in this 'sort of electricity' that the sacred is created, and as such is described as society itself by Durkheim. This analysis may be helpful for understanding what happens when sacrifice takes place in groups, especially larger ones, and how sacrifice may be an occasion for creating and maintaining social relationships, whether consciously or not. In this case, sacrifice, although it may have other functions, is merely one kind of tool, and presumably not the only such tool. As a consequence, the specific act of sacrifice is not what is important, only one of its results. Therefore, although this function is significant, the study of sacrifice should not stop there. If the ritual of sacrifice is chosen among the many reasons for gathering, there must be a reason why this particular ritual is chosen above the others.

### **Walter Burkert (1931-)**

Born in Bavaria, Germany, Burkert studied philology, classical history and philosophy, and has been pre-occupied with the history of religion, myth and ritual, especially in ancient Greece. Among other things, he emphasises the psychological aspects of religion. Burkert has written much about Greek religion, but the most important work including sacrifice is *Homo necans* (1983, first published in German in 1972 as *Homo necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen*).

Walter Burkert is another writer situating sacrifice at the very core of religion and the creation of community: sacrificial killing is the basic experience of the sacred.

---

<sup>29</sup> "Or, le seul fait de l'agglomération agit comme un excitant exceptionnellement puissant. Une fois les individus assemblés il se dégage de leur rapprochement une sorte d'électricité qui les transporte vite à un degré extraordinaire d'exaltation" (Durkheim 1968: 308).

Although Burkert is mainly concerned with ancient Greek sacrifice, he sees the origin of sacrifice in the human hunt for and killing of prey. The essential similarity of death by human violence is considered so important that any possible differences are attributed to later practices. Burkert argues that the hunt can become ceremonial, and conversely, a sort of hunting scene is often acted out as part of sacrifice (Burkert 1983: 15). Hunting was an important development in making humans human, and with the 'age of the hunter' began a new structure in human society, one in which the world "falls into pairs of categories: indoors and out, security and adventure, women's work and men's work, love and death. At the core of this new type of male community, which is biologically analogous to a pack of wolves, are the acts of killing and eating"<sup>30</sup> (Burkert 1983: 18).

Further, in the hunt, as in sacrifice, intraspecific aggression is aimed at an outside, thus creating close communal bonds. The 'prey', Burkert maintains, tended to be 'great mammals' because they most resemble humans. This would in turn lead to feelings of guilt among the hunters, and the hunt would become ritualised, including actions that were meant to create the illusions of willingness on the part of the animal (as is seen in some Greek sacrificial practice), as well as those meant to restore or resurrect the animal (Burkert attributes to this the keeping and setting up of bones and skulls).

Although hunting and sacrifice clearly have many links, as will also be seen in the material in the next two chapters, there seems to be no reason to think that they are inextricable. Many types of sacrifice do not display any strong association with hunting, and the hypothesis of such sacrifices merely being later developments cannot be substantiated because the link cannot be verified empirically in the first place. Even if such an origin could be verified, these other types are so different that they need explaining in some other manner anyway. But to return to the original, historical, link, Burkert bases this on the 'facts' of human intraspecific aggression and the development of male human hunters, hunting in particular large mammals. The notion of sacrifice arising from the hunt is in itself only a hypothesis based on these 'facts',

---

<sup>30</sup> "seine Welt zerfällt in zwei Bereiche, das Drinnen und das Draußen – Geborgenheit und Abenteuer, Frauensache und Männersache, Liebe und Tod. Denn im Zentrum des neuen Gemeinschaftstyps, dessen biologisches Analogon das Wolfsrudel ist, steht das Töten und Essen" (Burkert 1972: 26).

and not one that can be proven. Yet even these ‘facts’ are not simple truths. The idea of whether or not human aggression or violence is ‘innate’ is a major discussion topic, with arguments from many different types of studies used for and against (see e.g. Flannery 2009: 48-59). In the end, it is a matter of which side is considered more persuasive. However, even if Burkert’s basic assumption (one which is also shared by Girard) is allowed, the notion of society structured around the hunting of large mammals, and separated into male and female spheres, is not supported by historical or ethnographic evidence, certainly not in an unproblematic manner (see e.g. the discussion in Smith 1987: 202-205).

Regardless of whether or not society in the Palaeolithic was structured along the strict gender-based lines outlined by Burkert, his interpretation of the hunting of large mammals as the core of community has the unfortunate consequence of excluding women from this community. In fact, remarks like “Community is defined by participation in the bloody work of men” and “man became man through the hunt, through the act of killing”<sup>31</sup> (Burkert 1983: 20 and 22) would, if taken to their logical conclusion, exclude women not only from community, but even from being human. Other parts of Burkert’s theory are perhaps more valuable to the study of sacrifice, such as his idea of how the ritual is a means of maintaining community by shared aggression aimed at something outside the group. Burkert thinks that religion, and in particular sacrificial ritual, serves as a model for society, and to bind together its participants:

As ethology has shown, a sense of community arises from collective aggression. A smile can, of course, establish contact, and a crying child touches our hearts, but in all human societies “seriousness” takes precedence over friendliness and compassion. A community bound by oaths is united in the “sacred shiver” of awe and enthusiasm – the relic of an aggressive reflex that made the hairs bristle – in a feeling of strength and readiness. This must then

---

<sup>31</sup> “Gemeinschaft ist definiert durch die Teilhabe am blutigen Männerwerk” and “der Mensch wurde zum Menschen durch das Jägertum, durch den Akt des Tötens” (Burkert 1972: 28 and 30).

be released in an “act”: the sacrificial ritual provides the occasion for killing and bloodshed<sup>32</sup> (Burkert 1983: 35).

In a sacrifice the circle of participants is segregated from the outside world. Complicated social structures find expression in the diverse roles the participants assume in the course of the ritual, from the various “beginnings”, through prayer, slaughter, skinning, and cutting up, to roasting and, above all, distributing the meat. ... The sacrificial community is thus a model of society as a whole, divided according to occupation and rank. Hence, the hierarchies manifested in the ceremony are given great social importance and are taken very seriously<sup>33</sup> (Burkert 1983: 37).

Sacrifice thus plays a very important social function, binding and reaffirming social roles within a community with a sequence of acts. This is done through the shared participation in killing and eating, with accompanying sentiments such as (collective) guilt and celebration. The concept of collective guilt may not be as straightforward as Burkert imagines, but some sort of strong (emotional, social)<sup>34</sup> shared experience is likely to be part of many sacrificial rituals. It has already been noted above, and will be again here, how shared meals have great importance, not simply in creating bonds, but also hierarchies, especially in terms of who is sponsoring the meal, and who

---

<sup>32</sup> “Gemeinschaft entsteht, wie die Verhaltensforschung gezeigt hat, aus gemeinsamer Aggression. Gewiß schafft auch ein Lächeln Kontakt, ein kindliches Weinen greift aus Herz; doch alle menschliche Gesellschaft hat es so eingerichtet, daß der Ernst höher steht als Freundlichkeit und Rührung. Im ‘heiligen Schauer’ der Begeisterung – dem Relikt aggressiven Haaresträubens – findet sich die verschworene Gemeinschaft zusammen, im Gefühl der Kraft und der Bereitschaft. In einer ‘Tat’ muß sich dies entladen: die Gelegenheit zum Töten und Blutvergießen weist das Opferritual” (Burkert 1972: 45).

<sup>33</sup> “Im Opfer schließt sich ein Kreis der Zugehörigen von den Außenstehenden ab; kompliziertere soziale Strukturen drücken sich darin aus, daß den Teilnehmern verschiedene Rollen im Vollzug des Rituals zufallen, vom mannigfachen ‘Anfangen’ über Beten, Schlachten, Häuten und Zerteilen zum Braten und vor allem zum Verteilen des Fleisches. ... Insofern ist die Opfergemeinschaft das Modell der arbeitsteiligen, nach Rang gestuften Gesellschaft. Die im Fest zutage tretende Gliederung ist darum von höchster sozialer Wichtigkeit und wird entsprechend Ernst genommen” (Burkert 1972: 47).

<sup>34</sup> Elsewhere, when talking about the ancient Greeks, Burkert also refers to the *Angst* involved in seeing an animal killed and/or bleeding to death (Burkert 1981: 112-114). As with the idea of guilt (and as pointed out by Henrichs and Kirk at the discussion at the end of the paper), such specific concepts have certain modern associations and assumptions, and as such should not be projected onto past communities.

receives what parts. As Burkert puts it, if someone does not know how to behave in these rituals – a “ritual idiot” – they will be excluded from the group (Burkert 1987b: 152). With Burkert and Girard having much in common in their treatment of sacrifice, Burkert’s main criticism of Girard’s work (which is discussed in the next section) is his negligence of the importance of the meal as a part of many sacrificial rituals (Burkert 1981: 110).

Another interesting feature taken up by Burkert is the symbols used in sacrifice and religion in general:

Every communication is symbolic inasmuch as it does not use the real object it wants to communicate, but substitutes a sign that is familiar to and, hence, understood by the addressee. The object serving as sign is exchangeable. If the sender and the receiver are sufficiently familiar with one another, the complex of signs can be greatly reduced. On the other hand, in competition with rival communications, the sign is exaggerated and heightened. Substitute signs thus used – whether consisting of natural or artificial objects, pictures, cries, or words – may be called symbols in a pregnant sense. They are not chosen arbitrarily, but are taken from a continuous tradition; they are neither independent nor self-evident, but bound to the system in which they function. Their richness of meaning coincides with the complex effects they produce in predetermined interactions<sup>35</sup> (Burkert 1983: 41).

---

<sup>35</sup> “Jede Mitteilung ist symbolisch, insofern sie nicht direct ein Stück Wirklichkeit an die Hand gibt, sondern ein Zeichen setzt, das von dem darauf eingestimmten Empfänger verstanden wird; der Gegenstand, der als Zeichen dient, ist auswechselbar. Der Zeichenkomplex kann stark reduziert werden, wenn die Einstimmung zwischen ‘Sender’ und ‘Empfänger’ eng genug ist; umgekehrt wird das Zeichen äubertreibend gesteigert, wenn es darum geht, konkurrierende Mitteilungen zu übertrumpfen. So verwendete Ersatz-Zeichen – natürliche oder künstlich hergestellte Gegenstände, Bilder, Rufe und Worte – heißen Symbole im prägnanten Sinn. Sie sind nicht willkürlich gewählt, sondern aus kontinuierlicher Tradition hervorgegangen, sie sind weder selbständig noch selbstverständlich, sondern gebunden an die Ordnung, in der sie fungieren. Ihre Bedeutungsfülle liegt in der komplexen Wirkung, die sie auslösen im gleichsam programmierten Zusammenspiel” (Burkert 1972: 51-52).

The material, in particular iconographic material, is full of signs and symbols. Some are repeated in both the Aegean and the Near East, some through time, and in specific contexts. Such signs may well be exchangeable, but if, as Burkert suggests, they are not completely arbitrary, but carefully chosen against the cultural background and tradition, these signs may tell us something about the society that created them.

## **René Girard (1923-)**

French cultural theorist and professor of languages, literature and civilisations at various North American universities, including, most recently, Stanford. One of Girard's major concerns is with the mechanism of violence in society, and he links this with religion and sacrifice. Girard has written two books that specifically examine sacrifice: *Violence and the sacred* (2005, first published in French in 1972 as *La violence et le sacré*), and *The scapegoat* (1986, first published in French in 1982 as *Le bouc émissaire*).

Rene Girard's main work on sacrifice, *Violence and the sacred*, was first published in French the same year as Burkert's *Homo necans* was published in German, 1972. Interestingly, Girard's theory is based on the same basic notion as Burkert's, of humans as inherently violent beings.<sup>36</sup> In such a framework, Girard sees sacrifice as a vent for human violence, working as a system to prevent the violence from spiralling out of control. The collective choice of a single victim upon whom all members of the community can project their aggression, rids that community of the impulse of violence, and in the act of killing the victim, it becomes sacred as the very being that rids the community of the otherwise self-destructive pattern. The victim must be chosen unanimously for the rite to be efficient - i.e. for it to put an end to the violence; if it is not unanimous, the chance of revenge still exists. Since violence is inherent (or at least inevitable), the ritual must be repeated at regular intervals, as well as in crisis situations.

---

<sup>36</sup> To be precise, Girard, through Freudian analysis, believes that 'mimetic desire' is inherent to humans, and it is this mimetic desire that causes violence (Harrison and Girard 2005).

A crucial element of the sacrificial process is the fact that the participants must not be consciously aware of the function of the process (or it would immediately stop working) – this is what Girard refers to as a necessary misunderstanding:

the sacrificial process requires a certain degree of misunderstanding. The celebrants do not and must not comprehend the true role of the sacrificial act. The theological basis of the sacrifice has a crucial role in fostering this misunderstanding. It is the god who supposedly demands the victims; he alone, in principle, who savors the smoke from the altars and requisitions the slaughtered flesh. It is to appease his anger that the killing goes on, that the victims multiply (Girard 2005: 7).

For sacrifice to fulfil its role, the role must be unknown to the participants; they must believe that the violence is exterior to the group, and they must believe that the victim is guilty (Harrison and Girard 2005). Such an analysis is useful for interpreting different levels of understanding, and can be a way of consolidating different theories of sacrifice. That is to say, when one theory insists that sacrifice is a mere gift, or to appease a deity, and another that it is a political/ideological act designed to create and maintain social status or to justify the eating of meat, these need not, with such an analysis, be diametrically opposed: several processes and functions can be at work at the same time, some with or without the knowledge of the participants.

The victim itself is not completely arbitrary, but must fulfil certain conditions. It must have a “delicately balanced mechanism of associations” (Girard 2005:41), being both exterior and interior to the group. It must be similar enough to the members of the community, in order for them to project the aggression onto it instead of the original object, hence Girard often refers to it as a double. That is, the victim works as the double of each individual. In the last chapter of this study, this interesting interpretation is used to analyse certain features of the iconography, in particular as seen in Aegean seals, where the doubling and mirroring of motifs is extremely common. As a final vent of sacrifice, Girard also sees the victim as a substitute, and if an animal, on several levels: it is both an animal for a human, and at the same time a

substitute for the whole community. Without this surrogate function, sacrifice would make no sense.

If Girard saw violence as inherent in the same manner as Burkert, this part of his theory would be subject to the same criticism as Burkert's. Girard's notion of violence is, however, more complex than this because he does not see violence itself as inherent, but what he calls 'mimetic desire' (Girard 2005: especially 152-178). This is a psychological mechanism which causes humans to imitate the desires of others, and this in turn causes violence because two or more people cannot have the same object. Some fascinating studies from psychology, neurophysiology and cognitive neuroscience highlight the power and importance of imitation in humans from an early stage in life (see Garrels 2006 for a summary of the most recent research). Not only can infants imitate adult actions, they can apparently also discern and complete certain intentions (Garrels 2006: 64). These findings are very interesting in light of Girard's theory, but there is still a big leap from the existence and performance of imitation to these imitations necessarily taking place, and to them necessarily causing violence as outlined by Girard. As Garrels notes, with imitation it is also clear that the infants of the study can differentiate between themselves and others (Garrels 2006: 61). This feature is perhaps as important as imitation, and they are most likely two aspects of the same process.<sup>37</sup> As Rose writes, the concept of mimetic desire is "a priori and posited" in Girard's work (Rose 1992: 145). Girard refers to animal behaviour at some points, and myth at others to support his arguments (e.g. Girard 2005: 2-3), but given his source material, they are hardly persuasive, and the matter remains one that cannot be empirically proven. However, as previously mentioned, this is as with any other theory that analyses ancient human intentions and perceptions – that is, it works as a postulate that, applied to the material, may or may not make sense and enlighten us about certain features.

Regardless of whether or not Girard sees violence as inherent to human nature, it does have a very strong and central focus in his work, and this has rightly been criticised. Valeri contends that it ignores or excludes the symbolic value of sacrifice – the

---

<sup>37</sup> In a later book, *The Scapegoat* (1986, *Le Bouc émissaire*, 1982 in French), Girard outlines how in the modern western world the judicial system has taken over the role of a previous sacrificial system.



importance of the transition between the visible (life) and the invisible (death), in some cases through the process of decomposition, something which applies to both animate and inanimate offerings (Valeri 1985: 69). Alexiou sees the emphasis on violence as a product of modern, western attitudes (Alexiou 1990: 99).<sup>38</sup> To an extent, these concerns are very real, but the problem is one of degree and perspective. Sacrifice does involve an element of violence, in that something is destroyed, by human agency. The question is then what we make of this and what significance we attribute to it (and of course what significance we think ancient people attributed to it; they may not have conceived it as ‘violence’). Girard has chosen to make it central to his theory: this procedure need not be followed. Part of the theories can be used without excluding all other elements and functions of sacrifice, the key being not to apply them as universal concepts – as Rosaldo says, “I wouldn’t advocate either of these views [concerning ritual] as universal, but one should consider both possibilities and gain analytical flexibility by asking when one, the other, or yet another view obtains” (Rosaldo 1987: 244).

Another critique aimed at Girard is his use of source material (Burkert 1987b: 172 and Alexiou 1990: 99). *Violence and the sacred* focuses on analysing sacrificial ritual in Greek tragedy and mythology, with a particular emphasis on the character of Oedipus. This critique is fully justified, and in fact acknowledged by Girard (Burkert 1987b: 179), who believes that, while myths in fact mask the scapegoat mechanism, the more myths you read, the more you can recognise the workings of the sacrificial process (Harrison and Girard 2005). Such a procedure could perhaps be applied to myths of ancient Mesopotamia, but I am here more interested in exploring how Girard’s theory can enlighten certain features of the evidence for sacrifice analysed in this study, with little reference to myth.

---

<sup>38</sup> Miller also notes the recent popularity of violence in studies of sacrifice, e.g. in Girard. He is in fact able to take the theme so far as to compare the violent consumption of modern shopping with that of the violence and consumption in sacrifice (Miller 1998).

## **Jonathan Zittel Smith (1938-)**

American scholar of the history of religions, Smith has spent most of his career working at North American universities, especially the University of Chicago. He challenges previous ideas and ways of thinking in the field of the history of religion, including the methods used by important scholars such as James Frazer and Walter Burkert. His main work on sacrifice is the essay “The domestication of sacrifice” (1987).

Jonathan Z. Smith, in his essay, “The domestication of sacrifice”, argues against much theoretical work on sacrifice that has gone before. Most of all, he rejects the idea of sacrifice as what he calls a ‘primitive’ ritual, in particular one that is related to hunting. By ‘primitive’, Smith refers to some kind of original act, or at least one that can be traced far back in human history. Smith argues that this fixation with placing sacrifice at the origin of human ritual is in fact an attempt to validate religion as “‘brute fact’ rather than in the work and imagination and intellection of culture” (Smith 1987: 198).

Smith instead sees sacrifice as strongly tied to agriculture and domestication:

Animal sacrifice appears to be, universally, the ritual killing of a domesticated animal by agrarian or pastoralist societies (Smith 1987: 197)

and

Sacrifice, in its agrarian or pastoral context, is the artificial (i.e., ritualized) killing of an artificial (i.e., domesticated) animal (Smith 1987: 201)

Sacrifice is thus a product of civilisation, and “a mediation on one cultural process by means of another” (Smith 1987: 200). The domesticated animal, because it is selected (in the breeding process), is understood as artificial, as liminal, between the human and the wild/animal, and by extension, in its sacrificial context, it occupies the space between the human and the divine. This ‘liminal’ feature of the sacrificial victim is

one that has already been noted on a number of occasions, and is particularly prominent in the writings of Hubert and Mauss, and Girard, but can in a sense be found in almost all of the above theories. In all cases, it appears that the victim has to fulfil certain conditions in order to qualify, and these conditions often place it in some kind of hybrid position – between the divine and the human, between animal and human, between the group and the individual, between members within a group, between the group and the ‘outside’, and so on. These conditions and the ‘liminal’ placement are highly theoretical, but may at times be detected in the material evidence, as will be seen in Chapter 4.

In this manner, Smith strongly rejects the idea of sacrifice as originating in hunting, and even devotes a separate section to arguing against the existence of any Palaeolithic evidence for sacrifice (the very evidence so ardently used by Burkert). This evidence may indeed be questionable, and even if not, does not prove much about the nature of sacrifice. However, in order to substantiate his theory, Smith seems to do two things, which without further justification become very problematic for his theory. The first is that he does not make a clear distinction between different types of animals within agricultural societies – as a quotation from A. E. Jensen reveals: “animal sacrifices are ‘almost exclusively of domestic animals, for they all occur in agricultural cultures’” (Smith 1987: 202). Such a statement would suggest that the animal is domestic simply by being sacrificed in an agricultural context. This is not only a circular argument, but also adds nothing. If this is not his intention, there are more than enough examples from agricultural societies, and from the evidence introduced in the next chapters, that wild animals were indeed sacrificed. So although the theory of sacrifice as originating in domestication is untenable, it nevertheless points towards its importance in agricultural societies.

The second aspect not explained in any detail by Smith may exclude such evidence, because he does not allow certain types of ritual, often labelled as sacrifice, into the category of sacrifice. The examples he excludes are human sacrifice (because it is “often too readily homologized with animal sacrifice” and “present only in agricultural or pastoral cultures”) and what he calls “the postmortem offering of some portion of an animal routinely killed for food” (Smith 1987: 197 and 204). Such exclusions

depend on one's definition of sacrifice, which, apart from the above quotations, Smith does not clearly state. The last exclusion would suggest that Smith focuses on the ritual killing aspect of sacrifice – but two other comments imply that this is not the case: the acts “elaborated” by sacrifice include “butchering, eating, exchanging, gift-giving, greeting, displaying” (Smith 1987: 195), and when speaking of human sacrifice, certain modes of ‘ritual killing’ are also excluded (Smith 1987: 197).

A related issue highlighted by Smith is that of the hunt. He rejects the hunt as the origin of sacrifice, but he does not reject (as would also be very difficult) that there are certain connections, in particular in terms of what he calls “the agrarian mythologization of the hunt” (Smith 1987: 201). He here touches upon an issue that has been much discussed, especially in Aegean scholarship (e.g. Ballintun 1995, Bloedow 1999a, Marinatos 1990, Pini 1985 and Thomas 2004). That is, there is general agreement, that the ‘elite’ made use of hunting ideology, and that hunting, at least of certain animals, was a prestige activity. The questions revolve around 1) whether or not such activity, known from iconography, is simply symbolic, or to what extent it was actually practiced, and 2) the extent to which such activities were also practiced by non-elite members of society, and at what scale. In particular, the depiction of lion-hunting has caused some disputes, because it is still uncertain if the lion existed on Mainland Greece in the Bronze Age (Ballintun 1995, Pini 1985, Boessneck and von den Driesch 1981, von den Driesch 1990 and Shapland 2010). In other words, if the iconographic material is read as purely symbolic/ideological, it could be argued that the link between sacrifice and hunting<sup>39</sup> is of the same nature.

Smith's greatest contribution to the study of sacrifice is perhaps in his reading of previous work, in which he points out some underlying hierarchies and assumptions, often based on

---

<sup>39</sup> On top of this is the complication of modern perceptions of what hunting constitutes. As Smith points out, hunting can be many things, not simply a matter of man battling or chasing a large mammal (Smith 1987: 204-205), as envisaged by Burkert. Ethnographic studies suggest that ‘hunting’ involves a great variety of activities, including tracking, digging out and trapping, and may consist of large prey as well as small prey such as rodents, birds and small mammals (see e.g. Morris 2000).

a variety of dichotomies: religion/magic, individual/collective, charisma/routinization, communion/formalism, the text as direct speech over against the commentary and the gloss, the original or primordial over against the secondary or historical (Smith 1987: 193, quoting himself).

Such dichotomies are evident from the earliest writing on religion and sacrifice – from James Frazer’s distinction between magic and religion through Robertson Smith’s association of magic to the individual, religion to the communal, to Girard, and especially Burkert’s focus on the origin of sacrifice.<sup>40</sup> Such distinctions may not in and of themselves be problematic, but they are so when placed in a hierarchical system, one where magic, the individual and the non-original are of less value than their ‘opposites’. As useful as it may be to understand the origin of sacrifice, such usefulness becomes obsolete if the context of its study – in this case the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East – is ignored. Sacrifice is a ritual act, and therefore includes repetition and imitation, and its interpretation may be fluid throughout time, and from person to person. If such factors are overlooked by an appeal to origin, a large part of the ritual will not be understood, or even misunderstood.

### **Nancy Jay (1929-1991)**

Born in South Africa, brought up in New England and educated at Radcliffe College, Jay later became a lecturer of social sciences and religion at Harvard Divinity School. She was interested in gender in the context of religion, and the structures behind the seeming domination of men in religious contexts throughout history. Her work on sacrifice is *Throughout your generations forever* (1992).

In her *Throughout your generations forever*, Nancy Jay focuses on the different roles taken by men and women in sacrificial ritual, as well as how these have been perceived and analysed by scholars on sacrifice, including many of the ones discussed in this chapter. Through such a focus, Jay understands sacrifice, along with Z. Smith,

---

<sup>40</sup> Even in Smith’s own essay, such prioritisation creeps up in two ways: his theory of sacrifice as a product of agricultural societies is in itself a theory of origins – as is recognised by Smith (Smith 1987: 213), and when referring to the work of Boas, he clearly prioritises earlier, more ‘immediate’ notes over “what he thought he wrote twenty years later” (Smith 1987: 215).

as a ritual primarily practiced by agricultural communities, and as closely related to patriarchal systems. As such, sacrifice is a male way of establishing descent, that is, since men lack the immediate connection between parent and child through childbirth, an equivalent 'blood-bond' is created through participation in the bloody ritual of sacrifice. Jay variously refers to sacrifice "as a remedy for having been born of woman" (Jay 1992: xxiii), "man's childbearing" and "opposed to childbirth as birth done better, under deliberate purposeful control, and on a more exalted level than ordinary mothers do it" (Jay 1992: xxiv). This is in a way similar to what has been said several times before about sacrifice as an 'artificial' act, in the sense that it re-presents another act, but in a completely controlled (hence 'artificial') environment, and can therefore be manipulated to suit the means of the performers. What Jay does is add a specific reason for the need for such a re-presentation, along with the division of who 'manipulates', and who is excluded. She points to the fact that in most sacrificial traditions, only men are allowed to sacrifice, and when women do participate, they never do so as mothers (or child bearers). Childbirth is in fact often seen as pollution.

Whether or not Jay's analysis of sacrifice as a predominantly male practice and deliberate manipulation of descent is a useful way of interpreting the material in this study, will be touched upon throughout in discussions concerning gender. It can already briefly be noted here that there certainly were women involved in sacrifice in both the Aegean and the Near East, but their precise roles as distinct from those of men may be slightly more difficult to establish. What is perhaps of deeper significance in Jay's work is her critique of the theories that we have already encountered here – in particular those of Durkheim, Girard and Burkert, but her observations could be applied to almost all the writers in this chapter. She points out how, in the writings of these authors, there is a more or less explicit assumption concerning gender roles (Jay 1992: 128-146). At times, as has already been seen with, for example, Burkert, women are quite explicitly excluded from sacrifice, and, since sacrifice is understood by these writers as the marker in the creation of civilisation or society, from being part of society itself. Or, at best, to be only second-rate participants. Thus, an important dichotomy that should be added to those of Z. Smith quoted above, should be that of male/female, with females being associated with magic, the individual, the passive/non-participant.

Two wonderful comments by Jay (here specifically on the work of Durkheim) serve to illustrate the absurdity of such assumptions,

If the capacity for conceptual thought is acquired only through participation in a process that excludes women, how does it come about that women can think? If you hold fast to Durkheim's analysis, there is no way to answer this question (Jay 1992: 136)

and

Little is known of what [the women] do together in the absence of males, but in any case it is not social. Probably it involves too much physical gratification and not enough moral renunciation (Jay 1992: 136).

The problem with such assumptions is that they universalise (or eternalise, as Jay would say) certain human characteristics which are pertinent to specific social contexts, and through such universalisation, serve to legitimate male domination. For example, both Girard and Burkert build their theories around the 'inherent' violent human being – or rather, man. Such analyses, whether true to the evidence or not, totally ignore women, and see them as merely passive – in the Freudian tradition, as objects of desire, and by extension, the cause of the violence in the first place.<sup>41</sup> These assumptions then carry on into further scholarship, often without new evaluation of the social context precisely because they have been universalised, as I would argue is the case, for example, with certain parts of Nannó Marinatos' work on Minoan sacrificial practice.

---

<sup>41</sup> Incidentally, a psychoanalytical twist is given to Jay's theory by William Beers, who argues that a difference in how men and women relate to "the omnipotent maternal self-object" essentially leads to men asserting power, control and strict structures through the ritual of sacrifice (Beer 1992: esp. 138).

## Theories specific to the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East

Whereas the cult practices of ancient Greece have been the subject of many scholarly works focussing on sacrifice, there are very few solely committed to this topic for the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East. What follows is an examination of some of the few scholars that have in some way been occupied with sacrifice, either as their main subject, or as part of a larger work, most often on religion in general. None of these are works proposing a new or even a general theory of sacrifice, but because they treat the subject of sacrifice, they have some preconceived idea of what that entails for their area of study. These will become apparent in the next couple of chapters, and here I simply offer a short survey of those few works that do consider sacrifice, and what assumptions (whether correct or not) they bring with them.

### The Aegean

#### *Nannó Marinatos*

Nannó Marinatos is the first to dedicate intensive study to the subject of sacrifice in the Aegean, mainly focussing on Minoan Crete - the most relevant being her *Minoan sacrificial ritual* (1986) (see also Marinatos 1988, 1993 and 2005). Nowhere does she give a specific definition of the word sacrifice or how she is using the concept. However, it is clear that she is heavily influenced by Walter Burkert and his theory of the origin of sacrifice in hunting (see e.g. comments 1986: 1 and 1988: 14). This is evident from her interpretation of the evidence from Crete, where she sees a strong link between sacrifice and hunting, and even equates the quarry with the sacrificial victim (1986: 13).

As a consequence, there is perhaps an over-emphasis on hunting in her work, and the influence of Burkert further leads her to conclude that women never performed the actual act of sacrifice in Minoan Crete. Her arguments for this are unsatisfactory and not sufficiently backed up by the material (more about this in Chapter 2 and 4), but it becomes clear from these writings that she understands the act of sacrifice as the moment of the killing of the animal. Everything else, such as the cutting up and the meal, although it may be important, is not part of the sacrifice itself. This is evident in



her writing with words like ‘after’, ‘following’ and ‘post-’ associated with the word sacrifice (especially Marinatos 1988).

Along the same line of argument, Marinatos claims that the moment of the kill is the most important, precisely because it is never or very rarely shown in the iconography – and the same is the case by comparison with other cultures (Marinatos 1988).<sup>42</sup> Again, I do not think a close examination of the material can support such a conclusion, but in any case, Marinatos at the same time writes that “the phase after the slaughtering of the victim was of great importance” (1988: 16) – because it is very often depicted. Interestingly, a sort of opposite picture emerges when imagery of hunting is examined – here, the moment of the kill is very often and explicitly shown. This leaves the question of precisely what the nature of the connection between the two practices is, other than in symbolic imagery.

Although some of Marinatos’ conclusions may be unsupported by the material evidence, she highlights an important issue often appearing in Aegean scholarship: the projecting back or assumption of features of the later Archaic and Classical Greek world to be present and similar in the Bronze Age. Her article of 1988, comparing Minoan and Greek sacrifice, is in a way a reaction against this tendency, by attempting to carefully lay out differences and similarities between the two worlds. One of her closing remarks is very pertinent to many of the works I discuss in the next chapter: “These differences should make us aware that the two cultures [Minoan and Greek] have to be treated as autonomous units and that our terminology cannot be transferred from one to the other without danger of misunderstandings” (1988: 19).

*Robert James Cromarty*

Another study solely dedicated to sacrifice in Minoan Crete recently appeared, *Burning bulls, broken bones: sacrificial ritual in the context of palace period Minoan*

---

<sup>42</sup> Marinatos, with Burkert, thinks this is due to the ‘guilt’ of the moment of death (Marinatos 1988: 17). Although this phenomenon does not seem relevant to the material investigated in this study, another explanation for specific importance being placed on that one moment may be offered from anthropological analogies: Bloch notes how in Dinka sacrifice, the sacrificer and animal share a certain identification, right to the moment of death. After this, they are again completely separate, and the animal treated very differently – and eaten (Bloch 1992: 36). Even here, however, this is not more important than the complex processes and rituals both before and after the ‘kill’.

*religion* by Robert James Cromarty (2008). Cromarty recognises the great variety in sacrificial ritual, and the importance of geographical and temporal contexts (Cromarty 2008: 8). In a study concerned with a term as theoretically loaded as ‘sacrifice’, he also realises the great importance of defining it in his own usage, as relevant to Minoan Crete (as opposed to what is claimed in an otherwise excellent review by Marinatos – Marinatos 2010: 1). Thus, he writes sacrifice,

involves the killing of an animal, in an area with cultic archaeological traits that serve to define it as a cult area, where at least an anatomically consistent portion of the victim is used for a purpose that does not satisfy the food requirements of those persons present (Cromarty 2008: 9).

Although I must disagree on a number of points with this definition, it is at least clearly set out, and therefore known throughout the rest of the work what is meant by the term. The main problem is that in Cromarty’s attempt to set up clear criteria for recognising sacrifice archaeologically, he ends up excluding anything that cannot be recognised as such in the archaeology. It must be admitted that just because the definitive archaeological evidence is not there, it does not follow that sacrifice did not take place. As part of sacrifice being detectable archaeologically, Cromarty further seems to insist on the presence of an altar (“fixed structures in cult complexes” – Cromarty 2008: 10). I see no reason for insisting on this, and no evidence from anywhere (Aegean or otherwise) that such structures should be a necessity in sacrificial practice. It is something that was also hinted at in Robertson Smith’s work, and may in fact have its roots in the way sacrifice is presented in the Bible.

Since the criteria are purely archaeological, any indications of sacrifice from other evidence, such as iconography, are a priori excluded, and Cromarty is indeed very sceptical about this evidence. Regardless of these doubts, however, such assumptions should not be made beforehand. The final, significant assumption I see in this definition is the idea that the animal<sup>43</sup> “does not serve food requirements”. Cromarty,

---

<sup>43</sup> Rather interestingly, Cromarty only includes animals in this definition. Unless he means this in a very broad sense that would include humans, human sacrifice is also excluded *by definition*.

at least to some extent, sees the important link that often occurs between sacrifice and feasting, yet with this definition maintains a complete conceptual differentiation of the two. He points out the difficulties in some instances of distinguishing between sacrifice and feasting in the archaeological record (Cromarty 2008: 9), and therefore seems to apply this limited definition. However, it could be that at least in some instances, the reason that the two are so difficult to distinguish is because no such distinction was made by the ancient people participating.

#### *Other works on sacrifice in the Aegean*

In his extensive work on Minoan and Mycenaean religion, Nilsson only briefly discusses sacrifice, indicating the primacy of the bull in sacrificial ritual, and pointing to the importance of the head of the animal in the sacrificial cult, in iconography and as a mnemonic device. He also advocates the idea of the double-axe as a tool for stunning the sacrificial animal (Nilsson 1950: 229-235<sup>44</sup>). These ideas appear rather influenced by the knowledge of later Greek sacrificial practice, and may in turn themselves have contributed to the perception of later scholars of especially Minoan sacrifice. Lastly, although Arthur Evans intermittently mentions sacrifice in his *Palace of Minos* volumes, he does not discuss it at length or in depth, and where his comments are of interest, they will be discussed with relevance to the material he is referring to.

To the best of my knowledge, no further extensive studies of sacrifice exist for the Bronze Age Aegean. There are a number of books and articles with sacrifice as their subject, or part thereof, and these will be discussed in the relevant sections in the next chapter.

### **The Near East**

#### *Jean Bottéro*

Jean Bottéro's *Religion in ancient Mesopotamia*, as the title indicates, deals with the subject of religion in general in Mesopotamia. He understands 'religious sentiment' as

---

<sup>44</sup> First edition published 1927.

the root of all religion. By 'religious sentiment', he means the dual movement of fear/respect and attraction to the supernatural (Bottéro 2001: 3). Bottéro takes a positive stance, seeing religious sentiment as a drive to

clarify the supernatural, toward which the basic impulse of our hearts immediately leads us, in the dark night, to define it, to portray it more vividly than in the light and shade in which from the beginning we only sensed its existence (Bottéro 2001: 3).

In a kind of extension of this, he emphasises the fact that, although religion is of a social nature, it is made up of individuals, and its secrets lie only in the 'hearts and minds' of individuals (Bottéro 2001: 2). Bottéro certainly has a point that in the study of ancient civilisations, the individual is easily forgotten or overlooked, and focus tends to be on society as a whole. This, however, is mostly due to the fact that the individual is very difficult to discover, and when individuals can be identified, they are often from the elite sections of society. Such an individual may well be interesting in themselves, but if it is not possible to make some postulations about the world of that individual from it, not much can be said.

Bottéro does not define sacrifice in the same manner, nor does he dedicate a specific section to any of the sacrificial practices in the Near East. In the index, the word 'sacrifice' refers to different practices, including the feeding of the gods, festivals and a personal sacrifice (Bottéro 2001: 244).

*Alberto Ravinell Whitney Green*

Green is one of the few scholars carefully laying out the difficulties in making generalisations about sacrificial practice. He goes through some of the main theories of sacrifice, and emphasises the importance of the complexity of sacrifice and the multiplicity of practices in different contexts (Green 1975: especially 1-17). His stance and precautions are the closest to my own approach to the concept:

The term “sacrifice” within the context of ancient cultures cannot be confined by any narrow definition, arbitrarily imposed, in support of some modern notion of what it “should” be (Green 1975: 17).

With these precautions in mind, he also realises the need to clarify his own working definition of (specifically human) sacrifice, which he formulates as “the voluntary or involuntary termination of human life in a ritualised manner or for ritualistic purposes” (Green 1975: 17). I do not find this formulation useful, for the following reasons. The use of the words ‘ritualised’ and ‘ritualistic’, without further explanation or definition, merely makes the definition vague. The word ‘ritual’ may or may not have religious connotations, depending on Green’s usage. Unfortunately, the issue is only complicated further on in the study, where Green differentiates between human sacrifice and ritual killing, “Whether [the phenomenon of ritual slayings of human beings] are referred to as mere ritual slayings or as human sacrifices” (Green 1975: 19). Apparently Green does not equate ritual killing and (human) sacrifice, although this equation is precisely his definition. If the definition had a clearer religious content, it would certainly be more satisfactory.

This definition also once again focuses on the act of killing something. This excludes practices where the focus is not so much on the slaughter itself, but on the giving of its product, meat, to a supernatural entity. Considering the evidence for meals and feeding, and the difficulty in establishing the moment of death as the most significant part of the process, it would be foolish to exclude this from the definition.<sup>45</sup>

#### *Other works on sacrifice in the ancient Near East*

There are various other works dedicated to sacrifice in the Near East: Dennis Pardee on *Ritual and cult at Ugarit* (2002), JoAnn Scurlock on “Animals in ancient Mesopotamian religion” (2002) and William W. Hallo on “The origins of the sacrificial cult: new evidence from Mesopotamia and Israel” (1987). None of these attempt a definition of sacrifice as such. Pardee merely writes “bloody sacrifice, that is, the slaying of a sacrificial animal” (Pardee 2002: 3), which is not very informative.

---

<sup>45</sup> It could be argued that in Green’s study, confined as it is to human sacrifice, the concept of the sacrifice as ‘meat’ may be less relevant, but this should be based on material evidence rather than a priori assumptions concerning what constitutes edible meat in the ancient world.

But he does also go through the different words used in the Ugaritic language (Pardee 2002: 267-273), which could potentially say much more about ancient perceptions than our own definitions, and his collection of texts relating to the sacrificial cult includes many of the aspects found in the material in Chapter 3. The Ugaritic terms will also be discussed in that chapter, along with Akkadian terms relating to sacrifice.

Scurlock also makes no attempt at defining her study topic, and apparently does not differentiate between offerings and sacrifice (Scurlock 2002b: 389). However, her study also includes a wide array of different types of sacrifice, what she summarises as “regular offerings and occasional sacrifices ... divinatory sacrifices, treaty sacrifices, and even “covenant” sacrifices. The dead, too, were entitled to a form of sacrifice” (Scurlock 2002b: 389). Hallo quite carefully discusses the (then) recent theories of Burkert and Girard, and attempts to bring out some particulars of Israelite and Mesopotamian sacrifice. Without providing a general definition of sacrifice, concerning Mesopotamia he writes,

animal sacrifice, though ostensibly a mechanism for feeding the deity, was at best a thinly disguised method for sanctifying and justifying meat consumption by human beings – a privilege routinely accorded to priesthood, aristocracy, and royalty and sporadically, notably on holidays and holy days, to the masses of the population” (Hallo 1987: 7).

During the discussion of the material evidence, we will see to what extent this applies, but Hallo also emphasises the political, sociological and ideological importance of sacrifice, with influence from Burkert in that it is seen as necessary to somehow justify the killing of animals by human agency.

## **Defining sacrifice**

These different theories of sacrifice diverge and disagree on many points, highlighting different aspects of the ritual, such as the sociological, ideological, economic, religious

and psychological. They emphasise sacrifice as gift-giving, as expiation, as a communal act, as a justification of meat-eating aspect, as mediation, as connected with hunting or domestication, as a scapegoat mechanism, and as a way of creating artificial blood-bonds. Many of these theories cannot be proven empirically, because they are concerned with the intentions and ideology of the participants, and such may even be difficult to establish when talking to people, but of course even more so when we are concerned with ancient people. In some instances, the ignorance of the participants is even a requirement for the sacrifice to serve its function (this may in fact be the case for most of them, but only Girard says so explicitly).

Each theory may have its own merits of explaining certain phenomena, as will be explored in the coming chapters, and in particular in the final chapter. Because they work on different levels of explanation, they need not in fact all be as contradictory as at first sight, and it is certainly possible that many factors are at play at the same time in a single ritual. However, as is emphasised throughout this study, a universal definition of sacrifice, using any of the above theories, is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at. It is in fact a modern category applied to a great variety of practices in the ancient world. As defined and used in this study, it refers to the practicalities of the ritual, in order to try and avoid assumptions about what sacrifice meant to ancient people, and to not exclude certain practices. As such, I will be using the following working definition of sacrifice in my approach to the material evidence in this study:

The symbolic or actual giving of an animal or human being, or parts thereof, to one or several supernatural entities, in such a manner that that animal or human being dies as a result.

By ‘symbolic’ I mean that the animal/human may be given to a supernatural being which includes its death, but not necessarily the total destruction of the body – i.e. it could instead be eaten or parts of it could be used for display and/or as a mnemonic device. The definition further attempts to understand sacrifice as a process, rather than unduly emphasising the moment of the kill as some single, quintessential instant around which everything else is centred. Thus, although the animal or human must,

according to the definition here, die, specifically in order to give it to a supernatural being, that act of giving need not lie precisely, singularly or even significantly in the moment of death. In other words, the killing (and, by extension, what *we* might consider the violence of the act) may not have received special attention, either symbolically or ritually.

As used in this study, ‘sacrifice’ does not include the offering of inanimate objects. Many of the theories above do include such objects, and often a ritual may even carry a sense of the killing or destruction of certain items. In fact, the conceptual gap created here between animate and inanimate objects<sup>46</sup> may not have existed or been as explicit for the people of the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East: as will be seen in chapter 3, some ancient phrases pertaining to sacrifice do in fact include inanimate objects in practice. Therefore, the distinction is used here only to limit the perimeters of an already very extensive study.

Finally, I have used the term ‘supernatural entity’, as opposed to ‘deity’ because certain entities to which sacrifices are given may not quite be ‘deities’, but are still ‘supernatural’ – that is, an entity beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature (in accordance with current knowledge). This is meant in the broadest sense possible, and includes entities which might otherwise be termed ghosts, demons, spirits, supra-human agents, ancestors and the dead, as well as more conventionally understood ‘deities’.<sup>47</sup> The differences and boundaries between these terms are very difficult to determine and highly dependent on the cultural context, and they are all included here to keep the definition wide and as free of assumptions concerning the object of sacrifice as possible.<sup>48</sup> In this broad sense, ‘sacrifices’ in connection with burials are

---

<sup>46</sup> Often also called ‘bloody’ and ‘bloodless’ or ‘non-bloody’ sacrifices or offerings. I have tried to avoid this terminology, as its emphasis on blood/liquid may be misleading, and give a general idea that this is important in all sacrifice. I use the word ‘offering’ to mean the full spectrum of things given in this manner, including non-animate objects. The use of words containing ‘blood’ may also have an association with violence: again something which may be more a modern perspective than an ancient one, and therefore to be avoided.

<sup>47</sup> This is *contra* Keane, who explicitly does not include these entities in his ‘supernatural agents’ (Keane 2010: 195).

<sup>48</sup> In some instances, for example, ‘ancestors’ or the ‘dead’ might not be understood as ‘supernatural’ – for example, in the culture of the Suku people of Africa, living ‘elders’ are not differentiated from ‘dead



included, since the dead, at least in the Near East, appear to have been attributed certain ‘powers’ or abilities to affect the lives of the living. For the Aegean, we are on shakier ground concerning any beliefs of an afterlife or underworld, given the absence of textual records on these issues. However, the possibility of animals or humans being offered to deceased people suggests that certain ‘powers’ or the ability in some sense to affect the lives of the living were attributed to the dead (e.g. as social actors or agents), and hence such instances are included in this study. That is not to exclude other important functions or elements of rituals, nor to propose a theistic definition in which the ‘supernatural’ is central. The apparent variety and complexity of Aegean and Near Eastern religion would support this broad definition. Equally, a distinction is not made in this study between sacrifice in relation to magic, and in relation to religion, because it is not evident in the material that a distinction was made between the two by the ancient people.<sup>49</sup>

Definitions are of course fluid, and have a sense of continuous deferral, in which one definition itself needs more definitions for clarification, and so on. I have tried to discuss and define problematic terms as they appear, but their fluidity and the importance of context and continuous review should always be kept in mind – the title of this section, “defining sacrifice” is meant as a reflection of this as a continuous process.

The theoretical framework of the study as a whole, with its strong basis in poststructuralism, actively encourages continuous reflection and re-evaluation of the way we perceive and formulate the material worked with. This is combined with systematic collection and recording of data from archaeological, textual and iconographic material. The poststructuralist framework means that, as has been done throughout this chapter, certain ideas or concepts might be placed under scrutiny in order to reveal either the more exact usage of the author or to uncover its internal

---

elders’, and the ‘power’ of both comes from structural relationships dependent on relative age, rather than being dead/alive (Kopytoff 1971).

<sup>49</sup> Distinctions have been attempted along many different lines, some of which will be discussed briefly in chapter 1. One is the idea that in magic action is coerced rather than entreated from supernatural entities (du Bois 1993: 62). The enforcement of this distinction would exclude divinatory practices from the study, for which there would seem no justification.

inconsistencies or inadequacies. This is done not with the purpose of undermining previous research, but to improve on future work through as complete as possible an awareness of problems and assumptions. The aim with this kind of analysis is to keep the possible interpretations of the evidence as open as possible, analyse their internal consistencies and compare them to the complete body of material. All too often, it interpretations are revealed not to be supported by the material, and therefore not satisfactory.

These analyses are applied throughout the study. In the final chapter, as mentioned in the introduction, specific ideas in the poststructuralist spirit are used to interpret certain features in the material. This includes Girard's concept of the 'double', that is, the possibility of all members of a group to become each others' 'double', and through this, their potential to dissolve or transcend boundaries and to become the sacrificial 'victim' (Girard 2005). These concepts of dissolution and liminality may provide an interpretation of the features of doubling and frontality in parts of the material discussed. These features have rarely been analysed, and if so, analyses are more concerned with style than interpretation, and Girard's ideas have been chosen because they provide a welcome way into beginning to understand them. In the same spirit, Baudrillard's analysis of a symbolic exchange between the living and the dead, and their relation, with the dead perceived as active players in 'primitive' societies, is applied to the material concerning interactions between the living and the dead, in particular at burials and associated with burial areas. The material associated with the dead and mortuary practices seems to suggest a more dynamic relation between living and dead than what is usually assumed, and this application allows for an interpretation along these lines.

Per the above definition, 'sacrifice' is kept as a broad term, including a large variety of practices in which the 'ritual' of sacrifice is merely one part of other processes, events, actors and functions. Some of these are deliberate, while others may be more or less so. There may be political and ideological intentions at stake, but just as these can be used to enhance or maintain some sense of superiority, they may also 'go wrong' (Hamilakis 2010: 194). The creation of memory and forgetting (Hamilakis 2008 and 2010, Mills and Walker 2008, Mills 2008, Meskell 2008) may equally be 'accidental'

functions particularly at work in communal sacrificial events, or exploited and explored by more powerful elements of the group, attempting to create specific, positive, memories of the participants in, for example, a feast. The many different ways of viewing sacrifice are thus kept open as the material is discussed, and in many cases one does not exclude another: many factors are at work at the same time in all of the examples analysed. The study focuses on sacrificial *practices* because these are most easily detected in the material, but not to the exclusion of religious *beliefs* when such can be inferred or suggested.<sup>50</sup> In some cases, religious beliefs may not have been particularly significant (Keane 1997: 64-65), but again, assumptions should not be made a priori.

Having discussed these theories, assumptions and definitions, I now move on to the material evidence of the Aegean and the Near East.

---

<sup>50</sup> This can of course only ever be to a limited extent, since we do not have access to the minds of the ancient people of the Aegean and Near East.



## CHAPTER 2

### SACRIFICE IN THE BRONZE AGE AEGEAN

Sacrifice took place in many different contexts, whose relation to each other is currently mostly unknown to us. The material is here discussed along the lines of these different contexts, as far as they can be detected; they may overlap in certain places, and at times distinctions are made simply to provide a way of examining the evidence, which may not concur with ancient perceptions. The first section discusses sacrifice in connection with burials, including that of complete animals such as dogs and horses. ‘Sacrificial Space’ investigates the different types of spaces in which sacrifice was performed. ‘Sacrificial practice and activities’ discusses the connection of sacrifice and feasting, the possibilities of identification and variety of occurrences, and the practice of placing ‘foundation deposits’ in the structure of buildings. This section is followed by a survey of the different kinds of iconography that depict sacrifice, including animals on a ‘table’, sacrificial symbols, the link between hunting and sacrifice, the theme of a female figure carrying an animal, and processions that may

have led to sacrifice. Finally, the material and assumptions concerning human sacrifice is examined. The discussions focus on case studies; an overview of the evidence as a whole is provided in the tables and appendices. Before turning to these sections, however, it is necessary to gain a general idea of the area of the study, the kind of material used and the problems and limitations involved, as well as the concept of 'sacrifice' in the Linear B tablets.

The area included in this chapter is shown on Maps 1 and 2. Most of the sites are on Crete or the Greek Mainland; outside these, relevant material from Thera has also been included. Cyprus has not been included in this study. Throughout this chapter, it has not been my purpose to systematically analyse differences between Minoan and Mycenaean practices. This is by no means because they are the same, rather it is because, within the topic of animal sacrifice, differences are not detectable in most cases. Within the larger theme of religion, it is easier to identify differences, though even these are very much discussed (e.g. Renfrew 1981). Since I am concerned specifically with the practice of sacrifice, I do not want to assume such differences unless they also show up within this subject. In the few cases where this is the case, the differences are noted.

Evidence from animal sacrifice in the Aegean is found in funerary contexts, in palatial contexts and in sanctuaries, as well as in the iconography and the Linear B tablets. Interpretations of this evidence range from excavation reports to thematic approaches to sacrifice and related symbols. This chapter approaches the evidence through a series of themes which are partly guided by the nature of the evidence, and partly by issues arising from previous interpretations of the material, to give a more nuanced understanding of sacrifice. Not all the sections include evidence from archaeology, iconography and textual records; textual records in particular are sparse, in marked contrast to the Near East. There are certain limitations or cautions concerning the material which apply to all sections of this chapter – these are both in terms of the material itself and in terms of the way it has been treated by modern scholars and experts.

To demonstrate animal sacrifice in the archaeological record, the most obvious thing to look for is animal bones in a religious context. This does not mean that sacrifice did not take place in other contexts, indeed it is almost certainly the case that many sacrifices would have taken place in contexts that today we are not able to recognise as religious, including otherwise ‘secular’ contexts. In fact, our categories of religious and secular may not have been recognised by the ancient Minoans and Mycenaeans. However, though animal bones found in contexts which are not obviously religious could come from a sacrifice, their sacrificial associations cannot be proven without more evidence. A religious context supplies such evidence. Religious contexts in the Aegean include burials, shrines and sanctuaries (though burials need not always be religious). The search for animal bones in the reports of such places is at times disappointing because the bones are not always recorded. As Day remarks, “Possibly it [the burial of dogs] occurred more often than we think, since animal bones from tombs were not always recognized, kept, studied or published, especially in earlier excavations” (Day 1984: 22 n.7).

Even when animal bones *are* recorded, they are often recorded as just that; “animal bones”, with no qualifications of what type of bones, from what animals and how many, let alone any information about their state, such as burning or cut-marks. This is, for example, the case with A5-A8, A21, A25, A26, A36, B3-B5, B13, and B32. This, of course, also means that no expert has analysed the bones and made their results available. There are also differences in what is included in the term “animal bones”. Some writers do not seem to class fish and birds as animals, and consequently, they write, for example, that a tomb contained “animal and bird bones” (A8), “animal and fish bones” (A11), or “human and animal bones, including a boar tooth” (Dörpfeld 1927: 225). In these cases, “animal” seems to be used as a synonym for “mammal” or “quadruped”. This distinction can lead to confusion, and it would be preferable if the “animals” in question were identified more closely, or if this is not possible, to state this problem. The same applies for the birds and fish in question.

Iconographic evidence in all cases must be interpreted from context. For the Bronze Age Aegean, there are no instances of text accompanying image, and therefore the luxury of confirmation through this is not possible. In some instances objects depicted in iconography have been found archaeologically – for example double axes or ‘incurved altars’ – but in many cases, the iconography has no immediate equivalent in archaeological or textual material. Items such as seals and sealings only provide a limited space for artists to work on, and hence what we get are very abbreviated and mostly images of limited content, which results in limited conclusions. Other material such as wall-paintings have often been discovered in a very fragmentary and badly preserved state; reconstructions are unfortunately very uncertain. The iconography may also seem imprecise or ambiguous at times, whether deliberate or not, making identifications of specific features more difficult.

Textual material from the Aegean of relevance to this study only comes from the Linear B tablets, which do not occur until very late in the period (the earliest archive perhaps dating to LM II – Shelmerdine 1998: 294, Driessen 2000: 10, and 2008: 76). This means that only archaeological and iconographic material is available for the earlier periods. As is well known, the Linear B tablets are administrative records, which again limits the kind of information that can be gained from them. Further, not all ideograms and syllabic signs are fully understood, rendering uncertainties in some extremely important tablets. One of the problems with them being of administrative nature is that the context is frequently absent – it is thus possible that many more tablets than we can confirm relate to sacrificial animals and humans.

Another point that should be remembered when examining the evidence for sacrifice is that the great majority appears to come from elite contexts, or is associated with an elite in some sense – that is, from palaces, from Linear B tablets (which are associated with palace administration), from wall-paintings and seals and sealings (also often thought to be mainly owned by wealthy individuals), from wealthy tombs and other such contexts. Every single object and site may not clearly be ‘elite’, and there is some evidence for at least participation of less wealthy individuals, but overall, it should be



kept in mind that the evidence, being from such contexts, mainly give insights into elite practices (it does not, however, necessarily mean that animal sacrifice itself was exclusively an elite practice, but that the evidence only relates to these).

### **‘Sacrifice’ in the Bronze Age Aegean**

It is not known if the people of Bronze Age Greece had a concept of sacrifice in any way similar to ours. There is not a simple word in the textual records that can be translated as ‘sacrifice’. However, a few words relate to sacrificial practice – these are outlined by Palaima (2008: 388-389). They include *tu-wo*, a noun form of the later Greek θύειν, usually translated as ‘to sacrifice’. In the Linear B tablets, it does not have a clear association with animal sacrifice, but has to do with burning of incense, referring to some sort of aromatic substance. The terms *i-je-ro* and *i-je-ra* apparently designate sacrificial animals in the Wu Series from Thebes (E13), and *i-je-ro-wo-ko* refers to the person killing the sacrificial animal. Palaima also suggests that *sa-pa-ka-te-ri-ja* on tablet KN C 941 refers to the ‘throat-slitting’ of 10 ewes and eight rams (2008: 389). Chadwick tentatively translates *i-je-to-qe* as ‘sacrifices’ in Tn 316 (E5), but this translation is very uncertain, as is acknowledged by Chadwick himself and evident from the alternative phrases *performs a holy ritual* and *perform a certain action* used by Palaima and by Ventris and Chadwick in the previous edition of *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Palaima 2004: 240-241 and Ventris and Chadwick 1956: 286-289). Not much can be said about the nature of sacrifice from these sparse references, other than that it appears that an exact equivalent of the English word did not exist. As it is, it would seem that the terms are either much broader than the English word (perhaps including inanimate items) or indeed very specific, suggesting that the great variety as we see it was one reflected in the language. New evidence may change or expand on the knowledge gained from Linear B concerning this.

## Sacrifice and burials

Sacrifice in connection with burials includes both parts of animals and full animal skeletons – in the Aegean, the complete skeletons are usually dogs or equids. Sacrifices may have taken place at the time of the funeral, or at a later stage, possibly repeated. Some cemeteries or burials have specific areas where rituals may have taken place. The evidence has been interpreted in a variety of ways, centering around two main ideas of the animal bones representing some sort of meal or sacrifice. These interpretations are discussed, along with the assumptions behind them, and the possibility of making such distinctions is questioned.

### *Archaeological material (Figure 2)*

Animal bones as possible indicators of sacrifice are most commonly found in tombs, or in association with tombs. Appendix A lists the burials in the Bronze Age Aegean in which animal bones have been reported. This list comprises 75 sites (50 on the Mainland, and 25 on Crete, though it does not claim to be exhaustive), and these are by far the largest body of material containing evidence of animal sacrifice in the Aegean. What is common at many of these sites is that the animal bones are found scattered, and in most cases do not seem to indicate the presence of a whole animal. The majority of these animals are cattle or sheep or goats (sheep and goat bones are difficult to tell apart, and consequently in most archaeological reports they are classed together as “sheep/goat”<sup>51</sup>). Ox<sup>52</sup> bones are found at 21 sites (28%), while sheep or goat bones are found at 23 sites (c. 31%). Dog and equid bones are found at

---

<sup>51</sup> Promising new studies are being made in this, which could prove very useful if applied in the future (Zeder and Lapham 2010).

<sup>52</sup> I use the word ‘ox’ as the singular, non-gendered word for cattle. This word is a little old-fashioned, but since no other singular, non-gendered word exists, I find this the best, though not ideal, solution. I use it as meaning a ‘bovine mammal’, the singular word for cattle, as opposed to using the gender specific words ‘cow’ or ‘bull’ (this should NOT be confused with its other meaning as “an adult castrated male domestic ox”). My insistence on using a non-gendered word will become clear in the later sections discussing gender.

respectively 17-19 and 16 sites (c. 23-25% and c. 21%), but since they appear to have been treated differently, they will be dealt with in separate sections below. Other animals that have been identified in burial contexts include pig, bird, bat, hare, rabbit, fowl, deer, feline, cat and fish. In another 33 cases the animal bones found are not identified in excavation reports or other published material.

These finds are variously interpreted, and one interpretation is that they indicate animal sacrifice. To take a typical example, in a LH tholos tomb in Routsis, Myrsinochori, near Pylos (A70), a copper frying pan with sheep or goat bones was found next to a human skeleton. The excavator, Spyridos Marinatos, interpreted this as from remnants from a final meal of the dead (1956: 203). Andronikos, however, acknowledges Marinatos' interpretation, but thinks that the bones are more likely to be from a sacrifice ('Opfer' in the original German) (1968: 88). Other interpretations are basically variations on these two, as we shall see, but the difference between them may not be as simple as assumed, nor may it be possible to make this distinction for most sites. In many cases, however, no comment is made about the animal bones at all.

Scattered animal bones in funerary contexts, when commented on, do not get more than a one-line interpretation. Therefore, it is difficult to see by what criteria, if any, animal bones are in one place called a sacrifice, and in another leftovers from a meal, or even, as in the Routsis example, the same bones are called two different things. This difficulty is made worse by the fact that these interpretations themselves are left vague or unexplained. We are here back at the fundamental problem of defining sacrifice itself. Andronikos clearly wants to distinguish between the meal ('Totenmahl') and a sacrifice.<sup>53</sup> He does not, however, explain the difference, or why they should be mutually exclusive. A clue is perhaps given in his comment on Mycenae Chamber Tombs 505 and 533 (A59 and A57). He notes that Tsountas first calls the animal

---

<sup>53</sup> The term 'meal of the dead' or the 'Totenmahl' is an ambiguous term, causing further confusion. What exactly is meant by a meal of the dead? Its meaning can slip from 'meal to the dead' to 'meal *in honour* of the dead' (that is, done by the participants, but in which the dead does not necessarily take part), and if it is a meal *to* the dead, is this meant as a provision for the afterlife, or the journey to the underworld, or as their portion of the funerary banquet? This is left undefined in most texts, and with good reason, because the archaeology cannot at present clarify these issues.

bones from oxen and sheep gifts to the dead, but in a later publication calls them leftovers from funeral meals (Andronikos 1968: 87). Andronikos sides with the first view, with the reasoning that this is more likely because of the presence of horns. Again, he does not explain why this should be the distinguishing feature between an offering and a meal. Possibly it is similar to the distinction made by Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki, below, between the skull and the rest of the body of an animal.

Wiesner advocates a related distinction, which is somewhat problematic. He wants to distinguish between non-burnt slaughters and the many 'Totenopfern' in which the animal was burnt (1938: 153). This distinction is based on the absence or presence of traces of fire on the bones. It also uses an eating versus not-eating distinction, almost a Lévi-Straussian 'raw versus cooked' distinction, in which the 'cooked' (though in this case not eaten) is the 'real' sacrifice; this is probably grounded in the later Greek idea of sacrifice (*θυσία*) as entailing the burning of a whole animal. As we will see in the section on feasting, Bergquist has a similar distinction in mind when dealing with the sanctuaries of Kato Syme and Epidauros (Bergquist 1988). However, these distinctions are more based on later Greek practice than on any Bronze Age evidence. It is not possible, from the present available material, to determine if burnt bones have been burnt 'whole', or if they have been burnt as part of their cooking. The evidence from Ayios Konstantinos, Methana indicates that the Mycenaeans actually did practice burnt sacrifices, but even if they did not, would that mean that they did not practice sacrifice at all? The above distinctions would imply this, and thus imply burning as a necessary part of the definition of sacrifice.

Yet another distinction is used by Yannis Sakellarakis and Efi Sapouna-Sakellaraki. They distinguish between animal bones as offerings to the dead, animal bones as remains of funeral banquets, and animal sacrifices:

Sea-shells, bones of animal, and even fish are also frequently found in tombs, possibly placed there as food offerings to the dead, though it is conceivable that they derive from animal sacrifices; the specific evidence for this is not clear, however, in contrast with the

skeletal animal remains of another kind, which will be discussed below in connection with burial cult. (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 255-6)

In the promised discussion on burial cult and “animal remains of another kind” they comment:

Animal bones were also found in the cult areas, probably pointing to funeral banquets, though also beyond any doubt associated with animal sacrifices; only the head was offered to the dead person (*pars pro toto*), the rest of the animal possibly being consumed during the course of the funeral banquet. (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 262)

And finally (referring to the dogs found in Tholos Tomb B), they suggest that

Characteristic finds were the skeletal remains of dogs – animals which could not have been eaten and can therefore only have been sacrificed. (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 263).

According to Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki, then, the identification of animal remains is to be based on

- 1) where they are placed – if with human skeletons, they are “food offerings”, and if found in “cult areas”, they are remains of funeral banquets.
- 2) What part of the animal is found – if it is a skull, or parts of a skull, it indicates sacrifice.
- 3) What kinds of animal are found. It appears that an animal like a dog can only have been sacrificed. No other animals are mentioned as clearly edible / non-edible.

In this scheme, eating and sacrifice are mutually exclusive, though it is possible to sacrifice the skull and eat the rest of the animal. Clearly set up, criteria like these could be extremely useful for identifying and defining different types of cult activity in funerary contexts. However, it should be obvious that even these are not clear-cut – what, for example, constitutes a “cult area” as opposed to funerary architecture in a cemetery or what if an animal skull is found with a human skeleton? But much more importantly, there is no evidence for any of these distinctions. We do not have proof that animal bones with humans are food offerings, however qualified a guess it may be. Skulls certainly do have some special significance (this will be discussed in more detail in the section on skulls), but that they are simple indicators of only sacrifice (and exclusive of banquets) is far from clear. Finally, determining what kinds of animals were eaten, or more importantly, *not eaten*, is probably not possible at present. Again, as we shall see in the section below on dogs in particular, there is some evidence that they were in fact eaten, and, very interestingly, that even their brains were eaten, which of course immediately means that the singling out of the skull as a non-edible sacrifice is dubious.

The fluidity of the boundaries between sacrifice, food offerings and funeral banquets can even be seen in Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki’s own texts. In discussing Burial Building 6 at Archanes, they mention a few animal bones and teeth, which they assign to funeral banquets or offerings to the dead (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 203). The teeth indicate a skull, which should indicate sacrifice, according to the above criteria, but the presence of other animal bones (not identified) makes the identification difficult. The ‘or’ is further indication of the difficulty here. Concerning the area of the same building, they later record the find of “several animal jaw bones with the teeth still in position, which are again the remains of sacrifice” (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 205). The ‘again’ is key here. The only animal bones previously mentioned in this section are the ones above. As we have seen, they were designated as remains of offerings or funeral banquets. They appear now to have morphed into being ‘sacrifices’. This possibly originates in a previous text, where an animal skull is mentioned earlier in the same paragraph (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1991: 103-4). This first skull is omitted in the 1997

publication, and the ‘again’ thus either (mistakenly?) refers to the previously mentioned animal bones, or it becomes an ‘empty sign’ – a reference without its reference point. A similar thing happens with the concept of ‘offering’ in their writing on Burial Building 12. Here, a few animal bones and sea-shells clearly indicate offerings to the dead (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997: 212). This is in keeping with the criteria for food offerings above. However, a page later they write “another sea-shell and pieces of an animal skull, once again the remains of an offering.” The again here has a clear reference to the previous offerings, but the pieces of an animal skull should, according to the criteria, be the remains of a sacrifice.

This section has mainly focussed on the texts of Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis. This is because, though their distinction may give rise to certain problems, they at least give some attention to the different activities (as they see them) involving animal bones in funerary contexts. In most writings, as mentioned above, this is not the case, and the animal bones either get no comment at all, or simply a short, one-line ‘interpretation’. Generally, the distinctions used in such interpretations tend to fall into the following binary oppositions as shown in figure 3.

Unburnt	Burnt
Parts	Whole
Body	Head
Eaten	Given
Slaughter	Sacrifice

**Figure 3. Binary oppositions.**

In these, the words in the right-hand column are associated with ‘real’ sacrifice. This is a structuralist system in which the right-hand words are given higher priority by being associated with later (Greek) practices and with burning: burning happens with fire,

and fire is through the myth of Prometheus clearly associated with ‘civilisation’; Lévi-Strauss’ distinction between the raw and the cooked also clearly favours the cooked, and again the association with fire and civilisation is clear. Similarly, a comment by Protonotariou-Deilaki reveals the prioritisation involved with another of the oppositions, and also how it becomes blurred.

Protonotariou-Deilaki makes an interesting distinction which is based on the difference between whole animals and parts of animals, which at first sight seems to fit into the above oppositions. Referring to various animal bones she comments that “These would appear to be the bones of sacrificial victims”, and then continues:

In regard to funeral offerings, there is a clear distinction between the ritual slaughter of animals and the deposition of funerary gifts. Slaughtering is a specific aspect of funerary ritual and was most likely a propitiatory gesture aimed at the nether gods, and thus not connected with the deceased personally. On the other hand, funerary offerings and the sacrifice (but not dismembering) of horses which were interred with the dead are a kind of farewell gift to the departed, and are intended for his posthumous utilization (1990: 101 n. 76).

Though Protonotariou-Deilaki claims a “clear distinction”, her own text betrays blurring of the concepts – she wants to put ‘sacrifice’ as that of whole animals on one side of the distinction, and ‘slaughter’ as that of dismembered animals on the other side, yet she in the first instance calls the dismembered animals “sacrificial”. The further distinction is between gifts to the dead and gifts to deities, which is reflective of the above eaten vs. given, where the parts are often understood as eaten, while whole animals are thought to be given. In Protonotariou-Deilaki’s scheme, they are both given, however, the *whole is given to the deceased*, while the *parts are given to deities*. This destabilises the relationship between the above distinctions, because there, the whole is given to deities while the parts are associated with humans, either the deceased, the surviving participants in the ritual, or both.



It is possible to identify the existence of some of these distinctions in the material – both burnt and unburnt animal bones are found (though it is rarely possible to determine if they are burnt ‘whole’ or as part of cooking), bones are found with and without signs of slaughter, such as cut-marks, and both whole animals and parts of animals are found. It is not possible for most of these, however, to transfer a distinction in the record into an equivalent distinction in the ideology of the Minoans or Mycenaeans. Thus, it may not have been of any importance to them whether or not the bones were burnt, and although the distinctions are sometimes identifiable, they need not have been the same or meant the same. Thus, scattered remains could have been eaten by the participants, or meant as food for the deceased, or as gifts to deities, or indeed as all of these, without clear distinctions. As for the whole animals, the majority of which are dogs and horses, these will be discussed below.

### *Iconographic material*

There is very little iconography of burials and burial rites – the sarcophagi from Tanagra may well depict such rites (Spyropoulos 1970), and it is possible that some images are actually representations of funerary rites, but that we are no longer able to recognise them as such. Otherwise, the only representation including sacrifice which is widely believed to show funeral rites is on a sarcophagus from a tomb at Ayia Triada (D1). One side, usually referred to as side B, shows a ritual involving animal sacrifice, a procession of women, a male musician, and another ritual at an altar, possibly involving libation. The opposite side, side A, shows women carrying and emptying vessels on the left, and men carrying two animals and a boat towards an armless man (thought to be the dead person at his tomb). The ends show females in a chariot being drawn by goats on one side, and griffins on the other. One end also has a largely damaged panel, with only some male legs surviving.

This sarcophagus has already been described well and interpreted by a number of scholars, including Paribeni (1908), Nilsson (1950), Matz (1958), Mylonas (1966), Andronikos (1968), Pini (1968), Sakellarakis (1970), Long (1974), Marinatos (1986

and 1993) and Löwe (1996). Long’s work on the imagery of the sarcophagus is particularly useful for providing parallels for each of the elements, and Löwe summarises well the two main types of interpretations of the sarcophagus, as either a cult of the dead or ancestor worship (‘Totencult’),<sup>54</sup> or a cult of deities (‘Götterkult’). Here, the purpose is to investigate some of the assumptions related to the interpretation of the sarcophagus. This is done by using Nannó Marinatos’ interpretation as a case study.

Marinatos sees on side A the theme of death, while on side B the theme of regeneration or renewal. These are emphasised by the short sides, one of which perhaps shows chthonic deities, the other celestial deities. Marinatos does this by identifying binary symbolic elements as follows:

**Side A**

Fruitless tree  
 Offerings of inanimate (?) calves  
 -  
 Libation downward  
 with large bucket-like vessel  
 Lyre (soothing music)

**Side B**

Fruit-bearing tree (identified as an olive)  
 Sacrifice of live animals  
 Offering of fruit  
 Libation on top of the altar  
 with pitcher  
 Pipe (piercing sound)

She further recognises an essential unity of the scenes, calling them “antithetical, and yet related” (1993: 34), pointing to the repetition of the following elements: double axes, birds, long robes and hide skirts.

---

<sup>54</sup> A ‘cult of the dead’ and ‘ancestor worship’ may not be exactly the same – not all dead become ancestors. A difference is not currently detectable in the Aegean material, however.

It is most likely that two different rituals are depicted on this sarcophagus, but the elements pointed out by Marinatos are not as simple as they may seem, nor is a death – regeneration dichotomy easily retained from these elements. To start with the trees, identified as respectively fruitless and fruit-bearing by Marinatos. The tree on side A does not show any signs of fruits, as she points out. No attempt has been made to identify this tree; Löwe rightly calls it “cactus-like” (1996: 24), though since cactuses are not indigenous to Crete,<sup>55</sup> it is probably not a cactus. However, the tree on side B (often identified as an olive) also does not bear any fruits. There is no doubt that the two trees are represented as two different types of plant, but this *difference* need not mean an *opposition*. Certainly, since fruits are not present on either tree, they cannot be the factor used to argue for an opposition between the trees. Plants in general tend to be associated with life, but it is possible, of course, that specific plants were associated with either death or life/regeneration. Thus, if it could be proven that olives have a specific symbolic association with life, there would be a case of identifying it with regeneration here. For an opposition with death, the tree on the other side would similarly have to be identified, as well as understood as a symbol of death in other contexts. However, neither of these seems at present possible.

The next distinction is between inanimate and live animals. It is very unclear whether or not the calves are alive, and it has been suggested that these are in fact not real animals (e.g. Long 1974: 46-7), but models, on account of their stiffness and the fact that the men can carry them. This uncertainty is what is reflected in the bracketed question mark inserted by Marinatos. The argument that calves would be too heavy is not convincing – it may not be a particularly light burden, but it is certainly possible to carry a calf. Countless seals from the Near East showing ‘presentation scenes’ also commonly show animals (often goats or kids) being carried as an offering to a deity, in compositions not entirely unlike the one on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. Further, the calves look too large to be models. Figurines of animals are not uncommon in tombs, but I am not aware of any that would approach this size. This does not rule out that such models existed, or that the size as shown on the sarcophagus is more of an ideal

---

<sup>55</sup> I thank Dr. Joanna Day for this information.

than a reference to real life. The seemingly stiff pose of the animals does also seem odd, and its meaning eludes us. Whether or not the calves are intended to be understood as real animals, if they are calves,<sup>56</sup> their youth would be more of an association with life than with death. The 'live' animals on side B constitute a rather dead looking ox, and two more bovids underneath the sacrificed ox. If the two bovids are about to be sacrificed (as seems most likely, and as suggested by most writers), they also are a reference to death, rather than life: this is notwithstanding many theories of sacrifice which see a cyclical and regenerative element of the practice of sacrifice in many cultures. In the first instance, they are a reference to violence and slaughter, which may later turn into life.

Libation inherently involves downward movement, though this does not necessarily mean that libations are always made with chthonic associations. Marinatos thinks that the pouring of liquid on side A is a blood libation, and that the blood eventually will be soaked up by the earth. Blood itself can easily be associated with either life or death. However, others are not so sure that the liquid being poured in is actually blood (Long 1974: 36 suggests a mixture of wine and water). Also, there is no indication that the liquid is flowing through the vessel and into the earth. On side B, Marinatos refers to the pitcher being used in a libation on top of the 'altar'. The pitcher is, however, a reference to libation, not a libation in itself. So, although it is shown on top of the altar (floating in the air, in fact), we cannot be sure where the libation would have been poured. Further, a much more likely 'libation' is the vessel beneath the neck of the ox. It is thought that blood runs from the neck into the vessel (apparently, a red stripe was once visible on the sarcophagus). This is clearly a downward libation, and almost certainly the liquid would in this case have been blood. Lastly for this side, the mirroring gestures of the two officiating women show them with arms out and *hands down*.

---

<sup>56</sup> As Marinatos calls them, though this is also disputed. The area around the animals' heads is badly preserved, and it is not possible to determine with certainty whether or not they had horns.

The offerings of fruit on side B may well be associated with life and regeneration. They are, however, also static and ‘inanimate’. More obviously, the “offerings of inanimate (?) calves” would fit across from the “offerings of fruit” in Marinatos’ table. This would give a more parallel relationship between the two (and possibly link the scenes, rather than create a gap). The linking of the “soothing” lyre to death and the “piercing” pipe to regeneration can best be described as arbitrary – there is no reason why the music of a soothing lyre should be related to death, and the piercing sound of a pipe to regeneration. Is death soothing and life piercing? Such an assertion can only be a matter of personal judgement, or if it was a common sentiment among the Minoans, we certainly cannot know this.

The choice of vocabulary serves to emphasise the distinctions, but more importantly, it reveals a prioritising of one of these binary oppositions. Calling one side “Death” and the other “Regeneration” inherently prioritises the regeneration side. The association of regeneration with something positive, and death as something negative is done throughout – in poststructuralist terminology, it is a prioritisation of presence over absence. From the beginning, death is “fruitless” while life is “fruit-bearing”. “Offerings” of non-living animals slips into the “sacrifice” of live animals. “Sacrifice” here has a much stronger emotive appeal than the vague “offering”, though it reveals violence within the otherwise peaceful scheme of regeneration. The second mention of fruit on side B is set against an empty space on side A, a way of marking presence against absence, again, life against death. The libation distinction is accompanied on each side by a row of words, again with positive and negative associations. As negative, for side B is “downward”, “bucket” and “vessel”, the latter two of which largely gain their “negativity” from the words opposed to them: “top”, “altar” and “pitcher”. Though Marinatos does not explicitly explain these associations, they may be related to the fact that the pitchers and ‘altars’ are represented as standing tall, the pitcher on the sarcophagus is shown with the mouth decidedly pointing upwards, and buckets and vessels are here shown as more “earthy”, being large and inelegant with wide bases. These associations are themselves problematic, but the scheme really starts to unravel from within when we get to the musical instruments. The words used to describe the lyre are “soothing” and “music”, and to describe the pipe, “piercing”

and “sound”. The “soothing music” would immediately seem more suited to the regeneration side, and “piercing sound” to the death side. Here, then, the scheme is reversed, revealing the fluidity of the significations in the first place.

It is perhaps not possible at present to reach any definite conclusions about the nature and purpose of the rituals depicted on the sarcophagus. What can be said, however, is that many different actions are taking place, depicted on four separate, but probably linked surfaces. A division in the rituals may be supported by the change in background colour, but if this is correct, it is also clear that they overlap: the elements are at times physically placed in more than one ‘sphere’.<sup>57</sup> Each side is loaded with symbols mostly familiar from other iconography and believed to have religious associations. These many different elements emphasise the contextuality of sacrifice as part of a broader set of rituals, and through this, highlight the artificiality of our ‘sacrifice’ category. A short survey of the different elements serves to bring out this great variety and complexity.

Side B depicts five women, all moving towards the right, and of this group, the one furthest to the right holds out her hands towards the ox on the table, palms down, the hands thus protruding into the change of background colour. The upper bodies of the women have not been preserved, so we do not know what they were carrying or what gestures they may have made.<sup>58</sup> In the middle of the scene an ox is bound to a table, legs crossed and head depicted frontally. Below the table lie two more animals, usually identified as goats, but more likely antelopes, judging from their long, upright horns, and short tails apparently going downwards. Behind all of this is the male musician. Below the ox’ head is the vessel possibly collecting blood, and the horns and part of the table protrude into the next change in background colour. Here, another

---

<sup>57</sup> An interesting suggestion is made by Pötscher, who interprets the background colours as referring to times of the day – yellow/white being morning/day and blue being night. Red is understood as referring to the realm of the supernatural (Pötscher 2000).

<sup>58</sup> According to the plates in Paribeni 1908 (the first publication of the sarcophagus), the upper body of the women restored with a head-dress also does not survive: hence this cannot be used to make an identification of this woman.

female figure mirrors the arms-held-out-and-palms-down gesture of the one on the other side of the ox. Her hands are, however, held above a small structure just below hip-height. This should probably be identified as an altar (i.e. used for depositing offerings). On top of it (and below the female figure's hands) is a flat vessel, and above this a spouted vessel, and what appears to be a basket with circular objects in it. On the right hand side of these is a tall stand with a double axe on top, and a bird perched on the axe. Finally, all the way to the right on this panel, again with a change in background colour, is another structure, similar to the previous one, but larger, and with four horns of consecration and a tree placed on top.

On the left on Side A are two female figures and a male musician. They are all moving left, towards two tall stands with double axes and birds perched on top. Between the stands is placed a vessel, into which the first female pours something from another vessel – the female figure behind her brings another two vessels of the same kind: she wears an elaborate headdress. Next, and overlapping into the change of background colour on both sides, are three men moving to the right, two of them carrying cattle and one carrying what seems to be a boat. Due to damage of the sarcophagus, it is not possible to see if the cattle had horns. On the right, and in another change of background colour, is a stepped structure, reaching about the thigh-height of the men. Behind this is a tall plant, and another man facing the others. He is smaller, wrapped in some cloth, and no arms or feet are shown. Behind him is yet another structure, similar in decoration to the ones on Side B, but larger than both, and with a protrusion on top that looks like its roof.

From all of these elements (and the short sides would add to these), it is clear that some very elaborate rituals take place, of which the animal on the table is only one part. It is a wonderful illustration that 'sacrifice' should be a term referring to a much broader process than the simple instant of killing an animal. Even if the content of the rituals cannot be securely identified, it can be noted that, in terms of human figures, it involved a group of people, including musicians and female figures performing specific gestures, the pouring of liquids (whether of blood or some other liquid), and

movements in specific directions. For the animals, there is an animal tied, perhaps dead, animals still living and not yet tied, and animals (whether models or real) being carried to a specific place – these may represent stages of one ritual, or at least three different ones; either way, they reveal a variety of uses of animals in cultic contexts, perhaps also suggesting a variety of ways in which humans related to and understood animals (so not simply as passive objects for manipulation). The many objects and structures support the great complexity of the rituals, clearly involving several different spaces and actions performed with the objects at hand.

The analysis here concerning the sarcophagus and in particular Marinatos' interpretation of the representations reveals some of the problems of the assumptions which are at times made. Although some of the above points may not seem directly related to sacrifice, discussion of these assumptions is important because they have wider consequences for the way animal sacrifice is understood, implying a prioritisation of certain types of sacrifice above others, which cannot be substantiated by the evidence. Such assumptions are continuously problematised throughout this study, as we have already seen in the section on animal bones in tombs. The whole discussion is also a good example of the complexity of Minoan and Mycenaean iconography in general, along with the varied interpretations possible and suggested in almost all cases; it illustrates some of the difficulties involved in examining this material (iconography) in general, not only that related to sacrifice.

### *Textual material*

The Linear B tablets are concerned with administrative matters, and there is nothing associated with funerary practices of any kind. It has been suggested that the Ch Series of tablets from Knossos deals with cattle for funerary sacrifice (Godart and Tzedakis 1992, and Godart 1999). Godart and Tzedakis argue that the tablets qualify the cattle mentioned in them with terms relating to the coat of the animals<sup>59</sup> – for example 'black', 'white', 'golden' and 'dappled'. Since this is elsewhere a qualification of

---

<sup>59</sup> Apparently these terms are also names given to each animal.



sacrificial animals – as in the Pylos tablets - they argue that this is also the case for these Knossos tablets. Comparison of these adjectives with sacrophagi from Armenoi and the sacrificial scene on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus leads them to conclude that the sacrifices are in particular related to funerary rituals (Godart and Tzedakis 1992: 242-243). The argument (contra Chadwick, who believes the cattle are for labour) for sacrifice is strong, since sacrificial animals are often qualified in such a manner. The same phenomenon is present in the Near East, though colour is not one of the more common qualifications. It seems more likely that the type of coat has a religious or symbolic significance than a significance in terms of manual labour – which also suggests a perception of the animal as more than simply practical. Having said that, there could be forces at work that we are not aware of, such as the colour black referring to an ox coming from a specific region or a specific breeder/farm. If these cattle were indeed destined for sacrifice, as seems likely, the argument for them being specifically for funerary rituals is not very convincing, although it is a distinct possibility; there is nothing within the tablets themselves suggesting this.

### **Burials with complete animal skeletons (Table 3)**

#### **Dogs**

##### *Archaeological material*

Dogs appear to have been treated slightly differently than most other animals found in funerary contexts, because in many cases whole or almost whole skeletons are found. Of the tombs listed in Appendix A, remains of dogs have been discovered at 17-19 sites: 6-7 on Crete and 11-12 on the Mainland. In both Archanes Tholos Tomb B and Galatas Chamber Tomb 2 (A10 and A33), remains of dogs were found. In both cases, these remains are interpreted as having been treated differently than the other animal bones. In Archanes Tholos Tomb B dog bones were found in two different places:

almost complete skeletons between two of the barriers; and dog bones found with boar tusks and pig and hare bones beneath the inner barrier. Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis (1997: 263) believe that the dogs were “animals which could not have been eaten and can therefore only have been sacrificed”. In both cases, Day adds that the dogs probably represent sacrifices of the animal after the burial (1984: 30).

The two dog skeletons found in Galatas Chamber Tomb have cut-marks on their bones, more precisely on their metacarpals, ulna and metatarsals. Hamilakis interprets these as the result of skinning. He writes that the exact cause of death is unknown, but that ritual killing seems plausible (Hamilakis 1996: 158-159). He thinks that dogs should be seen as another grave good, to do with the social and ideological role of hunting in Mycenaean society. The only other dog found in a funerary context that has been subjected to faunal analysis is the dog from Kokla Chamber Tomb II (A43). The information given about this dog is that it was the size of a German shepherd. No cut-marks or burning are mentioned, but the remains were (no longer?) complete, and not very well preserved (Boessneck and von den Driesch 1984: 333).

It is unfortunate that there is no faunal analysis for most of the dog bones. Such analyses would be able to determine whether any of these bones had cut-marks, and whether a difference could be detected in the way the dog bones were treated compared to other animal bones. There is also very little data on breed, which, as Day points out, would tell us whether it was one or more breeds that tended to accompany burials, and could help determine their function (1984: 26).

However, there is no reason to assume, as Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis do, that dogs could not have been eaten. The eating of dogs has happened throughout history in many cultures, and is still practiced even today in for example Korea and China.<sup>60</sup> But it is not necessary to refer to parallels outside the Aegean Bronze Age to

---

<sup>60</sup> There is also good evidence for dogs being eaten in later times (Snyder and Klippel 2003, and Roy 2007).

prove that dogs were eaten. There is evidence from Bronze Age Lerna (mainly Lerna V, Middle Helladic, but also in all other levels) of dogs being skinned and eaten (Gejvall 1969: 17-18, 59). The dog bones had cut-marks and traces of burning, and though specific breeds could not be determined, they came from all sizes of dog, indicating that no one breed was preferred. At Nemea, Dabney *et al.* report dog bones among the animal bones with cut-marks, from a deposit that is interpreted as remains from feasting (2004: 199), and Boessneck and von den Driesch also note dog bones in the food remains from Tiryns (1981: 258). This does not prove that any of the dogs found in burial contexts were in fact eaten, but in the absence of better faunal analysis it must remain a possibility, especially in cases where only part of the skeleton is found, and when it is found with other animals that were eaten. The resistance towards believing that dogs were eaten is most likely a modern (mainly Western) concept of what can and cannot be eaten (Fiddes 1991: 132-143), and a common attitude is that pets cannot (or should not?) be eaten, and dogs are in our culture mainly seen as pets. A more borderline case is perhaps the horse, which many people today would hesitate to eat, but is much more commonly eaten, at least in Europe.

A note of caution is offered by Vermeule, who, in reference to the burial contexts of Asine, Thebes, Dendra Tholos Tomb and Vapheio (A17, A30, A73 and A75), does not consider the dogs found “as burial companions in noble Homeric style, because they are reported especially from tholoi where it is easy to creep in chasing rabbits” (1964: 349).<sup>61</sup> The possibility of dogs creeping into tombs should of course be kept in mind. However, it can be difficult to determine by what criteria a dog has crept in, and by what it was part of the original offerings, and the cases actually referenced by Vermeule cannot be interpreted as dogs creeping in. For example, at Asine, the dog skull was found in a conspicuous position, on a bench next to a human skeleton. The presence of only the skull, and in the specific position, excludes this being a dog randomly finding its way into the tomb. Therefore, there is no reason in general to suspect dog remains as being from dogs creeping in, either by curiosity or when

---

<sup>61</sup> Day issues a similar warning, and also calls the cases of Leukas and Vapheio “possible but dubious dog burials” (1984: 24), though not necessarily for the same reason as Vermeule.

chasing rabbits.<sup>62</sup> The more likely explanation in most cases, as with most other animal bones in burial contexts, is that they were placed there deliberately.

Dogs are considered by some to have been sacrificed to follow their human master. Concerning the Mycenaean evidence, Mylonas writes that “occasionally a favorite dog or horse was killed so as to accompany his master on the trip to the lower world” (1966: 116). Vermeule shares this opinion, both for dogs and horses, and links them with the life of the warrior (Vermeule 1979: 59-60). This is a likely scenario in some of the cases, though we are perhaps unlikely to ever be able to fully verify or disprove Mycenaean or Minoan ideas about the underworld and any journey necessary to get there. However, it does not explain certain cases; for example, when extra attention seems to be paid to the head of the animal, when the dog is not clearly associated with a human skeleton, when dog bones are found mixed with other, usually eaten, animals, as at Kallithea, Oxylinthos, Archanes Tholos Tomb B and Ayios Charalambos Cave, (A10, A37, A24 and A63) and it does not explain cut-marks, whether they are from skinning or removal of flesh.

Hamilakis’ idea that dogs found in burials were somehow connected to their importance as part of hunting is interesting, but difficult to verify in the archaeological record. One assumption apparently involved in the idea of dogs in tombs being associated with hunting is that hunting is a male activity, and that it is associated with elite members of society. To confirm such a hypothesis, dogs in burial contexts should be found in rich, male burials. As the record stands, this is not possible to confirm – as Day remarks, the evidence is not good enough to establish a link between the gender of the human and the dog sacrificed, and further, “with the exception of the tholos tombs, the dog burials do not seem to accompany particularly wealthy individuals or to be part of royal or even aristocratic funerary rites” (Day 1984: 26). Hamilakis, however, notes that most of the tombs with dog bones are in fact wealthy tombs, and he also stresses the association of tholos tombs with elite members of society (1996:

---

<sup>62</sup> Incidentally, the only example of rabbit and dog bones being found together is at Archanes Tholos B, where it is clearly not a case of dog chasing rabbit.

165). Thus, there may be some support from the richness of the tombs suggesting elite associations. However, there are slight problems with definitively identifying some tombs as rich, partly because of the difficulties of determining the status of a tomb's inhabitants based on structure and finds, partly because of incomplete publications, plundered tombs or tombs that have been used repeatedly (where it is difficult to determine which grave goods belong to which skeleton).

In most cases of dog burials, it is not possible to determine which particular human skeleton (if indeed it was only one) the dog belonged with, and also in most cases, the human skeleton(s) are not assigned a gender in the reports – this is the case with for example A17, A30, A33, A43, A57, A59, A64 and A74. In other instances, the dog bones are not clearly associated with human bones, possibly because these have been removed for secondary burial: in Archanes Tholos B, Thebes Chamber Tomb 6 and Knossos Mavrospelio Chamber Tomb IX (A10, A73 and A74). At Oxylinthos, the dog, ox, sheep/goat and pig bones were found over the skeletons of a woman, a youth and a boy, and at Vapheio the tomb contained a pit with a male skeleton, but it is not clear if the dog teeth are thought to be associated with this skeleton. Most of the tombs also do not contain other signs that might indicate the tomb's owner was involved in hunting, such as weapons or tools, though many objects could have been disturbed and items possibly made of organic material, such as armour made from leather, would have disintegrated.

The archaeological evidence thus only provides slight support for an association of dog burials with the ideological role of hunting. This hypothesis provides a better explanation for the skinning of dogs, in that it is not a 'companion' being skinned, but rather a symbolic element. This is still not completely satisfactory because it only really serves to make the skinning understandable; it does not give any affirmative reasons. The custom of skinning dogs, as suggested by Hamilakis for the Galatas dogs, and supported by the Lerna evidence, is perhaps best explained as a practical measure, though at present it is not possible to know much about this. Certainly, if the dog was used to hunt, and not itself hunted, its skin could not have been a trophy or a

mnemonic device the way an ox hide or skull could be. It is possible that it could have functioned as an ideological sign, the way the dog itself may have done, but in that case it is perhaps surprising that it is absent from the iconography in such a role.

### *Iconographic material*

Dogs are not shown in explicit sacrificial scenes relating to burials. In the iconography, dogs tend to be shown in contexts of hunting, which is the prime reason for the idea that its presence in tombs has to do with its role as a hunting companion. Dogs are shown in C44, C88, C89, C96, C101-C105, D5-D9 and D17. Here, dogs are often associated with hunting. Thus if hunting was an important ideological, presumably elite, activity, and dogs were part of this activity, dogs themselves could also have become part of the symbolism associated with it. As such, the burial of a person with his or her dog would serve as a marker of identity. At present, however, there is little within the funerary contexts in which dogs have been found to support this idea. Some of the depictions of dogs point towards other functions, which may or may not be associated with hunting. For example, C44 shows two dogs in a relatively standardised composition of a symmetrical image, with front legs on an ‘incurved’ altar. This composition will be analysed in more detail below, but it certainly has strong symbolic significance; the same can be said concerning D7. D104 and D105 show dogs engaged in apparently more ‘mundane’ activities, such as scratching and looking after their young ones – the latter being a very common motif, especially for cattle.

### *Textual material*

Dogs are only known implicitly in the Linear B tablets from the term *kun-āgetai* – ‘huntsmen’ (Chadwick 1973: 132). This provides supplementary evidence that dogs could be part of hunting activities, but does not offer new details.

The evidence suggests that dogs were utilised for a variety of purposes, including exploitation of skin, and flesh for eating, as well as for hunting. The dog bones in

burial contexts found with other animal bones may suggest eating, while the more common whole or partial skeletons indicate that dogs served a symbolic role, which may be connected with their use by elite members of society. Their association with hunting is not clear in the archaeological evidence, but may be supported by iconographic representations and to some extent Linear B records. The skinning may also have had a symbolic value outside that of hunting, but if so, this is now hard to reconstruct. The key to understanding the role of dogs is perhaps to not view it in a simple manner; human-animal interfaces can be extremely complex, and animals themselves may be seen as active agents, both shaped by and shaping human lives. This issue will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, but suffice it to mention here that dogs across time and space have interacted with humans in a great variety of ways, including as pets, companions, helpers in hauling, herding and hunting, as religious symbols, as witches, as guardians, as weapons, for tracking, and for their meat and fleece (Haraway 2003 and Walker 2008). Similar varieties and interdependence may well apply to all animals.

## **Horses**

### *Archaeological material*

Horses have been found in similar funerary contexts as dogs, sometimes even together. The burial of horses mainly, though not exclusively, occurs in the LH/LM periods, and appears to have been predominantly a Mainland practice, since remains of horses have only been discovered at two sites on Crete: in Archanes Tholos Tomb A (A9) and Ayia Triada Tholos Tomb A (A23). On the Mainland, remains of horses have been found in association with tombs at 13 or 14 sites. Even more commonly than with dogs, horse burials include either whole skeletons or just skulls. They are sometimes found in pairs, as at Marathon, Dendra Tumuli B and C and possibly at Kokla (two pairs – A31, A32, A43 and A54), and it is thought that they were yoked, and that possibly the chariot was buried with them in some instances, though no traces of

chariots have actually survived.<sup>63</sup> The burial of horses, is, like the burial of dogs, thought to be associated with their ideological role in society, and is especially connected to ‘richer’ members of society, to do with hunting and fighting – as Kosmetatou writes, “horses were favorite animals of the nobility and warriors” (1993: 32). Horses are more likely than dogs to have been expensive animals, both to acquire in the first place, and to keep.

Again, faunal analysis is sparse. The only sites where the bones of horses have been examined by an expert are Archanes Tholos Tomb A, Nichoria MME Tholos, Kokla Chamber Tomb II and Dendra Tumuli B and C (A9, A31, A32, A43 and A62). At Archanes, the species was identified as *E. caballus*, c. 6 years old and very small, no gender given. The shoulder bones had cut-marks, and the bones were carefully cut and arranged in the tomb, probably before decomposition (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997: 263-4). At Nichoria, the upper molar is identified as from *E. caballus* (Reese 1995: 37). From Kokla are reported four *E. caballus*, two males and two females, measuring 1.31-1.33 m. It is specifically noted that there are no cut-marks on any of the bones (Boessneck and von den Driesch 1984). At Dendra, two pairs of male *E. caballus* were found, all c. 15 years old, and all 1.35-1.40 m tall (Pronotariou-Deilaki 1990 and Payne 1990). The similarity of these four horses may suggest that they all came from the same stable.

There is some evidence that horses were eaten. The horse in Archanes Tholos Tomb A had been cut up, suggesting that the meat may have been cut off the bones and eaten. The careful re-arrangement is unique, however, and it is difficult to reconstruct what the ritual performed may have involved. No other known cut-marks have been reported on horses, but a horse uncovered in Trench F at Lerna was found scattered, and with fragments of at least 37 kylikes and other vessels (B18). While Caskey deliberately does not propose an explanation, both Kosmetatou and Reese suspect that this is not a burial deposit (Caskey 1954: 11-2, Kosmetatou 1993: 38, Reese 1995: 36).

---

<sup>63</sup> Actual bits have been discovered (Crouwel 1981: 101-104), but they could have been used for riding or chariots.



Rather, it looks like a deposit from a feast or banquet, and the scattered bones with drinking vessels strongly suggest that the horse was eaten. The bones did not have any traces of burning. Horse remains are also reported among the bones of animals that were eaten at Tiryns (Kilian 1981a: 150).

That horses appear to be associated with elite members of society need not mean, as Kosmetatou writes, that horse burials “escorted only male burials, as far as we can tell” (1993: 31). In fact, the archaeological evidence for horses being buried with males (warriors) is very weak. Though Kosmetatou refers to the LH on the Mainland, the possible case of a female buried with a horse at Archanes Tholos A should be noted.<sup>64</sup> A horse tooth is also reported from beneath a 30-year-old woman in MH Pit Grave 65 at Lerna (A49). For the rest, none have been securely associated with males or warrior tombs. At Marathon, Lemerle mentions two stone shafts in the tomb, possibly those of king and wife (Lemerle 1935: 253), but this appears to be based on the associated finds, not skeletal analysis, while Kurtz and Boardman claim that there were two men in the tholos, but provide no reference (1971: 30). At Argos, two human skulls were found with the horse, but they are not gendered (Deshayes 1966: 69-70), at Mycenae Chamber Tomb 505 and Kokla the human skeletons are not identified. At Nauplia, the excavator calls the human skeleton a “warrior” buried with his horse (Stais 1982: 53), but this appears to be based solely on the finds of the horse and the human skeleton – again there is no sign of skeletal analysis. For the Dendra Tumuli, a single skeleton has so far been found in Tumulus B (Grave 1), but this is not identified, and the human burial in Tumulus C has not yet been found (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990: 95). Aidonia Tomb 14 does not appear to have had any human remains, though the chamber is missing, and for the Shaft Grave, no details are provided for the human remains (Krystalli-Votsi 1998). Lastly, the Nichoria MME Tholos may have contained a warrior burial, judging from the bronze fragments from a suit or armour found in the floor and in the fill of Pits 2 and 4. However, the tomb had been plundered and/or cleaned several times, and at least 16 individuals were buried in the

---

<sup>64</sup> I call this a ‘possible’ female burial because the identification of the skeletal remains as female is based on the associated finds (and absence of certain objects, such as weapons), which is not satisfactory.

tomb, 7 males, 2 possible males, 3 females and 4 unidentified, all adults (Wilkie 1992: 256). It is impossible to determine to whom the single horse tooth might have belonged (and who the armour belonged to), and this is even harder since the tooth was found near the dromos, not in the chamber itself. The case for associating horse burials with male burials cannot be upheld on present evidence, but better skeletal information could certainly help solve this issue.

### *Iconographic material*

Like dogs, horses are not shown as explicitly as sacrificial animals in the iconography (C106-C111, D8, D10, D14, D17, D19, D21 and D24).<sup>65</sup> They are most commonly shown harnessed in front of a chariot. There is one scene in which a horse (or antelope) appears to be hunted by a griffin (D20), which could indicate another aspect of the role of horses, similar to that of other animals shown as hunted. AI 25, a vase shaped like an equid carrying a saddle, indicates that the animal was also used for riding and/or as an animal of burden, and AI 21 shows that the use of horses was not confined to men (unless it is insisted that the women in the chariot must depict deities). The objects with these scenes may support a mainly elite appropriation of the horse, since they, being either made of gold or coming from palatial contexts, themselves have elite associations.

### *Textual material*

In the Linear B tablets, horses appear in association with chariots and military equipment, but not as provisions for sacrificial feasts. Equids are not very common in the Linear B material, but horses and asses are recorded at Knossos and Pylos (males, females and foals for both) (Chadwick 1973: 50 and 132, and Crouwel 1981: 38). They are at times recorded in connection with military equipment such as corslets and chariots (Chadwick 1973: 380), but it is otherwise difficult to gauge their uses.

---

<sup>65</sup> Most of the examples appear to be horses, but an in-depth analysis may indicate that other types of equids are depicted in some cases.

The archaeological material indicates a special significance attributed to horses different from that of most other animals in the same context, since they are often found as complete skeletons. This significance may come from their use in hunting and battle, if we are to judge from the evidence from iconography and Linear B tablets, but the sepulchral archaeology itself does not display anything of the kind. Future and more careful osteological analysis has the potential to yield much more information about the use of horses and other equids in burials, but as with dogs, it appears that equid-human relations were complex and varied.

## **Sacrificial space**

This section examines sacred spaces used for animal sacrifice. The spaces associated with burials have already been examined, and will therefore not be included here. ‘Sacrificial space’ is here looked at through the contexts of palace centres, shrines and sanctuaries, and caves, as well as the iconographic evidence from wall paintings and evidence from Linear B tablets. The terminology associated with the different types of sacred and sacrificial space is highly problematic and fluid.<sup>66</sup> I do not here intend to enter into this discussion, which deserves more attention than can be given to it in this study. For the purposes of this study, it is not of great importance if a sacred space is called a sanctuary, shrine, temple, cult place or whatever else might be used; for ease of reference, I use the same term as is used in primary publications. The archaeological material is investigated in sections of sacrificial space in major centres (conventionally ‘palaces’ or ‘citadels’), other urban sacrificial spaces (most often called shrines), and sacrificial space outside settlements (including ‘sanctuaries’ and caves). These categories are simply used to investigate the material: they are not intended to be strict, or to claim that there are no variations within and overlaps

---

<sup>66</sup> Discussions can for example be found in Albers 1994: 7-8, Whittaker 1997: 6-7 (who prefers the term ‘cult building’ or, occasionally, ‘sanctuary’), Preziosi and Hitchcock 1999: 120-122.

between them. Close attention is again paid to some of the interpretations related to these spaces, in particular ideas concerning what kinds of sacrifice were performed.

### *Archaeological material (Appendix B)*

The sacred spaces are here limited to those that also exhibit signs of animal sacrifice: there are certainly many more sacred spaces than discussed in this section (see e.g. Gesell 1985, Rutkowski 1986, Albers 1994, Whittaker 1997 and Jones 1999 for surveys of different kinds of sacred space on Crete and the Mainland). Signs of animal sacrifice will typically include animal bones, and any special treatment of these, but – as we shall see – can also be present in the form of iconographic or even Linear B evidence. However, though animal bones may help to identify sacrificial sacred space, they are not enough by themselves. The sacred space in most cases has to be identified independently of, or in conjunction with, animal bones.<sup>67</sup> For the Bronze Age Aegean, this is no simple task, because there is no standard ground plan or architecture for such spaces or structures. As Rutkowski writes, “the Aegean world produced no sacred structures whose function could, from their ground plan, clearly be described as sacred” (Rutkowski 1986: xvi). That this is indeed the case is quickly realised by a glance at the ground plans shown in Appendix B, which lists possible sacrificial spaces in the Aegean. Rutkowski further notes that it is also not possible to identify these spaces simply by their being built of better or finer materials, because it is clear that similar things are done for some secular spaces (1986: xix). Objects may offer some help, but it should be noted that many objects which are thought to have been prevalent in religious ceremonies (e.g. rhyta, drinking vessels and ‘offering tables’) are also found and used in secular areas. Further, Rutkowski cautions against a tendency to call any object religious simply because its practical use is not immediately obvious to us (1986: xvi). Therefore, the identification of a space as sacred must rely on a variety of factors, including the wider context, the objects found in the space and any furniture or paraphernalia, as well as possible storage facilities for religious equipment.

---

<sup>67</sup> The criteria outlined in Renfrew and Bahn (2000: 408-412) may also offer some advice to identifying sacred space in general, but the archaeological context of Crete and Mainland Greece – and for the next chapter, Syria and Iraq – must be taken into consideration.

The material is neither extensive enough nor has it been subjected to osteological analyses that would allow any conclusions concerning the types of animals found or the specific parts of the body used. The majority of the cases merely record “animal bones”, with no further details (this is the case for 19 of the sites in Appendix B). In the remaining instances, sheep/goat are recorded from 16 sites and cattle from 14 sites, pig from nine sites, deer from six sites, and bones from equid, dog, feline, bird, turtle, fish, rabbit, boar, bear and rodent only in a few instances. It is clear that in most cases, the animal bones have not been studied separately (or if so, the studies have not been published), with the result that much information is lost.

Sacred space and remains of religious activity are found in some settlements, and at most major centres, both on Crete and on the Mainland. Though animal sacrifice may have taken place at all of these, only some have material evidence that support this. ‘Shrines’ or sacred areas with evidence of sacrifice are recorded at the palaces of Knossos, Phaistos, Galatas, Archanes, Zakro and Khania on Crete (B3-B5, B11, B14, B15, B17, B27 and B35), and Pylos, Tiryns and Mycenae on the Mainland (B22, B31 and B33).

At the MM II - LM IIB palace of Archanes, the contents of Hall 10 strongly support its identification as a religious structure. Thought to have fallen from the upper storey, the finds included a “stone sacrificial altar”, about 30 offering tables, two horns of consecration, animal figurines and animal bones, interpreted as possible remains of sacrifices (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1991: 38). Hall 10 was also furnished with benches along three of its walls, and it has direct access to Courtyard 11. Connecting Courtyard 1 and Courtyard 11 is a “platform” with a stone altar, possibly stepped. Along this altar runs a drain (for libations?). On the platform were found animal bones, a triton shell, part of a libation table, a base thought to be for a double axe, and about 40 plain conical cups. Here again there is a linking of sacrifice and feasting, suggested by the sanctity of the platform and its associated ‘shrine’ in Hall 10, the animal bones, the plain conical cups, the open space and the altar. This scale

here is significantly smaller, if the number of cups is anything to go by (it is not made clear how many animal bones were found, or any details about species, burning, cut-marks and so on), which may correspond to the size of the palace, rather than suggest any exclusive ritual. The fact that conical cups, as opposed to kylikes (which only occur from the LM period on Crete – see e.g. Popham 1965 and 1967), are more frequently found in Minoan contexts could indicate a difference in Minoan and Mycenaean ritual or religion, but since they appear to have the same function, more supporting evidence is needed to show that the difference in drinking vessel represents a difference in belief and/or ritual rather than simply in tradition.

One other location at the Archanes Palace suggests areas of sacrifice: Area 17, which was probably a shrine – its content included two stone bases possibly for double-axes, animal skulls, chryselephantine figurines, a rhyton and a triton. Palace shrines with associated animal bones are also found at Knossos, where the MM III basement rooms called the ‘House of the Sacrificed Oxen’ contained ox horns placed near tripod offering tables. Evans interpreted these as “a solemn expiatory offering to the Powers below” (Evans 1928: 302). At Phaistos, Sacello VIII and associated rooms near the west court have been identified as a shrine from the first palace period. Associated with this were a bench, an offering table, libation vessels, a triton shell, and a circular trench with vases, obsidian knives, burnt animal bones and charcoal, and a hearth with bovid decoration on the rim (Gesell 1983). The Mainland centres similarly display evidence of areas of sacrifice: at Mycenae, animal bones suggesting sacrifice have been found in several places in the ‘Cult Centre’, including near an ‘altar’ in shrine Γ2, and near a round ‘altar’ on the lowest terrace of the slope. At Tiryns, bones of oxen, sheep/goats and pigs were found in cult room 117 (belonging to LH IIIB, and called cult room 110 in LH IIIC), and animal bones were found in the adjoining court area (Kilian 1981b), lending some support to the idea that palace courts or large open spaces were used as part of sacrificial activities. There is also strong evidence of sacrifice from Pylos, which will be examined more carefully below in the section on feasting.

Similar evidence of sacrifice in shrines comes from settlements other than palace centres – at Tyliossos and Palaikastro on Crete (B26 and B54), and Malthi, Eutresis and Midea on the Mainland (B9, B19 and B20). Room 3, House A at Tyliossos is sometimes called a Pillar Crypt. It has a square ‘pillar’ in the middle of the room, and the finds include bones of pig, sheep and oxen (*Bos primigenius*<sup>68</sup>), small cooking vessels, a pitcher and votive axes (Hazzidakis 1934: 13-15). Rutkowski has questioned its identification as a pillar crypt (1986: 26-7), but the finds may still indicate a shrine. At Midea, the ‘Megaron’ and ‘Shrine Area’ of Terraces 9 and 10 contained a large amount of animal bones, pottery, and the religious context is suggested by a terracotta bovine figurine, a female figure, a female figurine, a miniature “offering table” figurine, a full size “offering table”, and stirrup jar with cult symbols. Many of the bones had burning and butchery marks, and some vessels had traces of meat and oil. All these factors indicate a close link between sacrifice and eating, if not in fact feasting.

Sacred spaces located outside main settlements further provide evidence of animal sacrifice. At Kato Syme in central Crete, there is a Neopalatial open-air sanctuary (B13). The complex consists of a large walled enclosure within which is a rectangular structure. This was an open-air space, with no roof, and a spring is nearby, which may have had some role in the cult. Between this central structure and the wall was found a thick black layer with remains of carbonised wood, animal bones, pottery and other objects. Some of the objects from the interior of the complex include goblets, chalices, libation tables, tripod cooking pots and a large number of handleless conical cups. The many cooking vessels testify to the eating of the meat, and the drinking and libation vessels to the importance of liquids and libations. Lebessi and Muhly believe that the area’s focus was on animal sacrifice, and that the ‘victims’ were partly eaten, partly offered to a deity, with the head as the deity’s portion (Lebessi and Muhly 1990). Other ‘natural’ sanctuaries in Crete with finds of animal bones are Mt. Jouktas, Anemospilia and Gonies Philioremos (B2, B21 and B29). Evidence of cult involving

---

<sup>68</sup> There is some debate about the identification of *Bos primigenius* – or the auroch – on Crete in the Bronze Age, see e.g. Nobis 1996. The auroch may never have been present on Crete in the Bronze Age, or the few possible examples may have been imported.

animal bones has also been found in the caves of Psychro and Skotino (B30 and B32). Caves with animal bones from the Bronze Age are, however, unique to Crete, and I know of none on the Mainland. This could be an accident of discovery and/or publication, but sacred caves are generally much more common on Crete than the Mainland. On the Mainland, at the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas, Epidauros was found what the excavator believes to be a Mycenaean altar below the Archaic altar (B8). The lower, Mycenaean, layer consisted of black, fatty ashes containing burnt animal bones, pottery fragments and other offerings. These include much coarse ware, fine ware, mainly early types of Vapheio cups and stemmed cups, bronze weapons such as swords, daggers and spearheads, and (as a Minoan element) bronze double axes (Lambrinudakis 1981).

Birgitta Bergquist has argued that burnt sacrifice did not take place in the Bronze Age Aegean, with special reference to Kato Syme and Epidauros (Bergquist 1988). Here I do not want to discuss so much the issue of whether or not the Minoans or Mycenaean performed burnt sacrifice. As it happens, it has been securely proven that burnt sacrifice did in fact take place, as is shown not just with the deposits at Pylos, but also at the sanctuary of Ayios Konstantinos, Methana (B6), where Hamilakis and Konsolaki's analysis of the animal bones show a preference for piglets, and that non-meaty parts were thrown in the fire (Hamilakis and Konsolaki 2004). Bergquist's article is slightly muddled on this point since, throughout the article, she grants (hypothetically at least), at separate points, the fire (1988: 30) and animals sacrificed on the altar (1988: 30 and 31). Thus animals, sacrifice, fire and an altar all appear to be present, yet we cannot admit burnt-animal sacrifice? Though the excavators may be guilty of some projection of later practices (and Bergquist is certainly right to warn against this), it is therefore possible that the evidence itself does suggest that sacrificial animals were burnt, though this need not mean that the two practices of Bronze Age and later Greek sacrifice were the same.



One scholar has observantly commented, “Let us not get lost in technicalities. Burning, cooking and eating may not be mutually exclusive”.<sup>69</sup> This may indeed be the case, and I here want to question the search for this particular kind of ‘Greek’ sacrifice in the first place, along with the assumptions associated with it.<sup>70</sup> There is a general tendency in the modern literature to attempt to divide the evidence into the categories of burnt vs not-burnt, whole vs not whole, and sacrifice vs ‘ritual meal’, as was already noted elsewhere. These distinctions are again closely related to the ‘celestial’ – ‘chthonic’ divide, in which the ‘celestial’ part is often prioritised by being associated with such notions such as life, heaven, upwardness and civilisation, as opposed to the ‘chthonic’ associations of death (and burial), earth, downwardness and primitivism.

In this distinction, tombs, pillar crypts and caves are associated with chthonic deities or ritual, while ‘upper’ shrines and peak sanctuaries are associated with celestial deities or ritual (for example in Rutkowski 1986: 65 and 87-88 and Marinatos 1993: 94-97). Nilsson, though tentatively suggesting a chthonic aspect for snakes, already commented on the doubtful value of trying to structure the evidence along the lines of ‘celestial’ and ‘chthonic’ cult (Nilsson 1950: 324). The reasons for linking burials with chthonic ritual are obvious enough (whether justified or not), and the reasons for the pillar crypts and caves to be linked with chthonic ritual are similar: they are dark and sometimes physically sunk into the ground, while peak sanctuaries and shrines are situated physically high up, and are assumed to have much light. It has been noted that Evans thought the finds in the House of the Sacrificed Oxen were offerings to the Powers below (1928: 302). Presumably this is to do with the perceived darkness of the room.

Marinatos also finds a chthonic – celestial divide of the cult places tempting (Marinatos 1993: 94-97). Her argument is based on binary oppositions of darkness –

---

<sup>69</sup> A comment made by B.C. Dietrich in the discussion after Bergquist’s paper.

<sup>70</sup> To some extent this is agreeing with Bergquist, who makes many good points in her paper, in particular her plea for excavators to publish more carefully details about faunal remains; the lack of such detailed study can be extremely frustrating, especially when interpretation is so heavily dependent on it.

light, down – up and death – life (though this opposition is also found within the chthonic aspect itself) as well as a reference to Lévi-Strauss and a statement that “the human mind perceives the world in terms of antithetical pairs” and that there is an “inherent opposition between sustenance (provided by earth products) and death” (Marinatos 1993: 97). To talk about anything as inherent in the context of human perception is hugely problematic, to say the least, and such a statement is begging the question. The construction of binary oppositions cannot be proved as something objective or as anything other than symptomatic of our time and place; that is, Marinatos thinks she sees the ancients creating this opposition everywhere, but since we only have our own perceptions, we cannot know if this opposition exists in the ancient mind or in our interpretation. The problem of binary oppositions destabilising themselves from within will be further explored in Chapter 4.

Even Bergquist, who believes that excavators tend to project the later Greek *θυσία* sacrifice back onto Bronze Age material, remains within the binary framework of the later period, with a subtle prioritisation of the burnt sacrifice. Though she is cautious in most places to say that the Aegeans did practice animal sacrifice, just not *burnt* animal sacrifice, the meaning of ‘sacrifice’ at times slips, revealing a leaning towards the burnt sacrifice as more ‘true’. This happens in the abstract, where she writes

the author assumes that the interpretation of the platform and terrace, respectively, as “sacrificial”, is due to a surmise of Minoan-Mycenaean burnt-animal sacrifice, based on a combination of the finds and an anachronistic inference from the historical, burnt-animal sacrifice. From this point of departure, it is argued that in the present state of documentation we cannot exclude that the Iron Age as well as Bronze Age finds actually are the remains of sacral meals of the worshippers and the cult personnel and not of sacrifices (Berquist 1988: 21).

In the first sentence, “sacrificial” is assumed to mean burnt-sacrifice, as is clear from the rest of the sentence, where it is paired with the “burnt-animal sacrifice”. In this instance it also seems to imply that the excavators believe burnt animal sacrifice took place on the platform and terrace, as altars. That the sacrificial is put in quotation marks could thus simply refer to the excavators’ interpretation, rather than Bergquist’s own. However, in the case of Kato Syme, the platform is not actually called sacrificial, and the attribution must therefore remain Bergquist’s. The bones, however, are called “sacrificial”, and the authors here reveal a similar assumption about burnt animal sacrifice in that they explain their calling them sacrificial with their belief that part of the animal was consumed, while another part (the head) was deposited in the fire (Lebessi and Muhly 1990: 326-328). Again, then there seems to be a criterion of burning for something to be called sacrifice. Unfortunately, Lebessi and Muhly do not state whether the decayed skulls and horns found in the Neopalatial layer had traces of burning. In Bergquist’s second sentence above, “sacrifice” is opposed to sacred meals, again implying that burning is a necessity, although elsewhere she writes that the remains are from meals with the meat of the sacrificed animals (Bergquist 1988: 31). Of course, this blurring of the definition of sacrifice is easily solved by inserting “burnt” in front of the word sacrifice, but as it stands, its absence reveals assumptions that are very telling.

A prioritisation of the burnt animal sacrifice is also implied in Bergquist’s article (whether deliberate or not). Her Table 1 (33) shows a summary of her findings on where and when burnt-animal sacrifice takes place, and here the burnt animal sacrifice is distinguished from “Animal sacrifice”. When we get to the Iron Age, burnt animal sacrifice is ‘ticked off’ at the Levant, Cyprus and the Aegean. However, the tick in the other column, “Animal sacrifice” has disappeared. To the best of my knowledge, non-burnt animal sacrifice, and “sacred meals” did not stop occurring in the Iron Age, certainly not in the Aegean, as Bergquist herself suggests in the above quotation. Thus, in leaving out the animal sacrifice, burnt animal sacrifice is given pride of place.

### *Iconographic material*

Scenes of sacrifice are rarely very explicit about their location – most of the seals and sealings discussed below with an animal on a table do not include background objects that might indicate the location, and other material, such as wall-paintings, mostly have a mono-coloured background. One example of a seal with an animal on a table has a palm tree bent over the animal. This could be an indication of a space outdoors, but as Marinatos has shown, the palm/date tree appears itself to be a strong symbolic element in iconography (Marinatos 1986: 15-17), which means it may be used even in places where it did not realistically occur. Although it is not certain, the A side of the Ayia Triada sarcophagus may take place just outside a tomb – i.e. in an open, outdoor space (outdoor and open space does not, however, mean that it is unmarked). The B side does not provide much evidence of the actual space other than through proximity to Side A. The three different background colours could indicate three different spaces (and rituals), but this can only be a suggestion; not too much importance should be attached to the fact that there is a plant on top on the structure on the right – it is after all placed on a human-created structure, meaning it could be anywhere. A wall-painting from Ayia Triada depicts two deer being led to a similar ‘altar-like’ structure, very likely for sacrifice; however, the tree on the left in this scene is complete restored (D13). Lastly, a wall-painting from Pylos depicts a composite scene which includes an apparent procession of people and an ox towards and into a structure which could be the facade of a shrine (D2). This would suggest that part of the ritual took place indoors, but it is neither certain that the ox is part of this particular composition, nor that it was in fact sacrificed. Another wall-painting with an ox in procession comes from Thera (D12). In the moment depicted, the ox appears to be between buildings, but it is difficult to be certain, and even harder to know its final destination, since there is no structure in the composition that would seem to function as an altar or anything else suggesting a final spot for slaughter. Thus, the iconography which includes animals does little to help understand exactly where sacrifice took place, other than show that it was in proximity to human-created structures and probably boundaries, whether these were inside or outside. It is indeed likely that sacrifice would have taken place both indoors and outdoors, but that the space was in some way set up and marked by humans – even if with as little as a simple table or ‘altar’.

### *Textual material*

The Linear B tablets record numerous sacrificial offerings, and in a few cases, a place may be indicated. Un 138 (E10) records sacrificial provisions for a feast at Pylos, Un 718 (E11) for a place called *sa-ra-pe-da*, and Un 2 (E8) ‘Sphangianes’. Unfortunately, none of these are particularly informative about the place of sacrifice; all we gain from them is that sacrifice also took place outside the palace<sup>71</sup> and that the palace was somehow involved in the organisation of the specific events referred to in these tablets.

## **Sacrificial activities and practice**

### **Feasting**

Some writers strongly emphasise the culinary aspect of sacrifice, and its political implications, sometimes to the detriment of any other considerations. Marcel Detienne, in his study of Greek sacrifice, writes that there is an “absolute coincidence of meat-eating and sacrificial practice. All consumable meat comes from ritually slaughtered animals, and the butcher who sheds the animal’s blood bears the same functional name as the sacrificer posted next to the bloody altar” (Detienne 1989: 3). That all eating of meat entails a sacrifice cannot be proven for the Bronze Age, and although we can determine that the two in some cases are clearly linked, we cannot say that meat eating was considered inherently sacred. Other writers emphasise the importance of sharing the meat of the sacrificial animal, as a way of sharing responsibility, i.e. to make *everybody* responsible for the ‘victim’s’ death, which also means that nobody is responsible, because there will be a continuous referral (which is

---

<sup>71</sup> Even this may be questioned in the case of Un 718: Chadwick’s translation suggests that the provisions are coming *from sa-ra-de-pa*, not going to it (Chadwick 1973: 283).

why no-one can be left out) (e.g. Girard 2005). Along the same lines, eating and drinking may serve as powerful mnemonic devices; a way of remembering and forgetting that also has the potential to be manipulated (Hamilakis 1998, 2008 and 2010). Feasting is thus a way of creating bonds within a given group, as well as being a way of differentiating the group from others. Mycenaean feasting is the subject of a special *Hesperia* volume (2004: 73.2). Here, Wright stresses the importance of the feast as a socio-political hierarchical structure (Wright 2004c: 133), a point which is well worth keeping in mind since much of the evidence does come from elite contexts such as the palaces.

What exactly is a feast, and how can it be detected in the different kinds of material? The problems and possibilities of detecting feasting in the evidence will be discussed under each section. The definition of a feast is not as simple as may at first be thought, and as is revealed by the studies done in several publications (see e.g. articles in Dietler and Hayden 2001a, especially Dietler and Hayden 2001b, Dietler 2001 and Hayden 2001, Nordquist 2008, and Hamilakis 2008: 5); people work with different definitions when they speak of feasting. Dietler and Hayden have been quite careful to explicitly state such definitions, which is the ideal situation, but in other cases, scholars may refer to feasting without explaining their specific perception. In this study, I use an adjusted version from *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

day or period of time set aside to commemorate, ritually celebrate or reenact, or anticipate events or seasons – agricultural, religious, or sociocultural – that give meaning and cohesiveness to an individual or to a religious, political, or socioeconomic group<sup>72</sup>

What is of interest in this section is of course religious feasting that involves sacrifice – we do not know if the people of Bronze Age Greece made a distinction between

---

<sup>72</sup> The original entry being: “day or period of time set aside to commemorate, ritually celebrate or reenact, or anticipate events or seasons – agricultural, religious, or sociocultural – that give meaning and cohesiveness to an individual and to the religious, political, or socioeconomic community. Because such days or periods generally originated in religious celebrations or ritual commemorations that usually included sacred community meals, they are called feasts or festivals” (“feast”, first paragraph, *Encyclopedia Britannica* 2009). I have made changes to reflect the fact that I do not think that feasts have to be communal.

religious and secular feasting, but this section only includes material where the religious element is fairly certain (or if not, the uncertainty itself is discussed). More importantly, we do not know if they had a concept of 'feasting' similar to any modern (English) concept, and it should therefore be remembered that the study of 'feasting' in this sense is through an artificial category created by modern scholars.

### *Archaeological material*

In their important collection of essays, Dietler and Hayden attempt to give guidelines for identifying feasts archaeologically, as well as to the different functions involved (Dietler and Hayden 2001b). Some of the features which Hayden thinks indicate feasting in the archaeological record include rare or special foods or drinks, large amounts of food, food waste, unusual types of preparation vessels, unusual (large) size of vessels, ritualised vessels, large storage facilities, feasting facilities such as special structures for guests etc, prestige items or signs of destruction of wealth and paraphernalia for public ritual (Hayden 2001: 40-1, Table 2.1). These are very helpful guidelines and, as Hayden says, more may undoubtedly be added to this list as the understanding of the archaeology of feasting improves, and they are here applied to Pylos. To the guidelines for identifying feasting should of course be added the religious or sacrificial element as discussed in the previous section.

At the palace of Pylos (B31), animal bones are abundant, but five deposits of burnt animal bones merit particular interest. One of the deposits was found in Room 7, thought to be an archive, because about 200 tablets with Linear B were also found in the room (some of which apparently deal with provisions for sacrifice and feasts). Other finds include 20-22 miniature kylikes, as well as a spearhead and a sword (Stocker and Davis 2004: 67). The burnt bones themselves consisted of right and left mandibles, femurs and humeruses from cattle and deer. They came from large, adult animals, suggestive of bulls and steers, and this deposit represents a minimum number of 10 cattle and one deer (Stocker and Davis 2004: 61). Cut-marks on the burnt bones show dismembering and stripping meat off bones (before burning), though there was no evidence of breaking to get to the marrow. They were found on a final destruction

floor, so there is a possibility that burning took place in the destruction of the palace (c. 1200 BC). However, some of the other, similarly burnt, deposits date to slightly before the destruction, and their burning must be deliberate. A few unburnt bones were also found in this deposit, from pigs and sheep, but their significantly different treatment suggests that they do not belong in the group (Stocker and Davis 2004: 62). The other deposits are found mainly just outside the main walls, as marked on the plan of B31.

Blegen interpreted the bones and kylikes found in Room 7 as remains of sacrifice and votive offerings (Blegen and Rawson 1966: 92). This interpretation has not changed radically, but the re-examination of the faunal material (Isaakidou *et al.* 2002 and Halstead and Isaakidou 2004) provides new insight into the practice of animal sacrifice at this palace. It shows that selected bones were burned; we cannot know the specific significance attached to these bones, but it can be noted that the femur and humerus are prime cuts for meat (again, we cannot know if this is the reason for their being singled out), and animal skulls, including mandibles, are certainly marked as significant in many other contexts, as will be discussed in a later section. The cut-marks on the bones indicate that they were stripped of their meat *before* burning. This means that the burning has not happened as part of ritual dining, and also that the meat is likely to have been available for consumption. The amount of meat which these animals would provide may feed between a few hundred and thousands of people (depending, of course, on how much you allow per person), which suggests participation by a large amount of people. Further, the types of animals – cattle and deer – may also be significant, though their presence here cannot be used as a general statement about sacrifice in the Aegean, or even on the Mainland.

Further evidence of large-scale feasting is found in the form of huge numbers of drinking vessels discovered across the site of the palace. Säflund notes large amounts of kylikes in the Southwestern Building, as well as cooking vessels (1980: 237 and 241). She also notes 2853 kylikes in Room 19. Based on the number and location of drinking and cooking vessels, she suggests banqueting to have taken place in courts 42



and 47, courts 3, 2, 4 and 44, and portico 94, outside Room 99 (Säflund 1980). She further notes that the bull procession that would be part of the banqueting would have as its goal the large hearth found in the Megaron (Room 6). Though Säflund's evidence for animal sacrifice is not very convincing (as it is based mainly on later, written evidence), the case for large-scale feasting is compelling. To support this, she also writes that many of the kylikes are Plain Ware, and stored in the palace, i.e. not for daily use. Interestingly, the distribution of kylikes and their quality has also been examined by Bendall. She locates more possible areas of banqueting, but more intriguingly, she attempts to identify varying degrees of access for different guests. Thus, the kylikes of 'Inferior Ware' are associated with banqueting outside the main gate and in Court 58. This presumably gives some feel of participation, though it is still outside the main area of the palace. Those with better access may have used the Fine Ware kylikes associated with Court 63 and the Southwestern Building. Finally, those most privileged would have used drinking vessels made of metal in the Megaron (Bendall 2004: 112-124). A hierarchy of feasting may even be indicated in the material within Room 7 with the burnt bones deposit. As we have already seen, the bones of the animals suggest a large number of people.

However, Stocker and Davis write that the comparatively few miniature kylikes found in association with the bones may point to a select group of 22 people taking part in a ritual involving the small kylikes (2004: 71). This is of course based on the assumption that the kylikes are representative of all those found from a single event. Room 7 is located towards the outer parts of the palace, but the contents were certainly moved there from elsewhere, as large animals could not have been slaughtered in this small room. As noted, because of the tablets, it is thought to be an archive or office of an archivist, and it is possible that the bones and kylikes were brought there for administrative purposes, the bones to be dispatched in a similar manner to the other burnt deposits (Stocker and Davis 2004: 68 and 73). Thus it is possible that large scale feasting had a hierarchical structure. A smaller (or more exclusive) feast may be suggested by the evidence from the palace of Archanes in Crete, where animal bones, along with a triton shell, part of a stone offering table, a fragment of a stone vase and

c. 40 handleless conical cups were found near and on the low structure called a 'platform' by Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis (1991: 39-41).

Large-scale feasting outside the main centres has been discovered at ancient Nemea in the northeast Peloponnese (B24). Here a deposit of animal bones, mainly cattle but also pigs and sheep/goats, dog and ass, was found. The deposit further included eating and drinking vessels, in particular many plain kylikes, cooking vessels and a terracotta female figure. The female figure, along with terracotta figurines and a single miniature kylix, singles out the deposit as religious, according to Dabney *et al.* Some of the bones had traces of burning and gnawing and cut-marks, and the cattle bones largely consisted of head and feet (Dabney *et al.* 2004). The bones represent a minimum number of individuals of six cattle, four pigs and five sheep/goats. If this is a single deposit (which is not certain), it indicates feasting on a large scale outside the main centres.<sup>73</sup> This could have interesting implications for the political aspect of sacrifice and feasting, and proves that the power to mount such feasts was not restricted to the palaces (though they may well still be restricted to an elite of some kind). Dabney *et al.* suggest that the amount of meat represented by the bones may have been brought home by the (elite) guests, to be redistributed in local areas.

The features associated with feasting by Hayden are such that the bigger the feast, the better and more secure the evidence. This means that smaller feasts are harder to recognise, and may run the risk of being marginalised. At Archanes the scale appears to be smaller than at Pylos, and similar cases may be proposed for Hall 22 at MM IIIB-LM IA Galatas on Crete, the LH III A-B sanctuary at Ayios Konstantinos, and Hall A1 and the small megaron B85 at LH IIIB Malthi in northern Messenia (B6, B11 and B19). However, feasts consisting of small groups (and such groups may in particular consist of less 'elite' members of society) can easily be overlooked. Here the smaller deposits of animal bones and drinking and cooking vessels often found in

---

<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that the whole dump was not actually excavated – Dabney *et al.* report that the excavators thought that less than half the dump was excavated (2004: 201). If the same amount of bones was discovered in the rest, this would be a very large deposit, possibly even larger than what is found at Pylos.

funerary contexts may be significant, as could be similar small deposits from sanctuaries. A promising method for detecting cooking that includes meat is organic residue analysis of pots (e.g. Tzedakis and Martlew 1999, and Tzedakis *et al.* 2008). The use of this technique has revealed that pots from possible sacred areas at Khania and Mycenae had contained ingredients that included meat (B14 and B22).<sup>74</sup> This means that even small-scale cooking can be identified, though this in itself does not guarantee that a religious feast took place; nor does cooking guarantee that human consumption took place. It is possible that at least some food was prepared for deities, as happened in the Near East, and what happens to the food thereafter is not certain, though human consumption seems very likely.

### *Iconographic material*

It has been questioned if there are any representations of feasting at all from the Bronze Age Aegean (Pini 2008). Most evidence usually referred to is extremely conjectural and based on assumptions concerning what is involved in a feast, and what kind of activities and preparations surround feasting – many of the contributions to the recent *DAIS* volume on Aegean feasting are of this kind (see especially articles by Wilson 2008 and Constantinidis 2008). Although feasting almost certainly included specific preparations, for example setting up the space used and the participants dressing up for the occasion, we cannot be certain that these subjects are actually depicted in the surviving iconographic material. As Pini tentatively suggests, almost all the material usually referred to (mostly wall-paintings) are not only fragmentary and the various restorations uncertain, but can also be interpreted in different ways (Pini 2008). When iconography of feasting is in itself subject to such a high level of uncertainty, it is no surprise that there is very little evidence of sacrifice as part of the festivities. Although sacrifice may often have had an element of feasting, the material does not justify assuming that all sacrifice is feasting, as seems to be the assumption made in the article by Ferrence, who makes no attempt to distinguish between feasting and sacrifice as she surveys the evidence (Ferrence 2008). The images referred to by

---

<sup>74</sup> Like any scientific technique, however, it should not be used outside its own limitations – for examples where this has happened, see the discussion in Hamilakis 2008: 13-14.

Ferrence mostly only show a single moment, but the more elaborate ones, such as the Ayia Triada sarcophagus show that such ‘moments’ are part of a much wider process and sequence of rituals. These events may well have included feasting – it is possible that after the rituals shown on the sarcophagus, a banquet took place. But however likely such events are, they are not in fact shown in the iconography.

Only two examples suggest feasting with animal sacrifice: they are both fragments of wall-paintings from the Palace of Pylos (D2 and D3). The first is reconstructed by Lang with two registers of humans bringing offerings towards a structure, possibly a shrine. Roughly in the middle of these is an ox of almost twice the size of the human figures (Lang 1969: pl. 119). The reconstruction is made from many different fragments found in more or less the same area of Room 5 (the throne room), but not all of the human figures shown in the reconstruction can actually be found in the fragments – as Lang writes, some were “added to fill gaps” (Lang 1969: 39). The “bull” is reconstructed from a fragment showing the front part of an ox’s head in profile (Lang 1969: pl. 52). This could be a procession towards a sacred building, leading to sacrifice and feasting, but the surviving evidence is hardly enough to consider this interpretation secure. The second example has similar problems. Lang’s reconstruction shows a large ox with a musician and a bird behind, as well as people seated at tables, with lifted vessels as if toasting (D3). This fresco was differently restored by McCallum (D3 – second picture), with the ox trussed on a sacrificial table, and again with a musician and bird, and people at tables. This restoration seems to fit the curve of the back of the ox better (whereas in the other restoration the artist had to make the ox bend its neck for the curve to fit). Apparently, the fresco fragment which the ox is based on has been re-examined, and can no longer be “confidently reconstructed as a bull or as any other sacrificial victim” (Stocker and Davis 2004: 70). However, Stocker and Davis here thank their colleagues Brecolaki, Zeitoun and Karydas for this information, which is not published, and it is therefore not possible to know precisely what is doubtful concerning the specific fragments. Nordquist casts further doubt on the use of this wall-painting in determining human practice by suggesting that it is in fact set in the world of the supernatural (Nordquist 2008: 108). This is a possibility that should always be kept in mind when dealing with

iconographic material – especially in the Aegean, where we have no definite ways of identifying deities of either gender in the iconography.

A further problem is that many elements which are assumed to be part of feasting may be extremely difficult to identify in the iconography. Pini's discussion of possible iconography of dancing is an excellent example of this (Pini 2008: 249-250); it is very difficult to make an unambiguous depiction of a dancing person, unless accompanied by further context or literary commentary. For example, a human figure shown with both arms raised may be dancing, but such an interpretation is far from certain. The same problem occurs when, for example, two people sit at a table with their arms up and holding cups<sup>75</sup> - what can be stated is that two human-like figures sit across each other at a table – we do not know if they were drinking, eating, toasting, what the occasion was for this activity, when it took place or even if it was part of a 'feast'.

### *Textual material*

Linear B does not, as far as is known, have a word that equals the English 'feast'. The word used for the *Aegaeum* conference and subsequent volume is *DAIS* (Hitchcock *et al.* 2008). However, this word only exists in Homer, meaning 'distribute' or 'divide' – it does not occur in the Linear B tablets (Nikoloudis 2008: 378 and Palaima 2008: 388). Although many daily words must be missing from the tablets, the absence of a word equivalent to feasting should warn us against assuming that the Minoans and Mycenaeans used such a concept. Religious feasting in the tablets is usually argued from the records of animals and other commodities, sometimes being brought to a certain place (e.g. Piteros *et al.* 1990, Killen 1994, Palaima 2004, Weilhartner 2008). For example, Un 718 (E11) records offerings to Poseidon of one bull, two rams, wheat, flour, cheese, honey and wine (Ventris and Chadwick 1956: 128 and 282-3). For another event involving Poseidon, Tablet Un 2 (E8), records 1,575 litres of barley, 115 litres of flour, 211 litres of olives, 10 litres of honey, litres of figs, one ox, 26

---

<sup>75</sup> In fact, the fragments with pairs of figures at tables in D3 are not preserved well enough to show what the figures hold in their hands, if anything.

rams, six ewes, two he-goats, two she-goats, one fattened pig, six sows and 586 litres of wine (Bennet 1998: 112). Although not explicitly stated, it is of course likely that much of this was consumed by humans.

Other tablets also do not explicitly refer to a religious occasion, but their content of commodities appear to be 'feasting' provisions: Un 138 (E10) records 1,776 litres of barley, 421 litres of olives, 374 litres of wine, 15 rams, eight yearlings(?), one ewe, 13 he-goats, 12 pigs, one fattened pig, one cow, and two bulls and Cn 418 (E13) records at least<sup>76</sup> four cattle, four rams, six male goats, three female goats, three yearlings(?) and a pig. The argument for these as sacrificial animals is largely based on the designations associated with them, for example *SI*, which is usually translated as 'fattened' (e.g. E7, E8 and E10) – this is a designation also commonly used for sacrificial animals in the Near East. Cn 418 has further designations, translated by Chadwick as *uniformly white* (Chadwick 1973: 207-208). These suggest careful selection of the animals, and that specific features are important for specific purposes or rituals. From Thebes, the Wu Series (E13) contains similar designations and is also thought to record animals for ceremonial banquets (Piteros *et al.* 1990 and Avarantinos 1990). It is believed that each sealing with an animal ideogram is associated with a single animal, and that this animal is destined for consumption at a banquet (Piteros *et al.* 1990 and Avarantinos 1990). The sealings mention the same type of animals as on the Pylos tablets, that is, cattle, goats, sheep and pigs, which is consistent with much of the archaeological and iconographic evidence. For Crete, the Knossos tablets do also record animals, and some of these could be for similar purposes, but there is no clear link to religion.

It is perilous to base too many conclusions on statistics gained from the Linear B tablets, considering we cannot be certain precisely which refer to sacrifice and/or feasting. Here it can be shortly noted that statistics from a group of tablets from Pylos often called 'mixed commodity tablets' would suggest that, if these commodities were

---

<sup>76</sup> 'At least' because some of the lines possibly recording more animals are missing (Chadwick 1973: 207-208).

for consumption at feasting, the feasts would have been very large and able to accommodate several thousand people (Weilhartner 2008: 412-413). Interestingly, such statistics also suggest that the types of animals sacrificed were most commonly sheep, with a much lower frequency of goats, pigs and cattle (Weilhartner 2008: 414), which is more in accordance with the archaeological material but not with the iconographic material.

## **Foundation deposits**

Foundation deposits<sup>77</sup> in the Aegean have not received much attention so far, and not many have been identified. Boulotis' catalogue of foundation deposits in the Aegean (including Cyprus) contains 12 entries (Boulotis 1982), and Herva estimates 20 on Crete alone, though without identifying all of these (Herva 2005). It is possible that many more such deposits exist but have not been recognised as such. A few of the deposits include animal bones; all of these examples come from palatial contexts on Crete – Knossos, Phaistos, Zakro and Galatas (B10, B17, B28 and B36). In all of these, deliberately placed deposits containing pottery and animal bones were incorporated into the structure of a building, either in the walls (Knossos, and apparently Galatas) or under the floors (Phaistos and Zakro).

From so few examples it is difficult to draw conclusions concerning any possible sacrifice, or if a tradition similar to that in the Near East existed – there is no textual or iconographic evidence for the practice. Herva argues that 'building deposits' in general need not be interpreted as religious, but as part of a dynamic relationship between humans and their lived-in environment, and that such deposits served as a

---

<sup>77</sup> Also called 'building deposits' – Herva defines them as "objects deliberately hidden and sealed up in the structure of ... buildings" (Herva 2005: 215), Ellis (writing on the Near East) as being "an integral part of the structure but is neither decorative (usually not even visible) nor structurally useful. It may occupy any position in the building" (Ellis 1968: 1).

practical means of maintaining these relations. Herva also emphasises that they may be part of a process in which buildings undergo construction, reconstructions and destruction, and that the deposits thus function as part of the “architectural texture” of the structure (Herva 2005: 224). Although the material from building or foundation deposits is not enough to verify this concept of built structures among Minoans (or Mycenaeans), the idea that the deposits are part of the architecture is worth noting, and whatever the precise meaning of them, it was clearly important that the objects in the deposits were integrated into the very fabric and foundations of structures.

### **Sacrificial representations** (Appendices C and D)

Some iconography of sacrifice does not have an obvious archaeological or textual equivalent. This iconographic material is discussed in this section, with some of the related symbolism.

#### **Animal on ‘table’**

As well as the Ayia Triada sarcophagus, a few seals and sealings show an animal on a table or some sort of platform, apparently about to be, being or just having been sacrificed. Unfortunately, these scenes are so condensed that very little can be said about the actual act of sacrifice from them: I will here examine what they can suggest about animal sacrifice, and how these scenes have previously been interpreted.

The identification of animals in Aegean iconography, especially glyptic, can be extremely difficult.<sup>78</sup> There are a number of reasons for this: the preserved state of the

---

<sup>78</sup> Morgan provides a good survey of the different animals in the iconography, along with some of the limitations of identification (Morgan 1988: 41-67).



seal or sealing, the vagueness of determining features of the animals, which would allow identification, and, perhaps most importantly, the skill, intentions and knowledge of the artist. Vagueness or mixing of features may be deliberate or due to lack of knowledge on behalf of the artist. Deliberation in turn may be either due to an insignificance in precise identification or to intentional ambiguities and merging of identities. Most of the animals on tables are thought to be cattle, but a closer look at each example reveals that doubts can often be raised. The horns, long tails with tusks and general body build of C3, C4 and C8 suggest that they are cattle. C6 could be an ox or an antelope, since the tail is not shown – the curvature of the horns would suggest an ox, whereas the slenderness of the body and limbs would suggest an antelope. C2 is designated as ‘Stier’ (bull) in *CMS*, but since the tail is not shown, it could also be a goat or antelope; however, the engraving of the horns is unclear, and something appears as part of them that could be branching, which would make the animal a deer. C5 is identified as a ‘Rind’ in *CMS*, which its long tail with a tusk at the end and horns would seem to support, but its horns have what appear to be ridges, which occur on goats or antelopes. Alternatively, the ‘ridges’ could be some sort of decoration on the horns. The lines on the neck are also not commonly shown on cattle. *CMS* also calls the animal on C7 ‘Kalb’ (calf) – there is no tail to help this identification, and it could also be an antelope. C9 is usually called some kind of ox (‘Rind’ in *CMS*, ‘Stier’ in Sakellarakis 1970: fig. 8), and its long tail would indicate this, but its slender body and long straight horns (with a strange ‘knob’ at the bottom) are more like those of an antelope. C10 is also called a ‘Stier’ in *CMS*; its mid-length tail speaks against this identification. A pig (or possibly a wild pig – a distinction is not here possible) is depicted on C11. The animal on C1 is designated as ‘Eber (Stier?)’ in *CMS*, as “probably a pig” by Demakopoulou (1988b: 198), “boar” by Mylonas (1966: 164) and “boar” by Evans (1935: 572). Its short tail and lack of horns makes it an unlikely ox, and its nose does mostly look like that of a pig, though it cannot be excluded that it is a deer.

Thus, the only two animals identified with any certainty in this kind of scene are the ox and the pig. Goats and antelopes may also be depicted, but without any certain examples, it is perhaps more likely that the scenes are meant to show cattle. Apart

from a definite case of a deer (C12), and perhaps a goat (C17 – judging from its upturned tail) the further possible examples do not add to the repertoire of animals, and have the same problems of identification, with many of the animals displaying even fewer distinguishing features – the animals on for example C16-C18, C20 and C36 are mostly non-specific; this may or may not be deliberate.

The animals are depicted in a limited number of positions on the ‘table’: on their back (AS 6), on their front with legs crossed/tied (C2-C4 C6 and C10), on their front with legs pulled up below them (C5 and C7-C9) or on their front with legs stretched out (C11). Sometimes the head is in profile, apparently lying on the table (C1, C4, C7 and C9-C11), sometimes the head is shown frontally (C3, C5, C8 and probably C6), and once turned back over the body (C6). No pattern occurs between the position of body, legs and head. These differences in position may signify different stages of the ritual, but without a more extensive body of material, it is not possible to decide on the meaning of these differences: the feature of the frontal head is discussed elsewhere. The recurrence of the crossed legs may in itself be a reference to the sacrificial animal, which is the reason C14, C18-C21, D26 and D27 are included as possible examples. This possibility is also noted by Pini (2008: 254). Most interestingly, animal figurines with apparently crossed or tied legs have also been discovered at the peak sanctuary of Atsipadhes (D26 and D27). Certainly, the position is not a natural one for any of the types of animals depicted, and must hence have been created by humans; at the very least, it designates the animal as within the human sphere and control. An association with hunting is also possible – compare C93, where a lion or lioness is tied up so that it appears in a position similar to those on tables, albeit upside-down. Perhaps the two associations (hunting and sacrifice) need not in these cases be understood as separate entities.

Three of these seals and sealings depict human figures, but these are not very helpful in understanding the sacrificial act. The first (C5) is very fragmentary, and the surviving part only shows human legs underneath the table (from two, or possibly three humans), this possibly means that some sort of procession took place in

connection with the sacrifice. Sakellarakis identifies them as male, based on their footwear, and notes a possible link with bull-leaping, as the figures in bull-leaping often wear similar footwear (Sakellarakis 1970: 174). Since women also appear to have taken part in bull-leaping, this identification cannot be secure. The second shows a human figure (C4, almost certainly male) making a gesture with his hands stretched out towards the animal. The gesture is very similar to the one made by the female behind the ox on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus, though here the arms are held slightly higher. This difference could be attributed to lack of space on the seal, rather than an actual difference in gesture. It is not possible to determine if the palms of the hands are also held downwards here, just as it is not possible at present to understand the meaning of this gesture. The third seal with a human figure (C1) shows the animal on its back on the table, and a human figure (variously identified as female or male – the dress would suggest male, but the ‘bun’ of hair would suggest female) leaning over it with a dagger in his/her hand, near the animal’s abdomen. The animal is in this case probably already dead, since it is not held or tied while being cut, so this act is either to do with the cutting up of the meat, or possibly, as suggested by Evans, to do with divination (Evans 1935: 41), the human figure then being a *haruspex*. *Extispicy* (divination by reading animal entrails) is widely attested in the Near East for this period, as we shall see in the next chapter, but there is no other evidence suggesting its practice in the Bronze Age Aegean.

The tables have been examined carefully by Sakellarakis (1970: 168-169 and 175-176).<sup>79</sup> Most of them have two legs, but three, and possibly five, have three legs, reminiscent of tripod offering tables, usually made of clay. The tripod offering tables found are, however, very small, and would certainly not have been able to hold a big

---

<sup>79</sup> The subject of ‘altars’ and ‘offering tables’ deserves much more attention than can be given in this study: there are major issues of how these are defined and distinguished, both in archaeology and iconography. There is unfortunately no standardisation of how these objects are referred to, and what their function is, in Aegean scholarship. The same problem occurs in the Near East, where it is complicated further by textual records. For the theme of sacrifice, it is important because these objects are sometimes used as an argument for the presence of sacrifice or sacred space. And, as was discussed in Chapter 1, some scholars see altars as a necessary element of sacrifice.

animal.<sup>80</sup> This type of offering table may rather have been used to display offerings, possibly including joints of meat and animal bones, after the animal had been sacrificed and cut up, as suggested by Branigan (1970: 101) and Nikoloudis (2001: 20). No tables clearly comparable to the ones shown on the seals and sealings have been found, and it is suggested that these sacrificial tables were not permanent installations, and that they were made of a perishable material, such as wood (Sakellarakis 1970: 175).

### **Iconography related to sacrifice**

The theme of sacrifice, while not explicitly shown as an animal on a table, is present in many other seals and sealings, as seen on many of the seals and sealings in Appendix C. Marinatos has shown the sacrificial association of certain symbols in Minoan glyptic, such as the figure-of-eight shield, the sacred garment (also sometimes called the sacred knot) and the so-called 'impaled triangle', or 'arrow' (Marinatos 1986: 51-72). She further links trees, especially palm trees, with sacrifice (because they often occur in scenes of sacrifice), and believes that they are used as markers of sacred space (1989). The 'impaled triangle' has still not been convincingly identified. It has been thought to represent a stylised tree, but Marinatos is probably right that, from the position it is usually placed in, and its resemblance, it is more likely a stylised weapon (Marinatos 1986: 61-3). The meaning of the sacred garment is also elusive. Although no definite conclusions can be made, it is interesting to note its resemblance to what is called the 'ring-post' in Near Eastern iconography: an attribute of the goddess Inanna – compare the example from Black and Green 1992: 154 to the objects on C29 and C69. Further iconographic symbols associated with sacrifice are the 'double-axe', 'horns of consecration', 'column', 'star-symbol', 'incurved altar' and 'altar structure'. The double-axe occurs frequently in ritual scenes. The suggestion that it was used to stun the animal (Nilsson 1950: 231) is perhaps not feasible, but it was certainly a most potent symbol, often placed in prevalent positions (see C24, C29, C55, C61, C62 and C65). To these symbols we may add the symbol of one to three small circles, which

---

<sup>80</sup> Among many others, examples of this kind of 'table' can be found in Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1991: 40, Mylonas 1966: fig. 133 and Rutkowski 1986: 232.

are even harder to identify, but are nevertheless clearly associated with sacrifice. On a seal from Nauplia three separate circles have been carved above the animal on a sacrificial table (C2). They look very similar to the eye of the animal, but this is probably due to technique. On a seal from Isopata in Crete two such circles, just connected, are shown in front of a large dog, while another one is shown above its back (C101). Another seal from Crete show two circles, just connected, below the stomach of a contorted ox, and a single circle on its body (C71). Here the circles in front of the dog and below the ox look like a figure-of-eight shield, but since single and separate circles are shown elsewhere, this at least cannot be the only or main meaning of these symbols.

### **Predators, prey and sacrifice**

The link between hunting and sacrifice has been carefully examined by Marinatos (1986). A few seals show the case in point. C75 shows a griffin attacking a deer, with a sacrificial table below the deer. C8 shows an ox lying on a sacrificial table (note its frontal face), with a dog or lion in a wide gallop, indicative of hunting, and C74 shows a lion attacking a deer, with a double axe below, again a symbol associated with sacrifice. Other scenes of predator and/or prey are shown on C85-C87, C89, C92, C93 and C107, including some with humans as predators. In these, there is the repeated contorted position of the prey as indicative of its defeat and death. A typical scene related to both the theme of hunting, and the frontal animal head is the composition of predator animals symmetrically opposed. In C39 the hunting link is clear, as the two lions almost bite into the bucranium in the middle, and in C57 two lions(?), joined in one frontal head in the middle, stand with their front legs on a bucranium. Below them are date trees. This latter composition is even more common where the bucranium on which the predators stand is an altar of the incurved sides type. This sort of composition can be seen in C40-C46. The flanking animals on these are either lions or griffins, which are predatory (symbolically) animals, and the association of this composition with sacrifice is provided not only by the altar itself, but also by other symbols such as the bucranium (C45) and the impaled triangle (C46). Another scene with a similar composition is one where the altar is supplemented or substituted by a column. We have already seen this in C41. Columns flanked by animals are also

shown in C47-C50. Columns and bucrania are further linked in C72, where the frontality of the bucrania is mirrored in the frontal faces of the two cattle striding above. Their sacrificial association is also shown by the tree, and the contorted posture of the furthest away ox.

The simple predator – prey relationship is complicated by images like the one on C58, where the predator (lion) is merged with the prey (bull) in a single frontal face. That this relationship is not in fact a simple binary opposition becomes clear if we look closer at some of the above images, as well as at more new ones. For example, in C22 no distinction is made within the imagery between the frontal heads of bulls and lions. On the top row are the heads of a lion, an ox(?), and a lion, while on the bottom row are the heads of an ox(?), a lion, and an ox(?). It is thought that this seal represents the heads of sacrificial animals being displayed on a building, perhaps a shrine, and it is impossible to tell from this composition that a prey-predator relationship is significant between the two animals, as they are treated in exactly the same way. The lion is clearly shown as hunted by humans in C92 and C93. Although the sacrificial element in these scenes is less clear, they show that the lion was considered both prey and predator. One other sign that this is the case is the posture of lions in some scenes, for example in C45 and C74, where the lions appear in the same sort of contorted posture as ox prey in other scenes. This is especially interesting in C74, where the contorted lion is biting (i.e. hunting) a deer. Marinatos suggests that this ambiguity of the role of the lion in relation to other animals and to humans reflects a hunting hierarchy in which horned animals are hunted by lions, and lions in turn are hunted by humans (Marinatos 1990). Further, humans have a double-faceted relationship to lions, in which they are admired as hunters, and in which they are seen as an enemy to be overcome. That the lion as prey may not have been solely symbolic may be suggested by lion bones found along with bones interpreted as leftovers from meals at Tiryns (Boessneck and von den Driesch 1981: 257-8).

Griffins may have had a similarly fluid symbolic role. They are shown hunting (C12), but they also occur flanking altars or columns (C41 and C48). Here they sometimes

have their heads turned, and their posture is similar to that of bovine prey, though it appears stiffer and more formal. If these postures are indeed related, it may indicate the ambiguous role of the griffin too. Slight support for this is found in the fact that the griffins appear to be bound to the column in some scenes – indicating that they would have to be subdued in some way. Further, a seal from Mycenae shows a griffin with its head and neck twisted up (C84). There is a small line above its wing, perhaps signifying an arrow; a comparable scene is seen on C75. This composition is again typical of a hunted animal. The fact that the griffin itself is part lion further links it to the lion, both as a rare, powerful animal and as an animal that is subdued.

Lastly, the role of the archetypal prey in Aegean iconography, the ox, is far from simple. Famous scenes of bull sports make it clear that the animal was used for more than sacrifice and as a hunted animal, though it is possible that bull sports were closely related to sacrifice. Some of these scenes show the bull with a frontal face, and this could support the argument for linking sacrifice and bull sports. However, in a few scenes, the bull is shown as mauling its human opponents (D22 and D23). Although the bull loses in the end, these scenes hint at a dangerous and potentially lethal aspect of the bull, related to the lethal aspect of actual predators like lions and humans themselves. Conversely, oxen may also have had a protective position in between humans and predators. This is indicated by the fact that the figure of eight shield appears to have been covered in cattle hides (D11), as were chariots, as we have seen on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. The use of cattle hides will have had a symbolic value as well, but the protective function cannot be ignored. This ambiguity of the role of animals, and merging of features will be explored further in Chapter 4.

### **Female carrying quadruped**

Another group of seals which has been linked to sacrifice typically show a female figure carrying or holding a quadruped by the horns (C121-C136). This type is found both on Crete and on the Mainland. The female figure is usually lavishly dressed in a patterned skirt and non-patterned top, often with prominent breasts. Some sort of hunting scene is perhaps being depicted, and presumably the female figure is bringing

the prey home, or perhaps to a shrine. Certain elements appear consistently in seals and sealings with this composition: the lavish dress, with a wide patterned skirt and 'plain' top; the carrying of an animal; and when the free arm is preserved, it is almost always positioned behind the female figure, either on her hip or straight down. This position is not accidental: it is emphasised by the arm not helping with the burden of the animal, and in some cases further attention is brought to the arm by it being extra long or thick (e.g. C121, C124, C127, C130 and C135). The dress is found in many other contexts showing female figures, and cannot do much to elucidate these scenes, other than emphasise once again the importance of clothes in Aegean culture. However, there is no consensus as to who she is, or if she is even the same in all these. Since the composition does seem quite formalised, it is likely that the same type of female is shown. It cannot be decided, however, whether she is a 'normal' mortal woman, a priestess or even a deity.

The exact type of animal carried is mostly not identifiable. Only in four examples can a reasonably secure identification be made: goats on C124 and probably C130 (identified as such by their short, upturned tail, and in C124, long upward going horns and perhaps a beard), and sheep on C122 and C132 (identified by their short, downward turned tail and horns going backwards and down). The rest may also be goats or sheep, but they are not engraved carefully enough to be certain – as previously noted, this may be a deliberate choice made by the craftsman.

An article was dedicated to the subject by Sakellarakis, who argues that they are scenes of sacrifice, with a female figure bringing a dead animal to be placed on an altar (Sakellarakis 1972). He further speculates that the altar was made of wood (Sakellarakis 1972: 255). This argument is based on three sealings of the same seal, where a construction is indicated on the right-hand side (C129). The problem, as noted by Pini (1992: 17), is that the drawing of the sealings used by Sakellarakis (and later also by Marinatos 1986: 16) is slightly misleading. It shows the structure as terminating about the middle of the seal, whereas the sealings show not only that the structure continues all the way up to the top of the seal, but also indicate that a



structure was present on the left, behind the woman. This makes it unlikely that it is a table or altar; it could instead be a shrine, but this too is not certain. Since the argument for sacrifice was based on the presence of an altar, it is severely weakened by the lack of it; none of the other examples depicts structures or have any other identifiers. The relative standardisation of the scenes through the common features indicates some sort of ritual which involved a female carrying a (dead?) quadruped. More details of this ritual cannot be established, and although it is possible, we cannot be sure that it is related to sacrifice.

### **Processions**

Although procession-ways have been suggested for certain areas (e.g. at Mycenae – Mylonas 1983: 315), evidence for processions is only present in the iconographic material. Even here, there are serious problems of identification, similar to those concerning feasting. If a procession is defined as “The action of a body of people going or marching along in orderly succession in a formal or ceremonial way, esp. as part of a ceremony, festive occasion, or demonstration” (*OED* 2010), with the addition here that there should also be something in the scene suggesting sacrifice, it is very difficult to determine if a number of people depicted in a line are proceeding forward in an orderly manner, or if this is simply an artistic method used to show and distinguish more than one person. Further, we once again cannot be certain that the concept of a procession in the modern sense existed.

A possible procession involving sacrifice has already been noted for D2, where an unknown number of people<sup>81</sup> all proceed to the left, apparently accompanied by an ox, and D12, where a large number of people appear to proceed towards the shore where ships are arriving, and among the human figures, an ox is led along. Other, smaller processions may be depicted on the D1, D13 and D14, but as with feasting, the smaller

---

<sup>81</sup> The exact number is unknown because of the fragmentary nature of the material and the problem of determining how many of the fragments with human figures actually belong to this scene – the reconstruction by Lang contains 20 human figures, but as she herself notes, some of these have been added to fill gaps (Lang 1969: 39).

the procession, the harder it is to identify. The Ayia Triada sarcophagus depicts five women inside the ‘orange’ area on the left of Side B (counted by their feet, since their upper bodies are not preserved); the concentration of so many people in this small space, wearing similar dresses and all moving in the same direction may suggest a procession, though we do not know their exact relation to the remainder of the scene, or if they carried anything in their hands. D13, a wall-painting from Ayia Triada depicts two deer being led towards a structure very similar to that on the sarcophagus, which strongly suggests that they were to be sacrificed. It is not certain, however, that this is in fact a procession. Finally, D14, a wall-painting from Knossos, depicts a chariot with a human figure in it, and a small part of what appears to be an ox’ head. This may also be part of a procession where the ox is led to sacrifice – comparable wall-paintings from Mari are interpreted as such (I1 and I2), but it is difficult to read this purely from the image itself. The ox could be led to the famous bull-leaping games (which themselves may or may not have ended in sacrifice).

Undoubtedly, there are other cases where processions leading to sacrifice could be suggested, but from the iconography alone, more context is necessary in order to strengthen such an interpretation.

## **Human sacrifice**

For the Bronze Age Aegean, human sacrifice is very difficult to prove.<sup>82</sup> This is partly due to the lack of good methods to identify such a practice, in any of the types of evidence present. In any evidence, the most obvious method would be to look for human sacrifice in the same way as for animal sacrifice or, once the contexts of animal sacrifice are fairly certain, to look for human sacrifice in similar contexts.

---

<sup>82</sup> Hughes 1991 provides a very good review of the evidence from the Bronze Age Aegean, as well as some of the arguments that are used for and against this evidence.

*Archaeological material* (Table 4)

As we have seen, animal bones indicating sacrifice and/or ritual meals are most commonly found in tombs. Clearly, human bones found here are not usually from sacrifice. It could be argued that the location of the human bones can suggest sacrifice. This has been done at Argos Chamber Tomb VI (Vollgraff 1904: 370), Mycenae Chamber Tomb 505 (Wace 1932: 12-18), Prosymna Tomb VII (Blegen 1937: 157) and Mycenae Grave Circle A (Tsountas and Manatt 1969: 96-7). At these tombs, the human skeletons were found in the dromos or at the mouth of the tomb. Such a location could suggest human sacrifice, and animal bones are often found in dromoi. However, the use of the dromos is not systematic enough to make such conclusions – humans are frequently buried in the dromos, and animal bones are frequently found in the main chamber.

Another argument that has been used in funerary contexts is the simultaneous burial of several skeletons. Several of the above fall into this same category, as do the tholos tomb from Dendra (Persson 1931: 8-42 and 68-70) and Tomb 1 at the New Hospital Site at Knossos (Hood and de Jong 1952: 248). For several of these tombs, it is now less certain if the skeletons were actually buried at the same time, or if they represent previous burials brushed aside, and for Dendra, Mylonas has argued that the ‘king’ and ‘queen’ of Dendra were buried at different times (1966: 127-9). In this case, however, his argument is not very convincing – since the chronological difference is largely based on two metal vessels found with them. As Hughes writes, these are very difficult to date (Hughes 1991: 29): being made of precious metal they could also easily be heirlooms. Further, the two skeletons were found in a single cist, which is otherwise extremely rare, and does suggest that they were buried at the same time. However, the problem with this, and the other sites with several simultaneous burials, is that it is virtually impossible to determine their cause of death. Thus it is quite possible that the two humans in Dendra simply died at the same time. Even if a violent death can be proved (and this becomes more likely when the numbers are greater, as for example at Mycenae Tomb 505, where six skeletons in the dromos are suggested

to have been sacrificial ‘victims’), it is in most cases not possible to determine how the violent death came about – sacrifice is only one of many options. The case is strengthened when human bones are found with animal bones, and when no signs of differential treatment are shown between human and animal bones. This again seems to be the case at Mycenae Tomb 505, but here it cannot be ruled out that all these bones were swept aside together.

Human sacrifice has also been proposed outside of sepulchral contexts. The two most famous and controversial cases are both from Crete: the site of Anemospilia and the West Room of the Minoan House at Knossos (B2 and B16). At Anemospilia, a young man found on a small structure in the west room of the building was interpreted as human sacrifice by the excavators (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1991 and 1997). In the same room was found a c. 28 year old woman and a c. 37 year old man, interpreted as a priestess and a priest. In the corridor was another skeleton, with which was associated a Kamares ware vase decorated with a relief bull, thought to have been used to contain blood from the sacrificial ‘victim’. The young man on the platform had his legs bent backwards, as if bound, and a spearhead (first thought to be a dagger or knife) was found near his abdomen. The youth’s bones had burnt differently on the right and left side of the body, and “specialists attribute this differentiation to the fact that the youth had lost a considerable amount of blood prior to the fire due to a haemorrhage, leaving blood only in the flesh of the right part of the body” (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 305). Objections to the excavators’ interpretation have been put forward on several grounds. First, the structure’s religious aspect, along with the supposition that animal sacrifice took place there, have been questioned (Hughes 1991: 15-6, Marinatos 1993: 114). However, its religious significance is indicated by cult vessels such as rhyta, the vase with the relief bull, tripod cooking pots, offering tables and horns of consecration, the clay feet of what may have been a xoanon, as well as the animal bones and structural features such as benches and a temenos wall. The plan of the whole structure may or may not resemble a tripartite shrine, as suggested by Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki – since excavation of the whole site is incomplete, this cannot be established with any certainty, though the parts that have been excavated do appear deliberately

symmetrical. We have seen that shrines and sanctuaries do not have a set structure in the Bronze Age Aegean, so the lack of parallels cannot be used to reject this as a sacred structure.

That animal sacrifice usually took place on the 'altar' where the youth was found is also questioned, partly by questioning the identification of the 'altar', and partly by claiming that animal sacrifice usually took place outside, and that a bull could hardly be negotiated into the room (Hughes 1991: 15-6, Marinatos 1986: 19 and 1993: 114). Parallels of altars in general are few, and from iconographic representations, it is thought that they were portable and made of wood. This does not mean that a sacred structure like this could not have a permanent feature used for ritual slaughter. If this platform was usually used for deposition instead, offerings of some kind should be found near it (e.g. vases), but this was not the case. From the plans and drawings, the youth appears to be placed deliberately on the platform, not, as Hughes thought possible, accidentally fallen over it (1991: 16). There are good indications that animal sacrifices were frequently performed in the open, but this does not exclude sacrifices taking place indoors. The main problems with believing that animal sacrifice could take place in the space suggested are more to do with assumptions about display and animal types than about practical issues. It is assumed that animal sacrifice involves display of the sacrifice, with a focal point such as an altar, and this would exclude the small, relatively private space in the west room. Further, it is assumed that the animal usually sacrificed would be a large bull. A bull could be led into the space, but among the animal bones mentioned are also pigs and goats, much smaller and easier to lead into the room. It is also possible that an outside structure existed (whether permanent or not) which was primarily used for oxen, while the inside one could be used for smaller animals. Marinatos claims that sacrifice is unlikely to take place indoors "especially under danger of impending earthquakes" (1993: 114). This is a strange argument – that danger of earthquakes should dictate what actions are done indoors, because the people clearly *were* indoors, impending earthquake or not.

Hughes further doubts the proof used to determine the young man's cause of death. Though experts have examined the bones and concluded loss of blood as the cause, based on the difference in burning of his bones, Hughes writes that although the presence or absence of *muscle* on the bone can show a difference in burning, there is no evidence that the presence or absence of *blood* can do the same (1991: 17). This dispute must be settled by experts, but the evidence is not vital to the interpretation, and even if it is confirmed, loss of blood does not have to be explained by sacrifice.<sup>83</sup> Finally, the fact that the sacrificial 'dagger' has convincingly been identified as a spearhead (Höckmann 1980: 131) has been used to reject the sacrifice interpretation. However, there is no reason to believe that a spearhead cannot be used as a sacrificial weapon, and as Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki note, Höckmann calls the spearhead a ceremonial, cult or sacrificial weapon (1997: 311).

At Knossos, children's bones were found, with animal bones, in a thick, burnt deposit (though the human bones themselves do not show signs of burning). Some of these bones had cut-marks on them, leading the excavator, Peter Warren, to choose ritual slaughter and eating of the flesh as the most likely interpretation, having considered and refuted other options (1981: 159-165). The most common objection to this is that the bones were perhaps being prepared for secondary burial, and that part of these preparations were to remove any flesh remaining on the bones (e.g. Hughes 1991: 21). However, there are no signs of the deposit being secondary, nor is the building in any way funerary, and it would seem strange that secondary preparation should take place away from the burial, though it is possible. Further, there is no evidence for the practice of 'de-fleshing' human bones as part of the secondary burial, despite the large amount of bones from secondary burials, and in these cases, I do not know of any evidence of the bones having been completely removed from the funerary context to do this – most of the time, the bones of previous burials are swept aside or moved into adjacent ossuaries to make room for new occupants. It is possible that the consumption of human bodies fit into a wider tradition of feasting and consumption, in particular in mortuary contexts, as suggested by Hamilakis (Hamilakis 1998: 123, where more

---

<sup>83</sup> On the other hand, the difference in burning must have some explanation. What Hughes appears to accept as the only possible cause, the lack of muscles on the bones, sounds highly unlikely.

tantalizing cases of human bones in unexpected contexts are also mentioned). There is plenty of evidence for the dead being ‘processed’ in some manner, for example through removal, sorting and treatment of bones after decomposition of the flesh (e.g. A10); this could theoretically also include actual consumption of human meat, or use of elements of the dead body for medicinal purposes, for example. We must at least be open to these options, so that we have a chance of detecting them in the material record.

Further assumptions concerning human sacrifice in the archaeology may be discussed through a case study of the Dendra Tholos Tomb (A30). The Tholos Tomb at Dendra was one of the first sites from the Bronze Age Aegean to be interpreted as evidence for human sacrifice. This was initially done by the excavator, Axel Persson. The tholos itself contained four pits. One pit (Pit III) contained the skeleton of a woman, designated by Persson as a ‘princess’, a second pit (Pit IV) in the doorway did not contain any skeletal remains, but was filled with charcoal and burnt objects, and called sacrificial. A third pit (Pit I) contained the skeletons of a man and a woman. These Persson called the ‘king’ and the ‘queen’, and thought that this was a case of the queen being sacrificed and buried with her husband. The fourth pit (Pit II) contained a human skeleton and a dog skeleton, and these are interpreted as the king’s servant and dog, also being sacrificed. Finally, on the floor of the tomb there were the scattered remains of three human skeletons, and these are thought to be possible sacrificial victims (Persson 1931).

Not surprisingly, Persson’s view of events has been rejected many times. However, the site was used for some time as a reference when human sacrifice was under discussion, most commonly as a possible but unlikely or difficult case to prove. Pini, for example, comments that it is difficult to prove that the death of the ‘queen’ was violent (1968: 69), and Andronikos thinks that the double interment is more likely to be a double death (1968: 83). Mylonas questions the simultaneous burial of the ‘queen’ and ‘king’, thinks that the ‘servant’ and dog have been swept aside from previous burials, and that the “less important burials on the floor” are from previous

burials (1966: 127-9). Interestingly, there is a tendency, very clear in the above comments, to focus on the ‘sacrifice’ of the so-called ‘queen’, and to focus on refuting her death as a sacrifice. The ‘princess’ rarely gets a mention, nor does the ‘servant’ and dog, and the same goes for the skeletons on the floor. Nor are the names given by Persson questioned – Mylonas comes close to doing this when he puts them in quotation marks the first time they are mentioned, but undermines this by proceeding without brackets and giving them capital letters (Persson himself only does this when offering his interpretation of events, not actually in the report of the excavation, which is presumably what Mylonas bases his argument on – compare Persson 1931: 8-42 vs 68-70), and by calling the burials on the floor less important, although if they are previous burials, as he believes, this cannot be proved. This reveals a prioritisation (whether deliberate or not) of what appear to be the richer members of the tomb, if not of the society they were part of. As such, it also reveals an implicit acceptance of Persson’s designations of the people in the tomb.

In other words, the issue of human sacrifice may often be discussed, but not the assumptions of status made by Persson. It is never questioned who the sacrificial ‘victim’ must have been; even when someone argues against the case of sacrifice, there is no doubt that it is the woman that must be shown not to have been sacrificed. So again, it is assumed without reservations that it must have been the woman who was sacrificed to her husband – there is no possibility of the ‘king’ being sacrificed at the death of the ‘queen’. When the ‘victim’ of sacrifice is called a ‘servant’ or a ‘queen’, these designations are made as oppositions to ‘master’ and ‘king’ (Persson does this himself by referring to all these four categories). This means also that they are singled out as in some way inferior, because that is the relationship between servant – master, queen – king. The creation of such oppositions, and the thus clear designation of the sacrificial animal/human as inferior, is a common tool used to ‘excuse’ the practice of sacrifice. When the practice of sacrifice is shown in some context, the ‘victims’ are assumed to have been prisoners, slaves, some sort of poor people, conquered people, women, or even animals. The logic behind this seems to be that you would not sacrifice somebody who is ‘equal’, perhaps because they are too close to yourself (and as such you would care more?). Thus, creating the opposition,



and the 'victim' as inferior, is a way for modern writers of 'softening' the violence of the sacrifice – it somehow seems less gruesome that way.

### *Iconographic and textual material*

Outside the archaeological record, evidence for human sacrifice is scarcer, and neither iconography nor the Linear B tablets provide explicit proof. The lack of iconographic representations of human sacrifice has been used as support to argue against its existence (e.g. Hughes 1991: 26). The lack of human sacrificial 'victims' in the iconography does not, however, prove much, since certain other animals which were clearly sacrificed are also not shown as sacrificial, for example dogs and horses. In the Bronze Age Near East, where human sacrifice is well attested, there are also no explicit iconographic representations of human sacrifice. The absence from the iconographic record of certain animals (and humans?) as sacrificial that we know were in fact sacrificed may suggest a different attitude to these animals, as we have already noted, and this may in turn suggest specific rituals associated with certain types of animals. The representations possibly alluding to human sacrifice are those where a human head is shown frontally (C28 and C60). When animal heads, especially oxen, are shown in this manner, they symbolise the sacrificial animal. A similar use of the human head could also indicate associations with sacrifice, though the positions they are shown in in the above examples, between the horns of an ox(?) and between two sheep, are often occupied by a sacrificial weapon such as the double axe (compare to C24, C29, C61 and C62). This would suggest them as perpetrators of death, rather than dead/dying.

From the Linear B tablets, there are a few tablets where humans are possibly given to deities as sacrifices. The most important one is Tn 316 from Pylos (E5). On it is mentioned deities (in the dative case, showing that something is given to them), followed by an ideogram for cup, which is in most cases, though not all, followed by an ideogram for man or woman. The gender of the men and women apparently follow the gender of the deity. It has been suggested, but by no means universally accepted, that the men and women represent sacrifices (e.g. Chadwick 1976: 92). Other

suggestions are that they are cupbearers (which is, however, not supported by the fact that some cups appear without humans ‘attached’) or that they are servants sent to the deity’s sanctuary to serve there, possibly to be in charge of precious vessels (Hughes 1991: 202). Unfortunately the first line, which would help settle the uncertainties, is not very clear. The difficulty is proven by the two different translations given in two editions of Ventris and Chadwick’s *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*. In the first edition they translate: “PYLOS: *perform a certain action* at the (shrine) of Poseidon ... the town, and bring the gifts and bring those to carry them” (1956: 172). In the second edition this becomes “Pylos *sacrifices* at [name of sanctuary] and brings gifts and leads *victims*” (Chadwick 1973: 463).

Thus, none of the evidence for human sacrifice is beyond dispute. My point in discussing the above cases has been to show that human sacrifice is much harder to prove than animal sacrifice. This does not mean that it did not take place; rather, it means that extraordinary finds have to be present, and in many cases, it is thought that sacrifice should be considered the last possible option. In any of the above instances, if the human element is replaced by an animal one, it would almost certainly be interpreted as animal sacrifice and / or ritual dining,<sup>84</sup> without hesitation. This is of course partly due to the fact that humans have the capability of fulfilling more functions than animals, but it is also partly due to an unwillingness to accept human sacrifice, at least unless it is the very last possible explanation, and even then it must be interpreted as a rare event. Human sacrifice may easily hide within contexts where it is difficult to detect. An interesting case is from Archanes Burial Building 19, where human bones, especially children’s bones, are found in cooking vessels. This seems a very odd scenario. Again, had they been animal, the interpretation would be clear. However, the strangeness of the case is not discussed; it is only commented that at this cemetery they used many different vessels for burials (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 248). Although there may be no more to it than that, it is perhaps such cases that merit more careful attention, for example in terms of osteological analysis to detect possible disease, burning or cut-marks.

---

<sup>84</sup> The Knossos case is an exception: here animal remains would more likely be interpreted as refuse from slaughter.

## Conclusions

For sacrifices associated with burials in the Bronze Age Aegean, the interpretations tend to explain the evidence as either remains of a funerary meal, or as ‘sacrifice’. These need not, however, be mutually exclusive, and in many cases it is not possible, or indeed not desirable, to decide between the two. This is part of a wider tendency to create binary oppositions in which one side, associated with burning, whole animals, animal heads, and giving, is prioritised above the other side, associated with parts of animals, not burning and eating. In terms of burials of dogs and horses, assumptions are made concerning what can and cannot be eaten, as well as about their link with rich males. In this, as in all the sections that include archaeological material in this chapter, more extensive and careful faunal analyses would contribute significantly to our understanding of sacrifice.

Sacrifice appears to have taken place in a variety of settings, including palatial centres, shrines and sanctuaries both within and outside settlements, and caves. These settings and their material may reflect a great variety in rituals, social groups, size of groups, and a hierarchy of access. Again, assumptions concerning what types of sacrifice were performed and prioritisations of rituals occur in interpretations of the evidence, and create strong distinctions between burning, eating, cooking and sacrificing; distinctions which may not be relevant to the prehistoric period. One of the activities that were closely linked to sacrifice, and in some cases probably indistinguishable from it, is feasting. The case of the archaeological evidence from Pylos is particularly interesting and suggests complex systems involving different levels of participation. The difficulties of identifying sacrificial feasting should not, however, be forgotten or ignored, and they especially surface in the case of smaller or ‘poorer’ feasts and in analysing the iconographic material.

The practice of placing deposits including animal bones in the structure of buildings is an intriguing one, and one that would benefit from further research and attention from excavators. Its meaning and associated rituals are so far not well understood, but the practice itself suggests interesting new facets of the way at least the Minoans perceived their own built structures. It also suggests one of the occasions (the construction or transformation of buildings) on which animal sacrifice may have been performed, the particulars of which we are otherwise mostly ignorant.

Much iconography depicts sacrifice or symbols associated with sacrifice which we cannot at present connect in an accurate manner to the archaeological and textual evidence, although it is most likely that they overlap. This iconography ranges from the more explicit depictions of animals lying on some sort of table through animals depicted in association with symbols that refer to sacrifice and ritual to animals shown as hunting and hunted, with a marked blurring of distinctions between predator and prey. This discussion of the iconography further highlighted some of the problems of identifying not only sacrifice but also specific elements, such as the kind of animal depicted. It is here extremely important to examine carefully each element of a composition, and not make assumptions concerning what would be believed to be the most likely animal depicted.

A survey of the evidence for human sacrifice and the interpretations attached to it reveals the general problems of identifying the practice, as well as hesitation or even unwillingness to include sacrifice as a possible interpretation. Again, certain assumptions are associated with human sacrifice, including that the sacrificial 'victim' is understood as 'inferior' and that, if it took place, it must have been during times of some sort of crisis.

The different types of material in many cases reveal great variety, with sacrifice being present in some but not in others. It is, for example, particularly fascinating that the iconography, though in some instances problematic, indicates that the most commonly sacrificed animal was the ox, whereas archaeological and textual contexts point to

sheep/goats as far more common. Conversely, the archaeology shows that animals such as horses and dogs (and humans may fit in this category as well) were also sacrificed, but if only the iconography or Linear B records were examined, it would almost certainly be concluded that they were not part of the sacrificial repertoire. This highlights the importance of including all available kinds of evidence in a study, so as not to skew the interpretation in a specific direction. It also underlines the limitations of the material; that in some cases, we must admit that not enough material or kinds of material is currently available to make conclusions about the specifics of a certain sacrificial ritual.

This chapter has indicated some of the rituals involved in the Aegean, not just in the actual killing of an animal, but much wider, complex and varied sacrificial processes, including associations with hunting, feasting and consumption of the sacrificial animal, as well as the broader use of sacrificial symbols. The next chapter will investigate the sacrificial process and how it is treated in modern interpretations in the Bronze Age Near East.



# CHAPTER 3

## SACRIFICE IN THE NEAR EAST

The area of the ancient Near East included in this study is comprised of Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria and Mitanni, stretching to the coast at Ugarit, but does not include the land occupied by the Hittites in modern Turkey, modern Israel and the Palestine coast, or ancient Egypt. The area roughly corresponds to that of the Akkadian empire at its greatest extent (Map 3). The evidence of this chapter comes from the ‘civilisations’ of the Sumerians, the Akkadians, the Babylonians, the Kassites, the Assyrians, the Hurrians and the Mitanni. The time period is roughly from 3000 BC (the beginning of the Early Dynastic period) to 1100 BC (the end of the Bronze Age, Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian periods).<sup>85</sup> As suggested by the multiplicity

---

<sup>85</sup> I am using the Middle Chronology for the Near East throughout this thesis. Although it has been proved problematic, it is still the framework used by most scholars, and as such, I will follow the same. For a short discussion of chronology with further references, see Bienkowski and Millard 2000: 73-74.

of groups mentioned here, this period and geographical area by no means represent a single coherent system or civilisation. The evidence therefore varies greatly over time and space, because many different cultural groups appear over this period of 2000 years, and it is not always easy to tell them apart or identify their differences and similarities. This is often based on a lack of material available. Certain ‘cultures’ are moreover not very well known at all, and therefore often tend to be viewed as minor or secondary. The specific geographical area and civilisations have been chosen because they do display some similarities, especially concerning the topic of this study. When differences appear that seem to be related to one or several specific cultures, they are noted. It could be argued that the areas of the Levant, Egypt and Anatolia would also be relevant to this study. This is indeed the case, and evidence from these areas would undoubtedly shed more light on sacrificial practice. However, I have had to make some limits, and as the cultures of these areas are usually seen as significantly separate from the larger area of Mesopotamia, I have not included them here.

The chapter is divided into sections, similar, though not identical to those in the previous chapter. The evidence is discussed in each section according to the three types of material – archaeological, iconographic and textual – and the results for each are briefly discussed at the end of each section. Not all sections have material from all types of evidence. When this is the case, the sub-section is left out, or possible/doubtful material is examined. When relevant, the sections include not only a discussion of the ancient evidence, but also of modern approaches to and interpretations of the evidence. It is worth repeating here that almost all the material used comes from what might be termed ‘elite’ contexts; that is, contexts that are usually considered to be controlled by or used mainly by the wealthier members of a community – large tombs, palaces and temples, for example.

The problems with the evidence are similar to those already encountered for the Aegean – this is particularly the case with archaeological material, where the complete lack of or inadequate recording of animal bones causes great trouble when interpreting the evidence. For the Near East, we are lucky in that there is a large amount of textual



material, mostly in the form of clay tablets, but also inscriptions on statues, seals and other objects. This provides a great deal of information, including personal names, and actual historical figures and events, as well as social organisation. In a sense this is a mixed blessing, because textual material is in many ways easier to work with, and can give very specific information that is not easily accessible in archaeology and iconography. This tends, however, to mean that textual material is prioritised above other kinds of evidence, with these being treated, at best, as supplementary, or at worst ignored or rejected (especially if it is contradictory or difficult to interpret) (e.g. Bottéro 2001: 21, Postgate 1994). Another tendency in Near Eastern scholarship, often closely related to textual studies, is to view the evidence in terms of or in comparison to the Bible. This is perhaps understandable to a large extent, but it often means that a site or a text is not interpreted in its own right and in its own context. Lastly, the civilisations of the ancient Near East were organised in such a manner that there did not appear to be any strict division of religious and secular spheres of society, certainly not as we are used to in contemporary Western culture. In the ancient Near East, all areas of society were heavily imbued with religion, and areas which we usually consider religious similarly had ‘secular’ functions – temples, for example, were not only places of worship, they were also economic and industrial centres. As will be seen throughout, the consequence is that it can at times be difficult to decide how to categorise certain types of material, and to determine whether its context is relevant to the present study.

The evidence pertaining to sacrifice not only suggests many different types of sacrifice taking place for a variety of reasons and occasions, but these different types may to some extent be dependent on the type of evidence, as well as the period or place it derives from. Thus, to give just one example: an extremely common theme on cylinder seals of the Akkadian and Old Babylonian periods, usually known as a ‘presentation scene’ in English, is virtually non-existent in other periods, mainly found in southern Mesopotamia and exclusively depicted on cylinder seals. We appear to know nothing about this from other sources. Possible interpretations of this scene are discussed below in the relevant section, but with this type of evidence it remains unclear whether or not its absence in other sources and periods is a clear indication that this kind of

sacrifice only took place in the Akkadian and Old Babylonian periods. Furthermore, it should always be kept in mind that a large majority of the material originates from contexts which are associated with higher levels of society (temples, palaces and wealthy graves), meaning that the conclusions reached should only be applied to these limited areas, and that at present we have little knowledge about the practice of sacrifice in any other context of society at the time.

This chapter deals with this great variety of material from Near Eastern contexts. The material in question is far too vast to be discussed comprehensively, but representative samples of each section are presented. The illustrations, tables and appendices should function not only as references throughout the text, but as material evidence which can be examined on its own. I start by discussing animal sacrifice in connection with burials – firstly, that of parts of animals and secondly that of complete or nearly complete animal skeletons. The next section deals with sacrificial space, which for the Near East mainly consists of temples, although there are a few other possible examples; this is followed by an examination of various sacrificial activities, for example those associated with feasting and festivals. After this comes a section specifically dedicated to iconography of sacrifice which does not seem to have equivalent evidence in the textual or archaeological records. Foundation deposits with animal sacrifice follow, and lastly a discussion of human sacrifice. Before anything else, however, a discussion of the terminology of ‘sacrifice’ specifically in the Near East is in order.

### **‘Sacrifice’ in the ancient Near East**

As has already been noted numerous times, the definition of the word ‘sacrifice’ is not simple, and its meaning in modern literature is highly fluid. Its use in Near Eastern scholarship is no exception to this general observation. Again, we encounter the problem of what is meant by ‘sacrifice’, and that other commonly used, but even more vague word ‘offering’. Very few authors elaborate on their use of either of these words, and in a good few cases it would seem that a sacrifice does not necessarily include an animal, and that an offering can indeed include an animal. For example, in

one of the best texts for defining Near Eastern symbols and concepts, Green and Black's *Gods, demons and symbols of ancient Mesopotamia*, sacrifice is in one place neatly differentiated from 'offering' as referring "especially to the killing of an animal", 1992: 158). However, in the entry on animal sacrifice, sacrifice is defined as "a religious rite by which an object, animal or person is offered to a divinity in an attempt to establish, maintain or restore a satisfactory relationship of the individual, group of individuals or the community in general to that god" (1992: 30). There is no specific entry for 'offering', but it becomes clear from the above and following remarks, "[sacrifice] has commonly taken the form of the ritual slaughter and offering of animal life" that the words 'sacrifice' and 'offering' are used interchangeably. It must therefore be kept in mind that in reading any modern work about Near Eastern sacrifice in particular that (unless qualified with words like 'animal' or 'blood') when these words are used, they may or may not refer to a process which includes the killing of an animal.

In ancient texts from the Near East, we may note that there is not one simple or single term which is the exact equivalent of 'sacrifice'. Many different words are translated into 'sacrifice' or 'offering', and this is perhaps the best illustration of the fact that 'sacrifice' involves a great variety of activities. The most general term for sacrifice is in Sumerian *siskur*, in Akkadian *niqû*, and in Ugaritic *dbḥ* (see entries in *CAD*, *RIA* 10: 100, Limet 1993 and Pardee 2002). They are all quite broad concepts, and they often include non-animate offerings. Limet analyses the ways in which *siskur* is used in context and compared to other words of similar meaning – and some of these are 'something said', 'something presented', 'something offered', 'an integral group of rites' (consisting of the sacrificial 'victim', speech, salutation and prayer), 'something prepared correctly', 'part of an economic exchange system' and 'act of homage' (Limet 1993: 244-252). The Ugaritic *dbḥ* is perhaps slightly less broad – Pardee notes that "it is clear that DBḤ designated both the act of sacrifice and the feast that accompanied the offering to the deity; etymologically, DBḤ expresses the cutting of the throat of the sacrificial beast" (Pardee 2002: 273).

Many more terms are used in different contexts involving the killing of an animal translated as ‘sacrifice’ or ‘offering’. *Sattukku* is another seemingly very general term for sacrifice; *CAD* calls it ‘food allowance, regular offering’. Others include *ki.a.nag* and *kispum* (Sumerian and Akkadian), *pgr* perhaps being the Ugaritic equivalent. They are usually translated as ‘mortuary sacrifice’ (*CAD*, Tsukimoto 1985, Pardee 2002: 270). Yet more remain largely enigmatic, though indications can again be deduced from contexts and etymology.

*kubātu* – ‘honours’ (*CAD*)

*teslītu* – ‘sacrifice’, from *šalû* (Limet 1993: 243)

*ginû* - ‘the regular monthly or daily temple sacrifice’, ‘dues’ (*CAD*; Prince 1907: 57)

*zību* - ‘offerings of any kind at all’, ‘food offering’ (*CAD*; Prince 1907: 58)

*kitrûbu* - ‘gift, sacrifice,’ from *karābu* (‘prayer’, ‘blessing’) (*CAD*, Prince 1907: 58)

*nidbû* - ‘freewill offering,’ occasionally used as a synonym of *sattukku* (Prince 1907: 58)

*nindabû* - ‘the regular offering due a divinity, especially a goddess’, ‘cereal offering’, ‘food offering’, ‘provisions’ (*CAD*; Prince 1907: 58)

*qīštu* - ‘gift’, ‘present,’ used frequently of offerings to temples, ‘votive offering’, ‘compensation’ (*CAD*, Prince 1907: 60)

*tamqêti* – ‘sacrifice’ (Prince 1907: 61)

*qarābu* – lit. “to bring near [the sacrificial animal, or sacrifice of any other kind] (namely: to the deity)” (Bravmann 1977: 465)

*šrp* – ‘burnt offering’, from ‘to burn’ (Pardee 2002: 267)

*‘rb* – ‘entry offering’; passage of divinity into new environment (Pardee 2002: 268)

*‘šr* – cultic feast to deity (Pardee 2002: 268)

*šlmm* – ‘peace offering’, ‘sacrifice (productive) of well-being’ (Pardee 2002: 271)

*šnpt* – ‘presentation offering’, unknown function (Pardee 2002: 271)

*rmšt* – ‘roast offering’, unknown function (Pardee 2002: 271)

*t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice* – ‘sacrifice’, unknown function, possibly expiatory (Pardee 2002: 272)

*tzg-sacrifice* – ‘sacrifice’, unknown function, Hurrian origin (Pardee 2002: 273)

These many terms emphasise the great variety of what is here united under the category of ‘sacrifice’ (and the unstable nature of it) – it is a variety in context, the way the sacrifice is carried out, the occasions – although the exact meaning of the terms as understood by the people of the ancient Near East is not known to us. As Limet aptly formulates it with reference to *siskur*, but it seems very fitting to ‘sacrifice’ in general: it is “une cérémonie culturelle fort fréquente, presque banale, mais difficile à définir parce qu’elle est polymorphe” (Limet 1993: 255)<sup>86</sup>.

## **Sacrifice and burials**

Animal remains are sometimes found in funerary contexts. At times, the remains constitute whole or almost whole skeletons; these are almost all equids of some kind, and will be discussed in a separate section below. More often, animal remains in funerary contexts only include parts of the animal, or scattered animal bones. In this section, the evidence for sacrifice in association with burials and the dead is examined, along with a discussion of how such evidence has been regarded by modern scholars.

---

<sup>86</sup> Prince expresses something very similar concerning the terminology of sacrifice: “It is a curious fact that although the Hebrews, and probably also the Assyro-Babylonians, had developed an elaborate system of various sorts of offerings, the vocabulary in both languages is not always distinctive to denote these different rites. ... It will be evident, therefore, owing to this very vagueness, that a more certain knowledge regarding these sacrificial rites can only be obtained by a more extended study of ritual texts. Context in this investigation is really more important than philology” (Prince 1907: 55-56).

*Archaeological material* (Appendix F and Figure 4)

The archaeological evidence for the practice of including animal bones in burials comes from 116 burials spread over 25 sites (see Appendix F). These are widely dispersed in time and space within the Near East and the Bronze Age – geographically, the sites cover most of the area investigated, with a roughly equal number of sites from the northern and southern areas of the Near East. There are examples from throughout the Bronze Age (though this does not necessarily prove a continuous practice, since there are also significant gaps), but the majority of the burials come from the second half of the third millennium. Unfortunately, though animal bones are reported from burials, the kind of animal is not always reported. However, by far the most commonly found animal bones come from sheep or goats<sup>87</sup> - of the 116 burials, 63 contain remains of sheep/goat. This number far exceeds that of the bones from the second-most common animal, that of equids, which is recorded from 27 burials, and closely followed by cattle, with 25 instances (though it should be noted that small animals such as fish and birds may more easily escape the attention or fancy of the excavator and thus not be recorded). Other animal bones more rarely mentioned include those of birds, fish, dogs, hares, gazelles, frogs, weasels and rodents (the last probably not representing a deliberate offering). There are very few instances where the types of bones found are recorded, so it is not possible to base interpretation on what exact parts of the animal were included. Figure 4 provides an overview of the kind of animal bones found in burials.

The quantity of animal bones ranges from a very few bones to large amounts – these large amounts can either be from single events or accumulated over a longer period of

---

<sup>87</sup> In some cases they are recorded as sheep/goat, in a few burials only ‘goat’ is recorded, but in the great majority they are ‘sheep’. As in the previous chapter, due to identification difficulties, I will not here make a distinction between these two animals. This would not be done if it was not for the fact that there seems to be no difference in the way the remains of the two animals are placed within the burials, though this may be difficult to gauge precisely because they are difficult to distinguish. That the two animals did in fact have different roles may be guessed by the fact that the most common animal used for extispicy was the sheep, while the animal almost always shown in ‘presentation scenes’ on cylinder seals was the goat. These will be discussed in the relevant sections below.

time. The large amounts of animal bones in some of the Ur tombs (F99, F102, F104, F115 and F116) come from single events, connected with the burial of the main person in each tomb. At the much later Hurrian site of Qatna (c. 1340 BC), a burial complex contained large amounts of animal bones (not further identified) and dining paraphernalia for many people, in parts of the complex that appear to have been accessed regularly (F56). Biomolecular analysis of some of the about 200 vessels from within the tomb also found that many of them contained degraded animal fat (Mukherjee *et al.* 2007).

The problems here are very similar to those for the Aegean, with animal bones often simply not being collected and/or reported, especially since many of the excavations were done at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and bones may often only be reported if they represent a whole animal, and even more likely so if this is a large and evocative animal like an equid. Even when the bones are reported, they are not always examined by an expert, which results in dubious or non-specific identification of the osteological material – the same thing happens to some extent for human remains, where the lack of analysis providing information about gender and age is very unfortunate.

The cases of burials with animal bones that do not represent a whole animal do not tend to receive much attention when reported as part of the burials – in many instances they are simply mentioned without further comment. When comments do arise, they are usually a half-sentence noting the bones as being part of the grave ‘offerings’, with no explanation of what that entails (this is for example the case with Tell es-Sweyhat Tomb 5, Abu Salabikh Graves 38, 27 and 82, Tell Razuk Burial 7 and Tell Arbid Grave 16). This is at times slightly elaborated by adding ‘food’ or ‘meat’ in front of ‘offering’ (as at Tell Madhhur Graves 7D and 6G, Abu Salabikh Graves 176/183 and 73 and Tell Banat Tomb 1). Such notes at least clearly state what is thought to be the role of the animal bones in these burials. The interpretation of the bones as remains of food is supported by cases where animal bones are found in or on vessels, which is not uncommon (of the 116 burials, there are 22 recorded examples of this, with many more recording the bones as next to vessels or mixed with pottery sherds). Since the

bones are understood as an ‘offering’ they are presumably not believed to be eaten by the participants of the funeral (though in some cases, the number of bowls and associated bones may belong to the leftovers of funeral feasting – see the section on feasting), but who are they offered to and what is the recipient expected to do with it? Pottery for drinking and eating is standard in many burials, and certainly always appears in richer ones. It is still unclear, though, what kind of ‘meal’ the meat-offering represented by the animal bones includes – is the meat for the dead at the time of burial, for a journey after death, for consumption in the afterlife, gifts for deities of the netherworld or for the ancestors in general?

Andrew C. Cohen is one of the few writers who attempts to provide some clarity on the subject through a systematic study of the vessel types found in the Ur graves. He uses three (not necessarily exclusive) categories of vessels according to function: those used for everyday consumption (that is, in the context of the graves, of food in the netherworld), those for feasting (this could be either at the time of burial, or for the deceased to host a feast in the netherworld) and those for travelling (Cohen 2005: 82-88). Using this approach, he discovered no vessels like those actually used for travelling, some graves with vessels for everyday consumption, and the ‘royal’ tombs mainly outfitted for feasting, but in this world rather than the netherworld, because none of the graves “had the full complement of vessels required to prepare, serve, and consume a feast” (Cohen 2005: 92). If the categories used are reliable, such an approach could turn out to be very useful at other sites as well. However, such categories cannot avoid some level of arbitrariness – as Cohen himself notes, many vessels have multiple purposes (Cohen 2005: 84), and although it may largely be the case, we cannot be certain that in sepulchral contexts, the function remains the same as might be expected elsewhere. A journey to the netherworld, for example, may not require the same types of vessels that journeys in life do. It is, however, of great interest that in a general sense it seems that at least the rich tombs indicate that a feast,



in which the deceased may have been perceived as participating, took place at the time of burial.<sup>88</sup>

This may be the case at single events such as at many of the Ur tombs, but there are also instances where people would return to a tomb. This is the case at the tomb complex of Qatna, where two cult statues with bowls placed in front, the extensive dining paraphernalia and animal bones all testify to feasting activities within the complex. The excavator links this evidence with a practice known from textual sources as *kispum* (Pfälzner 2007: 55-60), the nature of which will be discussed below. Most other tombs do not seem to have been directly opened and accessed in the manner of the Qatna tomb complex, but since it is common practice in Mesopotamia to bury the dead underneath private houses (as for example at Ur – see e.g. Woolley 1982: 179-213 and Woolley and Mallowan 1976, and Ugarit – see *Syria* reports by Schaeffer 1931-1972), and to provide for them there, it is likely that the provisions would at least at times, and for those who could afford it, include meat offerings. There is not, however, actual archaeological evidence of this,<sup>89</sup> as would also be unlikely, since any remaining animal bones left in the house would either be removed by its inhabitants, or interpreted as normal food remains by the excavator. For some of the more monumental tombs, it is also possible that *kispum* rituals were performed near, but not inside them.

As in the Aegean, there appears to be a tendency in Near Eastern scholarship to believe that sacrificed animals could not be eaten, and that sacrifice requires a whole animal. Such assumptions are often unstated and can in many cases only be suspected;

---

<sup>88</sup> Another problem with the method is that, as with feasting in general, it may be very difficult to identify a small feast, either in the sense that only a few people participate or in the sense that it was not as elaborate or rich, or indeed both. Such may in particular have been the case with poorer tombs, and the distinction between everyday consumption and a feast may here be difficult to make.

<sup>89</sup> One of the residential tombs at Ugarit does have animal bones associated with it (F92), but they come from an apparently closed deposit placed in front of the door, not suggestive of repeated access and feasting.

one example of this criterion being used implicitly comes from Woolley, who in regard to the material in Ur PG 1400 notes that,

The animal bones did not seem to represent a complete beast *such as would imply a sacrifice* in the grave but rather a collection of joints prepared for food; judging by analogy of other graves in which clay saucers and dishes are found containing one or two bones obviously from a portion of cooked meat, this also might be the piled remains of a funeral feast (Woolley 1934: 176, my emphasis).

On present evidence, it is simply not possible to make such a statement. Although the precise relationship between whole sacrificial animals found in graves and elsewhere and parts of animals is uncertain, it is unwise to assume that if an animal was eaten it could not have been sacrificed. We have little clear evidence indicating what happened to the remains of animals sacrificed for example for divination (though the tablet quoted in the section on divination notes that at least part of the animal was cooked), and even less for exactly how an animal destined for food was slaughtered (i.e. if it was ritually slaughtered), but there is no reason to think that a sacrificed animal could not be eaten. The assumption that a sacrifice must include a whole animal is perhaps linked to western / Christian beliefs that a sacrifice must entail a loss or destruction of the given object and may therefore not be of further use to the donor. Such assumptions should not be projected onto the people of the ancient Near East without firm evidence.

That animal bones in graves were not always primarily perceived as a food item is suggested in a few cases where the type of bone and its context indicate a different, highly symbolic function (and this again suggest a more complex animal-human relation than simply animals as practical commodities passively used by humans). One such example comes from Tell es-Sweyhat Tomb 5 (dated towards the end of the third millennium), where bird eggs were set in the eye sockets of the skull of a sheep or goat, and another sheep/goat skull was placed in the middle of the tomb chamber surrounded by four stones (F68). The tomb was used repeatedly, and these finds may

be further support for a cult of the dead in the northern part of the area. At Abu Salabikh, several graves contained gazelle horn cores (F3 and F5), in one case with part of the skull still attached (F3), interpreted as having 'symbolic' meaning (Postgate 1980: 75). In these cases, there is, as will be seen at Tell umm el-Marra, an emphasis on the skull of the animal. If they work as markers of sacred space, it is not a matter of continued conspicuous display (beyond the funeral itself), as they are all hidden from direct, exterior views. They may, however, be part of processes of social remembering and forgetting, as will be discussed in connection with foundation deposits in Chapter 4.

### *Iconographic material*

Unfortunately, the iconographic evidence does not offer any insight into any kind of rituals connected with burials. This is despite burials clearly involving significant activities and being displays invested with significant wealth, material and ideology (some of the most obvious examples coming from Ur and Tell umm el-Marra). In many cases they must have been an important part of the city in which they were located. The fact that such a central element of a city and its activities is only slightly reflected in one medium (tablets) and not at all in another should keep us alert that some practices can be very difficult to detect, and that the evidence itself does not provide an even reflection of reality. A possibility which should be noted, however, is that these lavish burials actually are depicted in the iconography, but that we have so far been unable to detect them. The prominent 'banquet scene' on seals and votive plaques of the Early Dynastic periods could, for example, depict banquets associated with major funerals. Some support for this is suggested by Cohen, who documents an exact match of the vessels found in the tombs with those shown on banquet scenes – bowls, drinking vessels, necked pots and spouted vessels (Cohen 2005: 90). Many of the seals depicting banquet scenes were also found in funerary contexts (H1-H6 and H9-H11).

*Textual material and kispum*

Sacrifice in connection with the dead is mentioned in several contexts in textual sources. Most of these texts concern rites involving the dead or the netherworld,<sup>90</sup> sometimes as part of a larger festival. That is, they involve a kind of continued worship or attention to the deceased, both individually and as a general group. Nielsen defines ancestor cults as “religious practices that allow the continued participation of deceased individuals in the affairs of the living” (Nielsen 2008: 210). This kind of interdependence and active interaction between living and dead seems particularly applicable to the material.

Two very interesting Old Babylonian tablets from Mari record what is translated as ‘mortuary sacrifice’:

Moreover, the day I sent this tablet of mine to my lord, [an ec]static of Dagan came and addressed me as follows: “The god sent [me]. Hurry, write to the ki[ng] that they are to offer the mortuary-sacrifices for the sha[de] of Yahdun-Li[m].” This is what this ecstatic said to me, and I have therefore written to my lord. Let my lord do what pleases him.

(From the governor of Terqa to Zimri-Lim: J13)

and

[The day I sent th]is tablet of mine [to] my lord, [.. the *ecstatic* o]f Dagan ad[dressed me] as follows: “Dagan se[nt me] concerning the performance of the sacrifice [*for the dead*]. Write to your lord that in the coming month, on the fourteenth day, the sacrifice *for the*

---

<sup>90</sup> For the Near East, we are on more stable ground than in the Aegean when talking about an ‘underworld’ or ‘netherworld’, since these are actually mentioned in texts, and even attributed with a deity. In contrast, any ideas of an underworld or afterlife in the Aegean remain conjectural.

*dead* is to be performed. Under no circumstances are they to omit this sacrifice.” This is what this man said to me. I now hereby write to my lord. May my lord do what in accordance with his deliberation pleases him.

(From the governor of Terqa to Zimri-Lim: J10)

In the first instance, the sacrifices are specifically addressed to Yahdun-Lim, whereas in the second text it is ‘the dead’ as a general entity (although it is in this text reconstructed). Moreover, it is clear that the rituals required are to take place long after the actual burial. The word being used in these tablets is a form of ‘kispum’. In *CAD*, it is translated as ‘funerary offering’ (vol. 8: 425), and the examples given show that it does not have to include sacrificial animals, and not all the items ‘offered’ are even food or drink.

The words *kispum* and its Sumerian equivalent, ‘ki.a.nag’, have also been translated as ‘Totenpflege’, ‘Totenklage’, ‘Totenzeremonie’, ‘Totenopfer’, ‘Toten/Grab-beigabe’, ‘Totenritus’, ‘Grab’, ‘Totenkult’, ‘Unterwelt’ and ‘ein heiliger Ort’ (Tsukimoto 1985: 23-38).<sup>91</sup> The variations reflect not only a possible change in meaning through time and from Sumerian to Akkadian, but also the different contexts in which the words are found, indicating once again the span of meaning of a word used by the people of the ancient Near East. In the above examples, *kispum* is a specific and apparently regular ritual. In another tablet from Mari, *kispum*, offered to Sargon and Naram-Sin, is part of a larger sequence of events which includes sacrifices of sheep, a meal, sacrifices of the king, the temple of Dagan and the sacrifice of a sheep to the cult statues (*lamassatum*) of Sargon and Naram-Sin (J44). *Kispum* is differentiated from the other types of ‘sacrifice’, which in this text are a form of *niqû*.

---

<sup>91</sup> Roughly translated as ‘care of the dead’, ‘mourning (of) the dead’, ‘ceremony of the dead’, ‘offering to the dead’, ‘offering the dead / grave offering’, ‘ritual of the dead’, ‘grave’, ‘cult of the dead’, ‘underworld’, and ‘a sacred place’.

At the ‘Festival of Baba’ at Lagash, c. 2300 BC, the cult of the dead was a major theme, and the festival included three preliminary days of offerings to royal ancestors:

Ovine offerings on the first day at the *ki-gú-ka* for the deceased governor, Enentarzi, on the second day at the *ki-a-nag* for Enentarzi and at the *é-ki-SÌL-la* for Dudu, the chief administrator of the temple of Ningirsu, and on the third day at the *gú-šu-RIN-na* for Enentarzi (Cohen 1993: 54).

Here, *ki.a.nag* appears to be either a place or an event – another tablet from Lagash and a tablet from Ur record something very similar (J73 and J84). The second Lagash tablet involves a very elaborate festival, and again, the *ki.a.nag* (‘funerary shrines of Lagash’) is only one small part of a long sequence of events.<sup>92</sup> The practice may also be seen at a building at Ur known as the *giparu* (G31), a residence and sanctuary complex of the *entu* priestess, which contained burials of deceased *entus* in Court C7 (Weadock 1975: 109-110). In the Isin-Larsa period, these dead *entus* received offerings for at least as long as 50 years after their death, as documented by lists of offerings of cheese, butter and dates (Weadock 1975: 104).

A similar practice, possibly a continuation of the practices recorded in Mari and elsewhere, is indicated by two stelai from 13<sup>th</sup> century Ugarit:

Sacred stele that Tarriyelli

offered to Dagan: mortuary sacrifice;

and a bull for food. (J58)

and

---

<sup>92</sup> Further discussion of the cult of the dead as part of or possible themes of festivals, such as the *ne-IZI-gar* festival, the *duku* festival (associated with the Sacred Mound), *abû* festival and the *akitu* festival, can be found in Cohen 1993: 100-104, 106-112, 261, 391-392, 456-462 and Fleming 2000: 184-189. Texts involving these festivals include J2, J28, J31, J40, J46, J47, J50, J77 and J83.

Mortuary sacrifice that Uzzinu  
offered to Dagan his lord;  
and a bull with the plow (J59)

The Ugaritic word translated here as mortuary sacrifice is *pgr*, apparently “a rite in honour of the deceased members of the royal line in which all members of the royal family were required to participate” (Pardee 2002: 123). Interestingly, though, the sacrifices are here made to Dagan, who is the deity concerned with the mortuary sacrifices in the Mari tablets as well, but not in fact the one they were directed at. Again, the sacrifice is part of other rituals, including a meal – a ‘bull for food’. Pardee suggests that the similarity of the two compositions can be taken as meaning the ‘bull with the plow’ was also destined for consumption at the accompanying feast (Pardee 2002: 125).

It is sometimes said, as in the above quote, that *kispum* and its variations constituted a royal activity. From the examples known and given here, it is easy to see how such a conclusion might be reached, since they all concern either members of the royal family, a governor and a temple administrator. Although all the examples concern royal or high-standing individuals, there is nothing in the texts that suggests that *kispum* was an inherently and exclusively royal practice, and it should be remembered that the documents are from a ‘royal’ context, hence recording royal activity. As mentioned previously, evidence of repeated returns to a tomb and feasting paraphernalia may be the archaeological equivalent of *kispum*, although it is not possible to know precisely what name the people of the ancient Near East gave to that specific activity.

Ugarit also provides the only text referring to the actual funeral ritual, rather than practices relating to later activities concerning the dead.<sup>93</sup> The text relates how the shades of the netherworld (the *Rapa'ūma*<sup>94</sup>) are summoned for the burial (which is at the same time the coronation of the new king), the dead king is mourned and sacrifices are part of the ritual:

1. Document of the sacrificial liturgy of the Shades.
2. You have been called. O *Rapa'ūma* of the Earth.
3. You have been summoned, O Assembly of *Didānu*;
4. 'ULKN the *Rapa'u* has been called,
5. TRMN the *Rapa'u* has been called,
6. SDN-*wa*-RDN has been called,
7. TR 'LLMN has been called.
8. They have called the Ancient *Rapa'ūma*.
9. You have been called. O *Rapa'ūma* of the Earth.
10. You have been summoned, O Assembly of *Didānu*;
11. King 'Ammittamru has been called,
12. King *Niqmaddu* has been called as well.
13. O Throne of *Niqmaddu*, be bewept,
14. And may tears be shed over the footstool of his feet.
15. Before him they must bewep the king's table,

---

<sup>93</sup> The ones that include equids will be discussed in the section below.

<sup>94</sup> For discussions about how to translate this term see Schmidt 2000: 238 and Pardee 2002: 86. I have here followed Pardee's translation.



16. Each must swallow down his tears:
17. Desolation and desolation of desolations!
18. Be hot, O *Šapšu*,
- Yea, be hot, O Great Light.
- On high *Šapšu* cries out:
20. After your lords, from the throne,
21. After your lords descend into the earth,
22. Into the earth descend and lower yourself into the dust:
23. Under SDN-*wa*-RDN,
24. Under TR 'LLMN,
- Under the Ancient *Rapa'ūma*;
25. Under King '*Ammittamru*,
26. Under King *Niqmaddu* as well.
27. Once and perform the t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice,
- Twice and perform the t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice,
28. Thrice and perform the t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice,
- Four times and perform the t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice,
29. Five times and perform the t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice,
- Six times and perform the t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice,
30. Seven times and perform the t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice.
31. You shall present bird(s) of well-being:
32. Well-being for '*Ammurāpi*', well-being for his house;
33. Well-being for *Tarriyelli*, well-being for her house;

34. Well-being for Ugarit, well-being for her gates.

(J70)

It is not known exactly what a ‘t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice’ is – Pardee notes that its etymology is “(sacrificial) gift” and that its function may be expiatory (Pardee 2002: 272). It is in any case clear that the ritual included what was referred to as two different kinds of sacrifice – the ‘t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice’ and the ‘well-being’ sacrifice of bird(s). Since the ‘t<sup>c</sup>-sacrifice’ is not further specified, we cannot in this case know if it involved animals as well.

Clearly burials and the space associated with tombs were the focus of extensive religious and social activities throughout the area and period in question, and sacrifice was an important part of these activities at many different stages. That is, animal bones were deposited in tombs at the time of burial and in some cases repeatedly afterwards. These bones may in themselves represent a range of sacrificial activities. Although we are not able to establish the exact meaning for the ancient people of these variations, we can as far as possible identify these differences and the wider rituals of which they form a part. The evidence for sacrifice at burials mostly comes from archaeological evidence, but textual records confirm the great importance attributed to burials and the dead in a more general sense, for example as social actors in the lives of the living and as part of or as the main theme of festivals. Matthiae goes as far as to suggest that three of the large temples at Ebla were in fact part of the cult of the dead, and closely related to the necropolis there (1984: 30). As far as can be discerned, iconographic data does not contribute to the subject, but it is possible that the so-called ‘banquet scenes’ in some cases depict funeral feasts.

## **Burials with complete animal skeletons**

Some animal bones found in tombs represent whole animals, and these are most often equids, though other animals can also appear like this. The evidence for whole animal skeletons (or whole with the exception of the skull) is discussed here.

### *Archaeological material*

Equid burials in the Near East suggest a similar trend as that which has been discussed for the Aegean. However, all the examples found so far come from the second half of the third millennium, dating from ED II to the Old Akkadian period, so roughly a millennium earlier than those in the Aegean. Further similarities and differences will be explored in the final chapter, and this section will investigate the Near Eastern evidence on its own. The 27 burials containing equid remains come from 12 different sites, eight of which are located in southern Mesopotamia. As will be seen, the northern examples appear to exhibit notable differences from those in the south, though they occur during the same periods. The equid burials are distinct because they usually contain whole animals, which suggests that their significance is not the same as that for the single or scattered bones of most other animals. Although equids are not the only animal found whole, they are by far the most common. In the few cases where scattered or single equid bones have been found, they are either in a secondary context (as in the White Monument of Tell Banat) or the graves have been disturbed, so that they could have been buried whole initially.

The high status of the humans in these burials is supported by the very rich finds in most of them, along with the extensive and impressive architecture of the tombs. The equids themselves appear to have been objects of wealth, since textual evidence records the prices of these animals as particularly high. Zarins believes that hybrid animals were especially expensive, noting the high price of a mule at four minas of silver (or 120 shekels), as well as a single instance of one costing 300 shekels (Zarins 1986: 185-186). The association of these burials with wealthy members of society

does not, however, prove that their human inhabitants were royal. This is even the case for Ur, where the royalty of the ‘royal’ graves has been questioned (Green 1975: 50-53).

The osteological data for these burials is not particularly helpful, as in many cases the species has not been identified or the remains were in too poor a condition to be identified. Further difficulties arise because certain species and hybrids are not easily distinguishable. However, the available data suggests that the types of equid used in these burials were either donkeys (*E. asinus*), onagers (*E. hemionus*), or hybrids of these. There are no recorded instances of horses, though, as pointed out, not all of the burials have this data available. There is almost no information about the gender of the equids – only from one site is this reported, at Halawa H-70, where two female and one male *E. asinus* were discovered (F47). Thus it is not possible archaeologically to substantiate any preference in terms of gender of the equids. Some explanations for the lack of horses and the prevalence of donkeys and onagers may, however, be hinted at in a document from Mari, which suggests that mules are more suitable for the king (here Zimri-Lim) than horses,

[Verily] you are the king of the Haneans, [but] secondly you are the king of the Akkadians! [My lord] should not ride a horse. Let my [lord] ride in a chariot or on a mule and he will thereby honor his royal head! (*ARM VI 76: 20-25*, Malamat 1987: 33).

It would seem, then, that at least the riding of horses was not considered suitable practice for royalty, though it is unclear if it would be acceptable for the chariot to be drawn by horses. It should be noted that this document is a rarity, and the attitude expressed may not be general, or indeed apply in the period to which most of the equid burials date (that is, several centuries earlier). The importance of donkeys may also be reflected in their use as sacrificial animals for sealing treaties, as will be explored in a later section.

Not much is written or said about equid burials by way of interpreting or attempting to understand what practice they are part of or signify. Usually it is simply thought that

they are part of the deceased's court or property, and are killed to go with him or her to the next world and there serve the same purpose as they did in life, with no discussion of what this purpose might have been (e.g. Orthmann 1981: 89). For the southern examples in particular, this explanation does seem satisfactory, because the equids appear to be part of an assemblage of grave goods which could represent the property of a living person (though still not explaining precisely what the equids' role would have been, even in life). As will be seen, the northern cases may indicate a different practice where such an interpretation is no longer adequate.

A similar issue is at hand regarding the human remains, which is significant because, as in the Aegean, some of these burials have been interpreted as warrior graves, with a man and his equid or team of equids (e.g. Philip 1995: 140, defining warrior burials as "burials interred with artefacts whose design indicates 'weapon' as their primary function" and Gibson *et al.* 1981: 74). This may explain some of the burials. However, out of the 19 burials containing whole equids, only one can be securely associated with an adult male (assuming that the warrior is male). In many cases, the equids were associated with several human skeletons, of which it has generally not been possible to determine which one (if only one) the equid remains belong to, or the human remains are very scattered and/or disturbed, also making it impossible to determine the relationship. In some cases, it is also not clear if the human remains have actually been examined to determine gender, or if they are assumed to be male precisely because of the presence of the equid (e.g. Al Hiba). In one case, at Nippur, the equid is thought to belong to a male human skeleton, although a female was found in closer proximity to and in the same layer as the equid (although both of these appear to be identified based on grave goods rather than osteological remains, creating a self-sustaining circular argument – F54). Another crucial part of the argument associating equids with male warriors is the presence of weapons in these burials - of the 19 burials with whole equid skeletons, seven contain weapons (F47, F53, F54, F70, F72, F73 and F86). This does not include implements which would normally be classed as tools rather than weapons, for example axes. However, two of these burials only contained one dagger (F53 and F86), which could have functioned more as a tool, or possibly as an item usually associated with men, but on its own it is hardly enough to identify a warrior.

Further, the human remains have not been identified (F70), are assumed to be male because of the finds (F54 and F73) or the equid remains cannot be securely associated with a specific human skeleton (F47, F53 and F86). Tomb 5G at Tell Maddhur is the only example where a man is clearly associated with an equid and weapons (F72). The weapons consist of a dagger, five bronze arrowheads and three blades; only the dagger was found with the human skeleton – the rest were found in the fill of the tomb (Killick and Roaf 1979: 540).

Another reason for interpreting the equids as related to warfare is the finds of chariots or other wheeled vehicles with the equids, as if they were placed in the grave harnessed in front of their chariot. Evidence of such vehicles has been found at Kish, possibly at al-'Usiyah, and is suspected at Tell Maddhur Tomb 5G, Tell Razuk Burial 12 and Abu Salabikh Grave 162 (F16, F72 and F73). Evidence of wheeled vehicles was also found at Ur, in the 'Royal Cemetery', but here the associated animals are believed to have been oxen (many were first identified as asses by the excavator, Leonard Woolley, but have later turned out to be bovids – Dyson 1960 and Zarins 1986: 166-168). This last instance may be another indication that if teams of equids along with a wheeled vehicle were buried in these graves, this may not be because of their specific use in war, as oxen are unlikely to have served such a purpose, although they could still have been used as draught animals, bringing provisions to the battlefield. Several authors have suggested that the presence of oxen rather than equids may indicate that they had a religious or ceremonial significance – as Dyson writes, oxen are usually shown as plough animals (Dyson 1960: 104), and Littauer *et al.* argue that ceremonial threshing is shown on several fourth millennium seals, and that the sledge in Pu-abi's tomb was used in such a context (Littauer *et al.* 1990: 19; see an example of an Akkadian seal with ox and plough in Moorey and Gurney 1978 no. 23).

To return to the instances at Kish, the only other place where remains of vehicles have been identified with certainty: unfortunately the records of the initial excavations are

very poor,<sup>95</sup> and it is not certain if the equids found were actually associated with the vehicles. Bovids were, as far as can be reconstructed, found closer to the vehicles and in more appropriate positions for having been yoked. This would certainly fit the evidence from Ur, to which the Kish material is chronologically closest, where it also seems that only bovids were harnessed in front of vehicles. That is of course not to say that chariots with teams of equids were not used for military purposes. However, they probably served other purposes as well, at a basic level for transport, and perhaps even traction in agriculture.<sup>96</sup> They may also have had some religious value, as they were used in processions (as seen on the standard of Ur), and as indicated by a few texts that record the sacrifice of donkeys in connection with treaties (examples in Pritchard 1958: 261 and Dalley 1984: 140-141).

Therefore, although it is possible that some of the equid burials represent a male ‘warrior’ with his equid or team of equids, the evidence does not at present support such an interpretation. It seems that the significance attributed to the equids does not rely on their function as military animals, or if so, this is only a symbolic function. Philip suggests that the gift of weapons for male burials is a way of displaying rank, status and connections, and that they are used to define “high status and ‘maleness’” (1995: 152). Thus, the remains of equids in burials may have had religious connotations, and it is possible that donkeys had a special association with royalty or wealth, and that they were therefore used in graves partly as markers of identity and status.

The northern cases, especially those at Tell umm el-Marra may reflect a different practice in which equids have a more explicitly symbolic role. Here, four ‘Installations’ (dated c. 2500-2200 BC), separate from the tombs themselves, but

---

<sup>95</sup> Several attempts have been made to rectify this situation, by Moorey (1978), Littauer and Crowell (1979) and Zarins (1986), but certain information could not be retrieved.

<sup>96</sup> Fleming also refers to a Hittite text in which a king is buried with everything needed for agricultural pursuits, including plough, horses and oxen (Fleming 2000: 155); here, it seems that practically the same material is interpreted in a significantly different manner, relating it to agriculture as opposed to warfare.

clearly part of the elite tomb complex, contained whole equid skeletons. Installation A was a rectangular room with mudbrick benches (F80) – it contained four equid skeletons and a skull and postcranial remains of a human infant, and in the upper debris was found sherds of a cylindrical ceramic stand, possibly used in connection with rituals at this installation (Schwartz *et al.* 2007: 625). Installation B was a subterranean mudbrick structure divided into two compartments (F81). Each of these contained an equid skeleton without their skull, but in a gap at the top of the western wall were placed two equid skulls and a spouted jar (it is not reported if these are thought to belong to the full skeletons within the compartments). Each of the compartments also contained three puppies, and the southern one a human infant; bones of sheep/goat and a third equid skull are also recorded from this installation. Another headless equid, this time standing upright, was found in Installation C, to which more equid bones and a dog skeleton found to the south and west at the same level probably also belong (F82). The D Installation was situated against the south wall of Tomb 1, and two equid skulls, along with a spouted jar and fragments of an infant skull were found against this wall. The installation contained at least six equids and five equid skulls (F83). Apart from in the designated ‘Installations’, an equid skeleton without the skull was found against the eastern wall of Tomb 1, and tombs 1, 3 and 4 contained scattered equid bones (F86-F88).

Unfortunately, the installations cannot be securely connected to any individual in the tombs; the tombs consist of several levels, each containing several human skeletons, both male and female (with a tendency for the female interments to be richer in terms of grave goods), and it has not been possible to establish with certainty which tomb each installation belongs to, let alone which level or human skeleton within a level. In fact, it may be that they are not simply associated with a single individual, but are part of some more elaborate ceremony and practice. The great importance placed on the skulls, along with finds of other animal and infant bones and ceramic vessels, point to some sort of ceremony taking place, with equids in particular playing an important role. This is hardly a case of sending them to their death with their master, but the exact meaning of the associated ritual remains elusive. There may be some relevance to the fact that the other bones belong primarily to infants and puppies – perhaps age is



of some significance. The equids could certainly once again have been a special signifier of identity, perhaps in a more general way – that is, as a symbol used by a group (the group using the space for burials) rather than by a single individual.

Two cases of donkey burials at Tell Brak, dated mid to late third millennium, also suggest a symbolic significance attached to these animals. A burial containing seven humans (which included one juvenile, two adults and, interestingly, three babies) had two or more donkeys placed on top of the human remains. These donkeys were apparently partly disarticulated, lacking their hind legs, and as at Tell umm el-Marra, their heads were separated from the body (F65). Further, donkeys were used as part of what the excavators have interpreted as a closing ceremony of a temple complex in Areas FS and SS. Here, six domestic donkeys, a dog, and scattered animal bones were found in several separate deposits, with whole donkey skeletons in four deposits (G22). The donkeys are both young and old animals, and both male and female, but unfortunately the remains were not well enough preserved to provide information about how they were killed. Whatever the significance, this treatment clearly reflects a symbolic meaning as part of a larger ritual, and the variety of ways in which equids and humans interacted.

Equids are by far the animal most commonly associated with burials as complete skeletons. Some instances of dogs and cattle in the same condition have already been noted, but the finding of whole animals in burials and religious contexts is otherwise unusual. There is no pattern of any other specific type of animal that accompanies burials as complete skeletons, though oxen (at Ur, and clearly associated with chariots), dogs (usually puppies), sheep and a bird are reported as complete, or complete with the exception of the skull.

#### *Iconographic material*

As with burials containing only parts of animals, there is no known iconography of whole animals being sacrificed as part of burials or in association with tombs. There

are, however, depictions of equids, which could shed some light on the types of equids in use, and their role in the ancient Near East. A full treatment of the subject is unfortunately not possible here, but it can be noted that equids are depicted on the Standard of Ur (I11); a rein-ring with an equid on top was found in Ur PG 800 (I26), a hunt with horses is shown on a seal from Ugarit (H185) and a rider on a horse is shown on a relief plaque from the British Museum (I20). Equids are in these and most other cases shown either as harnessed to a chariot or, more rarely, as ridden. Both horses and donkeys/onagers appear to be depicted – the seal from Ugarit and the terracotta plaque depict horses, whereas the examples from Ur are usually called donkeys.<sup>97</sup> On the Standard and the relief plaque, they are shown as stallions, but gender is either not visible or not depicted on the others.

### *Textual material*

Thus, the remains of equids in burials may have had religious connotations, and it is possible that donkeys had a special association with royalty or wealth, and that they were therefore used in graves partly as markers of identity and status. This may be supported by a few textual references from the late third millennium which mention equids being buried with humans, in two cases accompanied by vehicles. One records the death of Ur-Nammu, who had asses buried by his side (Kramer 1967: 118, line 71), a second notes one harnessed donkey and an unknown type of chariot as part of the rich grave goods of a certain Billala and his wife Lalla (Foxvog 1980: 70), and a third records “One sled/sledge made of boxwood (and) one team (of four?) female mules” as part of another set of rich grave goods (Zarins 1986: 183). Significantly, the last example is for the burial of a woman, and Steinkeller’s reading of ‘sledge’ (Zarins 1986: 183) links the items in the text even closer to the material found in the Ur graves, especially in the grave of Pu-abī.

---

<sup>97</sup> Even these could, however, be horses. The main differences between horses and donkeys that might be visible in iconography are the tail, the mane, the ears and the muzzle, but all of these can be ambiguous or dependent on the viewer. On the Standard of Ur, the equids are probably identified as donkeys because of their upright mane, narrow tail at the top and perhaps the line of the muzzle. All of these could belong to horses as well, since they also can be depicted with all these features.

Donkeys being killed as part of festivals or in temples are also recorded in J11, J43, J44 and J53. In some cases, especially J53, they may again be associated with treaties or covenants, but elsewhere such an association, if present, is not explicit. Further, in the north, a month called *Ajaru* may have derived from the word donkey, and a corresponding festival belongs to that month – called the ‘Donkey Festival’ (Cohen 1993: 310). The donkey (and in these cases, it is always the donkey that is referred to, not horses, onagers or hybrids) was clearly very important, especially in the north, where the contexts of donkeys at sites such as Tell Brak and Tell umm el-Marra indicate that a strong symbolic meaning was attached to the animals. The iconographic evidence provides a more limited repertoire of function, typically showing equids as either ridden or in front of vehicles – though here both horses and donkeys appear.

## **Sacrificial space**

This section examines some of the other places where sacrifice is recorded to have taken place, as well as evidence for preparational spaces such as kitchens thought to be related to or used in the sacrificial process. The term ‘Sacrificial space’ refers to any space where sacrifice took place – many of these may be unknown, or only known from certain sources. The space itself need not otherwise have been considered ‘sacred’. Appendix G provides a catalogue of some of the temples and other sacrificial spaces of the Near East. It is not a complete catalogue of all temples and sanctuaries discovered,<sup>98</sup> but is meant as representative reference for certain features mentioned in this section. It does, however, include all cases known to the author where animal bones have been found that may indicate sacrifice.

---

<sup>98</sup> A very good and comprehensive list and commentary of all temples of the ancient Near East known until its publication is *Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im alten Mesopotamien* (Heinrich 1982).

### *Archaeological material*

Temples are numerous throughout the period and area in question – usually every city had several temples, including one for the patron deity of the city, and these temples were often rebuilt for many centuries on the same spot. The temple was understood as the ‘house’ of the deity, and cult statues of the deity or deities to which a temple was dedicated were placed in the sanctuary. Cultic acts performed in the temple included the washing of the statue, the ‘feeding’ of the deity (i.e. the statue), divination and various regular and extraordinary festivals. Temples were also commercial centres, with their own production units and goods coming in and out; this combination of the temple’s functions means that, as Postgate puts it, “In a sense it represents the communal identity of each city” (Postgate 1992: 109). In their capacity as commercial centres, temples had sacred herds of animals – mainly sheep, goats and cattle. As well as meat, these would have provided wool and dairy products, and would also have been needed for extispicy. This means that when animals are depicted in connection with temples or sacred buildings, or animal bones are found in temples, it must be kept in mind that they had several functions, not all directly related to sacrifice.

Direct evidence of sacrifice in temples in the form of animal bones is rare, and the contexts are not numerous enough to establish much of a pattern. Animal bones possibly representing sacrifice have been found in Tell Brak Mitanni Temple (G24), Khafajeh Temple Oval (G8), Tell Asmar Abu Square Temple (G20), Tell Asmar Abu Single Shrine Temple (G19), Assur Ishtar Temple (G2), Tell Yelkhi Temple (G29), Mari Dagan Temple (G9), Ur Ziggurat (G33), Mari Ninhursag Temple (G11), Alalakh Temple (G1), Tell Leilan Temple (G25) and Ebla Sacred Area of Ishtar (G3). There are three instances of a complete layer of animal bones between levels, usually with ashes and fragments of pottery: Assur Istar Temple, Alalakh Temple and Tell Leilan Temple (Andrae 1938: 79, Woolley 1955: 52 and Weiss 1985s: 13). In some cases, the bones and their associated finds may represent foundation deposits – such as Khafajeh Temple Oval, where a reed basket with animal bones, pots and beads was found beneath the remains of a wall of the third building period; and at Tell Asmar Abu Single Shrine (Delougaz 1940: 99), where a deposit including animal bones was found beneath the offering table / pedestal (Delougaz and Lloyd 1942: 202).

At Tell Asmar Abu Square Temple the bones were closely associated with an 'altar' of some kind, and had possibly been placed on it - animal bones with other objects such as beads, amulets and seals were found in a small space between the altar and the wall (Delougaz and Lloyd 1942: 181). Animal bones were found in association with 'sacrificial installations' against the exterior of the Mari Dagan Temple (Parrot 1938: 24), and in the courtyard just outside the Tell Asmar Abu Single Shrine Temple (Hilzheimer 1941: 49). An association of animal sacrifice with platforms/altars/offering tables is also suggested by the discovery of human and animal footprints in the vicinity of such structures at the Khafajeh Temple Oval in the second building period (Delougaz 1940: 81). Uniquely, deposits with animal bones buried outside any temples, but within the sacred precinct, were found in the Ebla Sacred Area of Ishtar (Marchetti and Nigro 1997). These deposits contain dog skeletons, disarticulated sheep, human and goat skulls and ceramic vessels with burnt animal bones and traces of animal fat. These deposits are likely from cult activities performed in the area (the inclusion of human remains is rather interesting, but not much else can be said about them).

In some cases, the animal bones are found in contexts that suggest 'kitchens', or at least a space that was used for food preparation. This is the case in room D 17:2 at Tell Asmar Abu Single Shrine, which included an installation called an 'oven' and animal bones from pig and sheep (Hilzheimer 1941: 49); Tell Yelkhi Temple had animal bones in almost all its rooms, Room 8 had traces of hearths, and Room 6, which contained roasted sheep and goat bones, is thought to have been used as a 'kitchen' at times (Bergamini *et al.* 1985: 53); and at the Ur Ziggurat, bones from fish and small animals were found in 'temple kitchens' (Woolley 1939: 11-13, 20-23, 39, 50). Temple 'kitchens' without specific mention of animal bones have also been recorded at Ischali Kitium Temple, Nippur North Temple, Ur Giparu, Mari Ninnizaza Temple and Nippur Enlil Temple (G6, G12, G14, G16 and G31). Food was prepared for deities for the practice of feeding the cult statues, and for humans as part of feasting activities as well as for daily consumption, but because of the wide range of functions of temples, including what we might consider 'secular' activities, it cannot be

established precisely what kind of food was being prepared in these rooms, and precisely what the bones represent – the distinction may in any case be mostly a modern one.

Archaeological evidence of sacrificial places other than temples includes sanctuaries within palaces, shrines in private houses, and ‘public chapels’. As with temples, evidence of sacrifice is very hard to come by, but most likely a similar set of rituals took place in these, albeit perhaps on a smaller scale. Shrines in private houses and ‘public chapels’ have not been identified in as many sites as temples, but this may be more of a reflection of archaeological accident and practice than of how common they actually were, because the excavation and recording of private areas of sites in general is quite rare. One place where such excavation has been done is at Ur, where private shrines at least during the Old Babylonian period are concluded to be very common, and where several ‘public chapels’ were identified, especially on street corners (Woolley and Mallowan 1976). The private shrines inside houses may have been closely connected to the maintenance of deceased family members, who, like the gods, apparently needed to be fed, though this may not have included meat. More explicit evidence of sacrifice comes from one of the ‘public chapels’ (as Woolley and Mallowan call them – their exact relationship to the temples and private shrines is uncertain, but they appear to be placed somewhere in between them in terms of ownership or maintenance). In the ‘Hendur-sag Chapel’, known as such because of the find of a statuette with the dedication to this minor goddess, was found the skull of a water-buffalo against the northeast wall of room 2, which also contained an altar (G32).

Whether this skull somehow marks out the space or is a symbol of the sacrificial animal, it may suggest an interest in the head of animals similar to that seen in the Aegean. At the Shamshi-Adad period palace of Tall Bi‘a, an ox skull, framed by stones, was set above the door of Room 22 (G18). A complete equid skeleton was also found in the blocking of the Acropolis East in Tell umm el-Marra (G27), and a terracotta model of a tower from middle to late third millennium Tell Brak is topped

by horned animal heads, perhaps sheep (I27); this may reflect a similar practice, and in this instance could indicate the presence of shrines in a military context. The placement of animal features in such key locations would certainly have served a highly significant and symbolic purpose, marking the zone between two spaces.

A unique and very intriguing case of sacrificial space comes from Urkesh, where a large 'pit' was discovered immediately outside the palace, containing large amounts of animal remains (G26). The structure consists of a rectangular antechamber and a circular chamber, containing the remains from dozens of animals, including 60 piglets, 20 puppies, 60 sheep/goats, 20 donkeys. Some animals were carefully slaughtered, while others were sacrificed whole. It has been interpreted as an *abi*, or channel to the underworld (Buccellati and Kelly-Buccellati 2004b, Lawler 2008). If this is indeed the case, it may have formed part of a cult of the dead or some kind of tool for interaction between living and dead.

### *Iconographic material*

Iconographic material rarely includes spatial markers – they are more preoccupied with animate figures; humans, deities, animals and supernatural or hybrid creatures. Structures are not commonly depicted, but there are some instances of seals and plaque where sacrifice is associated with what may be representations of temples or shrines/sanctuaries: H23 and H24 show a female figure inside two or three rectangles encompassing the whole figure, and other figures outside bringing an animal and other items towards her. The female figure and the squares may represent a temple or other sacred structure with the cult statue placed inside. The feature in the lower right-hand corner on I4 may also represent a temple – the loops on either side are thought to represent temple gateposts (Collon 1995: 74).

### *Textual material*

Sacrifice in connection with temples is frequently mentioned on tablets and other textual evidence, for example

1 shekel of silver (for) 1 bracelet, a she-goat (for) the “ritual bath” (in) the “great temple” of GN for the enthronement of the king. (J79)

and

On the day of (ritual) purification of the *kizzu*-festival of Ea they consecrate (the statue of) Ea while *hukku*-bread, a white bread made with fruits, and pitchers of barley-beer (are on the offering-tables). On the second day they sacrifice one ox, six sheep and a lamb. They proceed along with the singers from the residence of the master of the house (Dagan) to the temple of Ea. They sacrifice an ox and sheep to Ea. They perform the *divine [rit]es(?)* before Ea. They make an offering to [Ea] of four offering-table loaves and four white breads, including among them a white bread. They fill (the cups of the gods) with wine and barley-beer. They fill seventy vessels (with barley beer) by the door to the temple of Ea. Before them they put out four *hukku*-breads, the beef and the mutton. They present four vessels to Ea. All of the men supplied by the king to perform the purification give a gift of silver to Ea in the residence of the master of the house. (J36)

From these, it is clear that at least part of the rituals took place inside the temple. A tablet from Emar relates how sacrifices are made outside the temple proper: four offering tables were set up on “open ground” outside the temple of Dagan (J34). In many other cases, the reference to the exact area of the temple is less explicit: most often the offerings are recorded as *for* this or that temple or deity, or a more general ‘in the temple...’ (J16, J30, J35, J36, J46, J47, J54, J55, J60, J64, J65, J67, J73, J77, J83 and J86). In these cases we have to assume that that means that the actual sacrifice also took place in the temple area, but in many instances, this could just as well be outside the temple building, for example in courtyards, or, as the installations at the



Mari Dagan Temple suggest (G9), at the entrance to the temple. Other places associated with sacrifice in tablets include a “dike” (J73), a “canal” (J25 and J73), “the palace” (J18, J54, J55 and J61), “the place of the king” (J47), the “house of the priest” (J66), the “roof” (of temple?) (J54), at “entrance of shrine” (J19), at the “city gates” (NET J29 and J33), “between the upright stones” [outside the city] (J33), at the “Small Chariot” or “chariot” (J45 and J73), at the “horse stables” (J30) and in a “sacrificial pit” or “abû” (J31 and J60).

It is also very likely that different stages of sacrifice took place at different locations – a tablet from Emar records how “each of the men goes back to his own home to eat and drink” (J35). This may imply that more commonly, they stay in the temple and eat and drink, and it is unclear if the food and drink is coming from the sacrifices or if the men are meant to go home ‘to normal affairs’. In any case, sacrifice could take place in many different places, and although a temple constituted one venue, it was far from the only one. This evidence provides a small glimpse into important types of sacrifice that have otherwise left little or no trace in our records and are hardly known in other kinds of evidence. The exact sacrifices referred to in the tablets may or may not actually have taken place, but they show that the concept of offering sacrifices in these locations was well-established.

## **Sacrificial activities**

### **‘Feeding the gods’**

One of the main types of sacrifice that took place inside the temples was that of ‘feeding the gods’ (Maul 2008), that is, in the temples a statue of the deity would be placed, and in front of this were offered regular (daily) meals, which could include meat. Unfortunately, there is very little archaeological or iconographic evidence for this, so the practice is mainly known from textual records. Supposedly, the meal would

be placed on an altar before the deity, and though we do not have explicit evidence for it for the period, the meal was more than likely afterwards eaten by temple personnel.<sup>99</sup>

### *Archaeological material*

Evidence for the practice of feeding the gods in the archaeology is sparse. Some of the cases where animal remains have been discovered in temples, especially near an altar, such as at the Tell Asmar Square Temple and Single Shrine Temple (G20 and G19) could represent remains from such meals. The food offering would not be left in the position in front of the divine image, and consequently, is very unlikely to show up in the archaeological record. Probably closely related to the feeding of deities are so-called kitchens in temple complexes discussed above. These were probably used to cook food both for the deity and for the personnel; we do not know if a distinction actually existed in terms of cooking/preparation of the food. However, for Near Eastern temples, it can be extremely difficult to separate the religious from the non-religious, and temples were very much economic and sometimes industrial centres in their own right, and consequently a temple kitchen may be used for purposes we would consider non-religious, though contemporaries may not have made this distinction.

### *Iconographic material*

The iconographic material for this ritual is equally vague, but scenes where an ‘altar’ or ‘offering stand’, at times with objects placed on it, is shown in front of a seated or standing deity may be a depiction of the ‘feeding’ (e.g. H36, H46, H80, H84, H85 and H106). This requires the assumption that the statue of the deity was depicted in the same way as the actual deity, which is quite possible but unfortunately not verifiable. These scenes are also all within the category of ‘presentation scenes’, which will be examined in a separate section, they include a worshipper, sometimes carrying an

---

<sup>99</sup> The first explicit evidence comes from texts composed in the 9<sup>th</sup> c. BC, which carefully outline the division of the meat of a sheep to various officials (McEwan 1983).

animal offering in their arms. This would suggest that non-temple personnel could perform this rite of ‘feeding the god’, which is unlikely to be the case.

### *Textual material*

Although we might be able to see vague signs of the ‘feeding’ ritual in the archaeological and iconographic records, it would not be known were it not for the textual material, recording, for example, the amount of animals and other food-stuffs needed on a regular basis. The amount of food and number of meals would have varied greatly, but a third millennium tablet from Uruk notes that four meals were needed every day for the deities, and proceeds to list the provisions necessary along the lines of four categories: beverages, grain, fruit and meat (Bottéro 2001: 128 for more details). The section on meat runs as follows,

That which makes, in all, every day, for the four meals of the above-mentioned gods: 21 top-grade sheep, fattened and without flaw, fed on barley for two years; 4 specially raised sheep, fed on milk; 25 second-grade sheep, not fed on milk; 2 large steers; 1 milk-fed calf; 8 lambs; 30 *marratu* birds (wild bird, not identified); 20 turtle-doves; 3 mash-fed geese; 5 ducks fed on flour mash; 2 second-grade ducks; 4 dormice (?); 3 ostrich eggs and 3 duck eggs.  
(J88)

This amounts to a massive amount of meat, but it is unequivocally stated that it is not for a special occasion, but for every day. Although these are large amounts, there is no indication that meat is more important than the other types of food and drink being offered; this is further supported by the fact that, as Lambert writes, there is no specific term for a meat offering (Lambert 1993: 197). Rather, the terms for food offerings cover all the four categories above.

That a simple distinction between secular and religious was not made may also be inferred from the vocabulary of surviving tablets, which does not distinguish between the food of the gods and the food of humans (Lambert 1993: 197). This lack of

distinction could be related to the fact that the meat offered to the deities was in fact eaten by humans – Hallo goes as far as to suggest that “animal sacrifice, though ostensibly a mechanism for feeding the deity, was at best a thinly disguised method for sanctifying and justifying meat consumption by human beings” (Hallo 1987: 7).

### **Divination and extispicy**

Divination was widely practiced in the ancient Near East, and included many different types of prophecy, such as observing oil, incense and animal behaviour, interpreting dreams and the movement of objects in the sky (Oppenheim 1967, Malamat 1987, Farber 1995, essays in Ciruolo and Seidel 2002). The many different ways of reading omens was a means of communication between the deities and humans, which always had to happen *through* something, be it a dream, an animal or a substance. Especially important for this study is the ritual of killing an animal to read omens from the liver, which is an active way of asking specific questions (as opposed to the relatively passive reading of dreams or the behaviour of animals). The most common animal for this purpose was a sheep, and this specific type of divination is called extispicy (Lambert 1993, Jeyes 1980 and 1989, Gachet 2000, Pardee 2000 and 2002). One important (though not exclusive) setting for this ritual was the temple - textual evidence records temple employment of many different types of diviners, with the *barû* (Akkadian), the person responsible for reading the signs on the liver; in the Hammurabi period Tell Yelkhi Level III Temple a tablet archive where most of the tablets related to extispicy was discovered (G29). There is no archaeological evidence for the practice.

### *Iconographic material*

Iconographic evidence of extispicy comes in the form of models of sheep livers. These models are usually made of clay and give instructions concerning the appearance of certain features that may be encountered during the ritual. Examples have been found at Mari, Emar and Ugarit (e.g. I37-I47). I47 includes an inscription that starts with the word *dbh*, the most general Ugaritic for ‘sacrifice’, and I37 is a rare example of a lung

model. Woolley also suggests that the slaughtering scene on I21 is part of an extispicy ritual (Woolley 1954: 160), but that cannot be proved with any certainty.

### *Textual material*

Although it is not possible to substantiate Leichty's argument that no sacrifice or slaughter could take place without taking omens (Leichty 1993: 241-242), extispicy was an extremely important ritual, and apparently the gods had to be consulted on almost every matter. Instances include when a temple should be built, if a military campaign should be undertaken and so on. For example, an inscription of a statue of Agum kakrime reads,

When in Babylon the great gods by their holy pronouncement had decreed the return to Babylon of Marduk, Lord of Esagila and Babylon, I, in order that Marduk would turn for me his face toward going to Babylon, prayed to Marduk with (cries of) woe and wails, made plans, paid heed, and so I turned Marduk's face toward the taking of him to Babylon and thus came to the aid of Marduk who loves my reign. By means of the (sacrificial) lamb of the diviner I made enquiry of Shamash (the sungod) the king, and so sent to a faraway land, the land of the Haneans and so they (i.e. the Haneans) verily led hither by the hand Marduk and Sarpanitum, who loves my reign, To Esagila and Babylon I verily returned them. To a house which Shamash had confirmed for me (as suitable) in the enquiry (by divination) I verily took them back (Translation by Jacobsen 1987: 16).

A tablet from Mari goes,

Speak to Yasmah-Addu, thus Asqudum your servant. When I arrived in Terqa, Tarim-shakim arrived too, and I asked him: 'Has Zunan taken the omens for the safety of the land and the fortress

yet?’ He answered me saying: ‘He has not’. So on the occasion of the census this month I returned to Saggaratum with him and I took the omens for the safety of the city of Saggaratum for the next six months, and the omens were that it would be safe. Then straight away I took them also for ... Terqa, Suprum and Mari, and now I am writing a complete report immediately to my lord. When I took the omens in Saggaratum for the monthly offering and for the offering of my lord, I looked at the liver and saw that the left part of the ‘finger’ was detached, and that the middle ‘finger’ of the lungs was to the right side, a favourable formation. May my lord rejoice! (*ARMT* V 65, translation Dalley 1984: 129).

Thus, the taking of omens was considered extremely important, and was done on a regular basis. From the existing records, the king appears to be the main client for extispicy, but this is more than likely due to the nature of the records, the majority coming from temples and palaces, and so naturally dealing with matters important to them. The use of extispicy outside official contexts was probably more common than the surviving evidence suggests. However, many people may not have been able to afford a sheep in order to get omens, and some of the other, much cheaper, types of divination may have been used instead.

The actual process of extispicy is only known in fragments – a unique Old Babylonian tablet records some details of how the sheep might have been slaughtered:

*Fell* the sheep!

Cut off the head of the sheep!

Let the blood vessels (of the neck) drip!

(Sum.) The sheep - the leg blood should be done.

(Akk.) One expresses the (blood of the) sheep.

(Sum.) The sheep - the blood vessels should be done.

(Akk.) One expresses the (blood of the) sheep.

Roast the hooves(!) and the tail!

Pull out the shoulder and rib cuts!

Roast (Akk. boil) the shoulder cut!

Place (it/them) on the table!

Wash the large omentum in water!

Arrange it on the table!

Inspect the intestines!

Pull out the intestines!

Separate out the intestines!

Pull out the connective tissue(?)!

Clear the feces from the colon (Akk. rumen) and wash it in water!

Inspect the liver(?)!

Pull out the ligament(s) of the heart(?)!

Cut up the flesh!

Cut up the flesh! (J82)

This is a very interesting and rare description of how the different parts of the animal might have been treated, and also seems to make it clear that there is a connection between extispicy and the meat of the animal for human and/or divine consumption. In this instance, the reading of omens in the organs seems to have been done in intervals. The ‘formula’ of omen-taking is quite standardised and usually goes along the lines of

- If [whatever feature on the liver, for example a dark spot or a hole],

- Then [some specific outcome, for example the king will die or a campaign will be successful] (see e.g. Jeyes 1989).

Whatever reply is obtained from the gods, this often had to be confirmed by repeating the procedure as is indicated in the inscription on Agum kakrime's statue above (and this of course further increases the cost).

### **Feasting and festivals**

Apart from regular meals in the temples, textual evidence provides ample evidence for religious feasting in the Near East; the most famous of these perhaps being the New Year Festival and the Sacred Marriage Ceremony (regardless of precisely what this entails), but a whole host of other cultic festivals are also attested, related to agriculture, specific deities, deceased ancestors and the Netherworld (see e.g. Cohen 1993). The same definition of feasting as outlined in Chapter 2 is used here. As has been noted elsewhere, the modern distinction between secular and religious may not apply in the ancient Near East, and most feasts may indeed have had at least a religious element. Nevertheless, I have in this section as far as possible attempted to include only evidence of clearly religious events. In cases where it is not clear, the relevant problems are discussed. Not all religious feasting is considered, however, as the interest here is in feasts that in some way include sacrifice, often with the subsequent (though not necessarily less significant) eating of the meat.

#### *Archaeological material*

Unfortunately, there is very little unambiguous archaeological evidence specifically for religious feasting for the period. One of the reasons for this may be inferred from texts recording festival activities, which often refer to offerings and sacrifices taking place outside a main city, sometimes as part of a procession, and thus unlikely to be discovered archaeologically. It is possible that some of the animal remains found in temples or even in secular contexts are in fact such deposits, but are not recognisable as such. The closest is perhaps from some very interesting deposits from fourth millennium Tell Brak (Middle Uruk period), where a "grill fireplace" was discovered,



associated with animal bones displaying evidence of burning which may be from communal feasting (Emberling and McDonald 2003: 23-25). The favissae deposits from Ebla could also represent the remains of religious feasting (G3), and we have seen how feasting activities are indicated at tombs, in particular at Ur and Qatna. Large assemblages of vessels associated with feasting, such as eating, drinking and pouring vessels, have also been identified in graves at other sites, for example F1, F58, F68 and F70. Such assemblages, associated with animal bones, may suggest religious feasting, including consumption of meat, or at least provisions for a feast.

### *Iconographic material*

Depictions of feasting and banquets can also be found in the iconographic record; a relatively standardised scene on seals, mostly limited to the Early Dynastic period and largely originating in Ur, are known as ‘banquet scenes’ (a selection is depicted on H1-H21). They normally consist of one or more seated men and women. More standing men and women appear to be servants or slaves, judging from their smaller stature and the fact that they attend to the seated figures in some way – perhaps bringing food and drink and fanning. The seated figures commonly raise a cup in their hand or drink from straws from a vessel. This, along with the provisions of more products and the frequent depiction in these scenes of a relatively large number of people, suggests that some sort of feast is intended. In almost all of these, liquids and drinking appear to have a particularly important status within the feast – seated figures are seen drinking from straws on (H1, H3, H5, H7-H10 and H19), and as raising a cup in almost all the examples, but the importance of liquid is further emphasised in several of the depictions. In the lower register of H4, two human figures are shown carrying jugs, and another two jugs are placed on the ground before the figure on the right, and in the upper register of H12, the two figures seated at a table each hold a similar jug, and are perhaps about to pour out the contents. It is possible that two parts of the same ritual are depicted on these two seals. Further, H1, I5 and I6 show a vessel being carried hanging from a pole on the shoulder of two people. The kind or kinds of liquid being drunk is uncertain – the liquid being drunk from straws is probably a type of beer, but the content of the cups is less easy to gauge; perhaps it is wine. The two different manners of depicting drinking probably reflect two different types of liquid

(the straws in the large vessels are believed to be there in the first place in order to avoid the less tasty ‘froth’ that gathers on the top). The liquid in smaller jugs and other vessels could be a third type, or what is poured into the cups.

By comparison, few of the seated people are actually shown eating (with the notable exceptions of H2, H7, H9, H11 and H18-H20, where one of the seated figures look as if they are reaching towards the food on the stand, or in the case of H7, being handed food by a servant). However, that food, and in particular meat, was an important element of the feast, albeit less so than liquids, is clear from depictions of meat and live animals. Prepared food is often shown on top of stands or tables, sometimes called ‘sideboards’, and in many cases, although suggestions are made, it is not possible to identify the exact food items (suggestions include cakes, cups, jars, bread, wine and meat – e.g. Woolley 1934). However, one object on these in several cases looks suspiciously like an animal leg, and that this is in fact what is meant is supported by the very clear depiction on a lyre inlay from Ur (I12). Here, there is no mistaking that this is an animal leg, even if it is not exactly from a lamb, and a comparison of this object with those shown on top of tables on H2-H6, strongly indicates that they are also animal legs, or in terms of provisions for a feast, cuts of meat. Meat eating and/or sacrifice may further be suggested by the frequent depiction of live animals being brought in processional manner towards the ‘action’ of the seated people, often along with other provisions (H5, H12, H66, I5, I6 and I8 and I11). Ellison suggests that where the figures are thought to be drinking from cups, it is possible that these could also have been used for foodstuffs:

The shape of the saucers held by the diners is similar to the shape of dishes containing foodstuffs which were placed in the Royal Cemetery at Ur. The sort of food found in these dishes was dried apple rings and bones of fish and sheep (Ellison *et al.* 1978, 169). The diners on the banqueting scenes are usually thought to be drinking from cups but it is possible that they were in fact holding dishes of food and that they used pieces of tannour bread to scoop the food up to their mouths. This would fit in with the Neo-Assyrian reading of NiNDA.MES as *kusāpu* which is connected with the

verb *kasāpu* meaning “to trim”, “to break off a piece” (CAD *kasāpu*). (Ellison 1983: 147).

Another element appearing frequently in these scenes is that of music – musicians with their instruments appear on H10, H18, H20, I2, I5, I6, I8 and on I12, which itself is an inlay from a musical instrument. Actual examples of such instruments have been found in the graves of Ur, and they look remarkably like the ones depicted – compare for example the harp on H10 with the one from ones from PG 800 and PG 1237 of Ur (Woolley 1982: 79 and 82). The group of people standing to the right of the musician on H10 may be a choir, as suggested by Woolley (Woolley 1934: 338). Such elements serve to emphasise the celebratory function of the scenes, even if the exact type of event eludes us in each case. The fact that many of these objects were found in graves, as well as other evidence of funerary meals at graves, may indicate at least one type of occasion on which such ‘feasts’ would take place. On the other hand, not all objects found in graves are necessarily related to funerary cult – if the dead were interred with objects used in life, the grave offerings are a reflection more of objects used in life than in death.

The banquet scenes are usually divided into two registers on cylinder seals, and three on plaques and on the ‘Standard’ of Ur. Sometimes the second register on seals shows apparently unrelated scenes; for example, on H9, H11, H12 and H13 the banquet scene is coupled with ‘contest’ scenes, with men and bulls fighting. On plaques and the Standard of Ur, the banquet is shown with processions of animals, provisions and chariots, suggesting a military association, perhaps a victory banquet, with the processions depicting all the spoils and perhaps prisoners of the battle. Seen on their own, the religious association of some of these objects may seem tenuous – as Henri Frankfort notes,

The Banquets and Symposia might be considered secular scenes, but for the fact of their habitual appearance on plaques set up in Early Dynastic temples throughout the land, so that they are more likely to commemorate an event connected with the cult. The seals

which bear this scene are also found in temples as well as in the so-called “Royal Tombs” at Ur. (Frankfort 1939: 77).

One of the cylinder seals has an inscription identifying its owner as a priestess (H4); furthermore the votive plaques all come from temple contexts, and their depictions are thus likely to have a sacred content. It is possible that such feasts and banquets were in fact inherently religious – and as such had better reason to be carved in the first place, but unfortunately, as Frankfort indicates, this cannot in all cases be known with certainty. The participants of the banquet all appear to be human, with the seated figures being of higher status and attended by the standing figures. Often a man and a woman are depicted seated, and these examples may be a reference to a feast associated with the Sacred Marriage ceremony. If the inscriptions refer not simply to the owner of the seal, but also to a person depicted, it may be surmised that the seated figures were of the highest status – a priestess and a queen (H4, and H6 which bears the name of Queen Puabi). The fact that these are both female owners and that women are often shown seated (with the notable exception of the Standard and plaques, where men are much more common), may further suggest that the cult depicted on these seals was presided over by women. These differences, along with the contextual evidence for each object, could also be used to understand some of the different occasions for feasting – such as, perhaps, a victory banquet on the Standard of Ur.

### *Textual material*

There are many texts recording festivals in which sacrifice forms a part. Some of these have already been encountered in previous sections, especially in connection with tombs and a cult of the dead, but many more festivals occurred, and these seem to have been organised according to carefully worked out religious calendars (Cohen 1993, Fleming 2000).

Some very enticing texts from the ‘Diviner’s Archive’ from 14<sup>th</sup> century Emar describe a *zukru* festival, with the patron god of the city, Dagan, as the main focus (Fleming 2000). One tablet goes,

12-16 one sheep each set aside for Dagan, the storm-god, the sun-god, Ea, the moon-god, dNinurta, Nergal, the Lord of Horns, dNinkur, Belet-ekalli, Astart - provided by the king.

22 sacrifice to Dagan one calf and one pure lamb, the people consume their hearts

33 Total: 4 calves and 40 sheep for the consecration

36 That one ewe is to be burned for all the gods. The breads, the beverages, and the meat go back up into the town.

184-5 also the breads and the meat that were before the gods go up into the city.

206 Total: 700 lambs, 50 calves (J29).

This and many other tablets recording festivals reveal a very elaborate sequence of events, involving a great variety of activities, sacrifice being one of them – more examples include J2, J11, J25, J27, J28, J33-J37, J39, J40, J46-J50, J55, J63, J65, J73, J74, J77, J80, J83 and J85. Many of these refer to different animals *for* specified deities – sheep again occur as the most commonly mentioned animal, with frequent occurrences of goats and cattle. Other animals mentioned include pigs, fish, birds and donkeys. Apparently the condition of the animal was important, because in many cases they are qualified with age, gender, feeding method ('grain-fed': J2, J19, J28, J39, J47, J49, J74, J80 and J85, 'grass-fed': J28, J39 and J85, 'reed-fed': J47 and J83), and appearance ('black': J48, 'fat-tailed': J49, 'pure': J29).

It may be surmised that many of the animals 'given' to deities as part of festivals were partly or wholly consumed by the participants (or a select group of the participants). If the numbers of animals recorded in textual records are to be trusted, there would be meat for a very large amount of people. In some cases, such consumption is explicitly mentioned in the texts – in J29, the 'people' are referred to as consuming the hearts of a calf and a lamb; J33 refers to the consumption of an ox, a sheep, bread and beer in

front of Dagan; in J30 “some participants” consume bread and beer, “the leader and the people of the countryside eat and drink”, and “the leader” and “the slaughterer” are recorded as receiving some of the meat from the animals; J2 records a total of two cattle, 12 sheep and six goats for the “banquet of Bēlat-šuhner and Bēlat-terraban”; and in J65, “the woman/women may eat (of the sacrificial meal)”. All of these instances show not only that consumption was an important element of some rituals, but also that there were great variations in the size of the event, who and how many participated, with different (social) levels, such as “the people”, “the people from the countryside”, “the leader”, “the slaughterer”, “the women” and so on. The present evidence does not allow us to determine the factors behind these divisions, which could include local, geographical, chronological, social and religious factors.

Drinking and music, as evident from the banquet scenes, are also frequently mentioned in tablets. Beer is mentioned in almost all of the examples given here, and in fact the Sumerian logogram for feast means ‘beer-pouring’ (Bienkowski and Millard 2000: 46). References to music are made in J31, J34 and J35.

Festivals and religious feasting were frequent and integral parts of the ancient Near East, and these were complex events which involved a wide range of activities, often with different varieties of sacrifice. The contexts for these celebrations are mostly a matter of speculation from textual content; from archaeological data, we only know that feasting could be associated with burials and a cult of the dead. The texts give hints as to some elements, if not main themes of festivals, such as a sacred marriage (J39 and J63), Barley and Malt Consumption festivals (J73). Feasting is thus recorded in archaeology, iconography and tablets, but it is only possible to link them to a limited extent and at certain junctures, such as archaeology and texts at burials or iconography and texts in terms of content. The differences indicated in some instances in terms of participation and selected access to each part of the festival suggest that these events were used as social, ideological/political tools – a way of both creating solidarity within certain groups through communal activities such as eating and drinking, and of creating and reinforcing social status. Using some of the material

outlined above, something similar has been argued in regards of ED Mesopotamia (Schmandt-Besserat 2001, Pollock 2003).

## **Processions**

Religious processions – that is, a group of people moving from one place to another in an orderly fashion – were also part of festivals, and in some cases associated with sacrifice. Not much is known about how they functioned in the Near East, but the material where processions may have included sacrifice is investigated here. There is no archaeological evidence for the practice.

### *Iconographic material*

The type of procession scenes depicted in Aegean art are less common in the Near East, although some of the presentation scenes and banquet scenes, for example the Standard of Ur, could be interpreted as such. Two very interesting wall-paintings thought to depict processions come from 18<sup>th</sup> century Mari (I1 and I2). They are believed to show bulls being lead to sacrifice (e.g. Kahane 1969: 74-75, Moortgat 1969: 71-72, Frankfort 1996: 124-125). It is not explicitly stated why the ‘bulls’ are thought to be for sacrifice, but their decorated horns - Moortgat thinks they have ‘metal points’ (Moortgat 1969: 71) – the ring in the nose and the crescent moon between the horns designate the animal as sacred. As such, they are part of some sort of ceremony, which more than likely involves their sacrifice. A caution should be made, however, against assuming, perhaps based on later Greek and Roman practices, that a decorated animal automatically means a sacrificial one. Further, as with the Aegean, there is here a clear assumption that the ox is a bull, although no such identification can be made based on the surviving wall fragments.

One more example should be noted here. It is a fragment of a wall-painting from Alalakh (I3). It depicts part of what may be the horn of an ox. If so, it could be part of a composition similar to the ones from Mari. A small curve on the upper left-hand corner of the fragment has also been suggested to be an object placed between the

horns, thus creating the familiar image of a frontal ox head with a sacred symbol above the head and between the horns (Woolley 1955: 231). This is only speculation, as is acknowledged by Woolley, since the fragment is far too small to even be sure that it is part of a horn that is depicted.

### *Textual material*

Many of the texts seen so far already mention processions – religious processions are recorded as part of festivals in J30, J33, J45 and J73. They frequently involve a procession going in or out of the city proper, with important rituals taking place at specific spots outside and at the city gates. Extended processions also include journeys between settlements, on rivers or with chariots, and transporting the images (statues) of deities. J45 suggests that the ‘chariot’ takes precedence in the procession, but otherwise we know very little about who took part (in J73 the participants are called ‘pilgrims’) or what kind of differentiation of participants was expressed.

### **Treaties**

As with processions, treaties sometimes appear to have included sacrifice as part of the process, but not much is known about it – again, there is no archaeological evidence for the practice.

### *Iconographic material*

One Middle Assyrian cylinder seal is thought to depict the ratification of a treaty (H156, Collon 1995: 115), with a seated figure with his hand on the antlers of a stag’s head in front of him, and two standing figures facing him. The stag’s head on the table suggests that a sacrifice has been made during the ritual of the making of the treaty. The interpretation of this scene as showing the ratification of a treaty appears to be based on the fact that the two standing men each hold a tablet in their hands, and one of the standing men and the seated man both put their a hand on the stag’s head. Collon suggests that the animals in the field above “probably symbolise the cities of



those participating in the ceremony” (Collon 1995: 115). It is difficult to find any other evidence to support the idea that this is how the making of a treaty was carried out, but it is a viable possibility.

### *Textual material*

Textual records also mention the sacrifice of animals during treaties, for example an Old Babylonian tablet from Karana:

Speak to Hatnu-rapi, thus Zimri-Lim. I have read your letter which you sent to me. In the past you have often written that we should meet in Qattuna, saying: ‘You there, bring (troops) upstream as far as Qattuna; and I here shall lead out the kings my allies who enjoy good relations with me; let us kill donkey foals; let us put the “oath of the gods” between us.’ You often wrote these words to me. (Dalley 1984: 140-141)

Here, and in another Old Babylonian tablet from Mari (Dalley 1984: 140, J12 and J41), it is specifically donkeys being sacrificed at treaties, and the sacrifice appears to have the purpose of sanctioning the commitment of the parties in front of the deities.

## **Foundation deposits**

### *Archaeological material*

It appears that certain rituals were sometimes undertaken when a new building was erected, or an old one rebuilt. This applies in particular to temples, but may also have been the case for private houses. Ritual deposits could thus be placed at significant positions in or underneath the new building, or sometimes the whole building was placed on ‘pure’ ground. A most pertinent example of this is the Temple Oval at Khafajah, where several metres of pure sand were imported and the foundations then

built on top of this (G8). In some cases, the foundation deposits comprise pottery or precious items such as figurines, fine metal and jewellery, and sometimes also animal bones or whole animals – to the third building period of the Temple Oval belongs the find of a reed basket with bones, mainly animal, and pots and beads (Delougaz 1940: 99-103).

Ellis provides a very comprehensive discussion of different kinds of foundation deposits in Mesopotamia and, with reference to animal remains, concludes that “Their appearance is so sporadic, however, and the circumstances in which they were found so varied, that it does not appear that the burial of sacrificial animals was ever a standard and important part of building rituals” (Ellis 1968: 42). The examples given by Ellis mainly come from Ur, with a few from Mari, and are all interpreted as ‘food offerings’<sup>100</sup> (Ellis 1968: 126-129): they include possible foundation deposits in the Ishtar Temple at Mari, as well as several deposits found in the palace of that city (G10 and G13). Another foundation deposit was found in the Mari Ninhursag Temple (G11), and in the Tell Asmar Abu Single Shrine, a deposit containing animal bones from fish, a large bird and goat or antelope horns, was found beneath an offering table or pedestal (G19).

Some evidence brought to light after his work comes from Tell umm el-Marra, where animal bones of equids were placed in the floors of some of the private houses, and part of an equid was found in association with the main gate to the Acropolis (G28 and G27); equid bones were apparently also found in the foundations of Building 6 at Tell Banat (Porter 2002b: note 12). Such deposits were placed in very careful and deliberate positions, indicating their use as markers of sacred boundaries. This interesting use of animal remains as liminal markers will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. A ritual which may be closely related to that of laying foundations, is a ‘closing’ ritual, attested at Tell Brak, Areas FS and SS (G22). Here, Akkadian period deposits of six donkeys, a dog, humans, a pile of gazelle horns and a pig’s skull were

---

<sup>100</sup> Which apparently do not qualify as sacrifice, since he deliberately excludes such deposits from the chapter dedicated to human and animal sacrifices.

discovered in what were probably temples and their associated buildings. The reasons for this closure ritual are not known, and there are no other reports of this sort of ritual, but it does point to a very elaborate ceremony.

### *Iconographic material*

There is no direct evidence of foundation deposits in the iconography, but there are a few examples that may suggest sacrifice in connection with building activities. On the chisel of the so-called 'Blau Monuments', the 'priest-king' is shown carrying an animal in a similar way as in presentation scenes, and below this is a workman, perhaps engaged in some kind of building activity (I18). The actual cutting up of an animal for sacrifice is depicted on the 'Stele of Ur-Nammu' (I21). The stele shows a complex of scenes in its different registers, and at least one of these is also concerned with building activities. It cannot be stated with any certainty that the animals on these were sacrificed to be placed in foundations of buildings, but they may imply that sacrifice was one of the ritual that could take place in connection with the construction or restructuring of buildings.

### *Textual material*

A good few texts and specific Sumerian and Akkadian phrases relate to foundation deposits (see e.g. Ellis 1968: 145-153, 169-186). However, apart from an obscure reference to a young lion and a young panther being placed in a temple (Ellis 1968: 172), only one text mentions animals in connection with such deposits:

Two gazelles, to consecrate the house,  
for Annabu, daughter of the king. (J88)

Of course, even this does not mean that the gazelles were actually placed in the foundations of the house.

Foundation deposits thus may at times have included animals, either sacrificed whole or sacrificed and eaten, but Ellis is probably right that animals were not a requirement in all such deposits. The reason why they are at times included and other times not may be many and could be to do with economic concerns, the type of building or the stage of building, for example.

## **Sacrifice representations**

The iconography pertaining to animal sacrifice mainly comes from cylinder seals and their impressions. Incredible variety and detail can be found in this micro-medium, and the different characters, symbols and styles can tell us much about where and when they were made, and, of course, about life itself in the ancient Near East. The other types of iconographic evidence that relate to sacrifice include plaques, wall paintings, figurines, stelae and stone vases. Although pottery can be pictorial, it is not usually narrative, and nothing has been found relating to sacrifice. I have already discussed relevant iconography in the previous sections; here I deal with iconography of sacrifice that does not appear to have equivalent archaeological or textual evidence, and which is often difficult to place in a wider context. The iconography examined here is, however, still significant for the study of animal sacrifice and may provide insights not found elsewhere in the material. I begin by looking at one of the most common scenes on cylinder seals of the Near East in the period.

### **Presentation scenes**

A very popular theme on cylinder seals, particularly in the Akkadian and Old Babylonian periods, is known as the ‘presentation scene’. A typical Akkadian example is shown on H70. A seated deity, identified as the sun-god Shamash by the rays emanating from his shoulders and the knife he is holding in his hand, is approached from the right by four figures. First is a god, identified as such by his horned

headdress, wearing a striped robe and leading a worshipper. The worshipper is a bearded man carrying a small horned animal, probably a goat, and wearing a fringed skirt. Behind him comes another bearded man in a fringed robe, carrying a small object in his right hand, perhaps what is usually identified as a bucket or a pail. Lastly is a small figure which is not very distinct, but also appears to be human and wearing a fringed robe. What is standard in this scene is the approach towards a deity of a human worshipper. The worshipper is often, though not always, accompanied by an interceding deity. He/she does not always carry an animal (in fact in the Ur III period, such scenes are extremely rare), but only those with an animal are considered here, as only they are of relevance to animal sacrifice. More examples of the theme are shown on H29-H155.

Although heavily standardised, there are many minor variations of the presentation scene. Some of these variations can be linked to chronological differences – the scene may in fact have developed from the ‘banquet scenes’ discussed earlier, where animals are at times brought to seated figures (e.g. H5, H66, I5, I6 and I8). The further changes in the Old Babylonian period may be exemplified by H82. Some of the variations apparently related to chronology are the standing instead of seated deity, the fact that the worshipper approaches the deity directly, with the interceding deity placed *behind* the worshipper, not leading him into Shamash’s presence (Haussperger 1991: 74). Haussperger, in her monograph on the subject, distinguishes between “‘echte’ Einführung” and “Adoration”,<sup>101</sup> which is based on the placement of the interceding deity (Haussperger 1991: 35). In some cases, the interceding deity may be left out entirely. The way the worshipper holds the animal is also slightly different; where in the previous example the worshipper carries the goat in his arms, the animal here almost seems to be hovering by itself in the air. This change is understood by E. Douglas van Buren as a reflection of “the transition from a rural to an urban mode of life”, and she further notes that the later development with the animal being carried in

---

<sup>101</sup> The ‘echte’ Einführung being when the interceding deity is in front of the worshipper, and the Adoration when the interceding deity is behind. Haussperger further identifies three main figures that occur in presentation scenes (one being adored, one adoring and one intermediate) and classifies the variation of these three figures according to seven different schemes (Haussperger 1991: 245).

one outstretched arm “suggests that it may have been a small model, a token offering” (van Buren 1951: 17 and 22).

There have been some studies on presentation scenes (e.g. van Buren 1951, Franke 1977, Nissen 1986, Winter 1986, Haussperger 1991, Suter 1991/93, Fischer 1997 and Felli 2006), but in many cases their interpretation is taken for granted, without much discussion or definition of what kind of act is being depicted, as can be exemplified by van Buren’s introductory sentence, “It might be the subject of the presentation of a goat to a divinity was a plain statement of a definite action without ulterior meaning” (van Buren 1951: 15). She does not go on to explain what the “definite action without ulterior meaning” which is supposed to be a “plain statement” might consist of. In fact, as we shall see, the presentation scene is anything but a “plain statement”, at least to modern eyes.

What is of interest to this study is the animal frequently brought to the deity by the worshipper. The pivotal question is what happens to the animal once the deity has accepted it. The two images so far discussed provide little clue to this problem: the animal is simply brought into the presence of the deity. The knife or saw held by Shamash may suggest some sort of cutting or other violence against the animal. However, this is so standard a symbol used to designate Shamash that it cannot be taken to mean anything other than that, although considering there are a number of identifiers used for Shamash, the specific choice of the knife may have some significance. As such, the presence of Shamash with his knife may be a reference to his role as judge (the origin of the saw supposedly lies in its function as ‘cutting’ justice), which has suggested the interpretation of the presentation scene as relating to justice or the worshipper being given his fair share (for example a specific office). This is part of the interpretation offered by Winter, who notes that as well as the frequent depiction of Shamash as a figure on the seals, astral symbols of Shamash and *Sîn* are often used (as can be seen for example on H82, H92.H94, H106 and H118-H120), both associated with justice (Winter 1986: 259). Felli further comments on the

role of Enki, the water-god, also often depicted in presentation scenes, as an important dispenser of justice, especially in the Akkadian period (Felli 2006: 49).

However, though Shamash, along with Sîn and Enki, are very commonly the deities approached by the worshipper, this is far from always the case, and therefore such an interpretation cannot account for all depictions. Other deities depicted include Ishtar, Ninsianna, Ea, Adad and many unidentified deities (see van Buren 1951 for a summary). Therefore, the interpretation of the presentation scene as relating to justice may suggest one instance in which the ‘presentation’ takes place, but so far it does not offer a single explanation for all these scenes, if indeed such exists. Further, the role of the animal is not fully explained in this interpretation, though it is also not excluded. If the scenes depict a petition, or request, from a human worshipper, it is possible that the nature of the request to some extent can be substantiated through the wider context – not just the deity approached, but also any other elements, since these are not arbitrary, and are all imbued with some significance, some of which it may be possible to discover by careful analysis and comparison of the compositions.

Some indication of at least a ritual aspect of the two seals described above is the presence of the small ‘bucket’ on both and a second item held by the man (probably a priest, as he is nude) on H82, identified as a ‘sprinkler’ by both Buchanan and Collon (Buchanan 1966: 91 and Collon 1990: 47). Both of these objects are probably associated with libations. The object held by the priest in his left hand appears with some frequency in presentation scenes (for example H82, H57, H58, H82, H128, and perhaps H40, H74, H105, H127, and I4), and in some cases its function as a libation vessel is revealed when a liquid is poured from it, usually onto an offering table and by a priest (H57, H58 and I4). The ‘bucket’ (held in the priest’s right hand in H82) is depicted even more frequently – it is also referred to as a pail, a situla or a lock (Buchanan 1981: 174,185; Werr 1992: 37; Collon 1982b; Hammade 1987: 32). This ‘bucket’ is in itself an interesting object, which I will return to shortly. However, the object in the priest’s right hand is significantly different from the objects usually identified as buckets: it is held at an angle to the ground (which makes more sense for

pouring); it has a small tip, probably indicating a spout, and it has ribs, possibly suggesting that it was made of metal. Similar objects are shown on H76, H100, and H127, where the absence of a top line again indicates an open vessel, and in H105, where the ribs are clearly visible, and the two pronged lines below may indicate liquid being poured. The features of the two vessels, rhyton and perhaps a cup, show an emphasis on liquids and the pouring of liquids, though the type of liquid is uncertain.

The item classified as a 'bucket' is different in that it is held horizontally, there are no indications of ribs or spouts and it is usually carried by a human worshipper, often female (H32, H33, H37, H48, H49, H55, H58, H59, H61, H62, H70, H72, H73 and H88). Its top appears to be where the handle is attached, since in some cases a rim is indicated (H32, H49 and H59). Whether or not the differences in shape (some being square and straight-sided, others being elongated with incurving sides) indicate another difference in vessel type or is due to regional and/or chronological varieties is not clear. Their function is also uncertain - in Neo-Assyrian art, such objects are often shown on reliefs, used by demons and kings, and are thought to be associated with purification (Black and Green 1992: 46), but they may not have had the same function in the Akkadian and Old Babylonian periods. In the context of the presentation scenes, they could have held further offerings; it is also tempting to see them as receptacles for blood when they are depicted with animal offerings. However, there is no contextual evidence for this, and blood in the Mesopotamian region does not seem to have had the same importance as in biblical religion (see for example McCarthy 1969 and 1973). Whatever their precise function, these items were certainly used in ritual, and they thus suggest that a ritual is depicted, in which the animal 'offering' would also have featured.

If more examples are taken into account, there are suggestions that the animal was in fact killed. In several examples, the way the animal is handled and carried suggests that it is either already dead, or soon to be killed – H24, H86, H101, H108, H111 and



H113<sup>102</sup> show the worshipper holding the animal by the hind leg, in a manner that would be unlikely for a completely healthy and live animal. In a few other examples, a table placed in front of the deity is piled with food: in H22, the food on the table is identified by Woolley as cakes and meat in the shape of a leg of lamb (Woolley 1934: 360), H36 shows another table with food, and H49 shows the table, this time with an animal head on it (perhaps on top of a pile of cakes). Although it is difficult to determine the precise type of animal this head belonged to, its presence on the table clearly shows that an animal was killed. Cooking may also be depicted on H37 and H48, where a small figure makes a gesture consisting of one arm raised at the top of what appears to be a cauldron, and the other hand at the bottom of it. Associated with this is also one or two storage vessels. These subsidiary scenes may indicate a feast to the deity and that the offerings brought are meant as provisions for the occasion – something which finds a close parallel in the banquet scenes of earlier periods. If so, the animal is likely to have been cooked. Their juxtaposition indicates a connection, but it is not clear precisely what the relationship between the main elements of the presentation scene, and the smaller cooking scenes, is.

On the other hand, two examples may suggest that the animal was included in the temple herds, at least temporarily – H51 and H60 show a goat seemingly nibbling at a plant that the deity holds in his hand, and H60 also has a scene of milking behind the worshipper. The placement of the worshipper and goat in between these two strongly associates the animal with these other elements, rather than with any violent act. Van Buren's understanding of all these scenes as having to do with fertility may be relevant for these and certain other examples with special emphasis on plants and vegetation deities (van Buren 1951). She suggests that the development of how the animal is carried, from apparently more realistic depictions to more formalised ones, might indicate that it was no longer an actual animal that was offered, but a 'model', essentially a substitute, "As it was a purely symbolic presentation the animal was reduced to the simplest abstract form, and they carried it resting on their extended

---

<sup>102</sup> Most of these examples do not originate in southern Mesopotamia, where most seals with presentation scenes come from, but most of them are Syrian or of Syrian style; this may be precisely why they offer a slightly different view of the same theme, thus providing a valuable insight into the understanding of it.

forearm, an impossibility in the case of a living creature of normal size which suggests that it may have been a small model, a token offering” (van Buren 1951: 22). This interpretation attributes an undue amount of realism to a scene that has been heavily formalised; as such, it cannot be expected to provide an accurate or dynamic depiction of how an animal might have been carried, just as the rest of the features and gestures of the figures are not particularly dynamic. By this logic, the human and divine figures should also be considered models, or perhaps statues.

The bringing of the animal for a deity, or in some cases a king, has also been interpreted as being for extispicy. This is suggested by Felli, who associates the extispicy with the appointment of cultic officials (with a caution, however, that so far there is no unambiguous evidence for the interpretation of these scenes – Felli 2006: 42-45). Suter similarly links the extispicy and what she calls ‘petition’, also to do with official appointments, but explains this with the importance of the king as a mediator between humans and divinities (in his role as main *haruspex* – Suter 1991/93: 68). The problem with the latter is that although the king is shown in many of the scenes, he is not always there, neither as receiving the offering nor as bringing the offering, so again, this cannot apply as an interpretation of all the scenes. Another issue is that the animal offered is almost always a goat, and, as noted by van Buren, probably not a kid, as is often written in descriptions of seals, since the animal is usually shown with full horns and at times a beard, which identifies it as an adult (van Buren 1951: 16). This does not accord with written evidence, where the animal used for extispicy is usually a sheep. It is possible, however, that a specific ritual which is not well recorded in the textual evidence, and which generally required a goat rather than a sheep, is being depicted.

The standardised way in which a human worshipper brings an animal to a deity does, however, still suggest that a specific meaning was attached to this act. Variations in the act are indicated by the other elements and details of each individual scene, though these are not always easily deciphered by modern eyes. Thus, there appears to have been a standardised way of depicting the offering of an animal to a deity, but this

specific act could have a range of different goals, which from present evidence may have been associated with justice/law, war, battle, disease, vegetation/agriculture, the appointment to office, and petitions. In any case, although the focus has here been on the animal, the animal is merely a means to a goal; it is of secondary importance to whatever is hoped for in return. This goes a long way to explain why a single unified interpretation of all such scenes does not emerge – it is because the animal is being used as a means to different ends.

### **Animal killing**

Unambiguous scenes of animals being killed in a religious setting are extremely rare, and can, for the entire period and area, be counted on one hand. Although for the similar situation in the Aegean it has been suggested that this is precisely because this is the most sacred and elevated moment of sacrifice (e.g. Marinatos 1988), it seems more likely that it is simply because the process of killing and cutting the animal is not considered symbolically important. Certainly it was not as important as other aspects, such as the bringing of the animal and the eating of meat (both perhaps indicating wealth in some way, whether that be the wealth of the country, the people, the ruler or the gods). In the few depictions there are of animals being killed or cut, there is no evidence of elevated horror or awareness at what is happening, in fact in most cases, the killing/cutting appears as a matter of course as part of a more extensive event, with no particular emphasis on the act itself. Animals being killed or cut open are shown on H24, H52, H53, I15 and perhaps H26-H28.<sup>103</sup>

I15-I17 are ivory plaques from Mari dating to the ED III period. I15 and I16 show two men holding a ram on its back on the ground, whereas I17 appears to be part of a similar composition, with only the right-hand side surviving. The fact that two men can hold the animal like this, and the turning of the animal's head, indicates that it is already dead, and presumably the men are in the process of cutting it up. The I15

---

<sup>103</sup> This does not include animals being killed in so-called contest scenes, which are probably scenes of mythological content.

plaque is reconstructed, and the other figures do not certainly belong to the scene, and will therefore here be excluded from the discussion. The problem with such a minimalist scene is that, although we can detect slaughter with some certainty, it is more difficult to establish its sacrificial nature. The only indicator in these instances is the fact that the men, as bald, could be interpreted as priests – had the scenes survived intact, we may have had better contextual evidence. I21 from Ur probably depicts a similar ritual: it also shows an animal (this time probably an ox) stretched out on its back on the ground, with two men holding its legs. This scene includes a third man in the middle, who appears to have his hands in the animal's belly – perhaps in the process of taking out the organs. To the right of this scene, a man “leans forward pouring a thick stream of liquid from a headless male goat or skin bag” (Canby 2001: 22). This is almost certainly a libation (regardless of whether it is blood from a live animal or some unknown liquid from a skin bag), which, combined with the baldness of the figures, suggests a religious scene. The other registers and the other side of the stele support such a context.<sup>104</sup>

Two cylinder seals show animals on their back, being held or cut by human figures (H52 and H53). On H52, the animal (an ox?) is lying on a platform, and two human figures, in a similar position as on the Mari plaque, hold the animal at each end; the figure on the left appears to be holding a long implement, perhaps for cutting. This scene of the lower register may belong in the theme of the banquet scene, and its upper register, with a human-headed boat and a dragon, provides a mythological link. H53 is similar to presentation scenes in its composition. It also shows an animal on its back on the ground; in this case it is clearly situated in front of a deity, and being cut along the throat with a knife, probably by a priest. If the religious element of the previous examples were tenuous, this is an unmistakable instance of an animal being cut open directly in front of a deity – a sacrifice.

---

<sup>104</sup> The other registers include scenes of human figures approaching seated deities and royal figures, libations, and, very interestingly, drummers and drums with what appear to be wrestlers in one register, and building activities in another. The different registers may represent separate activities performed by the king, or activities taking place at the same time.

## Human sacrifice

### *Archaeological material (Table 4)*

The archaeological evidence for human sacrifice in the ancient Near East is compelling. Alberto Ravinell Whitney Green provides a good survey and evaluation of much of the evidence pertaining to human sacrifice in the ancient Near East, using archaeological, textual and iconographic material (Green 1975), and I will here discuss some of this evidence, along with a few more recent examples, as well as some of the issues pertaining to human sacrifice in the Near East and its scholarship. The prime example of human sacrifice in the ancient Near East is the Early Dynastic ‘Royal Cemetery’ at Ur. Excavated in the early twentieth century by Leonard Woolley, this cemetery contains at least 11 ‘royal’ graves and ‘death pits’ with human sacrificial ‘victims’ (F97-F103, F106, F107, F111 and F113).<sup>105</sup> For example, PG 789, supposedly the tomb of King Abargi, contained a total of 63 human bodies in the stone chamber ‘pit’, including six bodies on the ramp, identified as soldiers because of their equipment of copper spears and copper helmets. Two wooden wagons were each drawn by three cattle, with more human bodies found at their back and heads – hence called ‘drivers’ and ‘grooms’. The end wall of the pit contained nine bodies, apparently of women (whether known as such from skeletal analysis or their outfits of precious material is unclear). In between these and the other bodies were strewn the bodies of more men and women, and down the middle of the chamber was a mass of animal bones (Woolley 1934: 62-71). The other graves with human ‘victims’ include similarly large numbers, though some appear to have had only a few ‘servants’ taken with them.

Woolley reconstructs a scenario in which the main occupant of the grave is first buried, and then

---

<sup>105</sup> Usually the number given is 16 – and there may well be more than this – but these are the ones where Woolley actually indicates possible victims. The reports for the rest are less clear about the presence of human victims, although this is one of the criteria use by Woolley to call them ‘Royal’.

down the sloping passage comes a procession of people, the members of the court, soldiers, men-servants, and women, the latter in all their finery of brightly coloured garments and head-dresses of lapis lazuli and silver and gold, and with them musicians bearing harps or lyres, cymbals, and sistra; they take up their position in the farther part of the pit and then there are driven or backed down the slope the chariots drawn by oxen or by asses, the drivers in the cars, the grooms holding the heads of the draught animals, and these too are marshalled in the pit. Each man and woman brought a little cup of clay or stone or metal, the only equipment required for the rite that was to follow. Some kind of service there must have been at the bottom of the shaft, at least it is evident that the musicians played up to the last, and then each drank from the cup; either they brought the potion with them or they found it prepared for them on the spot – in PG/1237 there was in the middle of the pit a great copper pot into which they could have dipped – and they composed themselves for death. Then some one came down and killed the animals and perhaps arranged the drugged bodies, and when that was done earth was flung from above on to them, and the filling-in of the grave-shaft was begun. (Woolley 1934: 35)

Although this may seem fanciful, it is largely based on the evidence – what cannot be known for certain is how these many people died. The poison theory cannot be proved, but Woolley's interpretation was rightly based on the evidence as he knew it, with a total lack of any signs of violence, as well as a generally neat arrangement of the bodies (though, as Woolley notes, this may have been done post-mortem). However, very recent and interesting studies on two of the crushed skulls (a woman and a man) from the royal tombs tell a different story, both skulls having holes in them, perhaps made by a pike (Wilford 2009). This would reveal a more violent scenario, but perhaps not changing the underlying belief-system where the 'victims' go to their death willingly, or at least knowingly. The identity of the main occupant has also been questioned. Woolley called these tombs 'royal', and used several inscriptions on seals

found in the tombs as support (Woolley 1934: 37-38). This evidence has been disputed by some, but quite convincing evidence in support of Woolley's identification of the tombs as royal is provided by Julian Reade (Reade 2001 and 2003 – the latter with a table summary of the tombs and their 'royal' occupants). However, the exact identity of the occupants of the tomb is perhaps not the central issue here – the fact remains that they were all extremely rich in their offerings, both in terms of quantity and quality, and as such are likely to be occupied by highly elite members of the society. Woolley's interpretation sees all the material found in the graves as provisions for the afterlife of the main occupant, supposedly enabling them to continue the same kind of lifestyle as before.

Other interpretations relate the ritual to fertility and the Sacred Marriage, with the main occupant being a priest or priestess and the rest being sacrificed to ensure the fertility of the land (Woolley 1934: 38 and Green 1975: 48-50). Woolley's own main objection to this is that such a ritual should have taken place every year, yet there are only 16 'royal' tombs, which naturally leaves many blank years. More importantly, there are no indications that these are anything but tombs. At Kish, a similar custom may be indicated by the chariot burials, where bovids with evidence of vehicles were found with several human skeletons (F51-F53). Unfortunately, the circumstances of the excavation do not allow thorough analysis of the material, and therefore the human sacrificial element remains uncertain. The tradition of human sacrifice appears to have continued at Ur into the Ur III period, as shown by the evidence from the Mausoleum of King Shulgi and Amar-sin, where one tomb chamber belonged to the king, and another contained a number of human skeletons, interpreted as sacrificial victims (Woolley 1982: 163-174).

Further evidence comes from the north, from Tell umm el-Marra, where human bones were found with the equid and canine bones in separate tomb Installations. These installations were clearly not actual burials in the same manner as the other tombs, but rather some sort of cultic installations related to the tomb complex as a whole. As already mentioned, human remains were discovered in Installations A, B and D, all

from infants (F80, F81 and F83). These remains appear to represent quite a different custom than those found at Ur. In both places, the offerings and sacrifices are mostly spatially separated from the main burial, at Ur with the sacrifices in the dromos or separate, though linked, ‘pits’ (although in some cases there are also human ‘victims’ with what is considered the ‘main’ burial), and at Tell umm el-Marra with structures so separate that it cannot always be determined which tomb they belonged to (or if they only belonged to one tomb). However, several features of the Tell umm el-Marra evidence suggests a cultic custom not related to provisions for the afterlife: the benches (not placed in the tomb for the use of the deceased), the special attention paid to the equid skulls, the spouted jars (and general absence of other offerings), and the emphasis on youth in the form of puppies and infants. It is difficult to reconstruct the ritual represented by these remains, and especially how equids (in particular skulls), puppies and infants all serve a role in a single ritual. In Hittite custom, dogs, and especially puppies, could serve a purificatory purpose, as well as being related to the ‘underworld’ (Collins 1992 and 2004) – and a Hurrian *abi* pit at Tell Mozan, interpreted as an ‘underworld channel’, contained many skeletal remains from puppies (G26). Certainly, both of these roles would make sense at a funeral, and perhaps the youth of the infants had a similar purpose, although this is nowhere attested (see however, below, for more suggestions of possible human sacrifice involving infants and young children). No signs of repeated entry or use is mentioned in the reports, so the installations appear to be related to single events, probably each associated with one of the burials.

An association of dogs, equids and perhaps humans with purification may also contribute to the understanding of several deposits in Areas FS and SS at Tell Brak (G22), also in the north, from the Akkadian period (late third millennium). At least seven deposits were found, interpreted as relating to a ‘closing ritual’ of what is believed to be a temple and its subsidiary buildings, and some of these included human bones, “c. 1 m north of the doorway of Room 2, rested a second donkey skeleton accompanied by a scatter of human bones representing parts of dismembered corpses” and “Above the floor of Room 20 was the usual layer of brick debris on which lay three partly dismembered human skeletons, accompanied by a number of



broken pots ... Similar fragmentary skeletons together with isolated skulls were found in Courtyard 5, and a single skull was found in association with Room 30 in the Area SS complex” (Oates *et al.* 2001: 43 and 49-50). There seems once again to be an emphasis on skulls, but in this case not on youth, as none of the remains are reported as being infants or puppies. Significantly, the human remains have been deliberately dismembered, lending support to the interpretation of the evidence as ritual killing. The excavators avoid using the vocabulary of human sacrifice, instead noting that “Like the donkeys the human skeletons represent some ritual act associated with the closure of the building, though if the abandonment of the complex was the result of human action, their presence might also be seen as an act of revenge on the people who had brought this about.” (Oates *et al.* 2001: 50). It is difficult to see a motivation of revenge, however, when the human remains are found in deposits with animal bones, though it is quite possible that it was preferable to sacrifice humans that are enemies rather than part of the group. This depends on the importance attributed to the ritual, and the requirement of the sacrifices – not all animals are equally suitable for sacrifice, and the same may have been the case for humans.

Even with this evidence at hand, there are similar problems to those in Aegean scholarship on the subject. In terms of the archaeological evidence, human sacrifice can be very difficult to detect, and may at times be indistinguishable from other practices. Such is for example the case with numerous finds of skeletons of infants and children near and under temple walls and in chapels, at the northern sites of Nuzi, Tepe Gawra, Chagar Bazar and Tell Brak (Green 1975: 59-83). There is great disagreement about how to interpret these finds – Ellis does not consider the evidence from these sites strong enough to merit human sacrifice (Ellis 1968: 38-39), while Green believes that the “only reasonable way” of explaining the location of these burials (as opposed to other burials at the same sites) and their association with altars and other votive offerings is that they “could signify some ritual involving a special type of burial, or a sacrificial rite which involves the killing of infants” (Green 1975: 79). Essentially, the problem is that unless the human ‘victims’ are treated in a way that leaves a trace in the archaeological record, for example being tied in a way that would be obvious in the remains, cut up or beheaded (which would also only show a

violent death, not in itself a sacrificial death), the difference between a ‘natural’ death and one by sacrifice is not detectable. Thus, other circumstances may be taken into account – for example, location and related finds. The above examples have attracted attention as possible cases of sacrifice precisely because of their strange locations, often related to religious structures, and their general lack of the usual grave goods, which is uncommon, though not unseen. These features are indeed very suggestive, but inconclusive.

The method of attempting to identify human sacrifice by analogy with animal sacrifice is, like the Aegean, fraught with difficulties. For example, in sepulchral contexts, the burial is usually made for humans, which means that animal bones can be considered intrusive or secondary – in contrast, human bones are, of course, generally thought to be the remains of the deceased for whom the internment was made. The main reason for the Ur sacrifices to be considered as such is the sheer number of individuals found in the same place, the differentiation in grave goods from other inhabitants of the tomb, and their location in the tomb. Once this is identified in one tomb, parallels can be made to those with fewer inhabitants. This is, however, rarely done for any other sites.

On top of problems of identification in the archaeological record is the issue of scholarly bias (which influences the interpretation and reports of archaeologists) – either with an inclination to overstate the case or a disbelief that such gruesome acts could have been done by their favourite culture. As is no surprise, this can cause great problems in terms of the accepted limits of interpretation - as Green puts it,

In itself, it is of no importance that a given ritual should appear “unethical,” “revolting” or “barbaric” to a given scholar; opinion and science are two different things ... it is when the scholar proceeds to argue that, because a ceremony or ritual is revolting (to him), it ought, therefore, to be explained away as the relic of an even more barbarous age, or rejected as an interpolation of

“popular” origin, that one finds oneself involved in all sorts of errors of fact (Green 1975: 189).

Curiously, Green does not give an example or explain how the opposite may be the case; how evidence might be sensationalised and exaggerated for whatever purposes of an excavator or scholar. However, even in such cases, the tendency is to see human sacrifice as barbaric or primitive. No doubt this is the attitude taken in most societies today, but without proper understanding of the context and purposes (which, even with the best evidence, are not well understood) such value judgements are inappropriate and not conducive to further insights into this evocative custom.

### *Iconographic material*

There is no unambiguous iconographic evidence of human sacrifice. As we have repeatedly seen with other types of evidence, the lack of material in one type does not exclude or even question its existence. So, since there are no known depictions of sacrifice in connection with burials, it follows naturally that there are no known depictions of human sacrifice in connection with burials. And considering human sacrifice is only known archaeologically from burials, it should be no surprise that images of human sacrifice are rare or difficult to recognise.

Green directs attention to a common scene on seals which usually shows a male figure raising one arm as if to strike, and holding a weapon in the other, while trampling on a human figure, itself usually on one knee and lifting an arm in defence (examples can be seen on H83, H105, H108, H135 and H172-H181). The scene often takes place within a religious setting, in front of one or several deities, and at times with other elements pointing to ritual, such as a figure with the sprinkler and bucket (H105 and H177). The issue of whether or not this is a representation of the ritual killing of a human being has hinged on the identity of the figure striking the ‘victim’ – he is seen as either a god, a priest or a king. However, as Green points out, the scenes should be seen as a whole, not disregarding the rest of the context. Other elements such as the priest with ‘sprinkler’, as well as the setting, often in front of a deity and/or possible temple structure, do suggest a religious content of the scenes. Green concludes that

these scenes do in fact depict the ritual killing of human beings. Such an interpretation is possible, but some minor problems may be noted. Although explicit scenes of the ritual killing of animals are rare, comparison with such, and with those thought to refer at some level to animal sacrifice, does not reveal any similarity between animal and human 'victims'. A figure like the striking one does not occur with animals, nor do animals appear in corresponding defensive and submissive postures. It may of course be that the human killing depicted was a considerably different practice or ritual with no animal equivalent, and thus shown in a significantly different manner. The new studies on the skulls from Ur may actually provide some support, since they indicate that the human 'victims' were killed by the strike of a sharp instrument to the head (Wilford 2009).

A different interpretation of these scenes may be suggested which relates to disease and destiny. In several cases, the god Nergal is shown. Nergal is primarily associated with the underworld, but also with fever, plague and war. Another scene with Nergal, a lion-demon and a human 'victim' show "the punishment of a sinner, a graphic rendering of seizure by disease" (Black and Green 1992: 67) – a similar interpretation may apply to the above scenes, as representations of a fever or the plague, at least those where Nergal is present. The man with the sprinkler and bucket may in this case be part of a healing ritual. The deity shown may also be Enki, rather than Nergal. Enki is usually associated with water, but one of his other aspects is as determiner of human destinies; this ties in with the human 'victim' as being punished for some sort of sin, and Enki's function here may therefore be quite similar to that of Nergal. The 'striking' of the human 'victim' would thus have a purely symbolic meaning, as being 'struck' by disease.

### *Textual material*

There is little evidence for human sacrifice in the textual material, and as usual, the possible examples are disputed. The only occasion of human sacrifice which might be recorded is that of burials; Sumerian fragments, dated to the late third millennium, of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* narrate Gilgamesh's arrival in the netherworld with all his

offerings and grave goods, the contents of which are closely mirrored in the ‘royal’ tombs of Ur,

His beloved wife, his beloved son, the ... wife, his  
beloved concubine, his musician, his beloved entertainer,  
his beloved chief valet, his beloved ... , his beloved  
household, the palace attendants, his beloved caretaker,  
in his(?) purified place (tomb?) within Uruk, he  
laid them down with him. Gilgamesh, the son of Ninsun,  
weighed out their offerings ... , gifts ... , and presents ...  
at the place of libations ... poured out beer.

(as translated in Zarins 1986: 180 – see also Kramer 1944).

This is of course an epic, largely a work of fiction, and even if there was a historical ruler by the name of Gilgamesh, we cannot know how much can be used for reconstruction of history, society and customs. However, the tombs at Ur prove that such burials did take place, and here the archaeological evidence is certainly stronger than the textual evidence, because of the mythological nature of the epic.

A similar though less extravagant text comes from the Ur III period at Girsu/Telloh, which is a list, apparently of offerings at the funeral of Ninenise, the wife of Urtarsirsira:

I.

1. 1 woman’s garment (of the wool from) barley-eating sheep,
2. 1 long nig<sub>2</sub>-lam<sub>2</sub>-garment,
3. 1 boxwood bed with thin legs,
4. 1 chair, being open(-work?), of boxwood,

5. 1 sledge (of threshing-sledge type) of boxwood,

II.

1. 1 team female kunga<sub>2</sub>-equids,

2. 1 bronze hand-mirror,

3. 1 ... of bronze,

4. 1 Akkadian copper luxury(?) container,

5. 1 copper ... luxury(?) item,

6. 1 small bun<sub>2</sub>-di-bowl,

III.

1. (these things) are the ensi<sub>2</sub>'s.

2. 1 slave girl,

3. 1 pot perfumed oil,

4. 1 pot ghee,

5. 1 ... -garment,

6. 1 ... -garment,

7. 1 bar-dul<sub>5</sub>-garment that ties at the neck,

8. 1 bar-dul<sub>5</sub>-garment, a spreading thing,

IV.

1. 1 linen ... ,

2. 1 woman's woolen headband,

3. 1 gold choker,

4. 6 carnelian um-dur-necklaces,

5. 2 gold um-dur-necklaces,

6. 2 gold zi-um-necklaces,

V.

1. 1 gold container that “goes at the hand”,

2. 4 “purified silver” containers that “go at the hand”,

3. 1 large bun<sub>2</sub>-di-bowl,

4. 1 perfume-jar of algames-stone ... ,

VI.

1. 1 (wooden) board and small wood scales,

2. 1 pair of combs of boxwood,

3. 10 boxwood spindles,

4. 1 bowl of boxwood

5. 1 foot-stool of oak

6. 3 ban<sub>2</sub> ground ...

VII.

1. 2 ul un-ground ...

2. 1 bucket for ... ,

3. (these things) are Baragnamtara’s.

VIII.

1. When Urtarsirsira,

2. the son (of Lugalanda),

3-5. was burying his wife Ninenise,

6. Lugalanda,

7. the ensi<sub>2</sub>

8. of Lagas

9. allotted (these objects) to him. 5(th year).

(Cohen 2005: 165-166, J26).

The text is, however, not without problems. As Cohen writes, the word that is translated here as 'to bury' (the word is  $tum_2$ ) is by others translated as 'to carry', with the sense in this context of 'to marry' (Cohen 2005: 163). That these are so easily exchanged is a testament to the similarity of the rituals of death and marriage (both perhaps understood as a type of rite of passage), but in the context of human sacrifice, there is a serious difference between the two translations. The 'slave girl' is in one case likely to have been put in the grave with her mistress, while in the other she would serve her mistress in life. Cohen believes that even if the translation as 'bury' is correct, the girl may have served the husband, and thus stayed alive, rather than 'serving' the wife (Cohen 2005: 96). However, if the rest of the list is a record of offerings for the tomb of the wife, it would seem odd that this one 'item' should be for a different purpose.

Again, even with strong evidence, the case for human sacrifice has to be not only the most likely explanation, it often also has to be the only conceivable possibility in order for it to be accepted. The Ur example is thus extremely difficult to explain as anything other than human sacrifice. However, there is generally not much discussion of this issue in Near Eastern scholarship, just as the subject of animal sacrifice is not very often treated in its own right (this is with the exception of biblical scholarship, where both these issues are much more on the agenda).



## Conclusions

The ancient Near East constitutes a large mix of different cultures at all times throughout the period in question. This is very much reflected in the evidence, which suggests animal and human sacrifice in a variation of contexts, such as burials, festivals and feasting, temple rituals, including extispicy, in connection with building activity and treaties, as well as more enigmatic cases shown in the iconography and in so far unique or rare instances. Differences in sacrificial practices can in some cases be explained by the variation in time and space, but many of the rituals do exist at the same time in the same place. When they do not, the differences may interestingly be explained by the multiplicity of social structures and cultural background.

Although all of these rituals in this work are treated under the apparently singular and simple heading of 'sacrifice', it is unlikely that the people of the ancient Near East would have categorised them in the same manner. In many cases, all they have in common is the religious killing or dedication of an animal or human being to a deity or some other supernatural entity.

One feature which manifests itself in most cases of sacrifice is that they all seem to be part of some larger, more elaborate rituals, or the 'sacrifice' itself is performed, though not without due care and attention, for some other, primary purpose. Sacrifice is therefore often part of a feast, in which meat-eating is only a small part, or part of an event celebrating a royal figure, or the animal is sacrificed in order to make prophecies, again often for a very specific purpose. Thus, what emerges is that sacrifice was extremely important in many varieties and situations, working as a tool for many different ends.



# CHAPTER 4

## COMPARISONS AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM

This chapter will compare the ‘primary’ material from the two areas discussed in the previous chapters, as well as the approaches taken to the material by scholars working in those areas. As has been seen, there is a vast amount of material from many different areas and cultures, of great variety and spanning a long period of almost 2000 years. Part of the interest here is to examine how such variety can guide interpretation; that is, how the absence or presence of some types of material may affect the way we interpret the past. This is not a simple matter of there being more or less evidence of a practice such as sacrifice, but how the material is used and prioritised by the people studying it. I will also examine discrepancies between different types of material. This has already been mentioned in instances where, for example, sacrificial practices are suggested by one type of material, but are partially or completely absent in other types. The chapter will further explore how poststructuralist ideas may be applied to parts of

this evidence in order to gain new insights into certain aspects of sacrifice in the areas in question, without insisting on such interpretations as final or static. In particular, the ideas used are those of Baudrillard concerning the relation between the living and the dead, and the manipulation of symbols, and those of Girard concerning the role of the double and liminality in the sacrificial process.

### **The material evidence of the Aegean and Near East**

Most of the evidence from both the Aegean and the Near East is in some way associated with the 'elites' of the cultures, for example by deriving from wealthy burials, palaces and temples or being made of expensive materials such as gold or semi-precious stones. It should therefore be kept in mind that the material in this study can only justifiably be applied to these 'elite' parts of the cultures of the Aegean and the Near East.

From the previous chapters, it will have become clear that the material from the Aegean and Near East differs significantly. Although I have discussed it under similar headings such as burials, sacrificial space and feasting, this taxonomy should not be understood as representing completely homogenous practices in the two areas. At a basic level, the amount of material from the Near East is far greater and has its provenance in more cultures than that of the Aegean. For example, although we have some textual evidence from the Aegean in the form of Linear B tablets, this material is hardly comparable to the countless tablets and other inscribed objects of the ancient Near East, which, although mainly administrative, also includes literary works such as epics and poetry. The larger amount of material may at least partly explain the greater extent of ancient standardisation apparent in the Near East, as well as the modern typologies created from such a large body of material. In the archaeological record there are, for example, set temple plans for different periods and geographical areas (Roaf 1995). Similarly, the vast amount of iconographic material allows the grouping and interpretation of specific standardised themes, such as the banquet or presentation scenes. The amount of material allows modern scholars to create such studies and typologies with a stronger basis than in the Aegean, and a greater degree of standardisation appears to be one of the features of the cultures in question.

The difference in material is one of the main reasons for the contrasting approaches displayed by Aegean and Near Eastern scholars.<sup>106</sup> Aegean studies tend to feature more in-depth discussions of specific topics, with stronger elements of theory and hypothesis based on the evidence at hand (e.g. Hamilakis 2003a, Bendall 2004 and Wright 2004b). For the Near East, the research is more typological and factual, mostly abstaining from interpretation and theorising (e.g. Haussperger 1991, Collins 2002, Duistermaat 2008). This is of course a general picture, and it is not my aim to decide which is better; they both have their merits, and depending on the material studied, one or the other – or both – may be more appropriate. The vast amount of textual material from the Near East is, as has been mentioned, a mixed blessing because it is too often referred to, in the case of any doubts, as the most authoritative resource, over and above other types of evidence, such as the archaeological and iconographic records. That textual evidence is also not simple and straightforward should be plain, but even the way a text such as the Bible is still used as literal evidence makes it clear that this is not the case. The problems with textual evidence include not just modern linguistic problems, but also discerning ancient intentions and ideology. Records of animals for sacrifice could, for example, have been exaggerated or slightly skewed to suit the ideological purposes of a temple administration. That this is a real possibility is shown by a study of sacrifice in Shang China, which reveals discrepancies between animals recorded for sacrifice in texts and those actually discovered archaeologically (Jing and Flad 2005). That does not mean that the same thing happened in the Near East, nor that all such material should be left out of consideration, but simply that we should keep such issues in mind, and not prioritise textual material in an unreflective manner or assume that it is any less problematic than archaeological and iconographic material.

The emphasis on textual material is partly related to one of the other main causes of differences in Aegean and Near Eastern scholarship: their history, and especially beginnings, as disciplines. Near Eastern scholarship/archaeology essentially started with the Bible as the main source, with the aim of verifying the truth of Biblical

---

<sup>106</sup> The terms ‘Aegean scholarship’ and ‘Near Eastern scholarship’, as with the terms ‘Aegean’ and ‘Near East’, cover a complexity and variety of cultures or ‘civilisations’ and also entail a great variety of disciplines, including archaeology, classics, Assyriology, prehistory, anthropology, history of art, Near Eastern and Mediterranean studies.

accounts, for example by identifying and locating actual sites mentioned in the Bible (Cline 2009: 13-20). This means that, even from the beginning, this discipline starts with a textual record, with the archaeology merely serving to substantiate statements made in texts, rather than being studied on its own merits. The discipline has also been strongly shaped by political and religious interests, as has for example been noted for the work of Robertson Smith. Although most scholars of the Near East today seek to avoid this bias and emphasis on the Bible, caution must still be exercised.<sup>107</sup> In the Aegean, the work of Heinrich Schliemann started a new era of searching for sites also known from textual sources, such as Homer's *Iliad*. Around the same time on Crete, Arthur Evans' work at Knossos started a long tradition of seeing the 'Minoans' as a peaceful, idyllic people, and as an important element of modern European identity. The passionate interests involved here had more to do with the emergence of western civilisation and the discovery of the riches of Troy, Mycenae and Knossos than they did with religion or history, but the ideologies expressed can still be found in modern scholarship, for example in the reluctance to see the Minoans as anything but a peace and flower-loving society (see e.g. Starr 1984, Walberg 1992 and Nixon 1994, papers in Hamilakis 2002, and Hamilakis and Momigliano 2006). These differences in the material, approach and history of the disciplines are important because they can affect how the material is understood and interpreted and, in particular, can impose certain limits on the scope of interpretations considered possible. This is perhaps most obvious in the case of human sacrifice, but it also occurs in what appear less 'controversial' contexts, such as what constitutes an 'altar', a 'sacrifice', a 'banquet' or an 'offering'.

## **Sacrifice and burials**

In terms of bones representing only parts of an animal or animals, similar patterns emerge in both areas. A common scenario in both areas is a relatively wealthy tomb, both in content and architecture, which contains a few animal bones, most often

---

<sup>107</sup> The issue is still very much present in 'popular' archaeology, where reports of important biblical finds continue to appear, the most recent at time of writing being the claimed discovery of Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat, see e.g. Fox News 2010.

sheep/goat or cattle bones. However, there are also some tombs that are poorer in construction, which usually contained just a few animal bones, never whole animals. (A19, A20, F14 and F25-F33). Most of the time, both for Aegean and Near Eastern material, such bones receive little or no attention. The problems of recording are similar in both areas, and the lack of not only expert analysis, but also of careful recording, can be frustrating, and effectively limits the information that may otherwise have been gleaned from the material. The comments that are made on animal bones in graves, as we have seen, tend to be vague and carry largely unstated assumptions. A binary opposition can at times be detected, distinguishing between sacrifice and eating, whole animals and parts thereof, or skull and body. Yet we cannot claim that the ancient people of the Aegean and Near East had the same perception of what constitutes edible bodies as we do today. Nor is there any reason to think that an animal cannot both be sacrificed and eaten. In fact, some theorists of sacrifice, such as Robertson Smith, maintain that the meal part of the ritual, the communion, is the most important part (Smith 2002).

The comments made for such cases have already been discussed in some detail for the Aegean and Near East, but it is well worth reviewing these in a summarised form in order to cast them into even sharper focus:

- *offering* (Zarins 1986: 172, Clutton-Brock and Burleigh 1978: 94, Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 182, 213, Danti 2006-2010)
  - *Opfer* (Andronikos 1968: 88, Löwe 1996: 21)
  - *animal offering / Tierbeigabe* (Gibson 1981: 80, Pini 1968: 68)
  - *food offering* (Coldstream 1963: 30, Roaf 1984: 114-115)
  - *meat offering / 'Fleischbeigabe'* (Postgate 1980: 74, Postgate and Moon 1982: 131, Philip 1995: 149, Panagiotopoulos 2002: 117)
  - *funerary offering* (Schwartz *et al.* 2003: 334-335)
  - *offerings to the dead* (Tsountas and Manatt 1969: 97, Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 203, 212, Betancourt *et al.* 2008: 163)
- *sacrifice* (Wilkie 1992: 249, Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 164)
  - *animal sacrifice* (Tzedakis 1981: 398, French 1989/90: 81, Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 171)

- *sacrifice in honour of deceased* (Demakopoulou 1990: 122, Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 265)
- *funeral banquet / funeral feast* (Woolley 1934: 176, Tsountas and Manatt 1969: 97, Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 203, McMahon 2006: 43)
  - *funerary dining ritual* (Hamilakis 1996: 165)
  - *feast in honour of ancestors* (Betancourt *et al.* 2008: 164)
  - *the living dining with the dead / 'kispum'* (Pfälzner 2007: 58)
- *nourishment for the dead* (Woolley 1934: 133, Orthmann 1981: 89)
  - *gift or offering to ensure source of food while body rotted* (Nordquist 1987: 105)
  - *food for journey to beyond* (Blegen *et al.* 1973: 79, Panagiotopoulos 2002: 117, Betancourt *et al.* 2008: 164)
  - *Totenmahl to dead person* (Pini 1968: 68)
  - *nourishment for the dead in the underworld* (Cohen 2005: 103-104)
- *for use by the deceased in the underworld* (Postgate 1980: 77)
- *propitiatory gesture for the nether gods* (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990: 101)
- *symbolic meaning* (Postgate 1980: 75)
  - *not eaten, but possible ritual signifiante* (Clutton-Brock and Burleigh 1978: 95)
- *pars pro toto* (Frödin and Persson 1938: 358, Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 262)

Of course, the contexts, though all funerary, are varied, and one interpretation cannot be generalised to include all cases. The examples here only relate to remains from parts of animals – the whole ones will be discussed below. They are not all definitive statements from the authors – often several options are offered – and they clearly overlap in several instances. However, what occurred as a problem in the previous chapters is once again obvious; that is, the assumptions, largely unstated, make all the difference to a definitive interpretation. Most authors, naturally enough, do not state precisely what they mean with every word, including a word often applied to these remains, “offering”. Only once in a while, with a few extra qualifications or explanations – for example ‘meat’ or ‘food’ offering – some light is shed on what is



meant by this. It still does not bring full transparency, as these qualifiers can also mean many things, but it is a step towards it. What is perhaps more problematic is that different authors use the words ‘offering’ or ‘sacrifice’ in a great variety of ways, as the above examples show, and in most cases the meaning is not stated. We have also seen how even the same author or authors are not consistent in their own use of the terms. The differences may not seem that great at first sight, but the conceptual difference between ‘meat’ being eaten by people during the funerary rituals and that meant as food for the deceased is actually quite significant in terms of how the ancients related to death, the afterlife and their religious beliefs in a more general sense.

As was seen in Chapter 2, certain criteria could be set up to distinguish between different types of activity or ritual, such as the head or body indicating sacrifice and partial remains indicating some sort of food. There is, however, at present no basis for making such distinctions, and no reason to believe that the people of the ancient Aegean and Near East thought of certain practices as ‘sacrifice’ and others as some kind of derivatives thereof. On the contrary, it appears that in many cases such practices as sacrifice and feasting were part of the same set of activities. Having said that, it is possible that a larger assemblage and extremely careful analysis of the animal bones could reveal interesting patterns. It may, for example, provide more information about what kinds of animals were preferred, and perhaps show that certain animals were preferred over others in certain contexts. Burning and cutmarks could perhaps tell us more about what animals and bones were cooked and consumed; we could also learn more about what parts of the animal were of interest, though this would not allow us to make conclusions about what was or was not eaten.

The differences in opinion about how to interpret these remains are perhaps largely caused by the ambiguity of the actual material, which in most cases simply does not allow for careful distinctions. We can say that animal bones were placed in graves – when they are complete, as discussed below, they were most likely killed for the purpose (rather than dying of natural causes). With partial remains, we also know that the animal was killed, and in some cases, as when the bones are found in bowls, there is a greater certainty that it was somehow considered food. Whether these were for the

deceased, for dead ancestors (perhaps conceived as situated in the underworld) or the remains of a funeral feast can usually not be established, though when there is a large amount of remains, it may indicate a feast of some kind. This, however, could also either be a funeral feast, or a feast in the ‘underworld’, perhaps with the deceased seen as the host. It cannot always be certain that the remains represent food, however. Similarly, the killing of the animal may or may not have been part of a broader ritual – it may or may not have been ritually killed and/or cooked, and its slaughter may or may not have been part of a divination ritual. What can be said is that the remains of the animal bones were somehow important enough to place in the grave with the deceased. In some cases, the symbolic significance may seem more apparent, as when certain parts appear deliberately and carefully placed in certain locations, for example the ox’s skull in the Archanes Tholos Tomb A, the sheep/goat skulls in Tell es-Sweyhat Tomb 5 and the equid skulls in Tell Umm el-Marra Installation B (A9, F68 and F81).

Apart from the actual material being open to different interpretations, modern cultural assumptions may come into play, be they related to modern concepts of sacrifice, the Bible or ancient Greek practices, to give just a few possibilities. Some scholars may also wish to be deliberately vague in their assessment by using a word like ‘offering’, thus reflecting the uncertainty of the material. The same deliberate admission of uncertainty is the case when several possibilities of interpretation are offered, such as when Pini writes “bones from animal offerings *or* from the portion of the Totenmahl given to the dead person” (1968: 68, my italics)<sup>108</sup> or when Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis variously refer to such remains as ‘sacrifice’, ‘offering’ and ‘pars pro toto’ (1997: 262).

As far as can be discerned, the above list of interpretations contains the various definitions used in modern literature when comments are made about such finds. The ones referring to the ‘underworld’ further involve assumptions about how the ancient people of the Aegean and Near East viewed the afterlife. For the Near East, there are some indications in textual records of how the afterlife was envisaged, but even these

---

<sup>108</sup> In the original German “verbrannte Knochenreste von Tierbeigaben oder von dem für Toten bestimmten Teil des Totenmahls”.

are conflicting, and may have varied greatly. In the Aegean, we have no such records, and we cannot say anything about what they felt the deceased may have needed, either in a possible underworld or for a journey there. The ‘meal’ may also have been part of some larger ritual, such as the funeral banquet, including the slaughter of animals for supernatural entities/consumption.

In other cases, the animal bones in graves may not represent a ‘meal’ at all, but have some other symbolic significance. This may apply to certain cuts and parts of the skeleton, as well as complete and nearly complete skeletons. This, however, is complicated by modern perceptions of what is edible, what constitute ‘good cuts of meat’, as well as by the fact that the way meat is presented to humans could be significantly different from how it is presented to supernatural beings. Thus, a whole animal skeleton could theoretically be understood as food for deities - or indeed humans: complete animals roasted on a spit are quite common in many countries (although there is no evidence of any of the complete animal skeletons being roasted in this manner). Certainly from the Near East, we can glean that a wide variety of cooking methods were in use (Bottéro 1985). If the Old Babylonian tablet referred to in the previous chapter is anything to go by, large parts of an animal may have been considered edible, including hooves and tail, and the legs and head of a kid are part of a recipe on another Old Babylonian tablet (*UCLM* 9-1910 and Bottéro 1985: 41).

### **Whole animals**

One of the patterns that does seem to occur is that when whole animal skeletons<sup>109</sup> are found in graves, they most commonly belong to equids or dogs, although others do also appear. Table 3 shows the types of whole animals found in graves in the Aegean and the Near East. These cases are sometimes interpreted as in some sense associated with warriors or warfare, with the equids either used as mounts or reined to a chariot, both in the Aegean and the Near East. Although equids may have been mostly associated with military and masculine activities, such an interpretation cannot be upheld from the evidence of the graves alone – neither in the Aegean nor in the Near East, as has been carefully discussed. This is mostly due to the material not being

---

<sup>109</sup> Meaning either the full skeleton or the full skeleton with the exception of the skull.

recorded meticulously enough or not preserved well enough for careful analysis. Suggestions as to how such remains of full equid and dog skeletons might be understood include

- *sacrifice / θυσία* (Kanta 1980: 47, Parlama 1973/74: 316, Day 1984: 30)
  - *Opfer* (Pini 1968: 68)
  - *remains of sacrifice indicating cult activity* (Krystalli-Votsi 1998: 28)
  - *sacrifice in connection with funerary rites* (Platon 1963: 292)
  - *certain animals for sacrifice because not eaten* (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 263)
- *sacrifice in honour of the dead* (Demakopoulou 1990: 122, Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990: 95)
  - *des offrandes aux morts* (Daux 1959: 586)
  - *sacrifice to the deceased* (Stais 1892: 53)
  - *equids part of funeral offerings, not for meat* (Postgate 1986: 201)
- *to accompany master to underworld* (Mylonas 1966: 116, Orthmann 1981: 89).
  - *Dog not burial companion because easy to creep in chasing rabbits* (Vermeule 1964: 349)
- *'farewell' gift to the departed, for posthumous utilization* (Protonotariou-Deilaki 1990: 101)
- *primitive custom involving 'destructive mania' after the loss of a loved one* (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 264)
- *ideological statement and association with hunting* (Hamilakis 1996: 163-165)

As with partial remains, the contexts are quite varied, and what seems a likely interpretation in one case may look less so in another. Again, assumptions concerning the use of equids may guide interpretation, at times even to the extent of determining the gender of the accompanying human based on the presence of an equid (e.g. at Nauplia and Al Hiba – A61 and F18). The idea of 'true' sacrifice involving a whole animal also surfaces very much in these interpretations, and it is often believed that if the animal is articulated, that its function requires it to be a whole animal, presumably serving a function similar to that which it had in this world (such as being an 'escort').

For both areas, equids are often assumed to be associated with males, which, though possible, on closer inspection of the material cannot be sustained. In most cases, the equid cannot be securely associated with an osteologically identified male, and in a few cases the association with a female seems more likely. There is also no evidence for the preference of male equids over female ones in the graves. One difference that does occur from the present data between the Aegean and the Near East is the species. In the Aegean, all the equids discovered that have undergone analysis belong to *Equus caballus* (the horse), whereas in the Near East, all identifiable examples are either *Equus asinus* (donkey), *Equus hemionus* (onager) or hybrids (Postgate 1986). For whatever reason, then, horses appear to have been preferred in the Aegean world, and donkeys or donkey hybrids in the Near East. A tablet from Mari also indicates that donkeys were of higher prestige in the Near East, but provides no further elaboration concerning the reasons for this (ARM VI 76: 20-25, Malamat 1987: 33).

### **Sacrificial space and activities**

In neither of the geographical areas does it appear to be the case that sacrifice was limited to specific spaces. More than likely, there were many spaces where sacrifice in one form or another was performed that have not been recognised or identified. However, there were certain places that were considered sacred space – be they temples, shrines, sanctuaries, or whatever terminology is preferred – where evidence of sacrifice appears. Such spaces also vary greatly, and we have seen that in the Aegean especially there is no standard form for a sacred structure; consequently they can be very difficult to detect (the same point is made by Whittaker 1997: 8 – see also the plans in Gesell 1985 and Rutkowski 1986). For the Near East, although some cases of ‘temples’ are controversial (e.g. the Fosse Temple at Lachish – Tufnell *et al.* 1940 and Ottosson 1980), there are much more standardised ground plans (Roaf 1995), and textual material helps us understand more about what went on in the temples. The activities referred to here and in the previous chapters took place in these recognised sacred spaces, but they should by no means be understood as having only taken place there.

The types of sacrifice that took place in these sacred spaces may not have differed much in the Aegean and Near East, despite great differences in architecture. The archaeological evidence for sacrifice in such spaces once again revolves around animal bones in religious contexts. A few careful and very interesting analyses of the distribution and assemblage of animal bones at certain sites have been done in the Aegean – for example at Pylos, Nemea and Methana (B6, B24 and B31).<sup>110</sup> Such careful studies are very useful, but unfortunately quite rare, and more so for the Near East. This may of course be to do with a difference in the material remains, but there are sites where a similar analysis would be most desirable, the ziggurat complex at Ur, with many references to discoveries of animal bones, being one such case (G33). A meticulous examination of the assemblage(s) of animal bones, their types and distribution from there has the potential to provide a huge amount of information about what sort of activities took place, including if there were some similar to those of the Aegean. The reason that such studies are rare for the Near East may go back to the difference in the manner in which this area is approached in the scholarship as opposed to the Aegean. The textual sources in the Near East already provide a large amount of information, and the emphasis is easily directed there, rather than to a more painstaking archaeological study with seemingly less exact results. In contrast, the Aegean material is sparser, and scholars therefore tend to make the most of the material, including in-depth examination of material that has already been studied before.

Consequently, although animal bones have been found in ‘sacred spaces’ in the Near East, the lack of methodical recording and analysis of them means that we do not know much more about what activities they are the remains of, whereas the studies from the Aegean strongly indicate religious feasting (including sacrifice). For the same reason of a lack of adequate records, it is also difficult to say much about and compare the kinds of animal bones found, but they appear to be similar to those found in graves, with cattle and sheep/goat as the most common again. However, evidence of feasting is also known from iconographic and textual evidence. Iconography of

---

<sup>110</sup> Similarly interesting studies are currently being carried out at e.g. Khania, where a deposit with significant difference in content from other areas of the site may indicate that it came from a shrine (Hallager 2001). Continuing excavations will hopefully shed more light on this.

feasting is amply represented in the Near East, especially in the ‘banquet scenes’, but is much less common in the Aegean. Possible examples include fresco fragments from Pylos showing figures seated at a table (D3). Some interesting parallels do appear in this - there are people seated, raising some sort of vessel in one hand. The vessels are not the same, but the gesture and general setting is very similar, and may represent similar activities (see Yasur-Landau 2008 for suggestions concerning the meaning of the differences in these images). The accompaniment of music is a common feature, also appearing in D3 (if that specific restoration is correct) and the Ayia Triada sarcophagus (D1) in the Aegean, and in, for example, H10, H18, H20, I6, I8, I11 and I12 in the Near East. Some of these instruments look very similar, and we have seen that actual examples have been found in the Near East in the Ur tombs. In both areas, there is also an association of such feasts with funerals, since the items have been found in tombs (sealstones, lyres, amulets, gold items): the Ayia Triada sarcophagus itself contains a burial, and pottery assemblages in tombs may represent feasting equipment. Textual records from both areas, again in much larger quantity from the Near East, also indicate large religious feasts and record provisions for such celebrations. The same kinds of animals once again appear in both areas – sheep, goats and cattle.

Two types of sacrifice often related to temples appear only to have been practiced in the Near East, but this is likely to do with the material, as both are almost exclusively known from textual records. One is the feeding of deities – probably done by laying food in front of the deity’s statue, just as it was dressed and washed. The temple ‘kitchens’ discovered at some sites (e.g. G6, G12, G14, G16, G19, G29, G31 and G33) may have been used partly for cooking such food, including meat. There is no evidence of an equivalent practice in the Aegean, although it is possible that ‘kitchens’ discovered in palace contexts had a similar function to those found in association with temples in the Near East, since palaces may themselves have worked as sacred spaces.<sup>111</sup> Kitchens have been suggested at the palaces of Phaistos, Mallia, Knossos and Zakros (Graham 1961: 167-169, Graham 1975: 144 and Platon 1985: 203-209). It is, however, a matter of great debate whether or not the Minoans or Mycenaean even

---

<sup>111</sup> For discussion and interpretations of palaces as sacred space, see for example essays in Hägg and Marinatos 1987.

had cult statues – indisputable examples are hard to come by. The terracotta feet from Anemospilia may have belonged to a cult statue, as suggested by Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis (1991: 140-141 and 1997: 285, 530-539), but if so, it is one of very few examples discovered. Nevertheless, had it not been for the textual records of the Near East, this practice would hardly have been known there, and something similar cannot be completely ruled out for the Aegean.

The second type of sacrifice known only from the Near East is divination, and in particular extispicy. This is also mostly known from textual records, but some examples of liver and lung models (I37-I47) further testify to the practice, as well as to its importance, since they show how to interpret specific features. That divination was widespread and common in the Near East can be surmised from the extensive textual records revealing many different types of divination as well as priestly titles based on them. The king was also known as the chief *barû* (diviner). Evans suggests that the image of one of the animals lying on a table with a human figure cutting into it is a scene of extispicy (C1 – Evans 1935b: 572-573), but this must remain speculation, as there is no explicit evidence for this practice in the Aegean.

## **Foundation deposits**

The practice of placing deposits of sacred items in the foundations/floors and walls of buildings and other architectural structures such as ‘altars’ is known mostly from the Near East. This could be because such deposits have not until recently received much attention in the Aegean (Herva 2005: 215). Boulotis’ short catalogue shows that they did exist, but may not always have been recognised as such by excavators (Boulotis 1982). In both the Aegean and the Near East, animal bones have been discovered as part of foundation deposits, but their rarity and dispersed character indicates that they were not an essential element of the ritual involved, at least not in all instances. A larger assemblage would allow the identification of varieties of this ritual, through possible differences in terms of for example the types of objects included, their state (new, used, broken, burnt, prestige item), the type of building and the location within the building.



We can only speculate about the intentions behind this kind of sacrifice. Ellis suggests four main categories for the Near East: sanctification, protection, commemoration and elaboration. That is, to set aside and make fit an area for its intended purpose, to protect the building, to preserve a record of the efforts involved, and especially to preserve the ruler's name and fame, and to elaborate and make more solemn the ceremonies surrounding the constructions and inauguration and use of the building (Ellis 1968: 165-168). Apart from the preservation of a ruler's name and fame, the same possibilities may apply to the Aegean. They may also be understood as boundary markers, placed in between spheres, as will be explored below.

To this can be added alternative interpretations, such as that offered by Herva, where humans and buildings are part of an organic and dynamic relationship (Herva 2005). Buildings or architectural structures may participate in human lives as 'social actors', that is, not only being influenced by, but also having a significant, active impact on humans (Mills and Walker 2008: 3). The same may be the case for objects (in a broad sense, including animals) – as Walker writes, “artifacts and architecture shape or curtail human agency” (Walker 2008: 141). If structures are understood as part of these dynamic interactions, Driessen's suggestion of 'feeding' buildings also becomes more meaningful (Driessen 2010: 45), the deposits indicating a structure's consumption. In 11<sup>th</sup> c. C.E. Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, houses appear to have been perceived in this manner, being 'fed' and literally wearing clothes (textiles) and jewellery, thus making them beautiful and creating an identity (Mills 2008: 98-100). The 'decoration' of buildings in the Aegean and Near East could be interpreted in this light. We know that walls were frequently painted with decorative motifs, and textiles could also have been hung on the walls, though there is no evidence of this. Architectural features or additions may be seen in the same manner, as for example the decoration of temples in the Near East (both as objects like plaques and the architecture itself), or the animal heads on I27, and the same goes for visible animal remains placed in or on architectural structures.

The ceremonies related to foundation deposits (especially those of consumption) can be placed in the broader context of collective remembering and forgetting, as

suggested by Hamilakis (Hamilakis 1998 and 2010). That is, the creation of memory through material culture – “People construct social memories through their engagement with other people (living as well as ancestral) and through their interaction with varieties of material culture” (Mills and Walker 2008: 13-14). Such construction and reconstruction of memory are part of everyday life as well as small and large-scale social events and ritual practices (Mills and Walker 2008: 7), but is in particular in the more extensive events like feasts that there is a potential field of power (Hamilakis 2010: 194). During such events, there is the possibility of deliberately creating specific memories for the participants, for example through sensuously strong acts like eating, drinking and dancing. Conversely, this selective remembering may not always be successful: there is always the risk of unintentional memories, for example of unsatisfactory food or bad wine (Hamilakis 2010: 194).

The construction of memory may be a significant part of most if not all the practices discussed in this study, but it appears particularly pertinent in connection with foundation deposits, where the incorporation of remains from sacrifices or sacrificial feasts are incorporated into the very structure of buildings, and can be seen as marking such events. This is not necessarily to the exclusion of other functions suggested in this section: several functions may easily be at work simultaneously. The incorporation of the remains within buildings could thus not only be seen as dynamic interactions between animals, humans and buildings, but also as hinting at ways in which such events themselves were both socially remembered (by being retained) and forgotten (by being hidden from direct view). The importance of remembering, which is a kind of ‘presence’, should not lead to the undermining of the importance of forgetting, which is a kind of ‘absence’. The two are intrinsically linked (Mills 2008: 81, Meskell 2008: 233). In the archaeological record, forgetting may be associated with practices of hiding, secrecy or destruction (Mills 2008) and the selective forgetting that naturally goes with selective remembering, or indeed the invention of memories of events.<sup>112</sup> The foundation deposits can be seen as both instances of

---

<sup>112</sup> There are of course many layers to this. The functions of remembering and forgetting are part of human existence in general, so not tied to a specific time period, but a continuous process. They are still part of everyday life today, but particularly come to the fore in disciplines that deal with history: all historians, and for that matter archaeologists, engage in the creation of memory through (necessary) selective re-collection of fragments of the past (Hamilakis 2010: 189, Mills and Walker 2008: 8). An

forgetting in their capacity as hidden inside structures, but paradoxically may also serve as particularly pregnant markers of remembering, drawing on the power of and fascination with the unseen (Meskell 2008: 237).

As appealing as these ideas of agency and remembering/forgetting may seem, they refer to thought processes and intentions of ancient people. And though Hamilakis notes that certain acts of remembering in fact “do leave material traces” (Hamilakis 2010; 191), such intentions or perceptions of ancient people are not directly available to modern scholars (Lucero 2008: 189). They are rather categories or concepts which are good to think with; through which we may explain and understand features in the material record, in a similar manner that poststructuralist ideas are applied in this study.

The idea of buildings as being social actors on a par with humans would only be one way of interpreting the foundation deposits found in them. This need not be to the exclusion of other functions, practices and intentions being at work. It is one possibility, but there is at present no reason to favour it above others proposed above. The textual records of the Near East also do not suggest structures being imbued with such a strong sense of agency, although it is clear that certain buildings were extremely important, as religious, political, administrative and social centres, and through this, they would no doubt have both shaped and been shaped by people.

Remembering and forgetting are features of both everyday life and special events which we can postulate as part of human existence in general, and we can attempt to interpret material culture through these ‘lenses’. However, remembering and forgetting do not exist in a vacuum: they gain their significance through their contexts, as precisely being part of a specific practice or ritual, for example, in a similar manner to how objects gain meaning (Mills and Walker 2008: 20). In this sense, the creation of memory (whether carefully controlled or not) is only one function among others, and sacrifice may be a particularly evocative practice for this, but it is the practice that

---

archaeologist may for example choose to describe a specific phase of a site, a specific building or specific collection of material, like pottery. This study is the same: it selectively ‘re-collects’ the fragments of sacrifice, to the exclusion, or temporary forgetting, of many other features.

creates content for remembering and forgetting, not the other way around. In other words, closer attention to context is needed for a full understanding sacrifice in its entirety.

These new ways of thinking also serve a pertinent reminder of why it is important to insist on the instability, continued scrutiny and openness of our categories. The definition of ‘sacrifice’ as laid out in Chapter 1 deliberately did not simply refer to ‘deities’ as recipients, but a broader spectrum of entities, which in this case may include buildings in their capacity as supra-human, yet still attributed with agency and the power to actively impact on human lives (although this does *not* entail that they were worshipped in the same way as deities).

## **Treaties**

The performance of sacrifice in connection with treaties is only known from the Near East, and even there, only from textual records. From those, we have seen that it was apparently expected in some cultures to sacrifice a donkey when a treaty was agreed – this was, in fact, so set that the phrase ‘to kill a donkey’ in Amoritic meant to make a treaty (J12). A single instance of a cylinder seal may depict the ratification of a treaty (H156), but otherwise this is unknown from other material. This is most likely due to the fact that such events would hardly leave a trace in the archaeological record, and even if they did, would at most be identified as sacrifice, with the context of a treaty unlikely to be recognised. In the Aegean there is no evidence for sacrifice in connection with treaties, but as with other cases, this may mostly be due to the paucity of textual records in general.

## **Substitution**

In sacrificial practice, substitution can mean a number of things – it can for example mean that one animal was sacrificed in place of another, an animal in place of a human, a human in place of an animal, a figurine or some other kind of model – either

human or animal – in place of a human or animal. It can also mean that one animal or human was sacrificed in the stead of many, or that a part was sacrificed instead of the whole, usually meaning that the animal or human does not die. This could be something like a lock of hair or a finger in the case of humans. In the archaeological records of the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East, such practices are virtually impossible to detect. If one animal or human was meant to stand in for one or more others, this is not recorded, and the archaeology would leave no trace of that kind of intention. The same is the case in the iconography, and the textual records from either area do not suggest any practices involving substitution in terms of sacrifice.<sup>113</sup>

Animal figurines, some found in sanctuary and temple contexts, could represent substitution. Since they would constitute inanimate sacrifices, they are in fact outside the scope of this study, but a short note can be made about them. Animal figures and figurines of various materials are common in both the Aegean and the Near East, and especially when they are found in contexts of sacred space, they have been suggested to stand in for actual sacrifices (that is, each figure or figurine would be offered to a deity instead of killing a real animal of the same kind). Cases of terracotta animal figurines with legs tied in a manner similar to that on sealstones may support such a suggestion (D26 and D27). However, the range of possible interpretations of such ‘votive’ animal (and indeed human) figurines is very broad - some of the possibilities are mentioned by Watrous (1996: 81-90) and Postgate, the latter distinguishing between human and animal ‘effigies’ (Postgate 1994). Figurines could be offered for their own value, they could be related to the characteristic of the deity to whom they were offered (i.e. their signature animal), they could represent a wish – something the worshipper asks for, in some way be related to healing and/or purification - or the animal could represent a characteristic desired by the worshipper (if a bull was thought to represent strength, that could be something desired by the person giving that item). The human figurines could represent the worshipper, and so be placed at a sanctuary or temple in a sort of permanent prayer; this is known for certain about some Near Eastern human figurines (Postgate 1994: 177 and Møller 1995: 70). There are

---

<sup>113</sup> Of course this does not include famous examples from the textual records pertaining mostly to the Levant, such as the Biblical story of Abraham being allowed to substitute a ram in place of his son, Isaac.

certainly more possibilities, and they may not be mutually exclusive; in short, the use of animal figurines as substitutes for actual sacrifice is only one among many possible interpretations.

## **Human sacrifice**

There is some evidence for human sacrifice both in the Aegean and the Near East, but the Near Eastern material is significantly more compelling; in particular, the material from the Ur cemetery can hardly be questioned. In the Aegean, the case of Anemospilia, although controversial, is also very convincing, and the same goes for the children's bones from Knossos (although these may not specifically testify to sacrifice, the evidence of the cutmarks cannot be ignored). The evidence from some tombs in the Aegean is the material most comparable to the Ur tombs, although on an altogether completely different scale (see below for examples). The problem with most of this material is an uncertainty in the chronology – at Ur, the many human skeletons in most cases come from closed, single contexts, whereas the contexts of the Aegean tombs are less clear. The Dendra Tholos Tomb is one such case – the excavator, Persson, interprets the material as human sacrifice (A30, Persson 1931), whereas Mylonas claims, based on the finds, that the tomb was opened and used for burials on several occasions (Mylonas 1948: 74-75). In other cases, human bones of several individuals in the dromos may indicate a practice similar to that displayed by the Ur tombs, although this is also disputed one way or another in each case (e.g. at Mycenae Tomb 505, Prosymna Tomb VII, Mycenae Grave Circle A, Mycenae Lower City Tomb 15, Argos Chamber Tomb 6 – A13, A55, A 58, A59 and A67).

The iconography is even more problematic. Near Eastern seals and seal impressions show a human figure in front of another figure – whether a deity or human is also disputed – about to be trampled, cut or hit (H83, H105, H108, H135 and H172-H181). They are almost all in a religious setting, but what might be a scene of sacrifice can also be interpreted as metaphorical or mythological. So, however, can pretty much all iconography, and the crucial question is, how much evidence is needed before the possibility of human sacrifice is admitted. There is not a similar standard motif for the

Aegean – the only comparable scene is on a seal from Zakro, which shows a kneeling human figure, holding what looks like a sword (CMS II,7: no. 2). In front of him are two men making familiar gestures: a hand to the head and a hand to the chest. Behind him is another man, possibly holding him with one hand, and leaning over the kneeling figure in a way that is reminiscent of the deity/human on the Near Eastern seals. Clearly some sort of ritual is depicted, but the seal is far too enigmatic to say anything more than that, let alone conclude that it represents human sacrifice.

The problem with the textual evidence is that for both areas there are some very elusive references to humans as part of offerings – either to deities in the case of Pylos Tn 316 or as part of funerary items in the Near Eastern examples (J22 and J26). In every instance, the interpretations of these as showing human sacrifice are rejected<sup>114</sup> on linguistic grounds or, in the case of the Epic of Gilgamesh, by reference to its mythological and epic nature. However, the list of objects in the Near Eastern examples does correspond quite carefully to the material found in the Ur tombs, and such a textual description of a known archaeological context is surely best interpreted as including humans placed in the tomb of the deceased rather than as being myths or servants staying alive to help other masters or mistresses.

There is a general reluctance in both areas to consider human sacrifice as a possible interpretation, and more often than not, it is only considered as a *last* possible option. This is especially the case in the Aegean, where the reputation of the Minoans as a peace-loving people is apparently at times ardently guarded. Even when human sacrifice is admitted, ‘excuses’ are invented to make it seem less extreme and more befitting modern sensibilities of what is accepted behaviour – this includes saying that human sacrifice was rare, or only done in times of great distress, or that only prisoners of war, slaves and women were sacrificed (e.g. Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1991: 156). The latter reveals some serious assumptions about which groups of people were considered as ‘other’; that is, as outside yet similar enough to the group to be acceptable sacrificial ‘victims’, not to mention inferior human beings. A similar agenda can be detected in some work on the Near East. For example, Gadd’s article

---

<sup>114</sup> Or more accurately, doubted, since there is also not enough evidence to categorically prove the opposite.

about the Royal Tombs at Ur uses some disturbing rhetoric in an attempt to ‘explain away’ the practice as that of an “invading and martial people”, with “a kind of terrible ‘logic’” – as opposed to a “great and highly developed culture” (Gadd 1960: 53 and 56).<sup>115</sup>

Detecting human sacrifice is quite difficult in both areas and the evidence is almost always open to interpretation. Certain features may help to identify it with greater confidence: the presence of several human beings, perhaps with one or more treated in a different manner; the presence of cutmarks or other signs of violence, including weapons or the gesture; and the position of the body in the archaeological context. Of course, context is all important here. Comparison with other instances where sacrifice is more securely established or with animal sacrifice may in some cases also be useful, but the difference in culture and possible conceptual difference between humans and animals must be taken into account. A similar approach may be taken to the iconographic and textual material. The problems of the assumptions made by scholars in both areas are relatively easily solved with a general willingness and, as far as possible, an objective approach which includes examining the basic material and evaluating what the most likely interpretation is, and keeping human sacrifice as an *equal* option, not as one that requires more evidence than other interpretations. That may in some cases also involve admitting that the evidence is not strong enough to privilege any one explanation above another.

## **Sacrificial iconography**

Representations of the exact moment an animal is killed are rare, both in the Aegean and the Near East. This has been interpreted as meaning that the moment of death is the most sacred and causes so much guilt that it cannot even be depicted (Marinatos 1988: 17). That sort of claim is difficult to either prove or disprove because it is based

---

<sup>115</sup> What is more, these issues are not always limited to scholarly concerns in history and archaeology: Gadd’s suggestion is that the practice came from the Mongoloid races of China, which had the most “atrocious examples of extermination” (Gadd 1960: 55). Such strong value and ethical judgement about ancient peoples are not only inappropriate for archaeological/historical research, but run the risk of being transferred onto modern society.



on the absence of a certain feature. There is, however, nothing to support such a statement other than this absence – not even in the textual records of the Near East. A more likely understanding of this absence is perhaps precisely what all other material points to – that ‘sacrifice’ has so many different tenets and functions in different contexts, that our focus on a moment of death is not one that was shared by the people of the Aegean and Near East. Other features, apparently more important, are depicted, such as religious feasting and the presentation of animals to a deity in the so-called presentation scenes (whatever their actual meaning).

Having said that, representations of the actual kill (in a clearly sacrificial context – not in hunting or mythological scenes), though rare, may not be entirely nonexistent. The exact stage of the sacrifice is often unclear, perhaps at times deliberately so, and at other times the scene might easily have been understood by a person living in that context. The animal could thus be shown as alive, unconscious/dying or already dead – but exactly which is in many cases debatable. Particularly unclear cases may include C1, C3, C4, C7-C9, C11, H52, H53 and I7, where the animal could be at any of these stages.

If animal sacrifice from the Aegean and Near East of this period was examined purely through the iconography, the two areas would seem to have almost nothing in common. Apart from a few scenes of an animal placed on its back and perhaps about to be cut (C1, C13, H52, H53, I15 and I21), there are very few directly comparable characteristics. The iconography of the Near East is highly standardised compared to that of the Aegean, and many of the symbols used are executed in a consistent manner, probably with specific meanings, some of which we can discern, others not. Such symbols also occur in the Aegean, but are much less standardised, and apart from some general ideas about certain symbols being associated with religion, sacred space or even sacrifice, many re-occurring scenes and symbols remain enigmatic.

### **Presentation scenes, female carrying goat, animals on table**

One typical scene from the Near East appears to be completely absent from the Aegean: the so-called presentation scenes. The uncertainty of their interpretation, even in the Near East, does not help with finding a comparable theme in the Aegean,

although scenes where an animal seems to be led to some sort of structure may seem formally comparable – for example D13, C66 and C117. However, the Near Eastern examples are, at least in some cases, associated with an office or appointment of an office – the same is unlikely to be the case for these Aegean examples, as the emphasis is not so much on the human figures but on the animal. Nor do they usually include another human figure to which the animal and worshipper are presented.

There is also a possibility that they are related to a scene apparently emerging only in the Aegean with no parallels in the Near East, and whose interpretation is subject to even more uncertainty than the presentation scenes. This is the depiction of a human figure – in all identifiable cases a female, carrying a bovid over her shoulder, when recognisable either a goat or a sheep (C121-C136). The fact that these, as far as can be discerned, exclusively depict females, and again no other figures being approached also makes this scene very different from the presentation scenes, and although a sacrificial association has been suggested for them, this cannot yet be substantiated.

The most common and clearly sacrificial scene from the Aegean – with an animal lying on a table (C1-C21) – is absent from the Near East. The closest comparable examples are those already mentioned, with an animal lying on its back (rather than on its front, as is more typical in the Aegean) and stretched out, either on the ground or on some sort of low platform, but never on a higher table as in the Aegean (I15, I21, H52 and H53). There are also examples of an animal standing (rarely lying) on a higher platform or table (H166-H171), which are more similar to some of the Aegean examples. An association here with sacrifice is not certain, but considering that they are usually shown with a human figure drinking from a tube or straw next to the platform or figures approaching in the usual worship gesture, some sort of ritual or feasting may be intended.

## **Types of animals sacrificed**

A large array of animals in sacrificial contexts is recorded from both the Aegean and the Near East, some – of course – with a much greater frequency than others. In many

cases it is difficult to determine exactly the kind of animal – either because of problems concerning the precise identification of bones (or lack of expert analysis), vagueness in iconographical depictions and animal figurines (whether deliberate or not) or issues of the correct translation of ancient terms in tablets. The animals that are recorded in these media include sheep, goat, cattle, pig, equid, dog, hare, bird, fish, deer, rodent, boar, gazelle, antelope, buffalo, bear, badger, fox, rabbit, weasel and frog.

The assemblages in each case are hardly large enough to start quantifying – this has only been attempted for the burials, because they contain a slightly larger and more homogenous assemblage. The types of animal bones included in graves are mostly similar for the Aegean and the Near East,<sup>116</sup> with sheep/goat and cattle bones being the most common in both areas, and pig, dog and equid bones also being quite common. The distribution of the different animal bones found in graves is shown in Figures 2 and 4. It can be seen that the differences between the Aegean and Near East are minimal here, but more careful analysis of the bones would have been interesting. The problems of recording are more or less the same in both areas – in 43% of the graves with animal bones in the Aegean, and 29% in the Near East, the animal bones are not further identified. That is not to mention the more than likely scenario of graves where animal bones are not recorded at all, and cases where only certain bones, for example very large ones or those of large animals, are recorded.

For the other themes – the sacrificial space, iconography and textual evidence – it is harder to draw anything other than general conclusions. There seems to be a great variety in what animals are preferred in areas of sacred space, possibly reflecting the great variety in sacred spaces themselves. Thus, pigs were apparently preferred at Methana (B6), while mostly cattle were part of the feasting deposit from Nemea Tsoungiza (B24), equids and puppies at Tell Brak (G22), and puppies, piglets, sheep/goat and equids at Tell Mozan (G26). The preferences do, however, seem to focus on four kinds of animals: sheep, goat, cattle and pig. The variations may be

---

<sup>116</sup> Considering the size of the assemblage, few conclusions can be drawn concerning the frequency and differences in frequency of animal types. These numbers also are not total numbers, but are based on graves, each grave counting as one. More careful counts and comparisons would require a larger assemblage and much better recording of the animal bones found.

related to different kinds of sacred space, perhaps to the deity or deities worshipped at each ritual or other local traditions that cannot be established from the archaeological remains. From the Near East, we know that some deities had an animal attribute,<sup>117</sup> but in most cases there does not seem to be a strict relationship between a deity's animal and what is sacrificed to that deity.

In iconography, the array of sacrificial animals seems smaller than for the other types of evidence, again with a preference for cattle and sheep/goat, and to a lesser degree, pigs and game. In both Aegean and Near Eastern iconography, it can be very difficult to establish what kind of animal is being depicted – this may be because it is left deliberately vague, because certain conventions were used which we are not yet capable of identifying, or because the artist either did not do a good job or even did not actually know what the animal looked like. As such, although the *CMS* for the Aegean, and the various catalogues of Near Eastern seals may identify an animal as some kind of goat or ox, for example, I have chosen to proceed with caution and when the image is unclear, to call the animal a 'bovid', or the closest identification possible.<sup>118</sup> For example, differences between goats, antelopes and cattle can often be very vague, if not completely lacking. If the animal has a beard it is a goat, as none of the others do. However, lack of a beard does not completely rule out the possibility of it being a goat, as some species do not grow beards, especially the females. Cattle have long tails, which are not usually found in goats or antelopes – and their horns are not ridged but smooth. To give just one example, this makes the identification of the animal on C9 problematic – it has a long tail, but also some sort of extra feature on its horns and its slender build may suggest an antelope rather than an ox; *CMS* suggests 'Rind' (cow) based on the long tail (*CMS* XI: 63). The fluidity of features may be deliberate, as can certainly be seen in the cases of actual merging of different animals (as discussed below), and given the frequency of such images, this is perhaps also the case here. It is sometimes noted that the 'faulty' features of an animal in Aegean art are due to artists not having first-hand experience of the animal, and therefore not

---

<sup>117</sup> The lion, for example, was associated with Ishtar and the dog with Gula (Black and Green 1992: 70, 119). However, an animal attribute is not necessarily standard for Near Eastern deities – often it is an item like the sun or so-called 'saw' for Shamash/Utu.

<sup>118</sup> That is, of the family *Bovidae*, which includes cattle, sheep, goats and antelopes.

being able to make accurate representations. The ‘horses’ on the grave stelai from Mycenae are famous examples of this, where the ‘horses’ are shown with what appear to be lion’s tails and – in one case – a strange protrusion from the head (D22-D24). But some representations of lions, dolphins and octopi are also lacking in accuracy, with a significant vein sometimes being shown in the wrong place on lions (Ballintijn 1995: 25), the fins, flippers and tails depicted erroneously on dolphins and the same for suckers on octopi (Morgan 1988: 60-61, Gill 1985: 69, Saunders 2008: 12, 14).

In many other examples, the features are simply not clear enough to even have the confusion of different animal characteristics. This is especially the case with many Near Eastern seals, often as a result of wear or damage. Much hybridity also occurs in Near Eastern iconography, with recurring figures such as the ‘bull-man’, the ‘griffin’, the ‘snake dragon’ and ‘lion dragon’ which are all clearly deliberate examples (see Black and Green 1992: 64). For ‘normal’ animals, the problems are generally more of vagueness than a deliberate mixing of features, though the vagueness itself may be deliberate. For example, the animals carried in ‘presentation scenes’ are often referred to as kids (e.g. H29, H30 and H31-H35). Although we have seen that their youth is questionable, they may well be goats, on account of the shape of their horns. However, many of them do not have beards, and so could also be interpreted as antelopes (e.g. H31, H32, H41, H44-H48 and H90); in many more cases, it can only be said with certainty that it is a bovid or even just a quadruped (e.g. H88, H29, H30 and H35).

Disregarding the many unidentifiable examples (which may in themselves be significant), the animals most commonly shown in actual scenes of sacrifice in the Aegean are cattle (C2-C4, C7, C8, C13 and D1). In other iconography with sacrificial associations, cattle are also very common, but goats and deer, not to mention what is usually labelled the ‘predator’, lions and lionesses, become more frequent. In the Near East, sheep, goats, cattle and antelopes all occur, with goats the most frequent identifiable animal in ‘presentation scenes’, and models of livers for divination coming from sheep.

In the textual evidence, we find a preponderance of sheep and cattle in particular, and goats and pigs to a lesser degree. In the Near Eastern tablets from Ugarit, different

kinds of birds – sometimes specified as doves, ducks or geese, but mostly just as ‘birds’ – seem of particular importance, as they occur in many of the sacrificial texts (Pardee 2002). Animals in tablets are also frequently qualified in some way – whether referring to their age, gender, way of feeding or ‘perfection’. Again, differences in animals recorded may be related to local or regional customs, to the deity involved, or something that seems particularly pertinent in the Near East, to the specific ritual in question. It appears that specific rituals required very specific animals, although we may not be able to deduce precisely why a specific animal was used for a specific ritual. For the Aegean, calculations of the types of animals have been made for what is referred to as the Linear B ‘mixed commodity’ tablets (Weilhartner 2008: table 1). This also shows a significant preference for sheep, with goats, pigs and cattle making up a much smaller amount. Similar calculations have been made for the sacrificial texts from Ugarit, where sheep/goats make up 33%, cattle 15% and birds 3% of the mentioned sacrifices (Pardee 2002: 225).

Bones from wild animals are rare, but they do occur, for example from gazelle (F3, F5, F43-F46, F116, G19 and G22), deer (A28 and A55) and hare (A10, A24, A33, F45, F46 and F89). Other animals are less straightforward, as it is not always clear if they were domestic or wild – some equids, for example, could have been wild, and the same goes for bovids. We tend to assume that they are domestic species, but since expert analysis is sparse on this material, we cannot be certain. What can be said is that evidence for both wild and domesticated animals appears in all types of material. Examples, apart from the archaeological material mentioned above, include the frequent mention of wild animals for sacrifice in tablets from Ugarit as well as elsewhere (see e.g. various texts in Pardee 2002 and Pritchard 1969) and depicted in iconography on for example D13 and C12.

However, domesticated animals are much more common in both the Aegean and the Near East. This means that strong links, in practice, between either hunting or domestication and sacrifice are unlikely for the period, although it cannot be ruled out that hunting had a greater significance in relation to sacrifice in earlier periods. There could also have been a difference between practice and ideology, with certain ideological ideas expressed in the iconography (especially of the Aegean). Here,

hunting and sacrifice do seem to be linked in some cases, though hardly inextricably. However, this does not comply with the textual and archaeological material, where domestic animals constitute the majority of sacrificial animals. Conversely, Jonathan Z. Smith's emphasis on domestication as another alternative to the origin of sacrifice over-simplifies the case, and is not particularly useful for understanding the material at hand (Smith 1987). In fact, the ancient people of the Aegean and Near East may not have made the same wild/domestic distinction we do, and once again, there is a danger of modern perceptions and assumptions guiding our view of ancient practices, and in particular prioritising certain practices above others. A domestic – wild distinction would tend to affiliate the domestic with the civilised, associated with the more technologically advanced and progressed, the more human, and the wild associated with the animal, non-human, uncivilised. Even in Burkert's theory, hunting is a step towards 'civilisation', that is, organised society (Burkert 1983).

As such, taking all these types of evidence into account, the most frequently sacrificed animals in both the Aegean and the Near East seem to be sheep or sheep/goats. Cattle come not far after this, along with pigs. In practice, it does therefore not appear to be the case that the bull was *the* sacrificial animal in terms of frequency of being sacrificed. There is here a discrepancy between the different types of material for the Aegean: the iconography would seem to suggest that the ox (not the bull – see the discussion concerning gender below) was the prominent sacrificial animal, but other sources do not agree with this. This difference should not be explained away, but is in itself very interesting. It may betray a certain ideology of the people that produced the images where the ox is more prominent. It is also possible that the images depicting cattle relate to a specific type of sacrifice that was for some reason more often represented in pictorial media, whereas those involving other animals are less common, for reasons that cannot at present be discovered. However, the importance of the ox even in iconography should not be over-emphasised: other animals *do* appear as well, and certainly in the Near East, there is a greater preponderance of sheep and goats. Many other species occur, and animals such as birds and fish are easily forgotten when in the company of such large and, at least to modern tastes, much more evocative animals as cattle and equids, for example. Nor is there reason to assume that smaller animals indicate a less significant sacrifice – the type of animal may have been

dictated by many factors, some of which we may not be aware, including the type of ritual, the occasion, the time of year/month/day, the deity involved, the place, economic concerns<sup>119</sup> and the participants.

### **Animal-human interfaces**

A general rhetoric which includes humans ‘using’, ‘controlling’ or ‘manipulating’ animals may lead to an unintended impression of humans being superior to and objectifying animals. This is by no means the case. Human-animal (or ‘non-human animal’-animal) relations are extremely complex, and though the exact features of the interfaces in the Bronze Age may in some cases be enigmatic, the material certainly shows us that animals were no mere practical objects. The sheer variety of contexts in which humans and animals interact even within sacrificial activity argues against such a view, and if a broader picture is considered, the activities and interfaces become even more complex. Some of the attitudes of humans to dogs noted by Haraway include seeing them as pets, as assistants in hauling, hunting and herding, as a source of food and fleece, and as intelligent weapons (Haraway 2003: 13). Many more could of course be added, both to dogs and other animals.

Another example may be taken from Siberia, where even today, herders live in a very close relationship with Yakut horses. They ride, feed, eat, slaughter/sacrifice, make clothes from and live with the horses. The horses roam about freely, but are not quite wild in that there are specific feeding places for the ones that are loose, and others (the ones ridden) are kept closer to the group. When a new horse is needed for riding or food, it is herded in, and they are killed before dying of old age. While not quite being worshipped, some sort of spirit and deep respect is attributed to the horses, as is visible in their daily dealings with them, and the skulls of certain, particularly ‘good’ horses are retained in a tree in a specific spot (Derrick 2009). These many interfaces demonstrate that the relationship is not simply one of ‘love’ or ‘utility’, but a highly complex and inter-dependent one. Animals, then, are not simply objects for human utilisation; humans and animals have co-evolved throughout history, and to write a history of humans devoid of animals would be to ignore a significant influence. A

---

<sup>119</sup> Postgate suggests that cattle were not often sacrificed because they were too valuable economically (1992: 163).



different approach altogether would be to write a history in which humans are only one (equal) animal among others.

That, of course, is not the aim of this study, nor is it the aim to attempt an analysis from any other perspective than the human one. However, that is not to diminish the role or the consciousness of the animal: within these many discussions concerning human use of animals in sacrifice, the animal itself is a potentially powerful agent. The animals discussed clearly had a noticeable impact on the lives of the people sacrificing them, and in some cases we may be able to speak of a relationship of interdependence, but without making assumptions about the possibility of knowing animal intentions or consciousness.<sup>120</sup> Neither humans nor animals exist in a vacuum – as Haraway expresses it, “beings do not preexist their relatings” (Haraway 2003: 6). What is more, although animals are highly theorised here, in the sense that much discussion revolves around the symbolic/metaphorical and ideological potential of animals, the ‘surface’ is equally important. In other words, animals are ‘good to think with’, but they are also ‘good to live with’. A relation that is not purely positive: it can be wasteful, cruel, indifferent, ignorant, full of loss, as well as full of joy, invention, labour, intelligence, play and ‘co-history’ (Haraway 2003: 12). The religious or symbolic is only one interface or attitude, one which, in order to gain value in the first instance, is situated in a web of other interactions.

Further, in terms of sacrifice, the distinction between animal and human may not be absolute. Both animals and humans (albeit much less frequently) were considered adequate sacrificial ‘victims’ in certain instances. It may here be pertinent to reiterate one of the beginning quotes from Girard,

the division [of sacrifice into human and animal] is based in effect on a value judgement, on the preconception that one category of victim – the human being – is quite unsuitable for sacrificial purposes, while another – the animal – is eminently sacrificable (Girard 2005: 11).

---

<sup>120</sup> Animals are sometimes referred to as ‘persons’. By this is meant not that they are part of the ‘species’ human being, but that refer to themselves as ‘persons’, and humans as ‘animals’ (i.e. outside their own group mentality). Animals are thus considered conscious, intentional agents (Viveiros de Castro 1998: esp. 476 and Willerslev 2007).

For example, in the Ur graves, no difference seems to have been made between the way the (whole) animals and humans were treated; they both appear to have been envisaged or placed as serving the same role in death as in life. In this instance, they may be said to have been considered equal, and it would make no sense to insist on the priority of either human or animal as above or more central than the other.

A final note on human-animal relations, and perhaps another caution: the term ‘animal’ is used throughout this study to refer to all non-human animals, but it may in fact not be entirely suitable. It is done here simply for the sake of convenience. However, as has been seen throughout, not all animals are treated in the same manner in any of the types of material. That serves as a clear indication that not all animals were viewed in the same way, as is only to be expected. Some animals, such as equids, lions/lionesses, cattle, perhaps dogs, and various hybrids, appear to have greater potential for use in the negotiation of identity and social relations, for example. Whether or not this amounts to a completely different view of the world, in which such a category as ‘animal’ did not exist for the people of the ancient Aegean and Near East is perhaps questionable, but the possibility of a difference in categories should be kept open.<sup>121</sup>

## **Poststructuralist contributions**

Throughout this study, a poststructuralist approach has shown a tendency in modern writing and interpretations to create binary oppositions organised in a hierarchical structure. Some of the binary oppositions that have occurred so far are listed in figure 5. Oppositions may not in and of themselves be problematic, but they rarely work as equals: as Derrida writes, “we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a *vis-à-vis*, but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the terms governs the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand” (Derrida 1981: 41). The terms

---

<sup>121</sup> This certainly happens elsewhere: in a study of Malawi, Morris notes how they do not have direct equivalents for ‘animal’ and ‘plant’, but they do distinguish between things that have ‘life’ and those that do not. These, however, will sound foreign to most western ears, as things that have ‘life’ include tree, animal, snake, serpent spirit, souls of the dead, edible mushrooms, rain, bird and soil (Morris 2000: 140-141).

on the left-hand column are thus attributed higher importance or as more ‘real’ than those on the right.<sup>122</sup> This hierarchy, however, is not only destabilised from within the modern texts, but also with reference to the material, where the order of things cannot be maintained. Such oppositions and prioritisations remain largely unstated, and probably largely unconscious. They are based on unstated assumptions about a wide range of concepts: these concern ancient attitudes, modern perceptions and methods, human society, religion and human-animal relations.

Up	Down
Sacrifice	Eating
Giving	Eating
Sacrifice	Slaughter
Burnt	Unburnt
Male	Female
Textual material	Archaeological material
Head	Body
Whole	Parts
Communal	Individual
Religion	Magic
Domestic	Wild
Origin/original	Copy/simulation/simulacrum
Sacred	Profane
Animate	Inanimate
Presence	Absence

**Figure 5. Binary oppositions.**

---

<sup>122</sup> There are examples where the opposite hierarchy is used – for example in Burkert’s writing, where hunting (i.e. the wild) is seen as more important than domestic, which is because of its perceived originality compared to later domestication.

We have seen how, in the interpretation of the Ayia Triada sarcophagus, there was a prioritisation of elements associated with upwardness and life,<sup>123</sup> how in referring to burial practices, the presence of whole animals or animal heads, appear to be a more ‘real’ sacrifice than only parts, and the same applies to animal bones as burnt and not burnt. Many of these oppositions are at the heart of theories concerning sacrifice, and these may in part lead to false assumptions concerning ancient peoples. For example, Robertson Smith and many others emphasise the *communal* importance of sacrifice, to the detriment of individual beliefs and practices – an idea going at least back to Frazer, who distinguished between religion and magic, seeing magic as a cruder version of religion and as related to the individual rather than the communal (Frazer 1993). Durkheim similarly sees religion as purely communal, and through his negative definition of the ‘profane’ assigns higher value to the ‘sacred’.

Two of the oppositions will here be explored further, since they have had profound influences not only on how sacrificial practice is understood to have taken place, but with wider implications for how society in general is viewed in the Aegean and the Near East. These are the oppositions between male and female (both in terms of humans and in terms of animals), and the domestic and the wild/hunting.

### **Gendered animals**

One key opposition often occurs in relation to gender, both in terms of humans and in terms of animals. For the Aegean, we have also already seen some suggestions of this with many cattle stereotypically referred to as bulls, even when the gender clearly cannot be established, as when just the head appears in iconography or in rhyton form.

A common assumption concerning gender is the sex of the sacrificial animal. Though a similar case may be made for other types of animals, I will here focus on the bull, because in the Aegean it is often called the sacrificial victim *par excellence* (e.g. Sakellarakis 1970: 181 and 193, and Marinatos 1986: 11). There is in fact no evidence to support this statement. What the evidence does suggest is that the *ox* was a very

---

<sup>123</sup> Goodison also notes and discusses how “contemporary preconceptions determine which themes within prehistory are chosen for study” (Goodison 2009: 234). She similarly identifies prioritised binary oppositions relating to male/female and up/down in modern scholarship.

important sacrificial animal. In the iconography, in the vast majority of cases, the ox is not actually gendered, despite the fact that when the Minoans and Mycenaeans wanted to show a bull, this could easily be done, even within the miniaturist medium of seals. The cow is less easy to represent, and the only secure iconographic depictions of cows are when they are shown with a suckling calf.

Iconographically, the only way that the bull is securely identified is by its genitals, as in C6, C73, C114. The prime example of an ox being consistently identified as a bull is the one trussed on a table on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus (D1). Since the first standard publication, the ox on the table is called a bull (Paribeni 1908). This appears to be a kind of mantra, repeated again and again in new publications, without any attempts at justification.<sup>124</sup> However, the ox on the table is not actually gendered; no genitals are shown. It might be argued that a bull can be identified by its horns, or its size of horns, but although bulls often have larger horns than cows, no such distinctions are made in the iconography. D16 shows a faience plaque from the Temple Repositories at Knossos. It represents a cow with her calf. Note that the cow's horns are quite long and elaborate, so that this criterion cannot be used to determine gender. More cows with their calves are shown in C112 and C113. It could also be argued that bulls can be identified by their skin.<sup>125</sup> The dappled skin of the ox on the sarcophagus is elsewhere shown on bulls (for example in the bull leaping scenes), but again, the cow in D16 is also shown with dappled skin, so this is not gender specific either.

Many other representations of oxen are, in a similar manner, called bulls, without further explanation – it is simply assumed. This is for example done with the wall-paintings from Pylos, which are based on very small fragments, none of which show any areas that can be gendered. One scholar goes as far as the describing the combined fragments of one of the paintings (D2) as “a procession to display the offering with

---

<sup>124</sup> These are just a few examples: Nilsson 1950, Andronikos 1968, Pini 1968, Sakellarakis 1970, Long 1974, Marinatos 1986 and 1993, Löwe 1992 and Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1996.

<sup>125</sup> Apparently the males of the extinct species of *Bos primigenius* or auroch (identified e.g. at Archanes Tholos Tomb A) could have dappled skin, while the females and calves were brown. See van Vuure 2005.

implied sacrifice of a valuable male animal by males, possibly to a male deity” (Wilson 2008: 24). The “male” animal is a fragment showing part of what appears to be an ox’s head, and the human “males” all come from more fragments, with uncertainties about how many of them belong to this painting, and including at least one woman. The “male deity” is completely absent. The problem is the same for the glyptic art: *CMS* identify bulls on C2-C4, C6, C13, C22, C24, C37, C60-C62 and C71. Only C3 and C6 show male genitals, in all other cases there is no reason to designate them as bulls. Among these, even bucrania are called bulls. This possibly originates in a misunderstanding of the word ‘bucranium’, which means ox’s skull, *not* bull’s skull. This misunderstanding is, for example, evident in Nilsson, who clearly links the bucranium specifically with the bull (1950: 232). It is difficult to gauge the extent of this misuse of the word, as most writers do not define it before use. Marinatos does not define the word, but she does claim that the animals considered sacrificial by the Minoans were bulls, goats or agrimi, rams, pigs or boars, sheep and deer (1986: 12). Oddly, she limits the oxen to bulls, though none of the other animals are limited to the males, nor does there seem to be any reason for this limitation.

Something similar happens at times in Near Eastern scholarship, although the ‘bull’ does not receive the same extensive denotation as the sacrificial animal *par excellence*. For example, the descriptions for the seals on H132, H166-H170, I1 and I2 designate the animals on them as “bulls”, and in the case of H22, “bull’s legs” – yet on none of them is it possible to say that the animals are definitely male. In fact, on some, such as H166-H168 and H170, it is hardly possible to be sure that the animals depicted are even bovine. The same problem occurs with bovine-shaped objects; a copper alloy “bull’s hoof” and “bulls’ heads” are on display in the British Museum, for example (I22 and I23), and several “bull’s heads” are recorded from Ur (e.g. Woolley 1934: pl. 119-120), despite the fact that it is impossible to tell gender merely from the hoof or the head. The presence of horns may again be the cause of such assumptions – concerning a “zoomorphic chariot”, Marchetti and Nigro write, “The front part is a horned head and so must belong to a ram or a bull” (Marchetti and Nigro 1997: 24). Here we see that for sheep and goats, the assumptions are the same – horns equal males. However, it is not that simple, since also both male and female sheep and goats

can have horns, though the female's are smaller and more slender<sup>126</sup> (Gilbert 2002a: 11 and pers. comm. 23.05.2010).

In many of the depictions of animals of all kinds, the absence of any gender-specific traits are more than likely deliberate; that is, they were not considered important in the specific context for which the artefact was intended. What is more, some iconographic examples show deliberate gender ambiguity. A seal from Mycenae shows a lion/lioness: the animal clearly has a prominent mane, which only lions have, yet it also has teats and a cub suckling below it (C115). Three more examples show lions/lionesses hunting – on all of them, the animal is shown with a mane and prominent teats (C78, C90 and C91). Another sealstone, in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, shows an ox with what looks like udders and teats – but it could also be perceived as testicles, and in fact, *CMS* refers to the animal as a bull (C83). As with the types of animals, such ambiguities could be deliberate on the part of the artist, some sort of artistic convention, lack of anatomical knowledge of the artist, inability of modern perception to understand their meaning, or a combination of any of those.

To link this to the same issue with the archaeological evidence, Marinatos claims that bones of a “bull, pig and sheep” were found at Tyllisos (1986: 13 and B5), with a reference to Hazzidakis 1934. Hazzidakis does not, however, assign gender to the femur fragment of an ox that was found (Hazzidakis 1934: 15). It is not uncommon for oxen to spontaneously turn into bulls with regards to faunal remains. At Trapeza (A2), Pendlebury *et al.* mention the find of an ox's jaw (1935/6: 21), while Sakellarakis refers to a bull's jaw (1970: 216). A tholos tomb at Apodoulou on Crete (A17) was first thought to contain remains of a horse, but this was corrected to an ox (Touchais 1982: 628 and Tzedakis 1988: 403). Löwe, however, mentions a bull skull (Löwe 1996: 21). At Epidauros (B16), Lambrinudakis remarks that “bovine skulls, horns and other bones prove that the animals most usually sacrificed on this altar were bulls and goats” (1981: 59). There is no reference to any formal faunal analysis here, so it is not clear how the bovine skulls and horns become bull skulls and horns. The same

---

<sup>126</sup> The goats and sheep shown without horns have been polled (artificial removal of the horns while the animal is young), but whether this has happened genetically or artificially is not at present possible to say with any certainty (Gilbert, pers. comm. 23.05.2010).

problem does not appear in the Near East, where sex is almost only attributed to equid remains (F18, F47, F80-F85), with a single exception of a female sheep from Abu Salabikh Grave 1 (F1). These are all based on examinations by a zooarchaeologist.

In fact, it is in many cases possible to gender ox bones from archaeological sites, especially if the pelvis or skull is present (Grigson 1982a). The possibility does, however, depend on the geographical location and period in which the bones are found – if no data has been studied for the region and period, there is nothing with which to compare the bones, which makes identification tentative. It may also be possible to determine gender by horn cores (Grigson 1982b and Armitage 1982). Such attempts at determining gender are complicated by the possibility of the presence of both domestic and wild species, as well as by castrated animals. I do not know of any studies being done for the Bronze Age Aegean which could help determining gender. However, it may still be possible in some cases to make an identification. The species *Bos primigenius* have been identified at Archanes and Tylissos. The males and females of this species are so distinct that they used to be considered as two different species (Grigson 1982a: 7). At Archanes, the ox skull has been identified as being of a bull by J.K. Melentis (Reese 1995: 37), though no faunal details or publication is provided. As noted, at Tylissos, the gender is not given. Even these two sites are exceptional, however, in that for most sites no specialist report has been made for the animal bones, and even fewer provide, or are able to provide, details about gender. Thus, the archaeological material does not at present support the idea that the bull was a primary sacrificial animal.

Lastly, we are fortunate in that in the majority of the tablets with provisions for sacrifice and feasting (and in those that are not clearly linked with these), the gender of the animal is actually noted, not just for oxen, but also for sheep, goats and pigs. And here we find both bulls and cows, which is a clear indication that *both* genders were indeed sacrificed. It is possible if a complete count is made, that the number of bulls will be higher than that of cows, but if this is taken as a sign that bulls are more important, then the count of goats and pigs would likely show them to be more important than oxen (see e.g. the suggestive statistics in Weilhartner 2008: Tables 1-4 and Pardee 2002: 224-225). However, the tablets are perhaps not suitable for



performing that sort of statistical analysis anyway, since we cannot be sure how representative a sample we have, nor precisely which to include as belonging to the topic of sacrifice. It is again interesting to note that the gender of the animal is not always recorded – hence not particularly important – and that some animals are never qualified as male or female (for example gazelles, dogs and birds).

### **Gendered humans**

The assumptions and reservations of some scholars towards identifying human sacrifice are bound up with assumptions concerning gender and social groupings within a community. This usually involves seeing women, slaves, prisoners of war and even animals as somehow inferior members, and consequently more suitable for sacrifice, as if excuses must be made for the sacrifice, and the sacrifice of something ‘inferior’ being somehow more excusable or understandable. Thus, the human ‘victims’ found in the Ur graves and elsewhere are frequently referred to as ‘servants’, ‘slaves’, ‘grooms’, ‘drivers’, ‘attendants’, ‘captives’, ‘prisoners of war’ (Persson 1931: 69, Tsountas and Manatt 1969: 97, Protonotariou-Deilaki 1969: 3-6, Woolley 1934: e.g. 64, 94, 116). Interestingly, women most often do not receive any designation which otherwise marks them as inferior in status (apart from Woolley’s occasional ‘court ladies’ – e.g. Woolley 1954: 64), suggesting that ‘female’ is just another word in this line, signifying a similar status. When there are cases of a man and a woman buried together, it is usually assumed it is the woman buried with the man, the queen with the king – the other way around is not considered, even if their positions and contexts otherwise indicate equal status. This is, for example, the case at the Dendra Tholos Tomb and Knossos New Hospital Site Tomb 1 (A30 and A42).

Along the same lines, human skeletons are at times assigned a gender based not on the skeletal remains, but on the grave goods found with them. Such identifications tend to project modern assumptions about gender roles onto the material, again without the possibility of substantiating such assumptions. Thus, the human skeletons at Archanes Tholos Tomb A, Marathon Tholos Tomb, Dendra Tholos Tomb, Nauplia Chamber Tomb, Knossos New Hospital Site Tomb 1, Lerna Shaft Grave, Al Hiba Burial, Tell Razuk Burial 12, Abu Salabikh Grave 80 and Abu Salabikh Grave 1 (A9, A30, A50, A54, A61, F1, F12, F18 and F73) all appear to have been gendered based on

associated finds. Such finds include jewellery, tweezers and the lack of weapons for women and the presence of weapons and equids for men, although it is not always possible to decide what the suggested gender is based on from the archaeological reports (as for example is the case for the Lerna Shaft Grave, where the human skeleton was not even present).

### **Gender and hunting in the Aegean**

In the Aegean,<sup>127</sup> a link between sacrifice and hunting has already been recognised in previous contexts, especially in the iconographic evidence, and is perhaps hinted at in the archaeological evidence in dog and horse burials. Though some link is thus fairly certain in some instances, it is not necessarily the case that all sacrifice is connected with hunting (in fact this is unlikely since mostly domestic animals were sacrificed). Conversely, all hunting may not have ended in sacrifice – and this is in either case difficult to prove. The strong connection between the two is a basic part of Walter Burkert's theory of sacrifice, where sacrifice in fact originates in the act of hunting (Burkert 1983). This aspect of his theory has been very influential, in particular with Nannó Marinatos, the main contemporary writer on Minoan sacrifice, but also in other studies, such as for example Guggisberg 2009, who sees in the 'wild' animal bones and figurines from Kalapodi and Amyklai (B1 and B12) a possible male initiation rite involving hunting and sacrifice. However, the linking of sacrifice and hunting has unfortunate consequences for the role attributed to women. Because hunting is perceived by most as a male activity (whether or not this is stated explicitly), women are marginalised, and in extreme cases, excluded from society, and even humanity.<sup>128</sup> This is, at least, the logical conclusion of Burkert's writing, where participation in the hunt and killing is a prerequisite for being human:

The transition to the hunt is, rather, one of the most decisive ecological changes between man and the other primates. Man can

---

<sup>127</sup> The same link is not obvious in the Near Eastern material, where scenes of 'hunting' often involve mythical or hybrid creatures, with no clear sacrificial association. The only possible link is through the presence of a few bones of 'wild' animals in graves.

<sup>128</sup> Nixon aptly discusses similar problems for the representation of Stone Age humans, both in scholarly and popular representations, where women tend to be excluded, left in the background or seen as a negative influence. Men, and hunting, are conversely seen as necessary and symptomatic of civilisation and progressive evolution (Nixon 1994).

virtually be defined as “the hunting ape” ... Among human beings, hunting is – in contrast to all animal predators – requiring both speed and strength; hence the male’s long, slender thigh. By contrast, since women must bear children with ever larger skulls, they develop round, soft forms. Man’s extraordinarily protracted youth, his *neoteny*, which permits the development of the mind through learning and the transmission of a complicated culture, requires long years of security. This is basically provided by the mother at home<sup>129</sup> (Burkert 1983: 17-18)

and

man became man through the hunt, through the act of killing<sup>130</sup> (Burkert 1983: 22).

Thus the argument goes as follows:

1. hunting and killing defines human beings (as opposed to other animals)
2. hunting and killing is a solely male activity; women “stay at home”

The logical conclusion to this, though only just falling short of being stated explicitly by Burkert is

3. women are not human

Though the conclusion (3) is not explicitly stated by Burkert, it must follow from the first two statements. This is the most extreme exclusion of women, and though not stated as extremely by other writers, the assumptions associated here with the act of hunting do carry on into other texts.

Marinatos, through her support of Burkert’s theory (for example, 1986: 9, 11, 40, 1988: 16 and 1993: 10-11), at least partially promotes the same marginalisation,

---

<sup>129</sup> “...der Übergang zur Jagd ist vielmehr die entscheidende ökologische Veränderung zwischen den übrigen Primaten und dem Menschen. Man kann den Menschen geradezu definieren als den ‘hunting ape’ ... Jagd ist Männersache – beim Menschen, im Gegensatz zu sämtlichen Raubtieren -, sie erfordert Schnelligkeit und Kraft; dazu bedarf es der langen, schmalen Schenkel des Mannes, während die Frau, die Kinder mit immer größerem Schädel gebären muß, runde, weiche Formen entwickelt. Denn die einzigartige lange Jugendzeit, die ‘Neotenie’ des Menschen, die die Entwicklung des Geistes durch Lernen und die Tradierung einer komplizierten Kultur ermöglicht, setzt lange Jahre der Geborgenheit voraus; sie wird vom Daheim der Mutter geboten” (Burkert 1972: 24-26).

<sup>130</sup> “der Mensch wurde zum Menschen durch das Jägerstum, durch den Akt des Tötens” (Burkert 1972: 30).

though not necessarily a complete exclusion. She excludes women from the actual act of killing, which is in effect not that different from the same exclusion as that made by Burkert. She does this by claiming that although women take part in animal sacrifice, they never perform the actual act of killing the animal (1988: 13-14). The argument for this is not very convincing; it is based on the fact that they are never shown in the iconography with the presumed weapon of killing, the mace, but there are a few showing a male figure with this weapon (but not with a sacrificial animal in the same scene). There are several problems with this argument. Firstly, we cannot be certain what the “instrument of death” was for sacrificial practice (if indeed only a single type of weapon was used). The ‘priests’ with maces (or single axes) that Marinatos refers to do not show them in a clearly sacrificial context (C116, C118 and C119) – no sacrificial animal or altar indicate sacrifice (the dolphin on Marinatos’ fig. 6 is nowhere understood as sacrificial, and Marinatos herself elsewhere identifies it as a hunter). The explicitly sacrificial scenes that do show weapons, show short blades such as knives or daggers (C1, C4 and C9) and of course the double axe is very dominant, but it is not certain if this was used as an actual weapon, or if it is mainly symbolic.

The mace or even double axe may have been used for stunning large sacrificial animals, but this probably does not include killing them, and a sharp instrument is needed for cutting the animal, and for penetrating the skin for blood libations. Thus, the identification of the mace or axe as carried by these priests as “the instrument of death” is doubtful. Marinatos herself contends that the moment of death or the kill is never actually shown in the iconography (1988:15) – this means that *neither men nor women* are shown killing the animal. Further, she also claims that both men and women perform sacrifice, but not together (1988: 13). Though I think this statement in itself is wrong, if taken at face value, it disproves her previous statement about women not killing. How are women to perform sacrifice without men if only men do the killing of the animal? It is not possible to hold both these positions at once.

Lastly, there are representations of female figures involved in hunting. For example, this is shown in the many scenes of a female figure carrying an animal, usually a goat, over her shoulder, as we have already seen (C121-C136). A woman drawing a bow,

possibly with a sword at her waist is shown on a seal probably from Crete (C120), and Marinatos herself points to a seal from Knossos which shows a woman in an aggressive position with a sword held high in her right hand and a kind of scythe behind her in her left hand (*CMS* II,3: no. 16). It is possible that these female figures should be identified as deities, but there is no agreement on this issue, as noted with the females carrying goats. Marinatos does not think that the figure on *CMS* II,3: no. 16 is a priestess, “because of the way she holds the sword and because there is no animal or altar to indicate that animal sacrifice is about to take place” (1988: 14). However, there is no evidence that her gesture identifies her as a deity, and the lack of altar and animal means very little – again, the men Marinatos identifies as priests are not associated with altars, or with sacrifice explicitly. Nor does sacrifice necessarily have to be involved – this could be a scene of hunting, or even battle, without a reference to sacrifice. Even the presence of an altar would not designate the figure as mortal. Thus, it is not, at present, possible to be certain whether these female figures are deities or mortals, but the attempt to identify them as deities, when the evidence is so ambiguous, serves further to marginalise the role of mortal women in Aegean society.

A similar tendency is detectable when women are depicted in chariots. When men are shown like this, they are simply associated with hunting or fighting, but when it is women, it seems that it has to be ‘explained’ by calling them deities or priestesses, or as part of a (religious) procession. An interesting example of this is Sakellarakis’ explanation of the human remains in Tholos Tomb A at Archanes (Sakellarakis 1970). He identifies the skeleton as female, but this is based on the finds (the lack of weapons, the household items and the amounts of jewellery), not on skeletal analysis, which was not possible (Sakellarakis 1970: 155). This, however, causes problems because of the horse found there, as horses are usually associated with men and hunting/battle, so Sakellarakis spends a long time arguing that horses could be used by priestesses in religious contexts, as for example on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus. In the Near East, a sledge was found in Queen Pu-abi’s grave at Ur. The usage may have been merely ceremonial (or non-military in any case), but it would be unwise from the current evidence to assume male + vehicle = military and female + vehicle = religious/ritual.

## **Death, liminality and poststructuralism**

Poststructuralism has often been criticised for not contributing anything to scholarship, and causing only a halt to further research or progress. The point made in many deconstructive readings is, however, that ‘progress’ is relative and can often be challenged. The concept of ‘progress’ requires an absolute point which can be referred to (such as an absolute truth, to which we constantly draw nearer). Such a point is precisely what is often undermined in deconstruction, through careful reading of texts. Although generalisations should not be made about all deconstructive ‘readings’,<sup>131</sup> deconstruction is not the ‘free for all’, where any and all interpretations are equally valid, a practice of which it has been accused (Norris 2002: 125). Because of its fragmentary and ‘de-constructive’ tendencies, poststructuralism can be seen as merely ‘taking things apart’ (i.e. ‘destroying’), and leaving them as such, and the same criticism might be aimed at the current study. The intention here is the uncovering of problematic assumptions made by modern scholars; it does not mean that *all* assumptions have been revealed, nor that the present author may not also be guilty of certain assumptions. However, such uncovering should be seen as healthy self-awareness of the disciplines involved, not as a threat. Nevertheless, not all poststructuralist ideas are ‘negative’ in this sense. What follows are some discussions of how specific ideas, developed by Girard and Baudrillard, may contribute new insights into certain aspects of the material. These pertain to the relationship between the living and the dead, and the recurring theme of doubling and frontality, both in archaeological material and iconography.

### **Baudrillard on symbolic exchange and death**

An interesting perspective on the different types of animal remains in burials is provided by Jean Baudrillard’s analysis of how society relates to death (Baudrillard 1993). He sees the control of death as a control of power, and as such is possible only

---

<sup>131</sup> Some writers are in fact adamant that sentences such as ‘deconstruction is...’ or ‘deconstruction is not...’ cannot even be made (see e.g. Wolfreys 1998: 1-15).

if “death is no longer free” (Baudrillard 1993: 130). So, if death is controlled through access and display by ‘elite’ groups of society, a certain degree of power can be gained.

Further, death is merely a *social relation*, another relationship between different people. This is an intriguing way of understanding the close ties that seem to have existed between the living and dead in the areas and period in question, perhaps in particular in the Near East, in cases where cemeteries are within the city boundaries, or even within houses, as a seemingly integral part of the house, as is seen, for example, at Ur and Ugarit (Woolley and Mallowan 1976: 33-39 and Yon 2006). As Baudrillard formulates:

There is an irreversible evolution from savage societies to our own: little by little, *the dead cease to exist*. They are thrown out of the group’s symbolic circulation. They are no longer beings with a full role to play, worthy partners in exchange, and we make this obvious by exiling them further and further away from the group of the living ... [the dead are] thrown further and further from the centre towards the periphery, finally having nowhere to go at all, as in the new town or the contemporary metropolis, where there are no longer any provisions for the dead, either in mental or in physical space (Baudrillard 1993: 126).

Whether or not the picture painted by Baudrillard, where the dead are extradited in modern societies but integrated in ‘savage’ ones, is really one that applies as generally as he makes it sound, it points to specific features in terms of how the dead, as a group, are treated in a society, and how this treatment can be used to exercise control and power. If control of death and the dead can be such a powerful tool, it could explain the strong emphasis on graves and tomb structures in certain places, and why cemeteries or areas adjacent to graves appear to have constituted sacred space where rituals took place. The idea of an exchange between the living and the dead may also help explain the practice of continuous worship of ancestors or the repeated presence at tombs, including the giving of objects and food to the deceased. This can be seen as a reciprocal relationship, within a larger system of exchange.

We may think that such a theory hardly makes sense, since there can be no real exchange between the living and the dead: “‘It’s all imaginary.’ Yes, and it is exciting to see that this is where the basis of the *real* social discrimination lies, and that nowhere else are power and social transcendence so clearly marked than in the imaginary” (Baudrillard 1993: 129). In a spirit akin to that noted for animals, objects and buildings, the dead may also be seen as ‘social agents’, still affecting and being affected by living humans, as Nielsen writes, “object animation allows entities from the (mythic or historic) past – gods, ancestors, or ghosts – to continue participating in current social practice” (Nielsen 2008: 209). What Baudrillard is mainly interested in is modern society, and especially the role of the simulacrum – a third level sign no longer having its original referent, which occurs particularly in a society where signs from advertising and various media create apparent meaning. Although this is too extreme to apply directly to ancient societies, there may be a sense in which it is the manipulation of the symbolic – such as the manipulation of the dead and control of access to them – that creates power. Thus, what is really being created is an ideology, and if this ideology is shared by the people, the people can be controlled and manipulated through it.

In this context, sacrifice is a tool – one way of controlling and setting up the symbolic exchange between living and dead: “This is the essence and function of sacrifice: to extinguish what threatens to fall out of the group’s symbolic control and to bury it under all the weight of the dead” (Baudrillard 1993: 138-139). Sacrifice is thus simply a mechanism within the exchange system – a means of exchanging. On top of this, further potential power may be added if the type of animal or the part of the animal is already imbued with some kind of symbolic significance in the society. How this is created is a different matter, but it may even be through such symbolic usage, creating a circular accentuation of the symbol, or it may have been created through other functions or features.

An appealing appendix to Baudrillard’s ideas may be found in recent research focussing on the somatic aspect of eating and drinking, especially in connection with death and the dead (e.g. Hamilakis 1998, 2007 and 2008, Hamilakis and Konsolaki



2004). Hamilakis reminds us of the importance of bodily senses in memory, and in the context of feasting and funerary rituals, it may be of particular significance (Hamilakis 1998). We have seen how actions surrounding the dead – not just at burials but also various other ceremonies near graves, cemeteries and possible sacred spots related to the dead such as temples, stones and pits – played a large role in many societies of the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East. The shared consumption of food provides another way a group of people to bond – in a manner suggested by Robertson Smith, though perhaps less naively positive than he envisages it. As an extension to this, it may be noted, with Hamilakis, that consumption is another device for negotiating identity, and that eating and digesting work as metaphors for death (Hamilakis 1998: 115-116). Thus, the consumption of food and drink (and possibly other substances) provide yet another arena for displaying, maintaining and creating social relations and identities.

Words such as ‘control’, ‘power’ and ‘manipulation’ should not be taken pejoratively in this context: such activities could have been more or less deliberate on the part of the people in power in the ancient Near East and Aegean. This is not to make any statements about the strength or sincerity of the religious feelings involved. Of those it is at present not possible to make any statements, but how religion functioned in ancient times may not have been very different to how it functions today – it and people’s faith may have been manipulated for political and ideological ends, whether deliberately or not.

### **Girard and the double**

The distinctions and binary oppositions that we so avidly make in modern texts may not have been shared by the ancient people of the Aegean and Near East. In the following section I will use in particular René Girard’s notions of the double and the merging of entities to discuss certain features of some of the ancient material, especially cases where such distinctions become very fluid and – at times – even merge. This is sometimes clearly deliberate, whereas other times it is harder for modern eyes to decide how the fluidity appeared in the first place and with what intentions. I will argue that sacrificial animals and humans play a liminal role, often placed *between* elements - between life and death, human and animal, human and divine, wild and domestic – thus enabling engagement between the elements, with the

unfamiliar within human relationships, and creating a temporary state of dissolution. This liminal function of animals is found not only in the ritual act itself, but also in the manner in which the physical remains are used symbolically, and in the way that these animals are depicted in the iconography.

### *Liminality*

The concept of liminality in ritual was first proposed by Arnold van Gennep in his *Rites of Passage*, first published in 1909 and translated into English in 1960. He divides rites of passage into three parts: rites of separation (or preliminal), rites of transition (liminal) and rites of incorporation (postliminal). In terms of sacrifice, the animal 'victim', although unlikely to be the subject of a rite of passage, can be seen to go through at least the first two stages, first in the preparations made for the sacrifice – this can include selecting the right type of animal, correct feeding, and proper decoration and processions. Decorated bovines, probably part of a procession and destined for sacrifice, are, for example, shown on two fragments of wall-paintings from 18<sup>th</sup> c. Mari – with crescents on their foreheads (?), and decorated tips of the horns (I1 and I2). We have also seen how in texts from the Near East, the importance of the type of food is emphasised over and over again – animals can be grain-fed, grass-fed, barley-fed, and milk-fed, for example (J3, J28, J46, J48, J50, J80 and J88). Clearly different kinds of feed are important for different occasions, even if we cannot establish the reasons behind this. The second stage would be the part of the sacrificial act in which the killing of the animal or human takes place, the stage itself functioning as a transition from the preliminal to the postliminal. The liminal zone acts as a period of alternative or subversive structures.

Victor Turner further describes liminality as 'betwixt and between' worlds, and associates it with his notion of *communitas* as unstructured communities where all members are equal (Turner 1967: 59-92). This idea of liminality is here combined with René Girard's theory of sacrifice, as has already been discussed in Chapter 1. Girard sees the sacrificial process as necessary to prevent the spiralling of violence, and it may be noted that the participation by all members of a group in the violent sacrificial act creates a liminal zone which is in constant flux – hierarchies are turned upside down and there is an effacement of differences. This is precisely because everybody

shares equally in the violent act and in some instances also in the aftermath, for example, shared consumption. In this the sacrificial 'victim' acquires extra sanctity because it has been the agent of this liminality, and has removed the threat of further violence. Paradoxically, this great leveller of differences has at the same time the potential to create and maintain structures, differences and hierarchies. The dissolution is a necessary element against which to define differences. And although participation may be total or complete (that is, all members of a group), it can still be graded, and this grading serves as a further defining force for hierarchies and social relationships.

This section explores how the function of the sacrificial 'victim' as an agent of liminal space and as temporarily eliminating differences can be detected in the material culture of the Aegean and the Near East. Animals marking out one sphere from another are not only exploited in the ritual act itself, but also in subsequent stages, and as permanent markers. This can in particular be seen in funerary contexts, with animal remains deliberately placed in in-between spaces, such as walls and dromoi. For example, at Archanes Tholos Tomb A, the head of an ox was found in the stone wall between the main chamber and the unlooted side chamber with a human burial. The skull was clearly deliberately placed there, and marks the boundary between the two chambers (A9). At Marathon, two horses were carefully placed creating a mirror image at the outer end of the dromos (A54). Again, their position shows deliberation, and they mark the space between the tomb and the outside world, perhaps with the whole of the dromos functioning as a liminal space between the two spaces. At the cemetery of Aidonia, a complete horse skeleton and 14 horse mandibles were found in front of a false door – once again, we may notice the importance of thresholds, situated between worlds (A1).

Similarly, equid skulls and a spouted jar were placed in the wall of Installation B and against the wall of Tomb 1 in Installation D at Tell Umm el-Marra (F81 and F83), and, outside of funerary contexts, a complete equid skeleton was found in the blocking of the doorway to Acropolis East, certain Tell Umm el-Marra houses had equid bones interred in the stone foundations, and above the door of Room 22 in Tall Bi'a Palace, an ox skull was placed, framed by stones (G27, G28 and G18). Foundation deposits

and deposits in altars may have served a similar function of marking out space, although they do not as often contain animal remains (Ellis 1968 and Bjorkman 2008).

In these cases, although we may be able to detect the liminal character of the animal, and its function as a boundary marker, it is difficult to determine precisely what the content is of the symbolic or conceptual worlds it is marking out, and we may only be able to detect some of these, but without understanding their full meaning or context. Several suggestions can be made – these instances could be seen as marking the space between the human and the divine, between life and death, between different types of space and structure, or as marking human social relationships, perhaps in terms of status – and several of these pairs are complementary, and may be at work at the same time. They suggest human engagement with and exploitation of animals as powerful symbols representing something ‘other’, in the sense that they are capable of bestowing a certain significance to rituals and space that ordinary humans are not.

Two interesting themes emerge from the archaeological cases: one is that a special importance appears to be attached to the head of the animal, the other is the occurrence of artificially created mirror images, as at Marathon; another, more complex, mirroring comes from Dendra, where two horses are placed in a sort of double-mirroring, reminiscent of a pattern repeated many times on seals (A32). In the Aegean, and to some extent in the Near East, both of these are also clear in the iconography of the period, and in fact often seem to be linked. I will start by looking at the importance of the head of the animal as expressed in the iconography.

The head is sometimes illustrated by the use of a frontal face of the sacrificial animal, not only in obvious scenes of sacrifice, but also extended as a shorthand for the sacrificial act in a broader sense. The usage of frontality in art is common in many different periods and civilisations, and does not have a single universal interpretation. Usually, interpretations are related to states of transcendence – frontality is for example thought to refer to birth, death, divinity, sex, dominance, intoxication and sanctity. Whatever the interpretation, the use of frontality as an artistic tool is a careful choice with symbolic meaning, and this is no less the case for the Aegean and the Near East. For the Aegean, the use of frontal faces in iconography has been shown by Lyvia

Morgan to be associated with death, and in particular with the practice of animal sacrifice through careful analysis of the contexts in which frontality is used in Aegean iconography (Morgan 1995).

C3, for example, depicts a bovine on a sacrificial table, with the head shown frontally. Above is the symbol usually referred to as an impaled triangle (whose meaning, as we have seen, is unknown), and below is another animal head, perhaps referring to another sacrifice. Of course, a similar scene is shown on the Ayia Triada sarcophagus (D1). On this sarcophagus, the sacrificial ox is tied to the table, and its head is again depicted frontally. Below are goats or deer, presumably to be sacrificed next. Note also the musician behind the ox. Music appears to have been an integral part of ritual, and would contribute to creating a hyper-real or transcendent state of consciousness and changing the usual social rules of conduct. Another seal again shows a bovine on an offering table, with a frontally-depicted head (C8). Below the table is a dog or a lion in flying gallop, perhaps referring to a link between sacrifice and hunting in some instances.

This sacrificial association of the frontally depicted head is extended into other contexts in which the sacrificial element is less explicit, but still a major theme. Often animals are shown in symmetrical pairs: on C45 two lions, front legs on an ‘incurved altar’ and with a bucranium between them, are placed as a mirror image; or C57, where two lionesses (?) merge into a single frontal head, with their front legs on a centrally placed bucranium, and each with a palm tree below their belly. More frontal animal heads can be seen throughout the illustrations, often associated with symbols of ritual or religious significance, such as the ‘incurved altar’ (C40, C45 and C46), the double axe (C24, C29 and C61), the star/sun (C25 and C26), the ‘sacred knot’ (C29), the ‘circles’ (C71 and C78), ‘impaled triangle/arrow’ (C3, C27 and C46), ‘figure of 8 shield’ (C30 and C76), and ‘horns of consecration’ (C33). C22 and C72, with rows of animal heads and heads next to a column suggest that actual animal skulls were displayed to mark buildings as sacred, in an even more visible way than the examples we have seen from tombs. I would argue that in these, the frontality to some extent serves as a reference to death and the act of sacrifice, but also contributes to constructing the animal’s role in sacrifice as a liminal agent.

Not only the ‘victim’, but at times also the predator, is shown frontally, most commonly the lion. This can be seen on C57 and C22, where the heads are merging into one on C57, and with the three separate heads on C22. More examples show heads merging into one, and front legs on an altar (C40), and lions symmetrically flanking an ox’s frontal head (C39). One of the most common scenes with lions is as a predator hunting its prey. In this, it is also very often shown with a frontal face – examples include C39, C87, C90 and C91.

Morgan interprets this as referring to the lion’s role as a perpetrator of death (Morgan 1995: 139-140). For the early periods of Mesopotamian history, Julia Asher-Greve has shown that frontality is a symbolic form used, often in connection with ritual, to convey sanctity, dominance and hierarchies (Asher-Greve 2003). Although not all the material is directly comparable, these features are also present in the Aegean evidence. We have already seen how the frontal head invokes the sacred, and its reference to the predator as dominant and powerful. Incidentally, human frontality is rare in Aegean iconography, but where it appears, it also has a strong reference to sacrifice and the sacred. Two rare examples are shown on C76 and C55 – the references are particularly clear in the second one, where the female figure is flanked by griffins, and wears two sets of ‘snake frames’, in the shape of horns, with a double axe between them.<sup>132</sup>

This frontality of human figures may be interpreted mainly as bringing about death, along the same lines as the lion. However, it is not possible to completely separate the two meanings of this one iconographic tool – the fact that the same form is used for death and for bringing about death reflects the ambiguity and fluidity of meanings. This is the case when humans are depicted frontally with a double axe above the head, or with an animal-like head – perhaps an attempt to capture a liminal zone between the human and the animal, or the liminal zone in which that animal itself is situated. This is also the case with the animals themselves – on one of the Vapheio cups a bull is shown with a frontal face (D22). Although this may in general refer to its function as a sacrificial ‘victim’, the bull is in this context shown, if not as a predator, certainly as

---

<sup>132</sup> The hybrid examples from Zakros may also be of some interest here, with elements of human-like, frontal faces and animal body parts, such as large wings – see e.g. *CMS* II,7 nos. 117, 118.

dangerous and as potentially bringing death to the human players by trampling them. Boars are also not simply shown as hunted by humans and in sacrificial contexts, but also themselves as a potential danger – as for example on *CMS XII*: no. 240, where a massive boar is trampling a human figure.

Another subversion is shown on a seal from Vapheio (C92), where the lion, usually a predator, is depicted as a victim, with a frontal head. And here, humans are in their more usual role of predators, not victims. Finally, the dissolution and interchangeability of identities of the dying vs the perpetrator of death is nowhere made more clear than in a seal from the Boston Museum, where the lion and the bull, predator and prey, merge into a single, frontal face (C58), and on a sealstone in the Metropolitan, where two human lower bodies merge into a single, frontal bovine face (C118).

Frontality is also quite common in the iconography of the Near East. Here it also has implications of liminality, but perhaps in a broader sense than in the Aegean, relating not simply to life and death but strongly related to the fluidity between the human, the divine, the animal and the monstrous or hybrid. Commonly, frontality is associated with Ishtar/Inanna. Examples of Ishtar/Inanna shown frontally can be seen on H46, H81, H103 and H141. Ishtar herself is an elusive deity with strong liminal aspects; as Harris fittingly describes her,

Inanna-Ishtar was a paradox; that is, she embodied within herself polarities and contraries, and thereby she transcended them. She was, to put it somewhat differently, a deity who incorporated fundamental and irreducible paradoxes. She represented both order and disorder, structure and antistructure. In her psychological traits and behavior she confounded and confused normative categories and boundaries and thereby defined and protected the norms and underlying structure of Mesopotamian civilization (Harris 1991: 263).

What is particularly interesting about this is that apparently one of the boundaries broken down by Ishtar is that of the sexes, betraying both masculine and feminine

features – Harris goes as far as to call her both male and female (Harris 1991: 268). She also, at different times, transgresses the boundaries of love, war, kindness, vengeance, compassion, aggression, construction, destruction, victory and defeat, to name but a few (Harris 1991). Although her liminality and frontal depiction is not as closely linked specifically to sacrifice,<sup>133</sup> she is also depicted frontally in some presentation scenes – a worshipper bringing an animal to her in the usual fashion, and Ishtar depicted frontally, with her arrows behind her shoulders, and holding a knife in her hand, and with some sort of table or vessel in front of her (H46).

In other cases, the frontality seems particularly associated with hybrid or monstrous beings, such as the bull-man, the ‘hero’/‘Lahmu’, and Humbaba/Huwawa. The ‘bull-man’ has a bovine lower body and a human torso and head, usually depicted frontally with a long beard and sometimes very large ears (H38). He is often shown fighting an ox, bull or lion/leopard, apparently in the process of killing it (I35, Woolley 1934: pls. 100, 104). The precise origin and meaning of this frequently depicted scene is uncertain, but it most likely has a mythical context. The bull-man, in his hybridity, transcends the human-animal opposition, and, as a perpetrator of death, he once more links the frontal and the liminal.

Another figure often shown with bulls or cattle is conventionally referred to as the ‘hero’ (or ‘Lahmu’ – Black and Green 1992: 115). This is a male figure, usually nude or nude with a belt, and frequently depicted with a frontal face. I12 shows Lahmu, with frontal face, placed between two symmetrical, also frontal face, bulls. H182 depicts two Lahmu on either side of a ‘standard’, again with frontal faces, and I34 shows a relief frontal face Lahmu on one side and a relief frontal face ox on another. These scenes of both the ‘bull-man’ and ‘Lahmu’ with frontal faces are far too numerous to recount here, but many more examples can be found in the Ur excavation volumes (e.g. Legrain 1936: pl. 20, 27-30 and 1951: pl. 15-16). The association of the monstrous and hybrid with frontality is also found in depictions of Humbaba/Huwawa. In the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, he is the guardian of the Cedar Forest, and the two heroes,

---

<sup>133</sup> See also Westenholz 1998 for further discussion of some of the many attributes of Ishtar/Inanna and other Near Eastern goddesses. Inanna/Ishtar is further linked to the Underworld through the myth *The Descent of Inanna/Ishtar*, and through her sister, Ereshkigal, the ruler of that realm (van der Toorn *et al.* 1999: 454).



Gilgamesh and Enkidu battle him and in the end kill him by cutting off his head. Depictions of Huwawa usually show him baring his teeth, and his face is a collection of lines reminiscent of either very heavy wrinkles or intestines – a selection of Huwawa masks and plaques can be found in Woolley and Mallowan 1976: plates 85-87. Interestingly, he is also connected with divination through inscriptions of models referring to “intestines like Humbaba” (Black and Green 1992: 106). When shown full-body, the whole body is also frontal, and nude, sometimes with a belt, similar to the ‘bull-man’ (whose body is usually depicted in profile, however). Seal impressions showing the killing of a human figure intriguingly show the ‘human’ with a frontal face – Buchanan even likens it to a Humbaba mask (H179, Buchanan 1981: 298). The frontality can be discerned, but otherwise the impressions are unfortunately not clear enough to sustain Buchanan’s idea. It would, however, connect Huwawa with ritual killing in yet another manner, and even suggest an association between this sort of killing and divination.

Animals shown frontally are usually lions and cattle – many can be seen in the above examples with the ‘bull-man’ and ‘Lahmu’, and such scenes are commonly called ‘contest scenes’. They bear some resemblance to the Aegean cases of a predator such as a lion fighting or biting into some sort of prey like an ox, sheep, goat or deer, and in a similar manner, both the ‘predator’ and the ‘prey’ can be shown frontally – I12, I19, I24 and I25. The apparently straightforward relationship between ‘prey’ and ‘predator’ is complicated not simply by the use of frontality for both, but also by the appearance of the ‘bull-man’ and ‘Lahmu’, who, as we have seen, can also be shown frontally, and fight both lions and cattle – or perhaps in some cases protect them. As in the Aegean, there is a fluidity between prey and predator and frontality serves to emphasise this. The extensive use of symmetrical images, especially of lions and lionesses, has also been noted by Harriet Martin for ED I – III seals in an article aptly entitled “A monster mirrored” (Martin 1989).<sup>134</sup> She refers to more examples showing the lions frontally and mirrored, often in combination with the bull-man. One seal impression from Fara, although unique, also shows two lions merging into a single

---

<sup>134</sup> This is a stylistic study: other than calling some of the examples a “master of animals” motif (Martin 1989: 174), Martin does not attempt interpretation of this material, but places it in its chronological, geographical and stylistic context. Nevertheless, the title very fittingly captures the features discussed here.

frontal head – with yet another doubling of the whole motif immediately below (H183).

### *The Double*

The second theme emerging from one of the above archaeological examples is that of mirroring or doubling, and this is also prominent in the iconographic material. We have already seen this in some of the images, for example on C40, C39, C57, C29, C46, C61, C33, C58 and C59, and we have seen that this is closely linked to frontality in iconographic depictions, both through their associations in the same scenes and through the merging of two bodies into one frontal head.

Such doubling can even be detected in the miniature arts, for example in many of the gold items from Mycenae (on display in Athens Archaeological Museum; see also Marinatos 1960: pls. 200-205). Here, deer, felines and birds are placed in symmetrical pairs on small gold plaques, one type possibly showing a shrine with horns of consecration on top. Certain terracotta animal figurines may reflect something similar - animal figurines with two heads, mostly bovine, have been found at peak sanctuaries on Crete – for example Vrysinas (D25) and Atsipadhes (D28). These figurines have one head at each end of their body and no indications of gender.

Near Eastern iconography does not display the same preoccupation with symmetrical patterns and mirroring, but we have seen a similar tendency in some of the material already – with Lahmu, lions and bovines frequently depicted in mirroring and symmetrical compositions, combined with their frontal faces (H182, H183, I12, I24, I25 and Martin 1989). H183 shows an extreme case of this, where there is not only the symmetrical merging of bodies into frontal faces, but this frontality itself is mirrored – as Martin writes, it is a double symmetrical composition, along both the horizontal and vertical axis (Martin 1989: 179).

Further, there are certain ‘two-faced’ characters, for example Isimud/Usmû, who is usually portrayed with two faces (H59, H79 and H87). Not much is known about him, but he is apparently the messenger or minister to Enki. His travelling between realms may explain this doubleness in his character. In the above examples, he is leading the

worshipper to the seated deity (probably Enki) or standing in front of him, and is thus situated between the human and the divine. Statues have also been found depicting deities with four faces (I32 and I33). One is a goddess whose crown has ‘the shape of a temple façade or altar’ (I33), thus placing her in a temple context. They are suggested to be deities of the four winds and of rainstorms, but their associations and the reason for their multiple faces remain unknown. A two-faced female figure is also shown on a relief plaque from Ur (I36).

These many symmetrical and mirror images may be read in light of Girard’s notion of ‘the Double’, in which every Double has the potential to become the sacrificial ‘victim’. Since this repetition and mirroring is frequently depicted along with the frontal face, it is probably related to the sacrificial act in at least the Aegean, whereas in the Near East, it appears to have a broader reference to states of transcendence or the in-between. A fascinating anthropological analogy may in this instance be telling: according to Bloch, Dinka sacrifice involves an identification between the sacrificer and the animal – though not of the whole person, but one part (Bloch 1992: 34). What is more, the boundary between the individual sacrificer and the other people is weak, making them co-participants rather than onlookers, and some may even fall into a trance (Bloch 1992: 35). This also hints at a dissolution of boundaries and a doubling or de-individualisation of participants.

Girard’s in depth-treatment of the role of the double in the sacrificial process might provide an insight into the interpretation of some of this material. Girard believes that the violent tendency of human beings is unavoidable, and that sacrificial rites serve to put an end to violence – without sacrifice violence would continue its vicious circle, with aggressive acts continuously being repaid with more violence. In the sacrificial ritual, all members of a group participate in the killing of a single victim that is a substitute for every individual’s personal antagonist – before this, the effacement of differences by violence has made doubles of all the group members. Sacrifice, by focussing all violent tendencies on a single victim that cannot revenge itself, restores peace and order, and because of this the victim itself can also be perceived as divine. According to Girard, an important part of this process is a ‘necessary misunderstanding’ in which the violence is attributed to exterior causes (often

materialising in some sort of religious belief that it comes from a deity), which means that the sacrificial victim has to be both interior to and exterior to the group. If it is too dissimilar from the group, it cannot properly function as an antagonist turned into a double. Paradoxically, then, sacrifice is a type of violence whose main purpose is to end violence. Sacrifice itself is then part of this double nature of violence.

Concerning the double nature of the sacrificial ‘victim’, Girard writes,

As the crisis grows more acute, the community members are transformed into “twins”, matching images of violence. I would be tempted to say that they are each *doubles* of the other. ... If violence is a great leveler of men and everybody becomes the double, or “twin”, of his antagonist, it seems to follow that all the doubles are identical and that any one can at any given moment become the double of all the others ... A single victim can be substituted for all the potential victims (Girard 2005: 83)

and

At the supreme moment of the crisis, the very instant when reciprocal violence is abruptly transformed into unanimous violence, the two faces of violence seem to be juxtaposed; the extremes meet (Girard 2005: 90).

In this scheme, all doubles are potential sacrificial ‘victims’. This application of the role of the double to the many mirror images and doubling of motifs in the Aegean evidence, and perhaps, to a lesser degree, also the Near Eastern evidence, provides a means of interpreting the combined features of frontality, merging and mirroring as constructing a liminal zone in which differences of identity become fluid and ambiguous – where one can substitute the other. The double, through sacrifice and its liminal properties, becomes linked to the divine. Further, the sacrificial animal, as a surrogate ‘victim’, functions as a link between the exterior and interior of the sacrificing group, again situated on the threshold. Interestingly, the doubling of symbols in images has the effect not only of eliminating differences of identity, but also of maintaining a sense of stability and order through the intrinsic use of

symmetry. This is parallel to the sacrificial ritual itself which has the potential to both stabilise and destabilise social relationships.

Although the emphasis in Girard is on the *violence* of the act, it should be clear from the above material and analysis, that this is not their focus. Violence may be part of it, but the focus of the material is on boundaries and the loss or dissipation of boundaries, and it is this part of Girard's theory that is of interest, not his ideas concerning the centrality and inherent nature of violence, which, as discussed in chapter 1, pose certain concerns.

In conclusion, the performance of sacrifice and the use of very specific artistic tools in these instances indicate a type of human interaction – both with themselves and with animals, the supernatural, the monstrous and other elements that we may not be able to identify – in which humans use a 'victim' for defining ritual space and negotiating human social relationships. It should be emphasised that the reading offered here is only one way of interpreting the material; it is one way of seeing human engagement with spheres that may otherwise appear separate, unfamiliar, prohibited or inaccessible, and the sacrificial process would certainly have had other functions than those proposed here. This is simply one way of interpreting some very specific characteristics of the material. Further, 'engagement with' should not be seen to imply an opposing hierarchical structure, imposing modern dichotomies onto the evidence. The sacrificial 'victim's' power of liminality in human thought marks it out as different, and as a tool to engage with the unfamiliar, the chaotic and the in-between, but it does not mark it out as *opposed* to humans.

## **Sacrifice in the Aegean and Near East**

From the survey of the evidence in this and the previous chapters, what is perhaps more important to note than anything is the very great variety of practices. The reason for this great variety can in some cases be related to differences in cultures, local traditions and the long time span. In other cases, we can detect variety, but the cause

of it must remain unknown for the time being – this is especially true when a type of sacrifice is discernible in one type of evidence, but not in others.

Even within this great variety, certain practices are found both in the Aegean and the Near East. Sacrifice in connection with burials is one such practice – both parts of animals, perhaps representing joints of meat, and complete skeletons, in particular those of equids. The finer differences within this would be very interesting to study, which may be possible with more careful expert analyses, although without textual records we are unlikely to discover reasons for why horses were preferred in the LBA Aegean and donkeys, onagers and hybrids in the second half of the third millennium in the Near East – all we can say is that this difference existed. Religious feasting was an important part of the cultures in both the Aegean and the Near East, but we come to this evidence in quite different ways for the two areas, and, partly for this reason it is difficult to say much about how the content of such feasting compares. We can say that it could include animal sacrifice, and certainly drinking was a significant element in both areas, and music appears to have been part of at least some events. Questions of participation must be evaluated on an individual basis, and in no areas or periods is it possible to make generalisations about who took part in the celebrations – there is evidence from both the Aegean and Near East of instances both with and without a hierarchical structure. Almost certainly, this would have depended on the particulars of each event.

In several instances, a type of sacrifice, or possible sacrifice, only shows up in one area – sometimes even within that only in one type of evidence. Table 5 provides an overview of the different types of sacrifice, as seen with modern eyes, where they have been recorded and in what kind of evidence. This includes much of the iconography, where, for example, scenes with an animal on a table and the so-called presentation scenes are virtually non-existent elsewhere. Similarly, the textual records of the Near East relate many occasions for sacrifice that are otherwise almost unknown. In many cases, it can be suggested that these types are not known from other places simply because they are unlikely to leave any trace (or at least be recognised as such) in the archaeological and iconographic records. Perhaps an awareness of these possible

practices would help identify them, but even then, it is difficult to prove with much certainty.

Clearly, sacrifice took many forms in both the Aegean and the Near East. Precisely how these many forms were related – if they were related – is something that we cannot know. The different rituals have in this study all been placed under the heading of ‘sacrifice’ because we see them as having this one thing in common – the giving of a living being to a supernatural being, with the death of the animal or human as a consequence. There is, however, no guarantee that there was any such equivalent category in the minds of the people of the ancient Aegean and Near East. They may have had a similar category that was broader – that included the giving of inanimate objects and other foodstuffs such as grain, honey, beer and wine. Or they may not have considered all these different rituals in any way related. Even with textual records, understanding how each of these cultures, let alone the individuals in each, perceived such rituals is extremely difficult, if not impossible. That does not mean we should dismiss all use of categories, typologies and so on – they are needed to approach the material in the first place. What we can do is examine the material and attempt to reconstruct the practices that did take place, and not project modern categories and binary oppositions onto the ancients without strong evidence.





# CONCLUSIONS

More than anything, ‘sacrifice’ of humans and animals is part of wider ceremonies, rituals, processes and human-animal relations. The different categories of evidence suggest a wide range of sacrificial practices and contexts – in mortuary contexts, in sacred spaces such as shrines, temples, sanctuaries, but also places that occupy a less exclusively religious role in society, such as ‘palaces’, both in the Aegean and the Near East. Sacrifice was practiced in connection with treaties, with the construction, re-construction, and destruction (or disuse) of buildings, and was used extensively for divination in the Near East; it was part of religious festivals on many occasions, both regular and irregular, and in some cases appears to have had an association with hunting. In almost all cases, sacrifice appears to have been part of a complex set of rituals, which could also include libations, processions, feasting, omen-taking,

inanimate offerings and many other rituals which we may not be aware of or even be able to recover.

Animals of many different species were sacrificed, with sheep/goats being the most commonly sacrificed animal in all periods and in both areas, followed by cattle, and, in the Aegean, pigs. The only material where sheep/goats are not the most prominent is in the iconography of the Aegean, where cattle take on a slightly more important role, perhaps indicating certain features of the ideology of the people that produced this material, or simply a reflection of the type of animal most commonly sacrificed in a specific ritual more prone to representation by artists. A multitude of other animals also appear: boars, deer, gazelles, equids, dogs, felines, hares, rabbits, badgers, rodents, hedgehogs, bats, fish, birds, bears, turtles, foxes, weasels, frog, and of course humans. The widest range of species appears in the tablets of the Near East, but this is perhaps due to poor recovery of animal bones from archaeological sites (meaning bones of small animals may not be collected, for example).

The treatment of the animals and humans sacrificed indicates a similar complexity and variety of rituals and interfaces with the sacrificial 'victim', which could include the deposition of complete animals and humans, parts of them, often with a special emphasis on the head, eaten, burnt or a combination of these. Some remains were carefully kept and placed in specific locations, perhaps used as boundary markers when placed in walls, dromoi, thresholds and other in-between spaces. Even with the great variety that we can detect, we should not exclude other possibilities that may be impossible or near impossible to identify in the archaeological record – for example, sacrifices thrown in the sea, or left in the open for the elements to decompose. There may be others that have not even occurred to us as possible ways of sacrificing.

Chronological and geographical differences can in some cases be detected, as has been outlined in Chapter 4, but in other cases, care should be taken not to attribute too much importance to apparent differences. These could, for example, be due to the scattered nature of the material in some contexts, to accident of discovery and the type of material. The practice of equid burials is thus almost exclusively a feature of the Late Bronze Age in the Aegean, but only occurs during the late third millennium in the

Near East. Incidentally, the case of equid burials is also a good example of how sacrifice may be visible in only in one kind of material – here in the archaeology (with the exception of a few references in Near Eastern tablets). Lastly, these burials provide a good example of how modern assumptions play a role in our interpretation of the material – in this case, it would seem that modern ideas of gender roles, hunting and warfare have coloured interpretations of the role of equids in burials and the gender both of the animals and the humans with whom they were buried. This includes associating ‘female’ with the household and ritual, and ‘male’ with warfare and hunting. Careful reading of modern works and interpretations of the material has thus revealed bias towards the imposition of hierarchical binary oppositions, not simply in terms of gender, but also related to life-death, sacrificing-eating, primary-secondary and burning-not burning.

Human sacrifice offers a similar case study that illustrates many of the topics discussed and examined here. Although there is good evidence for its occurrence both in the Aegean and the Near East, the strongest evidence comes from the Royal Cemetery of Ur. Here, the practice appears to have been confined to the Early Dynastic period; after this there is certainly no suggestions of the same kind of mass sacrifices. The reasons for its disappearance could have been any number of things, and there is no reason to believe, with Gadd, that it was because of its “intolerable cruelty” (Gadd 1960: 53). Assumptions concerning gender and otherness again emerge in interpretations, with the ‘victims’ typically being designated to some sort of inferior character in order to justify or better accept the practice. Differences in the importance attributed to archaeological, iconographic and textual material also manifest themselves in the case of human sacrifice, where its absence in textual records may be used to undermine its importance overall – even with the unequivocal archaeological evidence at hand. Textual records are in this case valued more highly than archaeological records.

In fact, textual and iconographic records may be subject to a similar degree of uncertainty and possible scenarios as the archaeological record. For example, if a tablet mentions provisions of animals for sacrificial feasting, we cannot know for certain whether or not these animals 1) actually arrived at their designated location and

2) were actually sacrificed for the occasion. It is possible that, for whatever reason of accident, some animals did not arrive and were sacrificed. In the case of tablets that list animals already sacrificed, such numbers may have been exaggerated for political or ideological reasons. I am not suggesting that the textual records we have do in fact manipulate numbers or events in this manner, but simply pointing out some of the problems that require care when using this material. Similar issues relate to the iconographic material. Archaeological contexts have their own problems, including selective collection of material and disturbed contexts, but the presence of animal or human bones cannot be manipulated in the same manner. Of course, they may have been placed in their found location for political or ideological purposes, but their existence cannot be contested.

Throughout modern history, many theories have been proposed which have exerted more or less influence on interpretations, with each attempting to explain the nature, purpose or intentions in sacrifice. An application of any one of these shows that the concept is not so easily universalised, and, in fact, the very complexity and variety defies such universal explanations. Some theories would appear to fit certain types of sacrifice very neatly, but if all variations are included, the theory no longer applies. This can, for example, be said with Hubert and Mauss' idea of mediation. Although they may include more abstract kinds of mediation, the most direct and practical example of mediation – communication – between deities and humans is in the practice of extispicy, where the animal is specifically killed in order to gain the opinion or knowledge of a deity. Burkert's theory of sacrifice may with some advantage be applied to cases of wild animals, but these are rare, and the deeper, social and psychological elements proposed by Burkert (such as the importance of guilt and the role of women) cannot be verified. Conversely, Jonathan Z. Smith's playful theory of sacrifice being of domesticated animals can be applied in many instances, but the exceptions and the lack of evidence for the 'domestication' being particularly significant renders this theory incompatible with the material.

However, it is possible to select parts of these theories that apply aptly to the features of certain types of sacrifice. For example, Durkheim and Robertson Smith's (and for that matter Girard and Burkert) emphasis on the communal aspect, and the importance

of the sacrificial meal, is hugely interesting when examining material which suggests sacrificial feasting and sacrificial meals as part of festivals. It highlights not only participation and the importance of sharing food, but equally, the non-participation: who does and who does not get to partake of the meal. Archaeological evidence from Pylos suggests levels of participation, and something similar is hinted at in the festival tablets from Emar. One of the functions of sacrifice could therefore be as a tool for certain groups to establish boundaries, ideologies and identities. Jay's notion of sacrifice as being a mechanism for men in particular to establish bonds is in this context very interesting, but the material does not suggest that sacrifice was an exclusively male practice (contra Marinatos and Burkert): there is plenty of evidence for female participation. Such an interpretation should not, however, exclude other factors, least of all the religious one. Sacrifice as a political and/or ideological tool does not reduce the significance of the religious content and feeling that the participants may have attributed to it.

I have in this study proposed an application of certain poststructuralist ideas – these should also not be understood as universal theories, but as ideas that provide insights into certain features of the material that I have found particularly intriguing. Thus, Baudrillard's analysis of the treatment of the dead in society is hugely interesting in light of the extensive evidence for sacrifice in relation to the dead – either at the time of burial or as a broader (more abstract?) cult of the dead. This is seen in the many burials which include animal and human sacrifices, and in structures such as the *abi* at Tell Mozan – and perhaps the large chasm at Mt. Jouktas had a similar function. It is also suggested in textual records from the Near East, where the dead as a cult appear to have had a part in many festivals, and the practice of *kispum* may have been more directly associated with activity at the spot of the burial, as evidenced at Qatna. Baudrillard points to how sacrifice may be used as negotiation with and control of the relationship between the living and the dead, and that control of access to the dead may be used as manipulation of power. This is another way of seeing sacrifice as a tool for the manipulation of power, ideologies and group identity, and again, the religious content should not be disregarded. In fact, the religious content is probably

precisely the reason such manipulation has the possibility of being efficient in the first place; people must already believe in the importance of the relationship.<sup>135</sup>

Girard's concepts of the double and the effacement of differences as part of the sacrificial cycle provides a way of interpreting the many double, mirror and frontal images that appear to have sacrificial connotations, especially in the Aegean, but also in the Near East (possibly in a broader context). An analysis with these concepts in mind reveals the liminal character of these images, and point to a similar importance in the archaeological record. It points to the deliberate placement of such potent symbols in places that occupy an in-between worlds.

With this study I hope to have achieved a number of things. First of all, to gain a more complete and complex understanding of the practice of sacrifice in the Aegean and Near East, through the use of all available sources and kinds of material. A very important and fundamental part of this is the collection of all this data into databases/catalogues, which can be accessed and exploited for their 'primary' material, irrespective of the arguments put forward in the study. That is not to say that these records are a completely neutral representation of the material: I have of course chosen a specific way of presenting it, with an emphasis on remains that I have considered relevant to the current topic. For example, in the archaeological material, as much detail as possible is provided concerning osteological remains, and in the iconographic material, a picture of the items has seemed of particular importance. These presentations could have been done in numerous other ways, each of which may give the reader a slightly different impression – others might consider the shape, size, geographical location, elevation or other features of tombs, or the colour, size and engraving technique of seals, more important. Nor are pictures a completely objective way of illustrating plans and objects: archaeological plans often only show one archaeological layer, frequently including some reconstructions. This helps to interpret what happened in that particular period, but if you visit the actual remains (provided that is possible), they will look very different. Pictures of seals can also be problematic – we have seen how inaccurate drawings can be the basis of a substantial argument

---

<sup>135</sup> Indeed, Girard calls this part of the *necessary misunderstanding* (Girard 2005: 7).

concerning a female figure carrying an animal, but even pictures of the actual seal and modern impressions can be difficult to ‘read’. They are always in some sense *re-presented* – either through pictures, where shadows and colours, or lack of colours, may reveal slightly different features, or even in museum displays, where factors such as light and colour also play a role. I have endeavoured to provide as clear and ‘readable’ plans and pictures as possible, but in order for readers to be able to make their own further investigations and judgements, the bibliographical field for each entry is thus very important.

Next, many problems have been raised throughout the study, with particular attention being paid to how modern assumptions have an impact on interpretations. This may come across as a largely negative approach, pointing out all the things that we cannot know or say. However, the process of uncovering these problems and assumptions should be seen as a beginning step towards solving or at least reducing their impact, and as showing new ways forward, guided by as acute an awareness as possible of the influences of our own personal perceptions/perceptions symptomatic of our time. In some cases the solutions are fairly straightforward in that they simply involve the recording and analyses of archaeological material such as faunal remains. The more extended use of relatively new technologies, such as biomolecular analyses of pottery to detect content, also have the potential to provide a huge amount of information, in particular in relation to food and feasting. More ‘positive’ ways forward have also been suggested with the application of the poststructuralist ideas mentioned above, which provide new perspectives and interpretations on parts of the material.

Of course, binary oppositions such as have been problematised throughout may also be detected within this study – it is possible to see oppositions between the Aegean and the Near East, between Crete and the Greek Mainland, between Mesopotamia and Syria, between animal and human, animate and inanimate and between ‘theory’ and ‘primary material’, for example. I hope, however, that the analyses made throughout this study show that these are not clear-cut oppositions, but extremely complex, fluid and inter-dependent. Further, I hope to have avoided any strong prioritisation of one side of such oppositions over another. I do not claim that this study is faultless in these matters, on the contrary, but the aim is to point to areas where care is due, and to new

possible ways in interpreting the material remains with less baggage, or at least, a keen awareness of such baggage, since complete avoidance is impossible.

It must be concluded, with Hubert and Mauss, that sacrifice not only in general, but even within the limits of the Bronze Age Aegean and Near East, involves too great a variety and complexity to be generalised or simplified. There will always be a sense of 'mystery' about a practice so evocative, so multifarious and so at the extremes of human action, but it is possible to gain some understanding, and to improve on our understanding through careful attention to material remains and to our own assumptions. As Nancy Jay would say, "understanding is not an end point that can be reached so much as it is a movement ... it is never done but not consequently invalid" (Jay 1992: 13).



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Abbreviations

- AAA – *Athens Annals of Archaeology*  
ADelt - *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*  
AJA – *American Journal of Archaeology*  
AR – *Archaeological Reports*  
BCH – *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*  
BSA – *Annual of the British School at Athens*  
CAD - *The Assyrian dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*  
CMS - *Corpus der Minoischen und Mykenischen Siegel*  
JCS – *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*  
JNES – *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*  
NEA – *Near Eastern Archaeology*  
Praktika - *Πρακτικά της εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογικής Εταιρείας*  
RIA - *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie*

Åkerström, Å. (1978). Mycenaean problems. *Opuscula Atheniensi*, 21(3), 19-86.

Albanèse, L. (1929). Note sur Ras Shamra. *Syria*, 10(1), 16-21.

Albers, G. (1994). *Spätmykenische Stadtheiligtümer: systematische Analyse und vergleichende Auswertung der archäologischen Befunde*. Oxford: Hadrian Books.

Alcock, S. E., & Osborne, R. (Eds.). (1994). *Placing the Gods*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Alexiou, M. (1990). Reappropriating Greek sacrifice: homo necans or άνθρωπος θυσιάζων? *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, 8(1), 97-123.

Alexiou, S. (1966). Χρονικά. *Κρητικά Χρονικά*, 20(I-III), 319-326.

Alexiou, S. (1969). Χρονικά. *ADelt*, 22(B2 1967), 480-488.

- Alexiou, S., & Warren, P. (2004). *The early Minoan tombs of Lebena, southern Crete*. Sävedalen: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Alles, G. D. (1994). Book Review: Minoan Religion: Ritual, Image, and Symbol Nanno Marinatos. *The Journal of Religion*, 74(3), 435.
- Allotte de la Fuÿe, F. M. (1908/12). *Documents présargoniques*. Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- Alster, B. (1980). *Death in Mesopotamia: papers read at the 26e Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*. Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag.
- Amiet, P. (1961). *La glyptique mésopotamienne archaïque*. Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique.
- Amiet, P. (1980). *Art of the ancient Near East*. New York: H.N. Abrams.
- Amiet, P. (1981). *Art in the ancient world: a handbook of styles and forms : Iran, Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt, Greece, Etruria, Rome*. London: Faber.
- Anderson, J. K. (1961). *Ancient Greek horsemanship*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Andrae, W. (1935). *Die jüngeren Ishtar-Tempel in Assur*. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs.
- Andrae, W. (1938). *Das wiedererstandene Assur*. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs.
- Andreadaki-Vlasaki, M. (2002). Are we approaching the Minoan palace of Khania? In J. Driessen, I. Schoep, & R. Laffineur (Eds.), *Monuments of Minos, Aegaeum* 23 (pp. 157-166).
- Andronikos, M. (1968). *Totenkult*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Anonymous. (none). Tell Mozan Urkesh: Special Topics. Retrieved from <http://128.97.6.202/urkeshpublic/overview.htm>
- Anonymous. (1957). Chronique des Fouilles et Découvertes Archéologiques en Grèce en 1956: Pylos. *BCH*, 81, 558-565.
- Archer, L. J., Fischler, S., & Wyke, M. (Eds.). (1994). *Women in ancient societies an illusion of the night*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Armitage, P. (1982). A System for ageing and sexing the horn cores of cattle from British post-Medieval sites. In B. Wilson, C. Grigson, & S. Payne (Eds.), *Ageing and sexing animal bones from archaeological sites* (pp. 37-54).
- Aruz, J. (1995). Syrian seals and the evidence for cultural Interaction between the Levant and Crete. In W. Müller (Ed.), *Sceaux minoens et mycéniens*, CMS Beiheft 5 (pp. 1-21).

- Aruz, J. (Ed.). (2003). *Art of the first cities: the third millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus*. London: Yale University Press.
- Aruz, J. (2008). *Marks of distinction seals and cultural exchange between the Aegean and the Orient (ca. 2600-1360 B.C.)*. CMS Beiheft 7. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern.
- Ascalone, E. (2007). *Mesopotamia: Assyrians, Sumerians, Babylonians*. Berkeley: University of California 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.
- Åström, P. (1957). *The middle Cypriote Bronze Age*. Lund: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Avarantinos, V. (1990). The Mycenaean inscribed sealings from Thebes: problems of content and function. In T. G. Palaima (Ed.), *Aegean seals, sealings and administration*, *Aegaeum* 5 (pp. 149-174).
- Ballintijn, M. (1995). Lions depicted on Aegean seals – how realistic are they? In W. Müller (Ed.), *Sceaux minoens et mycéniens*, CMS Beiheft 5 (pp. 23-37).
- Bär, J. (2003). Sumerians, Gutians and Hurrians at Ashur? a re-examination of Ishtar Temples G and F. *Iraq*, 65, 143-160.
- Barnett, R. D., & Wiseman, D. J. (1969). *Fifty masterpieces of ancient Near Eastern art in the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, the British Museum* (2nd ed.). London: British Museum.
- Barrelet, M. T. (1968). *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la Mésopotamie antique*. Paris: Librairie orientaliste P. Geuthner.
- Barry, P. (2002). *Beginning theory: an introduction to literary and cultural theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Bates, W. N. (1908). Archaeological news. *AJA*, 12(3), 351-394.
- Bates, W. N. (1909). Archaeological news. *AJA*, 13(1), 69-124.
- Bates, W. N. (1920). Archaeological news. *AJA*, 24(3), 291-312.
- Baudrillard, J. (1993). *Symbolic exchange and death*. London: Sage Publications.
- Baudrillard, J. (1994). *Simulacra and simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Beers, W. (1992). *Women and sacrifice: male narcissism and the psychology of religion*. Wayne State University Press.

- Behrens, H. (1964). *Die neolithisch-frühmetallzeitlichen Tierskelettfunde der alten Welt*. Berlin: Vebdeutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Behrens, H., Loding, D., & Roth, M. T. (Eds.). (1989). *Dumu-e<sub>2</sub>-dub-ba-a: studies in honor of Åke W. Sjöberg*. Philadelphia: Samuel Noah Kramer.
- Bendall, L. M. (2001). The economics of Potnia in the Linear B documents: palatial support for Mycenaean religion. In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia*, *Aegaeum* 22 (pp. 445-452).
- Bendall, L. M. (2004). Fit for a king? hierarchy, exclusion, aspiration and desire in the social structure of Mycenaean banqueting. In P. Halstead & J. C. Barrett (Eds.), *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece* (pp. 105-135).
- Bennet, J. (1998). The Linear B archives and the kingdom of Nestor. In J. L. Davis (Ed.), *Sandy Pylos* (pp. 111-133).
- Bergamini, G. (1984). The excavations in Tell Yelkhi. *Sumer*, 40, 224-244.
- Bergamini, G. (1985). The cylinder seals. In E. Quarantelli (Ed.), *The land between two rivers* (pp. 278-280).
- Bergamini, G., Saporetti, C., Constantini, L., Biasini, L. C., & Masiero, C. (1985). Tell Yelkhi. In E. Quarantelli (Ed.), *The land between two rivers* (pp. 41-61).
- Bergman, J. (1987). Religio-phenomenological reflections on the multi-level process of giving to the gods. In T. Linders & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Gifts to the gods* (pp. 31-42).
- Bergquist, B. (1988). The archaeology of sacrifice: Minoan-Mycenaean versus Greek. In R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Early Greek cult practice* (pp. 21-34).
- Bergquist, B. (1993). Bronze Age sacrificial Koine in the eastern Mediterranean? In J. Quaegebeur (Ed.), *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East* (pp. 11-43).
- Bermant, C., & Weitzman, M. (1979). *Ebla: an archaeological enigma*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Betancourt, P. P., Karageorghis, V., Laffineur, R., & Niemeier, W.-D. (Eds.). (1999). *Meletemata: studies in Aegean archaeology presented to Malcolm H. Wiener as he enters his 65th year*. *Aegaeum* 20 (Vols. 1-3). Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Betancourt, P. P., Nelson, M. C., & Williams, H. (Eds.). (2007). *Krinoi kai limenes: studies in honor of Joseph and Maria Shaw*. Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press.
- Betancourt, P. P., Reese, D. S., Verstegen, L. L., & Ferrence, S. C. (2008). Feasts for the dead: evidence from the ossuary at Hagios Charalambos. In L. Hitchcock,

- R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, *Aegaeum* 29 (pp. 161-165).
- Beyerlin, W. (1978). *Near Eastern religious texts relating to the Old Testament*. London: SCM Press.
- Bhabha, H. K. (2003). Postmodernism/postcolonialism. In R. S. Nelson & R. Shiff (Eds.), *Critical terms for art history* (pp. 435-451).
- Bieliński, P. (1999). Tell Arbid: the fourth season. *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 11, 273-284.
- Bieliński, P. (2000). Tell Arbid: interim report of the fifth season. *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 21, 315-326.
- Bieliński, P. (2001). Tell Arbid: the sixth campaign of excavations, preliminary report. *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*, 8, 279-294.
- Bienkowski, P., & Millard, A. (Eds.). (2000). *Dictionary of the ancient Near East*. London: British Museum.
- Bietak, M. (1992). Der Friedhof in einem Palstgarten aus der Zeit des späten mittleren Reiches und andere Forschungsergebnisse aus dem ostlichen Nildelta (Tell el-Dab'a 1984-1987). *Ägypten und Levante*, 47-75, 47-75.
- Bietak, Manfred. (2003a). Science versus archaeology: problems and consequences of High Aegean Chronology. In Manfred Bietak (Ed.), *Synchronisation of civilisations* (pp. 23-33).
- Bietak, Manfred (Ed.). (2003b). *Synchronisation of civilisations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the second millennium B.C. II*. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Biggs, R. D., Myers, J., & Roth, M. T. (2008). *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale: held at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, July 18-22, 2005*. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- Biro, M. (1980). Fragment de rituel de Mari relatif au kispum. In B. Alster (Ed.), *Death in Mesopotamia* (pp. 139-151).
- Bjorkman, J. (2008). Mesopotamian altar deposits. In R. D. Biggs, J. Myers, & M. T. Roth (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 51st Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale* (pp. 361-370).
- Black, J., & Green, A. (1992). *Gods, demons and symbols of ancient Mesopotamia: an illustrated dictionary*. London: British Museum.
- Blackburn, E. T. (1970). *Middle Helladic graves and burial customs with special reference to Lerna in the Argolid*. University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati.

- Blakolmer, F. (Ed.). (2000). *Österreichische Forschungen zur ägäischen Bronzezeit 1998*. Wien.
- Blegen, C. W., & Blegen, E. D. P. (1937). *Prosymna: the Helladic settlement preceding the Argive Heraeum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blegen, C. W., & Rawson, M. (1966). *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in western Messenia. Vol.1: the buildings and their content*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Blegen, C. W., & Rawson, M. (2001). *A guide to the Palace of Nestor: Mycenaean sites in its environs and the Cora Museum*. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
- Blegen, C. W., Rawson, M., Taylour, W., & Donovan, W. P. (1973). *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in Western Messenia. Vol.3: acropolis and lower town, tholoi, grave circle, and chamber tombs, discoveries outside the citadel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Blier, S. P. (2003). Ritual. In R. S. Nelson & R. Shiff (Eds.), *Critical terms for art history* (pp. 296-305).
- Bloch, M. (1992). *Prey into hunter: the politics of religious experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bloedow, E. F. (1999a). On hunting lions in Bronze Age Greece. In P. P. Betancourt, V. Karageorghis, R. Laffineur, & W.-D. Niemeier (Eds.), *Meletemata*, Aegaeum 20 (pp. 53-61).
- Bloedow, E. F. (1999b). "Hector is a lion": new light on warfare in the Aegean Bronze Age from the Homeric simile. In R. Laffineur (Ed.), *Polemos*, Aegaeum 19 (pp. 285-296).
- Boardman, J. (1970). *Greek gems and finger rings: Early Bronze Age to late Classical*. New York: H.N. Abrams.
- Boessneck, J. (1973). *Die Tierknochenfunde aus dem Kabirenheiligtum bei Theben (Böotien)*. München: Institut für Palaeoanatomie, Domestikationsforschung u. Geschichte der Tiermedizin der Universität München.
- Boessneck, J., & von den Driesch, A. (1981). Ein Beleg für das Vorkommen des Löwen auf der Peloponnes in 'Herakleischer' Zeit. *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 257-258.
- Boessneck, J., & von den Driesch, A. (1984). Die zoologische Dokumentation der Reste von vier Pferden und einem Hund aus einem mykenischen Schachtgrab in Kokla bei Argos (Peloponnes). *Spixiana*, 7(3), 327-333.
- du Bois, J. W. (1993). Meaning without intention: lessons from divination. In J. H. Hill (Ed.), *Responsibility and evidence in oral discourse* (pp. 48-71).

- Bonacossi, D. M. (2007). *Urban and natural landscapes of an ancient Syrian capital: settlement and environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in central-western Syria*. Udine: Forum Editrice.
- Borgna, E. (2004a). Social meanings of food and drink consumption at LMIII Phaistos. In P. Halstead & J. C. Barrett (Eds.), *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece* (pp. 174-195).
- Borgna, E. (2004b). Aegean feasting: a Minoan perspective. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 247-279.
- Borowski, O. (2002a). Animals in the religions of Syria-Palestine. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 405-424).
- Borowski, O. (2002b). Animals in the literatures of Syria-Palestine. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 289-306).
- Bosanquet, R. C. (1901/02). Excavations at Palaikastro. I. *BSA*, 8, 286-316.
- Bottéro, J. (1985). The cuisine of ancient Mesopotamia. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 48(1), 36-47.
- Bottéro, J. (2001). *Religion in ancient Mesopotamia*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Boulotis, C. (1982). Ein Gründungsdepositum im minoischen Palast von Kato Zakros: minoisch-mykenische Bauopfer. *Archäologisches Korrespondenzblatt*, 12, 153-166.
- Branigan, K. (1970). *The tombs of Mesara: a study of funerary architecture and ritual in Southern Crete, 2800-1700 B.C.* London: Duckworth.
- Branigan, K. (Ed.). (1998). *Cemetery and society in the Aegean bronze age*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Bray, T. L. (Ed.). (2003). *The archaeology and politics of food and feasting in early states and empires*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Bremmer, J. N. (2007). Greek normative animal sacrifice. In D. Ogden (Ed.), *A companion to Greek religion* (pp. 132-144).
- Breniquet, C. (2002). Animals in Mesopotamian art. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 145-168).
- Brothwell, D. R., Thomas, K. D., & Clutton-Brock, J. (Eds.). (1978). *Research problems in zooarchaeology*. London: University of London Institute of Archaeology.
- Bryson, N., Holly, M. A., & Moxey, K. (Eds.). (1994). *Visual culture images and interpretations*. Hanover: University Press of New England.

- Buccellati, G., & Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1995). Mozan, Tall. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*.
- Buccellati, G., & Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1997a). Mozan, Tell. In E. M. Meyers (Ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Ancient Near East*.
- Buccellati, G., & Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1997b). Urkesh: the first Hurrian capital. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 60(2), 77-96.
- Buccellati, G., & Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2000). The Royal Palace of Urkesh, report on the 12th season at Tell Mozan/Urkesh: excavations in Area AA, June-October 1999. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 132, 133-183.
- Buccellati, G., & Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2004a). Tell Mozan, ancient Urkesh: a self-guided tour of the site. Pamphlet.
- Buccellati, G., & Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2004b). Der monumentale Palasthof von Tall Mozan/Urkesh und die stratigraphische Geschichte des Abi. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, 136, 13-39.
- Buchanan, B. (1966). *Catalogue of ancient Near Eastern seals in the Ashmolean Museum I*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Buchanan, B. (1981). *Early Near Eastern seals in the Yale Babylonian Collection*. London: Yale University Press.
- du Buisson, R. du M. (1948). *Baghouz: l'ancienne Corsôte le tell archaïque et la nécropole de l'Age du Bronze*. Leiden: Brill.
- van Buren, E. D. (1948). Fish-offerings in ancient Mesopotamia. *Iraq*, 10(2), 101-121.
- van Buren, E. D. (1951). An enlargement on a given theme. *Orientalia*, 20, 15-69.
- van Buren, E. D. (1952). Places of sacrifice ('Opferstätten'). *Iraq*, 14(2), 76-92.
- Burkert, W. (1972). *Homo necans: Interpretationen altgriechischer Opferriten und Mythen*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Burkert, W. (1981). Glaube und Verhalten: Zeichengehalt und Wirkungsmacht von Opferritualen. In J. Rudhardt & O. Reverdin (Eds.), *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité* (pp. 91-134).
- Burkert, W. (1983). *Homo necans: the anthropology of ancient Greek sacrificial ritual and myth*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burkert, W. (1987a). Offerings in perspective: surrender, distribution, exchange. In T. Linders & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Gifts to the gods* (pp. 43-50).
- Burkert, W. (1987b). The problem of ritual killing. In R. G. Hamerton-Kelly (Ed.),



*Violent origins* (pp. 149-188).

- Burleigh, R. (1986). Chronology of some early domestic equids in Egypt and western Asia. In R. H. Meadow & H.-P. Uerpmann (Eds.), *Equids in the ancient world* (pp. 230-236).
- Campbell, S., & Green, A. (Eds.). (1995). *The archaeology of death in the ancient Near East*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Canby, J. V. (2001). *The "Ur-nammu" stela*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.
- Carroll, D. (Ed.). (1990). *The states of 'theory': history, art, and critical discourse*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Carter, E., & Parker, A. (1995). Pots, people and death in Northern Syria and Southern Anatolia. In S. Campbell & A. Green (Eds.), *The archaeology of death in the ancient Near East* (pp. 96-116).
- Carter, J. (Ed.). (2003). *Understanding religious sacrifice: a reader*. London and New York: Continuum.
- Caskey, J. L. (1954). Excavations at Lerna, 1952-1953. *Hesperia*, 23(1), 3-30.
- Caskey, J. L. (1955). Excavations at Lerna, 1954. *Hesperia*, 24(1), 25-49.
- Caskey, J. L. (1962a). The goddess of Ceos. *Archaeology*, 15, 223-226.
- Caskey, J. L. (1962b). Excavations in Keos, 1960-1961. *Hesperia*, 31(3), 263-283.
- Caskey, J. L. (1964a). Ceos, 1964. *Archaeology*, 14(4), 277-280.
- Caskey, J. L. (1964b). Excavations in Keos, 1963. *Hesperia*, 33(3), 314-335.
- Caskey, M. E. (1981). Ayia Irini, Kea: the terracotta statues and the cult in the temple. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 127-135).
- Caskey, M. E. (1990). Thoughts on Early Bronze Age hearths. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 13-21).
- Castleden, R. (1990). *Minoans life in Bronze Age Crete*. London: Routledge.
- Catling, H. W. (1977/78). Archaeology in Greece, 1976-77. *AR*, (24), 3-69.
- Catling, H. W. (1978/79). Archaeology in Greece, 1978-79. *AR*, (25), 3-42.
- Catling, H. W. (1979/80). Archaeology in Greece, 1979-80. *AR*, (26), 3-53.

- Catling, H. W. (1980/81). Archaeology in Greece, 1980-81. *AR*, (27), 3-48.
- Catling, H. W. (1981/82). Archaeology in Greece, 1981-82. *AR*, (28), 3-62.
- Catling, H. W. (1982/83). Archaeology in Greece, 1982-83. *AR*, (29), 3-62.
- Catling, H. W. (1989). *Some problems in Aegean prehistory, c. 1450-1380 B.C.* Oxford: Leopard's Head Press.
- Caubet, A. (2002). Animals in Syro-Palestinian art. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 211-234).
- Cavanagh, W. G., Gallou, C., & Georgiadis, M. (2009). *Sparta and Laconia from prehistory to pre-modern*. London: British School at Athens.
- Chadwick, J. (1973). *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chadwick, J. (1976). *The Mycenaean world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chatzi-Vallianou, D. (1981). Σμύαρι Πεδιάδας. *AAA*, 8 1980(1), 20-60.
- Ciraolo, L., & Seidel, J. (Eds.). (2002). *Magic and divination in the ancient world*. Ancient magic and divination. Leiden: Brill.
- Cline, E. H. (2009). *Biblical archaeology: a very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cline, E. H., & Harris-Cline, D. (1998). *The Aegean and the Orient in the second millennium*. Aegaeum 18. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Clutton-Brock, J. (1986). Osteology of the equids from Sumer. In R. H. Meadow & H.-P. Uerpmann (Eds.), *Equids in the ancient world* (pp. 207-229).
- Clutton-Brock, J. (1989). A dog and a donkey excavated at Tell Brak. *Iraq*, 51, 217-224.
- Clutton-Brock, J., & Burleigh, R. (Autumn). The animal remains from Abu Salabikh: preliminary report. *Iraq*, 40(2), 89-100.
- Clutton-Brock, J., & Davies, S. (1993). More donkeys from Tell Brak. *Iraq*, 55, 209-221.
- 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.
- Cohen, M. E. (1993). *The cultic calendars of the ancient Near East*. Bethesda: CDL Press.

- Coldstream, J. N. (1963). Five tombs at Knossos. *BSA*, 58, 30-43.
- Collins, B. J. (1992). The puppy in Hittite ritual. *Oriental Institute News and Notes*, 136. Retrieved from [http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/nn/win92\\_collins.html](http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/nn/win92_collins.html)
- Collins, B. J. (Ed.). (2002). *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East*. Leiden: Brill.
- Collins, B. J. (2004). A channel to the underworld in Syria. *NEA*, 67(1), 54-56.
- Collon, D. (1982a). *The Alalakh cylinder seals a new catalogue of the actual seals excavated by Sir Leonard Wooley at Tell Atchana, and from neighbouring sites on the Syrian-Turkish border*. Oxford: B.A.R.
- Collon, D. (1982b). *Catalogue of the Western Asiatic seals in the British Museum. Cylinder seals II: Akkadian, post Akkadian, Ur III periods*. London: British Museum.
- Collon, D. (1987). *First impressions*. London: British Museum.
- Collon, D. (1990). *Near Eastern seals*. London: British Museum.
- Collon, D. (1995). *Ancient Near Eastern art*. London: British Museum.
- Collon, D. (1997). *7000 years of seals*. London: British Museum.
- Collon, D. (2006). The iconography of Ninurta. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *The iconography of cylinder seals* (pp. 100-109).
- Constantinidis, D. (2008). From fields to feasts: interpreting Aegean architecture and iconography in relation to feast preparations. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, *Aegaeum* 29 (pp. 65-74).
- Cooper, J. S. (1993). Sacred marriage and popular cult in early Mesopotamia. In E. Matsushima (Ed.), *Official cult and popular religion in the ancient Near East* (pp. 81-96).
- Cosmopoulos, M. B. (2003a). Mycenaean religion at Eleusis: the architecture and stratigraphy of Megaron B. In M. B. Cosmopoulos (Ed.), *Greek mysteries* (pp. 1-24).
- Cosmopoulos, M. B. (Ed.). (2003b). *Greek mysteries: the archaeology of ancient Greek secret cults*. London: Routledge.
- Crawford, H. (2004). *Sumer and the Sumerians* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cromarty, R. J. (2007). *Burning bulls, broken bones: sacrificial ritual in the context of*

- palace period Minoan religion*. University of Durham, Durham.
- Cromarty, R. J. (2008). *Burning bulls, broken bones sacrificial ritual in the context of palace period Minoan religion*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Crouwel, J. H. (1981). *Chariots and other means of land transport in Bronze Age Greece*. Amsterdam: Allard Pierson Museum.
- Curtis, A. (1985). *Ugarit (Ras Shamra)*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Curtis, J. (Ed.). (1982). *Fifty years of Mesopotamian discovery the work of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq, 1932-1982*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq.
- Dabney, M. K., Halstead, P., & Thomas, P. (2004). Mycenaean Feasting on Tsoungiza at Ancient Nemea. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 197-215.
- Dalley, S. (1984). *Mari and Karana: two old Babylonian cities*. London: Longman.
- Danti, M. D. (2006/10). Tell es-Sweyhat Archaeological Project. *Tell es-Sweyhat Archaeological Project*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from [http://www.jezireh.org/sweyhat\\_home.html](http://www.jezireh.org/sweyhat_home.html)
- Danti, M. D., & Zettler, R. L. (2002). Excavating an enigma: the latest discoveries from Tell es-Sweyhat. *Expedition*, 44(1), 36-45.
- Darcque, P., & Poursat, J.-C. (Eds.). (1985). *L' iconographie minoenne*. BCH Supplement. Athens: Ecole française d'Athènes.
- Daux, G. (1958). Chronique de fouilles. *BHC*, 82, 644-830.
- Daux, G. (1959). Chronique de fouilles. *BHC*, 83(2), 567-793.
- Davis, J. L. (1998). *Sandy Pylos* (1st ed.). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Davis, J. L., Alcock, S. E., Bennet, J., Lolos, Y. G., & Shelmerdine, C. W. (1997). The Pylos Regional Archaeological Project part I: overview and the archaeological survey. *Hesperia*, 66(3), 391-494.
- Dawkins, R. M., Hawes, C. H., & Bosanquet, R. C. (1904/05). Excavations at Palaikastro: IV. *BSA*, 11, 258-308.
- Day, J. (1989). *Molech: a god of human sacrifice in the Old Testament*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Day, L. P. (1984). Dog burials in the Greek World. *AJA*, 88(1), 21-32.
- Day, P. L. (1992). Anat: Ugarit's "Mistress of Animals." *JNES*, 51(3), 181.
- Day, P. M., & Wilson, D. E. (2004). Ceramic change and the practice of eating and

- drinking in Early Bronze Age Crete. In P. Halstead & J. C. Barrett (Eds.), *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece* (pp. 45-62).
- Deger-Jalkotzy, S., Hiller, S., & Panagl, O. (Eds.). (1999). *Floerant studia Mycenaea Akten des X. Internationalen Mykenologischen Colloquiums in Salzburg vom 1.-5. Mai 1995*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
- Dehayes, J. (1956). Necropole de la Deiras. *BHC*, 80, 361-365.
- Delaporte, L. J. (1920). *Catalogue des cylindres: cachets et pierres gravées de style oriental. I: Fouilles et missions*. Paris: Hachette.
- Delaporte, L. J. (1923). *Catalogue des cylindres, cachets et pierres gravées de style oriental. II: acquisitions*. Paris: Hachette.
- Delougaz, P. (1940). *The temple oval at Khafa-jah*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Delougaz, P. (1968). Animals emerging from a hut. *JNES*, 27(3), 184.
- Delougaz, P., Hill, H. D., & Lloyd, S. (1967). *Private houses and graves in the Diyala region*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Delougaz, P., & Lloyd, S. (1942). *Pre-Sargonid temples in the Diyala region*. Chicago: The University of Chicago press.
- Demakopoulou, K. (1975). Ειδήσεις απο τη θήβα: Ανεύρεση πρωτοελλαδικού αψιδωτού οικοδομήματος. *AAA*, VIII(1), 192-199.
- Demakopoulou, K. (1988a). Κόκλα (θολωτός τάφος). *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*, 36, 94-97.
- Demakopoulou, K. (Ed.). (1988b). *Das mykenische Hellas: Heimat der Helden Homers*. Berlin: Reimer.
- Demakopoulou, K. (Ed.). (1988c). *The Mycenaen world: five centuries of early Greek culture, 1600-1100 BC*. Athens: Ministry of culture.
- Demakopoulou, K. (1989). Κόκλα Μυκηναϊκή νεκρόπολη. *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*, 37, 83-85.
- Demakopoulou, K. (1990). The burial ritual in the tholos tomb at Kokla, Argolis. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 113-123).
- Demakopoulou, K. (Ed.). (1996). *The Aidonia treasure seals and jewellery of the Aegean Late Bronze Age*. Athens: Ministry of Culture.
- Demakopoulou, K. (2009). Το Μυκηναϊκό ιερό στο Αμυκλαίο: μια νέα

- προσέγγιση. In W. G. Cavanagh, C. Gallou, & M. Georgiadis (Eds.), *Sparta and Laconia* (pp. 95-104).
- Demargne, P. (1964). *Aegean art the origins of Greek art*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Derrick, W. (2009). Horse people with Alexandra Tolstoy: Siberia. *Horse people with Alexandra Tolstoy*. BBC Two.
- Derrida, J. (1981). *Positions*. London: The Athlone Press.
- Derrida, J. (1990). Some statements and truisms about neologisms, newisms, poetisms, parasitisms, and other small seismisms. In D. Carroll (Ed.), *The states of 'theory'* (pp. 64-94).
- Deshayes, J. (1956). Chronique des fouilles en Grèce en 1955. *BHC*, 80(1), 219-432.
- Deshayes, J. (1966). *Argos, les fouilles de la Deiras*. Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin.
- Detienne, M. (1989). Culinary practices and the spirit of sacrifice. In M. Detienne & J.-P. Vernant (Eds.), *The cuisine of sacrifice among the Greeks* (pp. 1-20).
- Detienne, M., & Vernant, J.-P. (Eds.). (1989). *The cuisine of sacrifice among the Greeks*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Dever, W. G. (1992). The chronology of Syria-Palestine in the second millennium B.C.E.: a review of current issues. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, (288), 1-25.
- Dickinson, O. (1994). *The Aegean Bronze Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dietler, M. (2001). Theorizing the feast: rituals of consumption, commensal politics, and power in African contexts. In M. Dietler & B. Hayden (Eds.), *Feasts* (pp. 65-143).
- Dietler, M., & Hayden, B. (2001a). Digesting the feast: good to eat, good to drink, good to think. In M. Dietler & B. Hayden (Eds.), *Feasts* (pp. 1-20).
- Dietler, M., & Hayden, B. (Eds.). (2001b). *Feasts: archaeological and ethnographic perspectives on food, politics, and power*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Dietrich, B. C. (1988). The instrument of sacrifice. In R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Early Greek cult practice* (pp. 35-40).
- Dietrich, B. C. (2005). Some thoughts on sacrificial ritual and meaning (abstract). In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 9-10).

- Dietz, S. (1980). *Asine II,2: results of the excavations east of the Acropolis 1970-1974. The Middle Helladic cemetery, the Middle Helladic and Early Mycenaean deposits*. Stockholm: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Dolce, R. (1986). Some remarks about a distinctive group of Kassite glyptic art. In M. Kelly-Buccellati (Ed.), *Insight through images* (pp. 71-78).
- Dor, L., Jannoray, J., van Effenterre, H., & van Effenterre, M. (1960). *Kirra: étude de préhistoire phocidienne*. Paris: E. de Boccard.
- Dörpfeld, W. (1908). Alt-Pylos. *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*, XXXIII, 295-317.
- Dörpfeld, W. (1927). *Alt-Ithaka: ein Beitrag zur Homer-Frage, Studien und Ausgrabungen aus der Insel Leukas-Ithaka*. München: R. Uhde.
- van Driel, G. (1969). *The cult of Aššur*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- von den Driesch, A., & Boessneck, J. (1990). Die Tierreste von der mykenischen Burg Tiryns bei Nauplion/Peloponnes. In U. Jantzen (Ed.), *Tiryns: Forschungen und Berichte* (pp. 87-91).
- Driessen, J. (2000). *The scribes of the room of the chariot tablets at Knossos: interdisciplinary approach to the study of a Linear B Deposit*. Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca.
- Driessen, J. (2008). Chronology of the Linear B texts. In Y. Duhoux & A. M. Davies (Eds.), *A companion to Linear B* (pp. 69-79).
- Driessen, J. (2010). Spirit of place: Minoan Houses as major actors. In D. J. Pullen (Ed.), *Political economies of the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 35-65).
- Driessen, J., Schoep, I., & Laffineur, R. (Eds.). (2002). *Monuments of Minos: rethinking the Minoan Palaces*. Aegaeum 23. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Duhoux, Y., & Davies, A. M. (Eds.). (2007). *A companion to linear B: Mycenaean Greek texts and their world. Vol. 1*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters.
- Duistermaat, K. (2008). *The pots and potters of Assyria: technology and organisation of production, ceramic sequence and vessel function at Late Bronze Age Tell Sabi Abyad, Syria*. Papers on archaeology of the Leiden Museum of Antiquities. Turnhout: Brepols.
- Dunham, S. (1986). Book Review: Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im alten Mesopotamien by Ernst Heinrich. *JNES*, 45(4), 322.
- Durkheim, É. (1968). *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (5th ed.). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

- Durkheim, É. (1995). *The elementary forms of religious life*. New York: Free.
- Durkheim, E. (1971). *The elementary forms of religious life* (7th ed.). London: George Allen & Unwin.
- Durkheim, E., & Mauss, M. (1903). De quelques formes primitives de classification. *L'année sociologique*, 6, 1-72.
- Dussaud, R. (1937). *Les découvertes de Ras Shamra (Ugarit) et l'Ancien Testament*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Dyson Jr., R. H. (1960). A note on Queen Shub-ad's "onagers." *Iraq*, 22, 102-104.
- van Effenterre, H., & van Effenterre, M. (1969). *Fouilles exécutées à Mallia*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Ehrich, R. W. (1992). *Chronologies in Old World archaeology* (3rd ed., Vol. 1-2). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ekroth, G. (2007). Heroes and hero-cults. In D. Ogden (Ed.), *A companion to Greek religion* (pp. 100-114).
- Ellis, R. S. (1968). *Foundation deposits in ancient Mesopotamia*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Ellison, R. (1983). Some thoughts on the diet of Mesopotamia from c. 3000-600 B.C. *Iraq*, 45(1), 146-150.
- Ellison, R. (1984). Methods of food preparation in Mesopotamia (c. 3000-600 BC). *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 27(1), 89-98.
- Emberling, G., & McDonald, H. (2003). Excavations at Tell Brak 2001-2002: preliminary report. *Iraq*, 65, 1-75.
- Encyclopedia, B. (2009). feast. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/203113/feast>
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1954). *The meaning of sacrifice among the Nuer*. The Henry Myers lecture. London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.
- Evans, A. (1899/00). Knossos. Summary Report of the Excavations in 1900: I. The Palace. *BSA*, 6, 3-70.
- Evans, A. (1900/01). The Palace of Knossos. *BSA*, 7, 1-120.
- Evans, A. (1902/03). The Palace of Knossos: provisional report for the year 1903. *BSA*, 9, 1-153.
- Evans, A. (1921). *The Palace of Minos* (Vol. I). London: Macmillan.



- Evans, A. (1928). *The Palace of Minos* (Vol. II). London: Macmillan.
- Evans, A. (1935). *The Palace of Minos* (Vol. IV). London: Macmillan.
- Farber, W. (1995). Witchcraft, magic, and divination in ancient Mesopotamia. In J. M. Sasson (Ed.), *Civilizations of the ancient Near East* (pp. 1895-1909).
- Faure, P. (1967). Nouvelles recherches sur trois sortes de sanctuaires crétois. *BHC*, 91(1), 114-150.
- Faure, P. (1969). Sur trois sortes de sanctuaires crétois (suite). *BHC*, 93(1), 174-213.
- Fedele, F. (1985). Mesopotamian zooarchaeology. In E. Quarantelli (Ed.), *The land between two rivers* (pp. 66-68).
- Felli, C. (2006). Lugal-usumgal: an Akkadian governor and his two masters. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *The iconography of cylinder seals* (pp. 35-50).
- Felsch, R. C. S. (2001). Opferhandlungen des Alltagslebens im Heiligtum der Artemis Elaphebolos von Hyampolis in den Phasen SH III C - Spätgeometrisch. In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia*, Aegaeum 22 (pp. 193-199).
- Fernie, E. (1995). *Art history and its methods: a critical anthology*. London: Phaidon.
- Ferrence, S. C. (2008). Is there iconography of the Minoan feast? In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 269-275).
- Fiddes, N. (1991). *Meat: a natural symbol*. London: Routledge.
- Finet, A. (1993). Le sacrifice de l'âne en Mésopotamie. In J. Quaegebeur (Ed.), *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East* (pp. 135-142).
- Finkelstein, J. J. (1968). *Cuneiform texts from Babylonian tablets in the British Museum. Part XLVIII: Old-Babylonian legal documents*. London: British Museum.
- Fiorina, P. (1985). Funeral customs. In E. Quarantelli (Ed.), *The land between two rivers* (pp. 62-63).
- Fischer, C. (1997). Siegelabrollungen im British Museum auf Ur-III-zeitlichen Texten der Provinz Lagas: Untersuchung zu den Verehrungsszenen. *Baghdader Mitteilungen*, 28, 97-183.
- Flannery, R. B. (2009). *The violent person: professional risk management strategies for safety and care*. Riverdale: American Mental Health Foundation. Retrieved from <http://americanmentalhealthfoundation.org/a.php?id=112>
- Fleming, D. E. (2000). *Time at Emar: the cultic calendar and the rituals from the diviner's archive*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.

- Forsdyke, E. J. (1926/27). The Mavro Spelio cemetery at Knossos. *BSA*, 28, 243-296.
- Forstenpointer, G. (2003). Promethean legacy: investigations into the ritual procedure of "Olympian" sacrifice. In E. Kotjabopoulou, Y. Hamilakis, P. Halstead, C. Gamble, & P. Elefanti (Eds.), *Zooarchaeology in Greece: recent advances* (pp. 203-213).
- Foster, B. R. (2002). Animals in Mesopotamian literature. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 271-288).
- Fox News. (2010, April 27). Has Noah's Ark been found on Turkish mountaintop? Text.Article, . Retrieved April 29, 2010, from <http://www.foxnews.com/scitech/2010/04/27/noahs-ark-found-turkey-ararat/>
- Foxvog, D. A. (1980). Funerary furnishings in an early Sumerian text from Adab. In B. Alster (Ed.), *Death in Mesopotamia* (pp. 67-75).
- Foxvog, D. A. (1989). A manual of sacrificial procedure. In H. Behrens, D. Loding, & M. T. Roth (Eds.), *Dumu-e<sub>2</sub>-dub-ba-a* (pp. 167-176).
- Franke, J. A. (1977). Presentation seals of the Ur III/Isin-Larsa period. In M. Gibson & R. D. Biggs (Eds.), *Seals and sealing in the ancient Near East* (pp. 61-66).
- Frankfort, H. (1933). *Tell Asmar, Khafaje and Khorsabad: second preliminary report of the Iraq expedition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frankfort, H. (1934). *Iraq excavations of the Oriental Institute 1932/33: third preliminary report of the Iraq expedition*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Frankfort, H. (1939). *Cylinder seals*. London: Macmillan.
- Frankfort, H. (1955). *Stratified cylinder seals from the Diyala region*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frankfort, H. (1996). *The art and architecture of the ancient Orient* (5th ed.). New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Frankfort, H., Lloyd, S., & Jacobsen, T. (1940). *The Gimilsin Temple and the palace of the rulers at Tell Asmar*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Fraser, P. M. (1970/71). Archaeology in Greece, 1970-71. *AR*, (17), 3-32.
- Frazer, J. G. (1993). *The golden bough: a study in magic and religion* (Abridged). Ware: Wordsworth.
- French, E. R., & Wardle, K. A. (Eds.). (1988). *Problems in Greek prehistory*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.
- French, E. (1971). The development of Mycenaean terracotta figurines. *BSA*, 66, 101-

- French, E. (1989/90). Archaeology in Greece 1989-90. *AR*, (36), 3-82.
- French, E. (1990/91). Archaeology in Greece 1990-91. *AR*, (37), 3-78.
- French, E. (1999a). Archaeological evidence for food stuffs at Mycenae. In Y. Tzedakis & H. Martlew (Eds.), *Minoan and Mycenaean* (pp. 129-137).
- French, E. (1999b). The excavation. In Y. Tzedakis & H. Martlew (Eds.), *Minoans and Mycenaean* (pp. 191, 196-205).
- Freud, S. (1950). *Totem and taboo: some points of agreement between the mental lives of savages and neurotics*. London: Routledge & Paul.
- Friedrich, W. L., & Heinemeier, J. (2009). The Minoan eruption of Santorini radiocarbon dated to 1613± BC - geological and stratigraphic considerations. In D. Warburton (Ed.), *Time's up!* (pp. 57-63).
- Frödin, O. V. A., & Persson, Axel W. (1938). *Asine I: results of the Swedish excavations, 1922-1930*. Stockholm: Generalstabens litografiska anstalts förlag.
- Furumark, A. (1941). *The chronology of Mycenaean pottery*. Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets, historie och antikvitets akademien.
- Gachet, Jacqueline. (2000). The divinatory livers. *NEA*, 63(4), 235.
- Gadd, C. J. (1955). A model liver for divination. In L. Woolley (Ed.), *Alalakh* (pp. 250-257).
- Gadd, C. J. (1960). The spirit of living sacrifices in tombs. *Iraq*, 22, 51-58.
- Galaty, M. L., & Parkinson, W. A. (Eds.). (1999). *Rethinking Mycenaean palaces: new interpretations of an old idea*. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology.
- Garrels, S. R. (2006). Imitation, mirror neurons and mimetic desire: convergence between the mimetic theory of René Girard and empirical research on imitation. *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, 12-13, 47-86.
- Gasche, H., Armstrong, J. A., Cole, S. W., & Gurzadyan, V. G. (1998). *Dating the fall of Babylon a reappraisal of second-millennium chronology*. Chicago: University of Ghent and the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- Gates, M.-H. (1984). The Palace of Zimri-Lim at Mari. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 47(2), 70-87.
- Gebhard, E. R., & Reese, D. S. (2005). Sacrifices for Poseidon and Melikertes-

- Palaimon at Isthmia. In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 125-151).
- Gejvall, N. G. (nd). *List and a short report of the animal bones and sea shells etc. from the excavations at Troy*. Svenska institutet i Athen.
- Gejvall, N. G. (1938). *The fauna of the different settlements of Troy: preliminary report*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.
- Gejvall, N. G. (1969). *Lerna, a preclassical site in the Argolid. Vol. 1: the fauna*. Princeton: American School of Classical Studies at Athens.
- Gelb, I. J., Landsberger, B., Oppenheim, A. L., & Reiner, E. (Eds.). (1956). *The Assyrian dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (Vols. 1-20). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- van Gennep, A. (1960). *The rites of passage*. London: Routledge & Paul.
- Gesell, Geraldine C. (1983). The place of the goddess in Minoan society. In O. Krzyszkowska & L. Nixon (Eds.), *Minoan society* (pp. 93-99).
- Gesell, Geraldine Cornelia. (1985). *Town, palace, and house cult in Minoan Crete*. Göteborg: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Gibson, M. (1972). *The city and area of Kish*. Miami: Field Research Projects.
- Gibson, M. (1979). Chicago-Copenhagen excavations at Uch Tepe, Hamrin. *Sumer*, 35, 467-461.
- Gibson, M. (Ed.). (1981). *Uch Tepe I: Tell Razuk, Tell Ahmed al-Mughir, Tell Ajamat*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gibson, M., & Biggs, R. D. (1977). *Seals and sealing in the ancient Near East*. Malibu: Undena Publications.
- Gibson, M., & Biggs, R. D. (Eds.). (1991). *The organization of power: aspects of bureaucracy in the ancient Near East* (2nd ed.). Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- Gilbert, A. S. (2002a). The native fauna of the ancient Near East. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 3-75).
- Gilbert, A. S. (2002b). Bibliography of Near Eastern zoology. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 493-536).
- Gill, M. A. V. (1985). Some observations on representations of marine animals in Minoan art, and their identification. In P. Darcque & J.-C. Poursat (Eds.), *L'iconographie minoenne* (pp. 63-81).
- Gilmour, G. (1995). Aegean influence in LBA funerary practices in the southern

- Levant. In S. Campbell & A. Green (Eds.), *The archaeology of death in the ancient Near East* (pp. 155-170).
- Gilmour, G. (2002). Foreign burials in Late Bronze Age Palestine. *NEA*, 65(2), 112-119.
- Giovino, M. (2006). Assyrian trees as cult objects. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *The iconography of cylinder seals* (pp. 110-125).
- Girard, R. (1986). *The scapegoat*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Girard, R. (1987). Generative scapegoating. In R. G. Hamerton-Kelly (Ed.), *Violent origins* (pp. 73-145).
- Girard, R. (2005). *Violence and the sacred*. London: Continuum.
- Godart, L. (1999). Les sacrifices d'animaux dans les textes mycéniens. In S. Deger-Jalkotzy, S. Hiller, & O. Panagl (Eds.), *Florent Studia Mycenaea* (pp. 249-256).
- Godart, L., & Tzedakis, Y. (1992). *Témoignages archéologiques et épigraphiques en Crète occidentale du néolithique au minoen récent III B*. Rome: Gruppo editoriale internazionale.
- Godart, L., & Tzedakis, Y. (1993). La tombe à l'aède de La Canée et la peinture crétoise des XIV<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles avant notre ère. *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, 137(1), 225-247.
- Goetze, A. (1957). Old Babylonian documents from Sippar in the collection of the Catholic University of America. *JCS*, 11(1), 15-40.
- Goldman, H. (1931). *Excavations at Eutresis in Boeotia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Gombrich, E. H. (1982). *The image and the eye: further studies in the psychology of pictorial representation*. Oxford: Phaidon.
- Goodison, L. (2009). Gender, body and the Minoans: contemporary and prehistoric perceptions. In K. Kopaka (Ed.), *Fylo*, Aegaeum 30 (pp. 233-242).
- Goodison, L., & Morris, C. (Eds.). (1998). *Ancient goddesses: the myths and the evidence*. London.
- Gordon, C. H. (Spring). Western Asiatic seals in the Walters Art Gallery. *Iraq*, 6(1), 3-34.
- Graf, F. (2005). Magical sacrifice (abstract). In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 71-73).
- Graham, J. W. (1961). The Minoan banquet hall: a study of the blocks north of the

- central court at Phaistos and Mallia. *AJA*, 65(2), 165-172.
- Graham, J. W. (1975). The banquet hall of the Little Palace. *AJA*, 79(2), 141-144.
- Grantham, B. J. (2000). Qasrin and the Druze: a cuisine-based model of bone distributions on archaeological sites. *NEA*, 63(1), 9-19.
- Graziadio, G. (1988). The chronology of the graves of Circle B at Mycenae: a new hypothesis. *AJA*, 92(3), 343-372.
- Green, A. R. W. (1975). *The role of human sacrifice in the ancient Near East*. Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press.
- Green, A. (1995). Ancient Mesopotamian religious iconography. In J. M. Sasson (Ed.), *Civilizations of the ancient Near East* (pp. 1837-1855).
- Greenewalt Jr., C. H. (1978). *Ritual dinners in early historic Sardis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Grigson, C. (1982a). Sex and age determination of some bones and teeth of domestic cattle: a review of the literature. In B. Wilson, C. Grigson, & S. Payne (Eds.), *Ageing and sexing animal bones from archaeological sites* (pp. 7-21).
- Grigson, C. (1982b). Sexing Neolithic domestic cattle skulls and horncores. In B. Wilson, C. Grigson, & S. Payne (Eds.), *Ageing and sexing animal bones from archaeological sites* (pp. 25-35).
- Guggisberg, M. (2009). Animal figures and sacrificial ritual at the end of the Bronze Age. In A.-L. Schallin (Ed.), *Encounters with Mycenaean figures and figurines* (pp. 125-138).
- Hägg, R. (1984). Degrees and character of the Minoan influence on the mainland. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *The Minoan thalassocracy* (pp. 119-121).
- Hägg, R. (1990). The role of libations in Mycenaean ceremony and cult. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 177-184).
- Hägg, R. (Ed.). (2002). *Peloponnesian sanctuaries and cults: proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 11-13 June 1994*. Stockholm: Svenska Institutet i Athen.
- Hägg, R., & Alroth, B. (2005a). Final discussion. In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 209-210).
- Hägg, R., & Alroth, B. (Eds.). (2005b). *Greek sacrificial ritual, Olympian and chthonian: proceedings of the Sixth International Seminar on Ancient Greek Cult, Göteborg University, 25-27 April 1997*. Stockholm: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Hägg, R., & Marinatos, N. (Eds.). (1981). *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze*

- Age proceedings of the first international symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 12-13 May, 1980.* Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen.
- Hägg, R., & Marinatos, N. (Eds.). (1984). *The Minoan thalassocracy: myth and reality.* Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen.
- Hägg, R., & Marinatos, N. (Eds.). (1987). *The function of the Minoan palaces: proceedings of the fourth international symposium at the Swedish Institute in Athens, 10-16 June, 1984.* Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen.
- Hägg, R., Marinatos, N., & Nordquist, G. C. (Eds.). (1988). *Early Greek cult practice: proceedings of the fifth international symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 26-29, June, 1986.* Göteborg: Paul Aströms Förlag.
- Hägg, R., & Nordquist, G. (Eds.). (1990). *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid: proceedings of the sixth international symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 11-13 June 1988.* Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen.
- Hallager, B. B. (2001). The ram in cultic contexts? In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia, Aegaeum 22* (pp. 315-320).
- Hallager, E. (2001). A waste deposit from a LBA-shrine in Khania (?). In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia, Aegaeum 22* (pp. 175-180).
- Haller, A. (1954). *Die Gräber und Gräfte von Assur.* Berlin: Gebr. Mann.
- Hallo, W. W. (1987). The origins of the sacrificial cult: new evidence from Mesopotamia and Israel. In P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, & S. D. McBride (Eds.), *Ancient Israelite religion* (pp. 3-13).
- Hallo, W. W., & Simpson, W. K. (1998). *The ancient Near East: a history* (2nd ed.). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Halstead, P. (2003). Texts and bones: contrasting Linear B and archaeozoological evidence for animal exploitation in Mycenaean southern Greece. In E. Kotjabopoulou, Y. Hamilakis, P. Halstead, C. Gamble, & P. Elefanti (Eds.), *Zooarchaeology in Greece: recent advances* (pp. 257-261).
- Halstead, P., & Barrett, J. C. (Eds.). (2004). *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece.* Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Halstead, P., & Isaakidou, V. (2004). Faunal evidence for feasting: burnt offerings from the Palace of Nestor at Pylos. In P. Halstead & J. C. Barrett (Eds.), *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece* (pp. 136-154).
- Hamerton-Kelly, R. G. (Ed.). (1987). *Violent origins: ritual killing and cultural formation.* Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hamilakis, Y. (1996). A Footnote on the archaeology of power: animal bones from a

- Mycenaean chamber tomb at Galatas, NE Peloponnese. *BSA*, 91, 153-166.
- Hamilakis, Y. (1998). Eating the dead: mortuary feasting and the politics of memory in the Aegean Bronze Age societies. In K. Branigan (Ed.), *Cemetery and society in the Aegean bronze age* (pp. 115-132).
- Hamilakis, Y. (2000). The anthropology of food and drink consumption and Aegean archaeology. In S. J. Vaughan & W. D. E. Coulson (Eds.), *Palaeodiet in the Aegean* (pp. 55-63).
- Hamilakis, Y. (Ed.). (2002). *Labyrinth revisited: rethinking "Minoan" archaeology*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Hamilakis, Y. (2003a). The sacred geography of hunting: wild animals, social power and gender in early farming societies. In E. Kotjabopoulou, Y. Hamilakis, P. Halstead, C. Gamble, & P. Elefanti (Eds.), *Zooarchaeology in Greece: recent advances* (pp. 239-247).
- Hamilakis, Y. (2003b). Animal sacrifice and Mycenaean societies: preliminary thoughts on the zooarchaeological evidence from the sanctuary at Ag. Konstantinos, Methana. In E. Konsolaki-Yannopoulou (Ed.), *Αρχαιολογικά* (pp. 249-256).
- Hamilakis, Y. (2007). Tombs for the living (review). *Antiquity*, 81, 1090-1093.
- Hamilakis, Y. (2008). Time, performance, and the production of a mnemonic record: from feasting to an archaeology of eating and drinking. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, *Aegaeum* 29 (pp. 3-22).
- Hamilakis, Y. (2010). Re-collecting the fragments: archaeology as mnemonic practice. In K. T. Lillios & V. Tsamis (Eds.), *Material mnemonics* (pp. 188-199).
- Hamilakis, Y., & Konsolaki, E. (2004). Pigs for the gods: burnt animal sacrifices as embodied rituals at a Mycenaean sanctuary. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 23(2), 135-151.
- Hamilakis, Y., & Momigliano, N. (Eds.). (2006). *Archaeology and European modernity: producing and consuming the "Minoans."* Creta antica. Padova: Bottega d'Erasmus.
- Hammade, H. (1987). *Cylinder seals from the collections of the Aleppo Museum, Syrian Arab Republic. 1: seals of unknown provenience*. Oxford: B.A.R.
- Hammade, H. (1994). *Cylinder seals from the collections of the Aleppo Museum, Syrian Arab Republic. 2: seals of known provenance*. Oxford: Tempvs Reparatum.
- Hammer, C. U., Kurat, G., Hoppe, P., Grum, W., & Clausen, H. B. (2003). Thera eruption date 1645 BC confirmed by new ice core data? In Manfred Bietak (Ed.), *Synchronisation of civilisations* (pp. 87-94).



- Hamnett, I. (2001). Durkheim and the study of religion. In W. S. F. Pickering (Ed.), *Émile Durkheim* (pp. 50-73).
- Hansen, D. P. (1963). New votive plaques from Nippur. *JNES*, 22(3), 145.
- Hansen, D. P. (1973). Al-Hiba, 1970-1971: a preliminary report. *Artibus Asiae*, 35(1/2), 62-78.
- Haraway, D. J. (2003). *The companion species manifesto: dogs, people, and significant otherness*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.
- Harris, R. (1991). Inanna-Ishtar as paradox and a coincidence of opposites. *History of Religions*, 30(3), 261-278.
- Harrison, R., & Girard, R. (2005, October 4). René Girard on ritual sacrifice and the scapegoat. *Entitled Opinions*. Stanford.
- Haskell, F. (1993). *History and its images: art and the interpretation of the past*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hausperger, M. (1991). *Die Einführungsszene: Entwicklung eines mesopotamischen Motivs von der altakkadischen bis zum Ende der altbabylonischen Zeit*. München: Profil Verlag.
- Hayden, B. (2001). Fabulous feasts: a prolegomenon to the importance of feasting. In M. Dietler & B. Hayden (Eds.), *Feasts* (pp. 23-64).
- Hazzidakis, J. (1916). Πρωτομινωϊκοὶ τάφοι παρὰ τὸ χωρίον Γούρνες. *ADelt*, 1915(1), 59-63.
- Hazzidakis, J. (1921). Μινωϊκοὶ τάφοι ἐν Κρήτῃ. *ADelt*, 1918(4), 45-87.
- Hazzidakis, J. (1934). *Les villas minoennes de Tylissos*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Heinemeier, J., Friedrich, W. L., Kromer, B., & Ramsey, C. B. (2009). The Minoan eruption of Santorini radiocarbon dated by an olive tree buried by the eruption. In D. Warburton (Ed.), *Time's up!* (pp. 285-293).
- Heinrich, E. (1982). *Die Tempel und Heiligtümer im alten Mesopotamien: Typologie, Morphologie und Geschichte* (Vols. 1-2). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Henrichs, A. (2005). "Sacrifice as to the Immortals": modern classifications of animal sacrifice and ritual distinctions in the Lex Sacra from Selinous. In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 47-60).
- Herva, V.-P. (2005). The life of buildings: Minoan building deposits in an ecological perspective. *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, 24(3), 215-227.
- Higgins, R. A. (1997). *Minoan and Mycenaean art* (Revised). London: Thames and

Hudson.

- Hill, H. D., Jacobsen, T., & Delougaz, P. (1990). *Old Babylonian public buildings in the Diyala region*. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- Hill, J. H. (Ed.). (1993). *Responsibility and evidence in oral discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hiller, S. (2001). Potnia/Potnios Aigon: on the religious aspects of goats in the Aegean Late Bronze Age. In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia*, *Aegaeum* 22 (pp. 293-304).
- Hilzheimer, M. (1941). *Animal remains from Tell Asmar*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hitchcock, L., Laffineur, R., & Crowley, J. L. (Eds.). (2008). *Dais: the Aegean feast. Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference/12e Rencontre Égéenne Internationale, University of Melbourne, Centre for Classics and Archaeology, 25-29 March 2008*. *Aegaeum* 29. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Höckmann, O. (1980). Lanze und Speer im spätminoischen und mykenischen Griechenland. *Jahrbuch des Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseums, Mainz*, 27, 13-158.
- Hodder, I. (Ed.). (2010). *Religion in the emergence of civilization: Çatalhöyük as a case study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hogarth, D. G. (1899/00). The Dictaeon Cave. *BSA*, 6, 94-116.
- Hood, S. (1956). Another warrior-grave at Ayios Ioannis near Knossos. *BSA*, 51, 81-99.
- Hood, S. (1977). Minoan town-shrines? In K. H. Kinzl (Ed.), *Greece and the eastern Mediterranean* (pp. 158-172).
- Hood, S. (1978). *The arts in prehistoric Greece*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hood, S., & de Jong, P. (1952). Late Minoan warrior-graves from Ayios Ioannis and the New Hospital Site at Knossos. *BSA*, 47, 243-277.
- Hope Simpson, R., & Dickinson, O. (1979). *A gazetteer of Aegean civilization in the Bronze Age. Vol. 1: the mainland and islands*. Göteborg: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Hrouda, B. (1971). *Vorderasien I: Mesopotamien, Babylonien, Iran und Anatolien*. München: Beck.
- Hubert, H., & Mauss, M. (1964). *Sacrifice: its nature and functions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Hughes, D. D. (1991). *Human sacrifice in ancient Greece*. London: Routledge.
- Hunger, H. (2009). How uncertain is Mesopotamian chronology? In D. Warburton (Ed.), *Time's up!* (pp. 145-152).
- Hunt, L. (2001). The sacred and the French revolution. In W. S. F. Pickering (Ed.), *Émile Durkheim* (pp. 74-91).
- Hutchinson, R. W. (1962). *Prehistoric Crete*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hutchinson, R. W., Eccles, E., & Benton, S. (1939). Unpublished objects from Palaikastro and Praisos. II. *BSA*, 40, 38-59.
- Iakovidis, S. E. (1969a). *Περατή, τὸ νεκροταφείον. Γ: Πίνακες*. Athens: Η εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία.
- Iakovidis, S. E. (1969b). *Περατή, τὸ νεκροταφείον. Α: οι τάφοι και τα ευρήματα*. Athens: Η εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία.
- Iakovidis, S. E. (1970). *Περατή, τὸ νεκροταφείον. Β: γενικαί παρατήρησεις*. Athens: Η εν Αθήναις Αρχαιολογική Εταιρεία.
- Iakovidis, S. E. (1980). *Excavations of the necropolis at Perati*. Occasional paper. Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California.
- Iakovidis, S. E. (1999a). The site. In Y. Tzedakis & H. Martlew (Eds.), *Minoan and Mycenaean* (p. 129).
- Iakovidis, S. E. (1999b). Grave Circle B. In Y. Tzedakis & H. Martlew (Eds.), *Minoan and Mycenaean* (pp. 220-221).
- Ilan, D. (2002). Mortuary Practices in Early Bronze Age Canaan. *NEA*, 65(2), 92-104.
- Immerwahr, S. A. (1990). *Aegean painting in the Bronze Age*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Invernizzi, A. (1980). Excavations in the Yelkhi area (Hamrin project, Iraq). *Mesopotamia*, 15, 19-49.
- Isaakidou, V., Halstead, P., Davis, J. L., & Stocker, S. (2002). Burnt animal sacrifices at the Mycenaean "Palace of Nestor", Pylos. *Antiquity*, 76, 86-92.
- Iser, W. (2006). *How to do theory*. Malden, Mass. Blackwell.
- Jacobsen, T. (1987). The graven image. In P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, & S. D. McBride (Eds.), *Ancient Israelite religion* (pp. 15-32).
- Jantzen, U. (Ed.). (1990). *Tiryns: Forschungen und Berichte*. Mainz am Rhein: Philipp von Zabern.

- Jay, N. (1992). *Throughout your generations forever: sacrifice, religion, and paternity*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- Jeyes, U. (1980). Death and divination in the Old Babylonian period. In B. Alster (Ed.), *Death in Mesopotamia* (pp. 107-121).
- Jeyes, U. (1989). *Old Babylonian extispicy omen texts in the British Museum*. Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Instituut te Istanbul.
- Jing, Y., & Flad, R. (2005). New zooarchaeological evidence for changes in Shang Dynasty animal sacrifice. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 24(3), 252-270.
- Johnson, B. (1980). *The critical difference essays in the contemporary rhetoric of reading*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Jones, D. W. (1999). *Peak sanctuaries and sacred caves in Minoan Crete: comparison of artifacts*. Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Kahane, P. P. (1969). *Ancient and classical art*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Kanta, A. (1980). *The late Minoan III period in Crete: a survey of sites, pottery and their distribution*. Göteborg: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Karetsou, A. (1976). Ἱερόν κορυφῆς Γιούχτα. *Praktika*, 1974, 228-232.
- Karetsou, A. (1979). Τὸ ἱερὸ κορυφῆς Γιούχτα. *Praktika*, 1976(B), 408-418.
- Karetsou, A. (1981). The peak sanctuary of Mt. Jouktas. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 137-153).
- Keane, W. (1997). Religious language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 47-71.
- Keane, W. (2010). Marked, absent, habitual: approaches to Neolithic religion at Çatalhöyük. In I. Hodder (Ed.), *Religion in the emergence of civilization* (pp. 187-219).
- Kelly-Buccellati, M. (1986). Sealing practices at Terqa. In M. Kelly-Buccellati (Ed.), *Insight through images* (pp. 133-142).
- Kelly-Buccellati, M. (2002). Ein hurritischer Gang in die Unterwelt. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, 134, 131-148.
- Kenna, V. E. G. (1960). *Cretan seals: with a catalogue of the Minoan gems in the Ashmolean Museum*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Keramopoulos, A. (1917). Περί το Κολωνακι μυκηναϊκοί ταφοί. *ADelt*, 3, 126-141.
- Kilian-Dirlmeier, I. (1988). Jewellery in Mycenaean and Minoan "Warrior Grave." In

- E. R. French & K. A. Wardle (Eds.), *Problems in Greek prehistory* (pp. 161-165).
- Kilian-Dirlmeier, I. (1990). Remarks on the non-military functions of swords in the Mycenaean Argolid. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 157-163).
- Kilian, K. (1981a). Ausgrabungen in Tiryns 1978. 1979. *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 149-194.
- Kilian, K. (1981b). Zeugnisse Mykenischer Kultausübung in Tiryns. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 49-58).
- Kilian, K. (1988). Mycenaean up to date: trends and changes in recent research. In E. R. French & K. A. Wardle (Eds.), *Problems in Greek prehistory* (pp. 115-152).
- Kilian, K. (1990). Patterns in the cult activity in the Mycenaean Argolid: Haghia Triada (Klenies), the Profitis Elias Cave (Haghios Hadrianos) and the Citadel of Tiryns. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 185-197).
- Killen, J. T. (1992). Observations on the Thebes sealings. In J.-P. Olivier (Ed.), *Mykenaiika* (pp. 365-380).
- Killen, J. T. (1994). Thebes sealings, Knossos tablets and Mycenaean state banquets. *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*, 39, 67-84.
- Killick, R., & Roaf, M. (1979). Excavations at Tell Madhhur. *Sumer*, 35, 542-534.
- Kinzl, K. H. (Ed.). (1977). *Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in ancient history and prehistory*. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter.
- Klengel-Brandt, E. (1986). Siegelabrollungen auf der altbabylonischen Tafel VAT 712. In M. Kelly-Buccellati (Ed.), *Insight through images* (pp. 143-148).
- Koldewey, R. (1914). *The excavations at Babylon*. London: Macmillan.
- Konsolaki, E. (1995). Μέθανα: Άγιος Κωνσταντίνος. *ADelt*, 46(B), 71-74.
- Konsolaki, E. (2002). A Mycenaean sanctuary on Methana. In R. Hägg (Ed.), *Peloponnesian sanctuaries and cults* (pp. 25-36).
- Konsolaki-Yannopoulou, E. (2001). New evidence for the practice of libations in the Aegean Bronze Age. In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia, Aegaeum 22* (pp. 213-220).
- Konsolaki-Yannopoulou, E. (2003a). Magoula at Galatas, Troezenia: a new MH-LH centre in the Saronic Gulf. In E. Konsolaki-Yannopoulou (Ed.), *Αργοσαρωνικός* (pp. 185-186).

- Konsolaki-Yannopoulou, E. (2003b). Ταφές νηπίων στο μυκηναϊκό ιερό του Αγίου Κωνσταντίνου στα Μέθανα. In E. Konsolaki-Yannopoulou (Ed.), *Αργοσαρωνικός* (pp. 257-284).
- Konsolaki-Yannopoulou, E. (Ed.). (2003c). *Αργοσαρωνικός: Πρακτικά Ιου Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Ιστορίας και Αρχαιολογίας του Αργοσαρωνικού, Πόρος, 26-29 Ιουνίου 1998* (Vol. A). Athens: Demos Porou.
- Konsolaki-Yannopoulou, E. (2004). Mycenaean religious architecture: the archaeological evidence from Ayios Konstantinos, Methana. In M. Wedde (Ed.), *Celebrations* (pp. 61-92).
- Kontorli-Papadopoulou, L. (1996). *Aegean frescoes of religious character*. SIMA. Göteborg: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Kopaka, K. (Ed.). (2009). *Fylo: engendering prehistoric "stratigraphies" in the Aegean and the Mediterranean*. Aegaeum 30. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Kopytoff, I. (1971). Ancestors as Elders in Africa. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 41(2), 129-142.
- Kosmetatou, E. (1993). Horse sacrifices in Greece and Cyprus. *Journal of Prehistoric Religion*, 7, 31-41.
- Kotjabopoulou, E., Hamilakis, Y., Halstead, P., Gamble, C., & Elefanti, P. (Eds.). (2003). *Zooarchaeology in Greece: recent advances*. London: British School at Athens.
- Kramer, S. N. (1944). The death of Gilgamesh. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, (94), 2-12.
- Kramer, S. N. (1967). The death of Ur-Nammu and his descent to the Netherworld. *JCS*, 21, 104-122.
- Krystalli-Votsi, K. (1998). The excavation of the Mycenaean cemetery at Aidonia. In K. Demakopoulou (Ed.), *The Aidonia treasure* (pp. 21-33).
- Krzyszowska, O. H. (2005). *Aegean seals: an introduction*. London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London.
- Krzyszowska, O. H., & Nixon, L. (1981). *Minoan society: proceedings of the Cambridge Colloquium 1981*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.
- Kurtz, D. C., & Boardman, J. (1971). *Greek burial customs*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Kyriakidis, E. (Ed.). (2007). *The archaeology of ritual*. Cotsen advanced seminars. Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology.

- Laffineur, R. (Ed.). (1987). *Thanatos: les coutumes funéraires en Égée à l'âge du Bronze*. Aegaeum 1. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Laffineur, R. (Ed.). (1999). *Polemos: le contexte guerrier en égée à l'âge du Bronze*. Aegaeum 19 (Vols. 1-2). Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Laffineur, R., & Crowley, J. L. (Eds.). (1992). *Eikon. Aegean Bronze Age iconography: shaping a methodology*. Aegaeum 8. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Laffineur, R., & Hägg, R. (Eds.). (2001). *Potnia: deities and religion in the Aegean Bronze Age: proceedings of the 8th international Aegean conference*. Aegaeum 22. Gothenburg: Gothenburg University.
- Lambek, M. (2007). Sacrifice and the problem of beginning: meditations from Sakalava mythopraxis. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13(1), 19-38.
- Lambert, W. G. (1993). Donations of food and drink to the gods in ancient Mesopotamia. In J. Quaegebeur (Ed.), *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East* (pp. 191-201).
- Lambrinudakis, V. (1976). Ἱερὸν Μαλεάτου Ἀπόλλωνος εἰς Ἐπίδαυρος. *Praktika*, 1974, 93-101.
- Lambrinudakis, V. (1977). Ἱερὸν Μαλεάτου Ἀπόλλωνος εἰς Ἐπίδαυρος. *Praktika*, 1975(A), 162-175.
- Lambrinudakis, V. (1978). Ἀνασκαφή στὸ ἱερό τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος Μαλεάτα. *Praktika*, 1976(A), 202-209.
- Lambrinudakis, V. (1980). Ἀνασκαφή στὸ ἱερό τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος Μαλεάτα. *Praktika*, 1977(A), 187-194.
- Lambrinudakis, V. (1981). Remains of the Mycenaean period in the sanctuary of Apollon Maleatas. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 59-65).
- Lang, M. L. (1969). *The Palace of Nestor at Pylos in western Messenia. Vol II: the frescoes* (Vol. II). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lange, K. E. (2005, February). Unearthing ancient Syria's cult of the dead. *National Geographic*, 108-123.
- Lasota-Moskalewska, A., Gręzak, A., & Tomek, T. (2006). Animal remains from the Mitanni grave at Tell Arbid. *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 15, 101-104.
- Lawler, A. (2008). Who were the Hurrians? *Archaeology*, July/August, 46-52.

- Lebessi, A., & Muhly, P. (1990). Aspects of Minoan cult, sacred enclosures: the evidence from the Syme sanctuary (Crete). *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 315-336.
- Legrain, Léon. (1912). *Le temps des rois d'Ur recherches sur la société antique, d'après des textes nouveaux Planches*. Paris: Champion.
- Legrain, Léon. (1936). *Ur excavations III: Archaic seal-impressions*. London: British Museum.
- Legrain, Léon. (1951). *Ur excavations X: seal cylinders*. London: British Museum.
- Leichty, E. (1993). Ritual, "sacrifice", and divination in Mesopotamia. In J. Quaegebeur (Ed.), *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East* (pp. 237-242).
- Lemerle, P. (1935). Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques dans l'Orient hellénique en 1934. *BHC*, 59, 234-309.
- Leonard, A. (1994). *An index to the Late Bronze Age Aegean pottery from Syria-Palestine*. Jonsered: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Leonard, A. (2003). MycIndex 3.1. In Manfred Bietak (Ed.), *Synchronisation of civilisations* (pp. 539-544).
- Leonard, A., & Williams, B. (Eds.). (1989). *Essays in ancient civilization presented to Helene J. Kantor*. Studies in ancient oriental civilization. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- van Leuven, J. C. (1981). Problems and methods of pre-hellenic naology. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 11-26).
- Lillios, K. T., & Tsamis, V. (Eds.). (2010). *Material mnemonics: everyday memory in prehistoric Europe*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Limet, H. (1993). Le sacrifice siskur. In J. Quaegebeur (Ed.), *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East* (pp. 243-255).
- Lincoln, B. (1991). *Death, war, and sacrifice: studies in ideology and practice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Linders, T., & Nordquist, G. (Eds.). (1987). *Gifts to the gods: proceedings of the Uppsala symposium 1985*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Lis, B. (2008). Cooked food in the Mycenaean feast: evidence from the cooking pots. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais, Aegaeum 29* (pp. 141-150).
- Littauer, M. A., & Crouwel, J. H. (1979). *Wheeled vehicles and ridden animals in the*



*ancient Near East*. Leiden: Brill.

- Littauer, M. A., Crouwel, J. H., & Steinkeller, P. (1990). Ceremonial threshing in the ancient Near East. *Iraq*, 52, 15-23.
- Lloyd, S., & Müller, H. W. (2004). *Ancient architecture*. Milan: Electaarchitecture.
- Long, C. R. (1974). *The Ayia Triadha sarcophagus a study of late Minoan and Mycenaean funerary practices and beliefs*. SIMA. Göteborg: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- van Loon, M. (1979). 1974 and 1975 preliminary results of the excavations at Selenkiyeh near Meskene, Syria. In D. N. Freedman (Ed.), *AR from the Tabqa dam project, Euphrates valley, Syria* (pp. 91-112).
- Löwe, W. (1996). *Spätbronzezeitliche Bestattungen auf Kreta*. Oxford: Tempvs Reparatum.
- Lucero, L. J. (2008). Memorializing place among Classic Maya commoners. In B. J. Mills & W. H. Walker (Eds.), *Memory work* (pp. 187-205).
- MacGillivray, J. A. (2000). *Minotaur Sir Arthur Evans and the archaeology of the Minoan myth*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- MacGillivray, J. A., Sackett, L. H., & Driessen, J. (2007). *Palaiastro two late Minoan wells*. London: British School at Athens.
- Malamat, A. (1987). A forerunner of biblical prophecy: the Mari documents. In P. D. Miller, P. D. Hanson, & S. D. McBride (Eds.), *Ancient Israelite religion* (pp. 33-52).
- Mallowan, M. E. L. (1936). The excavations at Tall Chagar Bazar, and an archaeological survey of the Habur Region, 1934-5. *Iraq*, 3(1), 1-85.
- Mallowan, M. E. L. (1937). The excavations at Tall Chagar Bazar and an archaeological survey of the Habur Region. Second campaign, 1936. *Iraq*, 4(2), 91-177.
- Mallowan, M. E. L. (1947). Excavations at Brak and Chagar Bazar. *Iraq*, 9, 1-iv.
- Manning, S. W. (1999). *A test of time: the volcano of Thera and the chronology and history of the Aegean and east Mediterranean in the mid second millenium BC*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Manning, S. W., & Ramsey, C. B. (2003). A Late Minoan I-II absolute chronology for the Aegean - combining archaeology with radiocarbon. In Manfred Bietak (Ed.), *Synchronisation of civilisations* (pp. 111-133).
- Marchetti, N. (2003). Notes on an Old Syrian Seal Impression from Sippar. *Iraq*, 65, 161-169.

- Marchetti, N., & 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. *JCS*, 49, 1-44.
- Margueron, J. (Ed.). (1980). *Le moyen Euphrate: zone de contacts et d'échanges*. Leiden: Brill.
- Marinatos, N. (1984). The date-palm in Minoan iconography and religion. *Opuscula Atheniensi*, 15(9), 115-122.
- Marinatos, N. (1986). *Minoan sacrificial ritual: cult practice and symbolism*. Stockholm: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Marinatos, N. (1987). An offering of saffron to the Minoan goddess of nature: the role of the monkey and the importance of saffron. In T. Linders & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Gifts to the gods* (pp. 123-132).
- Marinatos, N. (1988). The imagery of sacrifice: Minoan and Greek. In R. Hägg, N. Marinatos, & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Early Greek cult practice* (pp. 9-20).
- Marinatos, N. (1989). The tree as a focus of ritual action in Minoan glyptic art. In W. Müller (Ed.), *Fragen und Probleme der bronzzeitlichen ägäischen Glyptik*, CMS Beiheft 3 (pp. 127-143).
- Marinatos, N. (1990). Celebrations of death and the symbolism of the lion hunt. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 143-148).
- Marinatos, N. (1993). *Minoan religion: ritual, image, and symbol*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Marinatos, N. (1995). Minoan religion: a response to J. Wright. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 95(08.11). Retrieved from <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1995/95.08.11.html>
- Marinatos, N. (2005). Symbolic forms of sacrificial imagery in the eastern Mediterranean. In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 201-210).
- Marinatos, N. (2010). Burning bulls, broken bones: sacrificial ritual in the context of Palace Period Minoan religion by Robert James Cromarty. *AJA Online Book Review*, 114(1).
- Marinatos, S. (1932a). Πρωτομινωϊκὸς θολωτὸς τάφος παρὰ τὸ χωρίον Κράσι Πεδιάδος. *ADelt*, 1929(12), 103-141.
- Marinatos, S. (1932b). Α ἰ ἀνασκαφαὶ Goekoop ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ. *Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική*, 1932, 1-47.

- Marinatos, S. (1956). Άνασκαφαὶ ἐν Πύλῳ. *Praktika*, 1956, 202-206.
- Marinatos, S. (1957a). Άνασκαφαὶ ἐν Πύλῳ. *Praktika*, 1957, 118-120.
- Marinatos, S. (1957b). Excavations near Pylos, 1956. *Antiquity*, 31, 97-100.
- Marinatos, S. (1960). *Crete and Mycenae*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Martin, H. P. (1988). *Fara: a reconstruction of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Shuruppak*. Birmingham: Chris Martin.
- Martin, H. P. (1989). A mirrored monster. In A. Leonard & B. Williams (Eds.), *Essays in ancient civilization presented to Helene J. Kantor*, Studies in Oriental Civilization 47 (pp. 175-180).
- Martlew, H. (1999). The Room with the Fresco at the Cult Centre, Mycenae. In Y. Tzedakis & H. Martlew (Eds.), *Minoan and Mycenaean* (pp. 189-190).
- Masetti, M. (2003). Taxonomic and behavioural aspects of the representation of mammals in Aegean Bronze Age art. In E. Kotjabopoulou, Y. Hamilakis, P. Halstead, C. Gamble, & P. Elefanti (Eds.), *Zooarchaeology in Greece: recent advances* (pp. 273-281).
- Matsumoto, K., & Yokoyama, S. (1989). Report on the excavations at Tell Songor B: the graves. *Al-Rafidan*, 10, 245-298.
- Matsushima, E. (Ed.). (1993). *Official cult and popular religion in the ancient Near East: papers of the first colloquium on the ancient Near East - the city and its life*. Heidelberg: Winter.
- Matthäus, H. (1983). Minoische Kriegergräber. In O. Krzyszkowska & L. Nixon (Eds.), *Minoan society* (pp. 203-215).
- Matthews, R. (2001). Contextual analysis of the use of space at two Near Eastern Bronze Age sites part 2: sampling an urban centre: an introduction to Tell Brak excavations 1994-1996. *Tell Brak Project*. Retrieved September 13, 2007, from <http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/projects/brak/pub.htm>
- Matthews, R. (Ed.). (2003). *Excavations at Tell Brak. Vol. 4: exploring an upper Mesopotamian regional centre, 1994-1996*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq.
- Matthiae, P. (1980a). *Ebla: an empire rediscovered*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Matthiae, P. (1980b). Two princely tombs at Tell Mardikh-Ebla. *Archaeology*, 33(2), 8-17.
- Matthiae, P. (1984). New discoveries at Ebla: the excavation of the western palace and the royal necropolis of the Amorite period. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 47(1), 18-32.

- Matthiae, P. (1990a). A new monumental temple of Middle Bronze II at Ebla and the unity of the architectural tradition of Syria-Palestine. *Annales archeologiques Arabes Syriennes*, 40, 111-121.
- Matthiae, P. (1990b). Masterpieces of Early and Old Syrian art: discoveries of the 1988 Ebla excavations in a historical perspective. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 75(1989), 25-56.
- Matthiae, P. (1997). Tell Mardikh, 1977-1996: vingt ans de fouilles et de découvertes. La renaissance d'Ebla Amorrhéenne. *Akkadica*, 101, 1-29.
- Matz, F. (1958). *Göttererscheinung und Kultbild im minoischen Kreta*. Wiesbaden: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz.
- Maul, S. M. (2008). Den Gott ernähren: Überlegungen zum regelmäßigen Opfer in altorientalischen Tempeln. In E. Stavrianopoulou, A. Michaels, & C. Ambos (Eds.), *Transformations in sacrificial practices* (pp. 75-86).
- Mauss, M. (1990). *The gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies*. New York: Norton.
- Mauss, M., & Durkheim, E. (1910). Les Aranda et Loritja d'Australie centrale I. *L'année sociologique*, 11, 76-81.
- Mauss, M., & Durkheim, E. (1913). Les Aranda et Loritja d'Australie centrale II. *L'année sociologique*, 12, 101-104.
- Mauss, M., & Hubert, H. (2002). Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice. L'Université du Québec. Retrieved from [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/mauss\\_marcel/oeuvres\\_1/oeuvres\\_1\\_3/essai\\_sacrifice.html](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/mauss_marcel/oeuvres_1/oeuvres_1_3/essai_sacrifice.html)
- McCarthy, D. J. (1969). The symbolism of blood and sacrifice. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 88(2), 166-176.
- McCarthy, D. J. (1973). Further notes on the symbolism of blood and sacrifice. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 92(2), 205-210.
- McClellan, T. L., & Porter, A. (1999). Survey of excavations at Tell Banat: funerary practices. In G. del Olmo Lete & J.-L. M. Fenollós (Eds.), *Archaeology of the Upper Syrian Euphrates* (pp. 107-116).
- McCown, D. E. (1952). Excavations at Nippur, 1948-50. *JNES*, 11(3), 169.
- McCown, D. E., & Haines, R. C. (1967). *Nippur I: Temple of Enlil, Scribal Quarter, and Soundings*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- McCown, D. E., Haines, R. C., & Biggs, R. D. (1978). *Nippur II: the North Temple and Sounding E*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- McDonald, W. A. (1972). Excavations at Nichoria in Messenia: 1969-71. *Hesperia*, 41(2), 218-273.
- McDonald, W. A., & Wilkie, N. C. (Eds.). (1992). *Excavations at Nichoria in southwest Greece. Vol. 2: Bronze Age occupation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- McEwan, G. J. P. (Autumn). Distribution of meat in Eanna. *Iraq*, 45(2), 187-198.
- McMahon, A. (2006). *Nippur V: the Early Dynastic to Akkadian transition: the area WF sounding at Nippur*. Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.
- Meadow, R. H., & Uerpmann, H.-P. (Eds.). (1986). *Equids in the ancient world. Vol. I*. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag.
- Meadow, R. H., & Uerpmann, H.-P. (Eds.). (1991). *Equids in the ancient world. Vol. II*. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag.
- Mee, C., & Renard, J. (2007). *Cooking up the past: food and culinary practices in the Neolithic and Bronze Age Aegean*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Megaw, A. H. S. (1967/68). Archaeology in Greece, 1967-68. *AR*, (14), 3-26.
- Mellor, P. A. (2001). Sacred contagion and social vitality: collective effervescence in Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse. In W. S. F. Pickering (Ed.), *Émile Durkheim* (pp. 167-188).
- Ménant, J. (1883). *Recherches sur la glyptique orientale: Les pierres gravées de la Haute-Asie*. Maisonneuve et Cie.
- Meskell, L. (2008). Memory work and material practice. In B. J. Mills & W. H. Walker (Eds.), *Memory work* (pp. 233-243).
- van de Mieroop, M. (1989). Gifts and tithes to the temples in Ur. In H. Behrens, D. Loding, & M. T. Roth (Eds.), *Dumu-e<sub>2</sub>-dub-ba-a* (pp. 397-401).
- Mikasa, P. T. (Ed.). (1992). *Cult and ritual in the ancient Near East*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Miller, D. (1998). *A theory of shopping*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Miller, N. F., & Weber, J. A. (1996). Botanical and faunal remains from Tell es-Sweyhat. *Expedition*, 38(1), 27-29.
- Miller, P. D., Hanson, P. D., & McBride, S. D. (Eds.). (1987). *Ancient Israelite religion: essays in honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Mills, B. J. (2008). Remembering while forgetting: depositional practice and social

- memory at Chaco. In B. J. Mills & W. H. Walker (Eds.), *Memory work* (pp. 81-108).
- Mills, B. J., & Walker, W. H. (2008). Introduction: memory, materiality, and depositional practice. In B. J. Mills & W. H. Walker (Eds.), *Memory work* (pp. 3-23).
- Mills, B. J., & Walker, W. H. (Eds.). (2008b). *Memory work: archaeologies of material practices*. Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press.
- Milstein, M. (2006, October 24). Tombs found in Syria hold riches, signs of ritual sacrifice. *National Geographic News*. Retrieved from <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/10/061024-tombs-syria.html>
- Mitchell, T. C. (1969). *Sumerian art: illustrated by objects from Ur and Al-'Ubaid*. London: British Museum.
- Mizruchi, S. L. (1998). *The science of sacrifice: American literature and modern social theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Møller, E. (1995). *The Near Eastern collection catalogue*. Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek.
- Molleson, T., & Hodgson, D. (2003). The human remains from Woolley's excavations at Ur. *Iraq*, 65, 91-129.
- Montelius, O. (1924). *La Grèce préclassique. Part 1*. Stockholm: Ivar Hæggströms Boktryckeri.
- Moorey, P. R. S. (1978). *Kish excavations, 1923-1933*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Moorey, P. R. S. (1994). *Ancient Mesopotamian materials and industries the archaeological evidence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Moorey, P. R. S., & Gurney, O. R. (1978). Ancient Near Eastern cylinder seals acquired by the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford 1963-1973. *Iraq*, 40(1), 41-60.
- Moortgat, A. (1969). *The art of ancient Mesopotamia the classical art of the Near East*. London: Phaidon.
- Morgan, L. (1988). *The miniature wall paintings of Thera: a study in Aegean culture and iconography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, L. (1995). Frontal face and the symbolism of death in Aegean glyptic. In W. Müller (Ed.), *Sceaux minoens et mycéniens*, CMS Beiheft 5 (pp. 135-149).
- Morgan, L. (2005a). New discoveries and new ideas in Aegean wall painting. In L. Morgan (Ed.), *Aegean wall painting* (pp. 21-44).
- Morgan, L. (2005b). The Cult Centre at Mycenae and the duality of life and death. In

- L. Morgan (Ed.), *Aegean wall painting* (pp. 159-172).
- Morgan, L. (Ed.). (2005c). *Aegean wall painting: a tribute to Mark Cameron*. London: British School at Athens.
- Morris, B. (2000). *The power of animals: an ethnography*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Morris, C. E. (1990). In pursuit of the white tusked boar: aspects of hunting in Mycenaean society. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 149-156).
- Mudar, K. (1982). Early Dynastic III animal utilization in Lagash: a report on the fauna of Tell Al-Hiba. *JNES*, 41(1), 23.
- Mukherjee, A. J., James, M. A., Pfälzner, P., & Evershed, R. P. (2007). Biomolecular analysis of ceramic containers, skeletal remains, anthropogenic sediments and Organic artefacts from the Royal Tomb at Qatna. In D. M. Bonacossi (Ed.), *Urban and natural landscapes of an ancient Syrian capital* (pp. 189-197).
- Müller, K. (1909). Alt-Pylos. II. Die Funde aus den Kuppelgräbern von Kakovatos. *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung*, 34, 269-328.
- Müller, W. (Ed.). (1989). *Fragen und Probleme der bronzzeitlichen ägäischen Glyptik*. CMS Beiheft 3. Berlin: Gebr. Mann.
- Müller, W. (Ed.). (1995). *Sceaux minoens et mycéniens*. CMS Beiheft 5. Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag.
- Müller, W. (Ed.). (2010). *Die Bedeutung der minoischen und mykenischen Glyptik VI. internationales Siegel-Symposium aus Anlass des 50 jährigen Bestehens des CMS, Marburg, 9.-12. Oktober 2008*. CMS Beiheft 8. Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern.
- Muskett, G. M. (2007). *Mycenaean art a psychological approach*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Myers, J. W., Myers, E. E., & Cadogan, G. (Eds.). (1992). *The aerial atlas of ancient Crete*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Mylonas, G. E. (1948). Homeric and Mycenaean burial customs. *AJA*, 52(1), 56-81.
- Mylonas, G. E. (1966). *Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mylonas, G. E. (1983). *The Cult Centre of Mycenae*. London: British Academy.
- Nashef, K. (1992). Archaeology in Iraq. *AJA*, 96(2), 301-323.

- Nelson, R. S., & Shiff, R. (2003). *Critical terms for art history* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Nielsen, A. E. (2008). The materiality of ancestors: Chullpas and social memory in the Late Prehispanic history of the south Andes. In B. J. Mills & W. H. Walker (Eds.), *Memory work* (pp. 207-231).
- Niemeier, W.-D. (1981a). Probleme der Datierung von Siegeln nach Kontexten. In W.-D. Niemeier (Ed.), *Studien zur minoischen und helladischen Glyptik*, CMS Beiheft 1 (pp. 91-103).
- Niemeier, W.-D. (Ed.). (1981b). *Studien zur minoischen und helladischen Glyptik: Beiträge zum 2. Marburger Siegel-Symposium, 26.-30. September 1978*. CMS Beiheft 1. Berlin: Gebr. Mann.
- Niemeier, W.-D. (1990). Cult scenes on gold rings from the Argolid. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 165-170).
- Nigro, L. (2008). The eighteen century BC princes of Byblos and Ebla and the chronology of the Middle Bronze Age. *BAAL Hors-Série*, 6, 159-175.
- Nikoloudis, S. (2001). Animal sacrifice in the Mycenaean world. *Journal of Prehistoric Religion*, 15, 32-38.
- Nikoloudis, S. (2008). Bulls and belonging: another look at PY Cn 3. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 377-382).
- Nilsson, M. P. (1950). *The Minoan-Mycenaean religion and its survival in Greek religion* (2nd ed.). New York: Biblo and Tannen.
- Nissen, Hans J. (1986). 'Sumerian' vs. 'Akkadian' art: art and politics in Babylonia of the mid-third millennium B.C. In M. Kelly-Bucellati (Ed.), *Insight through images* (pp. 189-196).
- Nissen, Hans Jörg (Ed.). (1999). *Fluchtpunkt Uruk archäologische Einheit aus methodischer Vielfalt : Schriften für Hans Jörg Nissen*. Rahden: M. Leidorf.
- Nixon, Lucia. (1994). Gender bias in archaeology. In L. J. Archer, S. Fischler, & M. Wyke (Eds.), *Women in ancient societies* (pp. 1-23).
- Nobis, G. (1996). Der Aurochse oder Ur (*Bos primigenius*) auf Kreta. In D. S. Reese (Ed.), *The Pleistocene and Holocene fauna of Crete and its first settlers* (pp. 263-272).
- Nordquist, G. (1987). *A Middle Helladic village Asine in the Argolid*. Uppsala: Academia Ubsaliensis.
- Nordquist, G. (1990). Middle Helladic burial rites: some speculations. In R. Hägg &



- G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 35-41).
- Nordquist, G. (2002). Intra- and extramural, single and collective: burials in the Middle and Late Helladic periods. In B. Wells (Ed.), *New research on old material from Asine and Berbati* (pp. 23-29).
- Nordquist, G. (2008). Feasting: participation and performance. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 105-109).
- Norris, C. (2002). *Deconstruction: theory and practice* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Nougayrol, J. (1955). *Le palais royal d'Ugarit III*. Mission de Ras Shamra (Vols. 1-2). Paris: Impr. nationale.
- Nougayrol, J. (1956). *Le palais royal d'Ugarit IV*. Mission de Ras Shamra (Vols. 1-2). Paris: Impr. Nationale.
- Nougayrol, J. (1970). *Le palais royal d'Ugarit VI*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: Impr. nationale.
- Nougayrol, J., Laroche, E., Virolleaud, C., & Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1968). *Ugaritica V*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: Impr. Nationale.
- Nunn, A. (1999). *Stamp seals from the collections of the Aleppo Museum, Syrian Arab Republic*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- O'Connor, T. (2000). *The archaeology of animal bones*. Stroud: Sutton.
- Oates, D. (1966). The excavations at Tell al Rimah, 1965. *Iraq*, 28(2), 122-139.
- Oates, D. (1967). The excavations at Tell al Rimah, 1966. *Iraq*, 29(2), 70-96.
- Oates, D. (1970). The excavations at Tell al Rimah, 1968. *Iraq*, 32(1), 1-26.
- Oates, D. (1982a). Tell Brak. In J. Curtis (Ed.), *Fifty years of Mesopotamian discovery* (pp. 62-71).
- Oates, D. (1982b). Tell al Rimah. In J. Curtis (Ed.), *Fifty years of Mesopotamian discovery* (pp. 86-98).
- Oates, D., Oates, J., & McDonald, H. (2001). *Excavations at Tell Brak. Vol. 2: Nagar in the third millennium BC*. London: British School of Archaeology in Iraq.
- Oates, J. (2005). *Babylon*. London: Folio Society.
- Oates, J. (2006). Tell Brak Project: BA Lecture 2004. *Tell Brak Project*. Retrieved February 18, 2010, from <http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/projects/brak/BAlect.htm>

- Oates, J., Oates, D., & McDonald, H. (1997). *Excavations at Tell Brak. Vol. 1: the Mitanni and Old Babylonian periods*. Cambridge: McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research.
- Ogden, D. (Ed.). (2007). *A companion to Greek religion*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Olivier, J.-P. (Ed.). (1992). *Mykenaïka*. BCH Supplement. Paris.
- del Olmo Lete, G. (1993). Royal aspects of the Ugaritic cult. In J. Quaegebeur (Ed.), *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East* (pp. 51-66).
- del Olmo Lete, G., & Fenollós, J.-L. M. (Eds.). (1999). *Archaeology of the Upper Syrian Euphrates: the Tishrin Dam area proceedings of the International Symposium held at Barcelona, January 28th-30th, 1998*. Sabadell: AUSA.
- Olsen, B. (1990). Roland Barthes: from sign to text. In C. Tilley (Ed.), *Reading material culture* (pp. 163-205).
- Ôno, M. (2001). Collective effervescence and symbolism. In W. S. F. Pickering (Ed.), *Émile Durkheim* (pp. 152-166).
- Oppenheim, A. L. (1967). *Letters from Mesopotamia: official business, and private letters on clay tablets from two millennia*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Orthmann, Winfred. (1980). Burial Customs of the 3rd millenium B.C. in the Euphrates Valley. In J.-C. Margueron (Ed.), *Le moyen Euphrate* (pp. 97-105).
- Orthmann, Winfried. (1981). *Halawa 1977 bis 1979: vorläufiger Bericht über die 1. bis 3. Grabungskampagne*. Bonn: Habelt.
- Ottosson, M. (1980). *Temples and cult places in Palestine*. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International.
- Palaima, T. G. (Ed.). (1990). *Aegean seals, sealings and administration*. Aegaeum 5. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Palaima, T. G. (1992). The Knossos oxen dossier: the use of oxen in Mycenaean Crete. Part I: general background and Scribe 107. In J.-P. Olivier (Ed.), *Mykenaïka* (pp. 463-472).
- Palaima, T. G. (2004). Sacrificial feasting in the Linear B documents. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 217-246.
- Palaima, T. G. (2008). The significance of Mycenaean words relating to meals, meal rituals, and food. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 383-389).
- Panagiotopoulos, D. (2002). *Das Tholosgrab E von Phourni bei Archanes: Studien zu*

- einem frühkretischen Grabfund und seinem kulturellen Kontext.* Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Papadatos, Y. (2005). *Tholos Tomb Gamma: a prepalatial tholos tomb at Phourni, Archanes.* Philadelphia: INSTAP Academic Press.
- Papadopoulos, T. (1987). Άνασκαφή Καλλιθέας Πατρῶν. *Praktika*, 1987, 69-72.
- Papakonstantinou, E. (1988). Κάτω Σαμικό. *ADelt*, 36 (1981)(B1), 148-149.
- Papathanassiou, M., Hoskin, M., & Papadopoulou, H. (1992). Orientations of tombs in the Late-Minoan cemetery at Armenoi, Crete. *Journal of History of Astronomy, Archaeoastronomy Supplement*, 23, 43-55.
- Papavasileiou, G. A. (1908). Άνασκαφή ἐν Εὐβοία. *Praktika*, 1907, 114-119.
- Papavasileiou, G. A. (1910). *Περί των εν Ευβοία αρχαίων τάφων.* Athens: Athenian Archaeological Society.
- Pardee, D. (2000). Divinatory and sacrificial rites. *NEA*, 63(4), 232-234.
- Pardee, D. (2002). *Ritual and cult at Ugarit.* Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Paribeni, R. (1904). Ricerche: nel sepolcreto di Haghia Triada presso Phaestos. *Monumenti antichi pubblicati per cura della reale accademia dei lincei*, 14, 677-756.
- Paribeni, R. (1908). Il sarcofago dipinto di Haghia Triada. *Monumenti antichi pubblicati per cura della reale accademia dei lincei*, 19, 5-86.
- Parker, B. (Spring). Cylinder seals from Tell al Rimah. *Iraq*, 37(1), 21-38.
- Parlama, D. (1973/74). Αρχαιότητες και Μνημεία Μεσσηνίας: Ανασκαφές. *ADelt*, 29(B), 315-316.
- Parrot, A. (1938). Les fouilles de Mari. *Syria*, 19(1), 1-29.
- Parrot, A. (1939). Les fouilles de Mari, cinquième campagne (automne 1937): rapport préliminaire. *Syria*, 20(1), 1-22.
- Parrot, A. (1940). Les fouilles de Mari. *Syria*, 21(1), 1-28.
- Parrot, A. (1946). *Archéologie mésopotamienne: les étapes.* Paris: Albin Miching.
- Parrot, A. (1948). *Mari: une ville perdue.* Paris: Éditions “Je sers.”
- Parrot, A. (1954). Les fouilles de Mari. *Syria*, 31(3), 151-171.
- Parrot, A. (1955). Les fouilles de Mari, dixième campagne (automne 1954). *Syria*, 32(3), 185-211.

- Parrot, A. (1956). *Mission archéologique de Mari. Vol.1: Le temple d'Ishtar*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Parrot, A. (1958). *Mission archéologique de Mari. Vol.2: le palais: peintures murales*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Parrot, A. (1959). *Mission archéologique de Mari. Vol.2: le palais: documents et monuments*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Parrot, A. (1967). *Mission archéologique de Mari. Vol.3: les temples d'Ishtar et de Ninni-zaza*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Parrot, A. (1970). *Sumerian art*. London: Collins.
- Payne, S. (1990). Appendix: field report on the Dendra horses. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 103-106).
- Pelon, O. (1976). *Tholoi, tumuli, et cercles funéraires: recherches sur les monuments funéraires de plan circulaire dans l'égée de l'âge du bronze, IIIe et IIe millénaires av. J.-C.* Athens: École française d'Atènes.
- Pelon, O. (1986). Un dépôt de fondation au palais de Malia. *BHC*, 110(1), 3-19.
- Pendlebury, J. D. S., Money-Coutts, M. B., & Pendlebury, H. W. (1937). Excavations in the Plain of Lasithi. II. *BSA*, 38, 1-56.
- Pendlebury, H. W., Pendlebury, J. D. S., & Money-Coutts, M. B. (1935). Excavations in the Plain of Lasithi. I: the Cave of Trapeza. *BSA*, 36, 5-131.
- Persson, Axel Waldemar. (1931). *The royal tombs at Dendra near Midea*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.
- Persson, Axel Waldemar. (1942). *New tombs at Dendra near Midea*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.
- Pettinato, G. (1991). *Ebla: a new look at history*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Pfälzner, P. (2007). Archaeological investigations in the Royal Palace of Qatna. In D. M. Bonacossi (Ed.), *Urban and natural landscapes of an ancient Syrian capital* (pp. 29-64).
- Philip, G. (1995). Warrior burials in the ancient Near-Eastern Bronze Age: the evidence from Mesopotamia, western Iran and Syria-Palestine. *The archaeology of death in the ancient Near East* (pp. 140-154).
- Picard, C. (1948). *Les religions préhelléniques (Crete et Mycènes)*. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

- Pickering, W. S. F. (1984). *Durkheim's sociology of religion: themes and theories*. London: Routledge & Paul.
- Pickering, W. S. F. (2001a). Introduction. In W. S. F. Pickering (Ed.), *Émile Durkheim* (pp. 3-8).
- Pickering, W. S. F. (2001b). The eternity of the sacred: Durkheim's error? In W. S. F. Pickering (Ed.), *Émile Durkheim* (pp. 103-135).
- Pickering, W. S. F. (Ed.). (2001c). *Émile Durkheim: critical assessments of leading sociologists* (Vol. II). London and New York: Routledge.
- Pini, I. (1968). *Beiträge zur minoischen Gräberkunde*. Wiesbaden: F. Steiner.
- Pini, I. (1985). Das Motiv de Löwenüberfalls in der spätminoischen und mykenischen Glyptik. *BHC Supplement*, 11(1), 153-166.
- Pini, I. (1992). Towards a standardization of terminology: problems of description and identification. In R. Laffineur & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Eikon*, Aegaeum 8 (pp. 11-19).
- Pini, I. (2008). Are there any representations of feasting in the Aegean Bronze Age? In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 249-256).
- Piteros, C., Olivier, J.-P., & Melena, J. L. (1990). Les inscription en linéaire B des nodules de Thèbes (1982): la fouille, les documents, les possibilités d'interprétation. *BHC*, 114, 103-184.
- Platon, N. E. (1963). Κρήτη. *ADelt*, 17 (1961/62)(B), 291-294.
- Platon, N. E. (1964). Άνασκαφαὶ Ζάκρου. *Praktika*, 142-168.
- Platon, N. E. (1974). *Ζάκρος. Τὸ νέον μινωικὸν ἀνάκτορον*. Athens.
- Platon, N. E. (1985). *Zakros: the discovery of a lost palace of ancient Crete*. Amsterdam: Hakkert.
- Pollock, S. (1991). Of priestesses, princes and poor relations: the dead in the Royal Cemetery of Ur. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 1(2), 171-189.
- Pollock, S. (2003). Feasts, funerals, and fast food in early Mesopotamian states. In T. L. Bray (Ed.), *The archaeology and politics of food and feasting* (pp. 17-38).
- Pollock, S., & Bernbeck, R. (Eds.). (2005). *Archaeologies of the Middle East: critical perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Pologiorgi, M. (1987). Αἱ χαιότητες στην περιοχὴ χωριοῦ Αποδοῦλου. *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*, 26, 125-151.

- Popham, M. R. (1965). Some Late Minoan III pottery from Crete. *BSA*, 60, 316-342.
- Popham, M. (1967). Late Minoan pottery: a summary. *BSA*, 62, 337-351.
- Porada, E. (1948). *Corpus of ancient Near Eastern seals in North American collections*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Porada, E. (1957). Syrian seal impressions on tablets dated in the time of Hammurabi and Samsu-Iluna. *JNES*, 16(3), 192.
- Porada, E. (Ed.). (1980). *Ancient art in seals*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Porada, E. (1985). Syrian seals from the late fourth millennium to the late second millennium. In H. Weiss (Ed.), *Ebla to Damascus* (pp. 90-103).
- Porada, E. (1995). *Man and images in the ancient Near East* (1st ed.). Wakefield: Moyer Bell.
- Porada, E., Hansen, D. P., Dunham, S., & Babcock, S. H. (1992). Mesopotamia. In R. W. Ehrich (Ed.), *Chronologies in Old World archaeology* (3rd ed., pp. 77-121, 90-124).
- Porter, A. (1995). Tell Banat – Tomb 1. *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 8, 1-50.
- Porter, A. (2002a). The dynamics of death: ancestors, pastoralism, and the origins of a third-millennium city in Syria. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, (325), 1-36.
- Porter, A. (2002b). Communities in conflict: death and the contest for social order in the Euphrates River Valley. *NEA*, 65(3), 156-173.
- Porter, A., & McClellan, T. L. (1998). The third millennium settlement complex at Tell Banat: results of the 1994 excavations. *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 10, 9-37.
- Porter, A., & McClellan, T. L. (2003). Tell Banat. In J. Aruz (Ed.), *Art of the first cities* (pp. 184-186).
- Postgate, C., Oates, D., & Oates, J. (1997). *The excavations at Tell al Rimah: the pottery*. Warminster: British School of Archeology in Iraq.
- Postgate, J. N. (1978). Excavations at Abu Salabikh, 1977. *Iraq*, 40(2), 77-88.
- Postgate, J. N. (1980). Early Dynastic burial customs at Abu Salabikh. *Sumer*, 36, 65-82.
- Postgate, J. N. (1982). Abu Salabikh. In J. Curtis (Ed.), *Fifty years of Mesopotamian discovery* (pp. 48-61).

- Postgate, J. N. (1984). Excavations at Abu Salabikh, 1983. *Iraq*, 46(2), 95-113.
- Postgate, J. N. (Ed.). (1985). *Abu Salabikh excavations, vol.2: graves 1 to 99*. London: British school of archaeology in Iraq.
- Postgate, J. N. (1986). The equids of Sumer, again. In R. H. Meadow & H.-P. Uerpmann (Eds.), *Equids in the ancient world* (pp. 194-204).
- Postgate, J. N. (1992). *Early Mesopotamia: society and economy at the dawn of history*. London: Routledge.
- Postgate, J. N. (1994). Text and figure in ancient Mesopotamia: match and mismatch. In C. Renfrew & E. B. W. Zubrow (Eds.), *The ancient mind* (pp. 176-184).
- Postgate, J. N., & Moon, J. A. (Autumn). Excavations at Abu Salabikh, 1981. *Iraq*, 44(2), 103-136.
- Postgate, J. N., & Moorey, P. R. S. (Autumn). Excavations at Abu Salabikh, 1975. *Iraq*, 38(2), 133-169.
- Pötscher, W. (2000). Bemerkungen zum Sarkophag von Hagia Triada. In F. Blakolmer (Ed.), *Österreichische Forschungen zur ägäischen Bronzezeit 1998* (pp. 107-108).
- Preziosi, D. (Ed.). (1998). *The art of art history: a critical anthology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Preziosi, D., & Hitchcock, L. (1999). *Aegean art and architecture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Prince, J. D. (1907). A study of the Assyro-Babylonian words relating to sacrifice. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 26(1), 54-61.
- Pritchard, J. B. (Ed.). (1958). *The ancient Near East: an anthology of texts and pictures. Vol. 1*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pritchard, J. B. (1969). *Ancient Near Eastern texts relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed.). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pritchard, J. B. (Ed.). (1975). *The ancient Near East: an anthology of texts and pictures. Vol. 2*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Protonotariou-Deilaki, E. (1968). Θολωτὸς Τάφος Καζάρμας. *AAA*, A(3), 236-238.
- Protonotariou-Deilaki, E. (1969). Θολωτὸς Τάφος Καζάρμας. *AAA*, 2, 3-6.
- Protonotariou-Deilaki, E. (1990). The tumuli of Mycenae and Dendra. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 85-102).

- Pullen, D. J. (Ed.). (2010). *Political economies of the Aegean Bronze Age: papers from the Langford Conference, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 22-24 February 2007*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Quaegelbeur, J. (Ed.). (1993). *Ritual and sacrifice in the ancient Near East: proceedings of the international conference organized by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from the 17th to the 20th of April 1991*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Quarantelli, E. (Ed.). (1985). *The land between two rivers: twenty years of Italian archaeology in the Middle East; the treasures of Mesopotamia*. Torino: Il Quadrante Edizioni.
- Rathje, W. L. (1977). New tricks for old seals: a progress report. In M. Gibson & R. D. Biggs (Eds.), *Seals and sealing in the ancient Near East* (pp. 25-32).
- Ravn, O. E. (1960). *A catalogue of oriental cylinder seals and seal impressions in the Danish National Museum*. København: Nationalmuseet.
- Reade, J. (1968). Tell Taya (1967): summary Report. *Iraq*, 30(2), 234-264.
- Reade, J. (1982). Tell Taya. In J. Curtis (Ed.), *Fifty years of Mesopotamian discovery* (pp. 72-78).
- Reade, J. (2001). Assyrian king-lists, the Royal Tombs of Ur, and Indus origins. *JNES*, 60(1), 1-29.
- Reade, J. (2003). The Royal Tombs of Ur. In J. Aruz (Ed.), *Art of the first cities* (pp. 93-107).
- Reese, D. S. (1995). Equid sacrifices/burials in Greece and Cyprus: an appendix. *Journal of Prehistoric Religion*, 9, 35-42.
- Reese, D. S. (Ed.). (1996). *Pleistocene and Holocene fauna of Crete and its first settlers*. Madison: Prehistory Press.
- Reese, D. S. (2005). Faunal remains from Greek sanctuaries: a survey (abstract). In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 121-123).
- Reitz, E. J., & Wing, E. S. (1999). *Zooarchaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Renfrew, C. (1981). Questions of Minoan and Mycenaean cult. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 27-33).
- Renfrew, C., & Bahn, P. G. (2000). *Archaeology: theories, methods and practice* (3rd ed.). London: Thames & Hudson.
- Renfrew, C., & Zubrow, E. B. W. (Eds.). (1994). *The ancient mind: elements of cognitive archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- Renger, J. (1979). The city of Babylon during the Old Babylonian period. *Sumer*, 35, 209-205.
- Rethemiotakis, G. (1999). The hearths of the Minoan palace at Galatas. In P. P. Betancourt, V. Karageorghis, R. Laffineur, & W.-D. Niemeier (Eds.), *Meletemata*, Aegaeum 20 (pp. 721-727).
- Roaf, M. (1982). The Hamrin sites. In J. Curtis (Ed.), *Fifty years of Mesopotamian discovery* (pp. 40-47).
- Roaf, M. (Ed.). (1984). Tell Madhhur: a summary report on the excavations. *Sumer*, 43, 108-167.
- Roaf, M. (1995). Palaces and temples in ancient Mesopotamia. In J. M. Sasson (Ed.), *Civilizations of the ancient Near East* (pp. 423-441).
- Roaf, M., & Postgate, J. N. (1979). Excavations in Iraq, 1977-78. *Iraq*, 41(2), 141-181.
- Roaf, M., & Postgate, J. N. (1981). Excavations in Iraq, 1979-80. *Iraq*, 43(2), 167-198.
- Robertson, J. (1995). The social and economic organization of ancient Mesopotamian temples. In J. M. Sasson (Ed.), *Civilizations of the ancient Near East* (pp. 443-454).
- Robertson, N. (2005). Sacrifice to the sea. In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 85-98).
- Rodenwaldt, G. (1976). *Tiryns II: die Fresken des Palastes* (1912nd ed.). Athens/Mainz.
- Roobaert, A., & Bunnens, G. (1999). Excavations at Tell Ahmar – Til Barsib. In G. del Olmo Lete & J.-L. M. Fenollós (Eds.), *Archaeology of the Upper Syrian Euphrates* (pp. 163-178).
- Rosaldo, R. (1987). Anthropological commentary. In R. G. Hamerton-Kelly (Ed.), *Violent origins* (pp. 239-244).
- Rose, G. (1992). *The broken middle: out of our ancient society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Roy, J. (2007). The consumption of dog-meat in classical Greece. In C. Mee & J. Renard (Eds.), *Cooking up the past* (pp. 342-353).
- Rudhardt, J., & Reverdin, O. (Eds.). (1981). *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité: huit exposes suivis de discussions: Vandoeuvres-Geneve, 25-30 ao ut 1980*. Geneve: Fondation Hardt.
- Rumaidh, S. S. (2000). *Excavations in Chokha: an Early Dynastic settlement*. London: Nabu Publications.

- Ruscillo, D. (2006a). The table test: a simple technique for sexing canid humeri. In D. Ruscillo (Ed.), *Recent advances in ageing and sexing animal bones* (pp. 62-67).
- Ruscillo, D. (Ed.). (2006b). *Recent advances in ageing and sexing animal bones*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Rutkowski, B. (1986). *The cult places of the Aegean*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Rutter, J. B. (1993). Review of Aegean prehistory II: the Prepalatial Bronze Age of the southern and central Greek Mainland. *AJA*, 97(4), 745-797.
- Säflund, G. (1980). Sacrificial banquets in the "Palace of Nestor." *Opuscula Atheniensi*, 13, 237-246.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1967). Minoan cemeteries at Arkhanes. *Archaeology*, 20(4), 276-281.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1968a). Άνασκαφή Άρχανών. *Praktika*, 1966, 174-184.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1968b). Χρονικά. *ADelt*, 20(B3 1965), 549-557.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1969). Άνασκαφή Άρχανών. *Praktika*, 1967, 151-161.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1970). Das Kuppelgrab A von Archanes und das kretisch-mykenische Tieropferitual. *Praehistorische Zeitschrift*, 45(2), 135-219.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1972). Τὸ θέμα τῆς φερούσης ζώων γυναικὸς εἰς τὴν κρητομυκηναϊκὴν σφραγιδογλυφίαν. *Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική*, 1972, 245-258.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1973). Άνασκαφή Άρχανών. *Praktika*, 1971, 276-283.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1974). Άνασκαφή Άρχανών. *Praktika*, 1972, 310-353.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1975). Άνασκαφή Άρχανών. *Praktika*, 1973, 167-187.
- Sakellarakis, Y. (1977). Άνασκαφή Άρχανών. *Praktika*, 1975(B), 255-321.
- Sakellarakis, Y., & Sapouna-Sakellaraki, E. (1981). Drama of death in a Minoan temple. *National Geographic*, 159(2), 204-223.
- Sakellarakis, Y., & Sapouna-Sakellaraki, E. (1982). Άνασκαφή Άρχανών. *Praktika*, 1980, 354-401.
- Sakellarakis, Y., & Sapouna-Sakellaraki, E. (1991). *Archanes*. Athens: Ekdotike Athenon.
- Sakellarakis, Y., & Sapouna-Sakellarakis, E. (1997). *Archanes: Minoan Crete in a*

*new light* (Vols. 1-2). Athens: Ammos Publications.

Sapouna-Sakellaraki, E., & Sakellarakis, Y. (1980). Ανασκαφή Ἄρχανῶν. *Praktika*, 1977(B), 459-482.

Sapouna-Sakellaraki, E., & Sakellarakis, Y. (1981). Ανασκαφή Ἄρχανῶν. *Praktika*, 1979, 331-392.

Sasson, J. M. (Ed.). (1995). *Civilizations of the ancient Near East* (Vols. 1-4). New York: Scribner.

Saunders, E. (2008). *Pictures from the sea: the role of marine imagery and artefacts in the Bronze Age Aegean* (Unpublished). Trinity College Dublin, Dublin.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1929). Les fouilles de Minet-el-Beida et de Ras Shamra (campagnes du printemps 1929). *Syria*, 10(4), 285-297.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1931). Les fouilles de Minet el-Beida et de Ras-Shamra, deuxième campagne (printemps 1930): rapport sommaire. *Syria*, 12(1), 1-14.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1933). Les fouilles de Minet-el-Beida et de Ras-Shamra, quatrième campagne (printemps 1932): rapport sommaire. *Syria*, 14(2), 93-127.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1935). Les fouilles de Ras Shamra (Ugarit), sixième campagne (printemps 1934). *Syria*, 16(2), 141-176.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1936). Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit, septième campagne (printemps 1935). *Syria*, 17(2), 105-149.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1938a). Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit. *Syria*, 19(4), 313-334.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1938b). Les fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit. *Syria*, 19(3), 193-255.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1939). *Ugaritica I*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: P. Geuthner.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1949). *Ugaritica II*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: P. Geuthner.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1951). Reprises des recherches archéologiques à Ras Shamra-Ugarit: sondages de 1948 et 1949, et campagne de 1950. *Syria*, 28(1), 1-21.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1954). Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit. *Syria*, 31(1), 14-67.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1956). *Ugaritica III*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: P. Geuthner.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1962). *Ugaritica IV*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: Impr. Nationale.

Schaeffer, C. F. A. (Ed.). (1969). *Ugaritica VI*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: P. Geuthner.

- Schaeffer, C. F. A. (1972). Note additionnelle sur les fouilles dans le Palais nord d'Ugarit. *Syria*, 49(1), 27-33.
- Schaeffer-Forrer, C. F. A. (1983). *Corpus I: des cylindres-sceaux de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et d'Enkomi-Alasia*. Paris: Editions Recherche sur les civilisations.
- Schallin, A.-L. (Ed.). (2009). *Encounters with Mycenaean figures and figurines: papers presented at a seminar at the Swedish Institute at Athens, 27-29 April 2001*. Stockholm: Svenska institutet i Athen.
- Schmandt-Besserat, D. (2001). Feasting in the ancient Near East. In M. Dietler & B. Hayden (Eds.), *Feasts* (pp. 391-403).
- Schmidt, B. (2000). Afterlife beliefs: memory as immortality. *NEA*, 63(4), 236-239.
- Schwartz, G. M. (2007). Status, ideology, and memory in third-millennium Syria: 'royal' tombs at Umm el-Marra. In N. Laneri (Ed.), *Performing death* (pp. 39-68).
- Schwartz, G. M., Curvers, H. H., & Stuart, B. (2000). A 3rd-millennium BC élite tomb from Tell Umm el-Marra, Syria. *Antiquity*, 74(4), 771-772.
- Schwartz, G. M., Curvers, H. H., Dunham, S., & Stuart, B. (2003). A third-millennium B.C. elite tomb and other new evidence from Tell Umm el-Marra, Syria. *AJA*, 107(3), 325-361.
- Schwartz, G. M., Curvers, H. H., Dunham, S., Stuart, B., & Weber, J. A. (2006). A third-millennium B.C. elite mortuary complex at Umm el-Marra, Syria: 2002 and 2004 excavations. *AJA*, 110(4), 603-641.
- Schwartz, G. M., & Weiss, H. (1992). Syria, ca. 10,000-2000 B.C. In R. W. Ehrich (Ed.), *Chronologies in Old World archaeology* (pp. 221-243, 185-202).
- Schweitzer, B. (1933). Axel W. Persson: The royal tombs at Dendra near Midea. *Gnomon*, 9, 177-188.
- Scurlock, J. (1995). Death and the afterlife in ancient Mesopotamian thought. In J. M. Sasson (Ed.), *Civilizations of the ancient Near East* (pp. 1883-1893).
- Scurlock, J. (2002a). Animals in ancient Mesopotamian religion. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 361-387).
- Scurlock, J. (2002b). Animal sacrifice in ancient Mesopotamian religion. In B. J. Collins (Ed.), *A history of the animal world in the ancient Near East* (pp. 389-403).
- Seidl, U. (2006). The rôles played by fish on neo-Assyrian cylinder seals. In P. Taylor (Ed.), *The iconography of cylinder seals* (pp. 133-142).

- Shapland, A. (2010). The Minoan lion: presence and absence on Bronze Age Crete. *World Archaeology*, 42(2), 273.
- Shelmerdine, C. W. (1998). Where do we go from here? and how can the Linear B tablets help us get there? In E. H. Cline & D. Harris-Cline (Eds.), *The Aegean and the Orient in the second millennium*, Aegaeum 18 (pp. 291-298).
- Shelmerdine, C. W. (1999). Administration in the Mycenaean palaces: where's the chief? In M. L. Galaty & W. A. Parkinson (Eds.), *Rethinking Mycenaean palaces* (pp. 19-24).
- Sherratt, S. (2004). Feasting in Homeric epic. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 301-337.
- Simandiraki, A. (2008). The Minoan body as a feast. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 29-37).
- Smith, J. Z. (1987). The domestication of sacrifice. In R. G. Hamerton-Kelly (Ed.), *Violent origins* (pp. 191-235).
- Smith, W. R. (2002). *Religion of the Semites*. New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers.
- Smogorzewska, A. (2006). Mitanni grave at Tell Arbid. *Damaszener Mitteilungen*, 15, 67-93.
- Snyder, L. M., & Klippel, W. E. (2003). From Lerna to Kastro: further thoughts on dogs as food in ancient Greece; perceptions, prejudices and reinvestigations. In E. Kotjabopoulou, Y. Hamilakis, P. Halstead, C. Gamble, & P. Elefanti (Eds.), *Zooarchaeology in Greece: recent advances* (pp. 221-231).
- von Soden, W. (1994). *The ancient Orient: an introduction to the study of the ancient Near East*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing.
- Soles, J. S. (2001). Reverence for dead ancestors in prehistoric Greece. In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia*, Aegaeum 22 (pp. 229-236).
- Sollberger, E. (1965). Three Ur-Dynasty documents. *JCS*, 19(1), 26-30.
- Sourvinou-Inwood, C. (1991). *"Reading" Greek culture: texts and images, rituals and myths*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Spyropoulos, T. G. (1970). Ανασκαφή εις το μυκηναϊκόν νεκροταφείον της Τανάγρας. *AAA*, 3 1970(2), 184-197.
- Stais, V. (1892). Ναύπλια. *Praktika*, 1892, 52-54.
- Stais, V. (1895). Προϊστορικοί Συνοικισμοί εν Αττική και Αιγινή. *Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική*, 1895, 198-264.
- Starr, C. G. (1984). Minoan flower lovers. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *The*

*Minoan thalassocracy* (pp. 9-12).

- Stavrianopoulou, E., Michaels, A., & Ambos, C. (Eds.). (2008). *Transformations in sacrificial practices: from antiquity to modern times: proceedings of an international colloquium, Heidelberg, 12-14, July 2006*. London: Transaction Publishers.
- Steel, L. (2004). A goodly feast... a cup of mellow wine: feasting in Bronze Age Cyprus. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 281-300.
- Stefani, E. (1930/31). La grande tomba a tholos di Haghia Triada. *Annuario della Scuola archeologica di Atene e delle Missioni italiane in Oriente*, 147-154.
- Stein, D. (2006). Paleolithic iconography on Bronze Age seals from the Mesopotamian periphery? In P. Taylor (Ed.), *The iconography of cylinder seals* (pp. 19-34).
- Stocker, S. R., & Davis, J. L. (2004). Animal sacrifice, archives, and feasting at the Palace of Nestor. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 179-195.
- Stone, E. C., & Zimansky, P. (Winter). The Tell Abu Duwari Project, 1988-1990. *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 21(4), 437-455.
- van Straten, F. (2005). The priest's role in Greek sacrifice: iconographical considerations (abstract). In R. Hägg & B. Alroth (Eds.), *Greek sacrificial ritual* (pp. 197-199).
- Strommenger, E. (1964). *The art of Mesopotamia*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Strommenger, E. (1994). Die Ausgrabungen in Tall Bi'a 1993. *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin*, 126, 11-31.
- Strommenger, E., & Hrouda, B. (1980). Bericht über die 5. Kampagne in Isin/Isan Bahriyat. *Sumer*, 36, 83-98.
- Suter, C. E. (1991/93). A Shulgi statuette from Tello. *JCS*, 43, 63-70.
- Taylor, P. (Ed.). (2006). *The iconography of cylinder seals*. London: Warburg Institute.
- Taylor, W. D. (1972). Excavations at Ayios Stephanos. *BSA*, 67, 205-270.
- Thalon, P. (1978). Les offrandes funéraires à Mari. *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, 22, 53-75.
- Themelis, P. G. (197?). *Mycenae the monuments and the finds: brief illustrated archaeological guide*. Athens: Editions Hannibal.
- Thomas, N. R. (2004). The Early Mycenaean lion up to date. *Hesperia Supplements*, 33, 161-206.

- Thureau-Dangin, François, & Dunand, M. (1936). *Til Barsib* (Vols. 1-2). Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Thureau-Dangin, François. (1903). *Recueil de tablettes chaldéennes*. Paris: E. Leroux.
- Thureau-Dangin, François. (1921). *Rituels accadiens*. Paris: E. Leroux.
- Tilley, C. (1990a). Michel Foucault: towards and archaeology of archaeology. In C. Tilley (Ed.), *Reading material culture* (pp. 281-347).
- Tilley, C. (Ed.). (1990b). *Reading material culture: structuralism, hermeneutics and post-structuralism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- van der Toorn, K., Becking, B., & van der Horst, P. W. (Eds.). (1999). *Dictionary of deities and demons in the Bible* (2nd ed.). Leiden: Eerdmans Publishing.
- Touchais, G. (1979). Chronique des fouilles en Grèce. *BHC*, 103, 527-615.
- Touchais, G. (1980). Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1979. *BHC*, 104, 581-688.
- Touchais, G. (1982). Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1981. *BHC*, 106, 529-635.
- Touchais, G. (1987). Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1986. *BHC*, 111, 519-583.
- Touchais, G. (1989). Chronique des fouilles et découvertes archéologiques en Grèce en 1988. *BHC*, 113, 581-700.
- Tsountas, C. (1889). Άνασκαφαί τάφων ἐν Μυκήναις. *Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική*, 1888, 119-180.
- Tsountas, C. (1890). Έρευναι εν τη Λακωνική και ο Τάφος του Βαφειού. *Εφημερίς Αρχαιολογική*, 1889, 129-172.
- Tsountas, C., & Manatt, J. I. (1897). *The Mycenaean age: a study of the monuments and culture of pre-Homeric Greece*. Chicago: Argonaut.
- Tsukimoto, A. (1985). *Untersuchungen zur Totenpflege (kispum) im alten Mesopotamien*. Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker.
- Tsumua, D. T. (1993). The interpretation of the Ugaritic funerary text KTU 1.161. In E. Matsushima (Ed.), *Official cult and popular religion in the ancient Near East* (pp. 40-55).
- Tufnell, O., Inge, C. H., & Harding, G. L. (1940). *Lachish II (Tell ed Duweir) the Fosse temple*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Turner, V. (1967). *The forest of symbols: aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell

University Press.

- Turner, V. (1977). Sacrifice as quintessential process: prophylaxis or abandonment? *History of Religions*.
- Turner, V. (1995). *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Tylor, E. B. (2010). *Primitive culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tyree, L., Kanta, A., & Robinson, H. L. (2008). Evidence for ritual eating and drinking: a view from Skoteino cave. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais, Aegaeum 29* (pp. 179-185).
- Tzedakis, Y. (1981). Φυλακή Αποκορώνου. *ADelt*, 36, 398-399.
- Tzedakis, Y. (1988). Αποδούλου Αμαρίου. *ADelt*, 36 (1981)(B2), 402-403.
- Tzedakis, Y., & Martlew, H. (Eds.). (1999). *Minoans and Mycenaeans: flavours of their time*. Athens: Greek Ministry of Culture.
- Tzedakis, Y., & Martlew, H. (2007). A chorotaxia at the Late Minoan III cemetery of Armenoi. In P. P. Betancourt, M. C. Nelson, & H. Williams (Eds.), *Krinoi kai limenes* (pp. 67-73).
- Tzedakis, Y., Martlew, H., & Jones, M. K. (Eds.). (2008). *Archaeology meets science: biomolecular investigations in Bronze Age Greece: the primary scientific evidence, 1997-2003*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Ussishkin, D. (1970). The Syro-Hittite ritual burial of monuments. *JNES*, 29(2), 124.
- Valeri, V. (1985). *Kingship and sacrifice: ritual and society in ancient Hawaii*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Valmin, M. N. (1938). *The Swedish Messenia expedition*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.
- Vanderpool, E. (1959). News letter from Greece. *AJA*, 63(3), 279-283.
- Vardaki, E. E. (2004). Animal husbandry revisited: the social significance of meat consumption in a highland village of Mt Psiloritis, central Crete. In P. Halstead & J. C. Barrett (Eds.), *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece* (pp. 196-205).
- Vardaki, E. (2003). Consumption strategies in a highland village of central Crete: marriage banquets as a case study. In E. Kotjabopoulou, Y. Hamilakis, P. Halstead, C. Gamble, & P. Elefanti (Eds.), *Zooarchaeology in Greece: recent advances* (pp. 297-301).
- Vasilakis, A. (2001). *Minoan Crete: from myth to history*. Athens: Adam Editions.



- Vasilakis, A. (n.d.). *Herakleion Archaeological Museum: visitor's guide*. Athens: Adam Editions.
- Vaughan, S. J., & Coulson, W. D. E. (Eds.). (2000). *Palaeodiet in the Aegean: papers from a colloquium held at the Archaeological Institute of America in Washington D.C.* Oxford: Oxbow Books.
- Ventris, M., & Chadwick, J. (1956). *Documents in Mycenaean Greek: three hundred selected tablets from Knossos, Pylos and Mycenae with commentary and vocabulary*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Verdelis, N. M. (1955). Ανασκαφικὰ ἔργευνα ἐν Θεσσαλίᾳ. *Praktika*, 1952, 185-204.
- Vermeule, E. (1964). *Greece in the Bronze Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Vermeule, E. (1979). *Aspects of death in early Greek art and poetry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Viganò, L. (1995). Rituals at Ebla. *JNES*, 54(3), 215-222.
- Vila, E., Gourichon, L., Choyke, A. M., & Buitenhuis, H. (Eds.). (2008). *Archaeozoology of the near East VIII actes des huitièmes Rencontres internationales d'Archéozoologie de l'Asie du Sud-Ouest et des régions adjacentes*. Lyon: Archéorient.
- Virolleaud, C. (1957). *Le palais royal d'Ugarit II*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: Impr. Nationale.
- Virolleaud, C. (1965). *Le palais royal d'Ugarit V*. Mission de Ras Shamra. Paris: Impr. Nationale.
- Vitale, S. (2008). Ritual drinking and eating at LH IIIA2 early Mitrou, East Lokris: evidence for Mycenaean feasting activities? In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, *Aegaeum* 29 (pp. 229-237).
- Viveiros de Castro, E. (1998). Cosmological deixis and Amerindian perspectivism. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 4, 469-488.
- Vollgraff, W. (1904). Fouilles d'Argos. *BHC*, 28(1), 364-399.
- van Vuure, C. (2005). *Retracing the aurochs history, morphology and ecology of an extinct wild ox*. Sofia: Pensoft.
- Wace, A. J. B. (1932). *Chamber tombs at Mycenae*. Oxford: Society of Antiquaries.
- Wace, A. J. B. (1980). *Excavations at Mycenae 1939-1955*. London: Thames and Hudson.

- Wace, A. J. B., Heurtley, W. A., Lamb, W., Holland, L. B., & Boethius, C. A. (1921). The report of the School Excavations at Mycenae, 1921-1923. *BSA*, 25, 1-434.
- Wace, A. J. B., & Stubbings, F. H. (1954). Mycenae 1939-1953, part II: the Grave Circle. *BSA*, 49, 244-247.
- Walberg, G. (1987). Early Cretan sanctuaries: the pottery. In T. Linders & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Gifts to the gods* (pp. 171-175).
- Walberg, G. (1992). Minoan floral iconography. In R. Laffineur & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Eikon*, Aegaeum 8 (pp. 241-246).
- Walberg, G. (1999). The excavation. In Y. Tzedakis & H. Martlew (Eds.), *Minoan and Mycenaean* (pp. 124-127).
- Walberg, G., & Reese, D. S. (2008). Feasting at Midea. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 239-245).
- Walker, W. H. (2008). Practice and nonhuman social actors: the afterlife histories of witches and dogs in the American southwest. In B. J. Mills & W. H. Walker (Eds.), *Memory work* (pp. 137-157).
- Wall, S. M., Musgrave, J. H., & Warren, P. (1986). Human bones from a Late Minoan IB house at Knossos. *BSA*, 81, 333-388.
- Warburton, D. (Ed.). (2009). *Time's up! dating the Minoan eruption of Santorini: acts of the Minoan Eruption Chronology Workshop, Sandbjerg, November 2007*. Athens: Danish Institute at Athens.
- Ward, W. H. (1889). Notes on oriental antiquities, VIII: "human sacrifices" on Babylonian cylinders. *The AJA and of the History of the Fine Arts*, 5(1), 34-43.
- Ward, W. H. (1910). *The seal cylinders of Western Asia*. Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington.
- Wardle, D. (1999). The fresco: an interpretation. In Y. Tzedakis & H. Martlew (Eds.), *Minoan and Mycenaean* (pp. 192-193).
- Wardle, K. A. (2003). The "Cult Centre" at Mycenae and other sanctuaries in the Argo-Saronic gulf and the NE Peloponnese: location and status. In E. Konsolaki-Yannopoulou (Ed.), *Αργοσαρωνικός* (pp. 317-332).
- Warren, P. (1972). *Myrtos: an early Bronze Age settlement in Crete*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Warren, P. (1981). Minoan Crete and ecstatic religion: preliminary observations on the 1979 excavations at Knossos + Postscript on the 1980 excavations at Knossos. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *Sanctuaries and cults in the Aegean Bronze Age* (pp. 155-166).

- Warren, P., & Hankey, V. (1989). *Aegean Bronze Age chronology*. Bedminster: Bristol Classical Press.
- Watrous, L. V. (1996). *The cave sanctuary of Zeus at Psychro: a study of extra-urban sanctuaries in Minoan and early Iron Age Crete*. Aegaeum 15. Liège and Austin: Université de Liège and University of Texas Press.
- Weadock, P. N. (Autumn). The Giparu at Ur. *Iraq*, 37(2), 101-128.
- Weber, J. A. (2008). Elite equids: redefining equid burials of the mid- to late 3rd millennium BC from Umm el-Marra, Syria. In E. Vila, L. Gourichon, A. M. Choyke, & H. Buitenhuis (Eds.), *Archaeozoology of the Near East* (pp. 499-519).
- Wedde, M. (Ed.). (2004). *Celebrations: sanctuaries and the vestiges of cult activity*. Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens.
- Weilhartner, J. (2008). Some observations on the commodities in the Linear B tablets referring to sacrificial banquets. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 411-426).
- Weiss, H. (1985a). Rediscovering: Tell Leilan on the Habur Plains of Syria. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 48(1), 5-34.
- Weiss, H. (Ed.). (1985b). *Ebla to Damascus: art and archaeology of ancient Syria*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.
- Wells, B. (1990). Death at Dendra: on mortuary practices in a Mycenaean community. In R. Hägg & G. Nordquist (Eds.), *Celebrations of death and divinity in the Bronze Age Argolid* (pp. 125-140).
- Wells, B. (Ed.). (2002). *New research on old material from Asine and Berbati: in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Swedish Institute at Athens*. Stockholm: Paul Åströms Förlag.
- Wells, B. (2003). The sanctuary of Poseidon at Kalaureia: the new investigations of 1997. In E. Konsolaki-Yannopoulou (Ed.), *Αργοσαρωνικός* (pp. 337-347).
- Werr, L. A.-G. (Ed.). (1992). *Old Babylonian cylinder seals from the Hamrin*. London: Nabu Publications.
- Westenholz, J. (1998). Goddesses of the ancient Near East: 3000-1000 BC. In L. Goodison & C. Morris (Eds.), *Ancient goddesses* (pp. 63-82).
- Whitley, J. (2006). The Minoans - a Welsh invention? a view from east Crete. In Y. Hamilakis & N. Momigliano (Eds.), *Archaeology and European modernity* (pp. 55-67).
- Whittaker, Helène. (1997). *Mycenaean cult buildings: a study of their architecture and*

*function in the context of the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean*. Bergen: Norwegian Institute at Athens.

- Whittaker, Hélène. (2001). Reflections on the socio-political function of Mycenaean religion. In R. Laffineur & R. Hägg (Eds.), *Potnia*, Aegaeum 22 (pp. 355-360).
- Wiener, M. H. (1984). Crete and the Cyclades in the LM I: the tale of the conical cups. In R. Hägg & N. Marinatos (Eds.), *The Minoan thalassocracy* (pp. 17-26).
- Wiesner, J. (1938). *Grab und Jenseits: Untersuchungen im ägäischen Raum zur Bronzezeit und frühen Eisenzeit*. Berlin: Verlag von Alfred Töpelmann.
- Wiggermann, F. A. M. (1995). Theologies, priests, and worship in ancient Mesopotamia. In J. M. Sasson (Ed.), *Civilizations of the ancient Near East* (pp. 1857-1870).
- Wilford, J. N. (2009, October 27). At Ur, ritual deaths that were anything but serene. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/science/27ur.html?\\_r=2&ref=science](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/27/science/27ur.html?_r=2&ref=science)
- Wilkie, N. C. (1975). The Nichoria tholos. *Hesperia*, 44(1), 76-79.
- Wilkie, N. C. (1987). Burial customs at Nichoria: the MME Tholos. In R. Laffineur (Ed.), *Thanatos*, Aegaeum 1 (pp. 127-135).
- Wilkie, N. C. (1992). The MME Tholos Tomb. In W. A. McDonald & N. C. Wilkie (Eds.), *Excavations at Nichoria in southwest Greece* (pp. 231-344).
- Wilkinson, T. (2004). *On the margins of the Euphrates: settlement and land use at Tell es-Sweyhat and in the Upper Lake Assad area, Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Willerslev, R. (2007). *Soul hunters: hunting, animism, and personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wilson, B., Grigson, C., & Payne, S. (1982). *Ageing and sexing animal bones from archaeological sites*. Oxford: B.A.R.
- Wilson, J. (2008). What were the women doing while the men were eating and drinking? the evidence of the frescoes. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, Aegaeum 29 (pp. 23-27).
- Winter, I. J. (1986). The king and the cup: iconography of the royal presentation scene on Ur III seals. In M. Kelly-Buccellati (Ed.), *Insight through images* (pp. 253-268).
- Winter, I. J. (1991). The legitimation of authority through image and legend: seals belonging to officials in the administrative bureaucracy of the Ur III state. In M. Gibson & R. D. Biggs (Eds.), *The organization of power* (2nd ed., pp. 69-93).

- Winter, I. J. (1999). Reading ritual in the archaeological record: deposition pattern and function of two artifact types from the Royal Cemetery of Ur. In Hans Jörg Nissen (Ed.), *Fluchtpunkt Uruk archäologische Einheit aus methodischer Vielfalt* (pp. 229-256).
- Winter, N. A. (1982). News letter from Greece. *AJA*, 86(4), 539-556.
- Wiseman, D. J. (1959). *Cylinder seals of western Asia*. London: Batchworth Press.
- Wiseman, D. J. (1962). *Catalogue of the western Asiatic seals in the British Museum. 1: cylinder seals, Uruk-Early Dynastic periods*. London: British Museum.
- Wolfreys, J. (1998). *Deconstruction, Derrida*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Woolley, L. (1927). The excavations at Ur, 1926-7. *The Antiquaries Journal*, 7(4), 385-423.
- Woolley, L. (1928a). The excavations at Ur, 1926-7. Part II. *The Antiquaries Journal*, VIII(1), 1-29.
- Woolley, L. (1928b). The excavations at Ur, 1927-8. *The Antiquaries Journal*, 8(4), 415-448.
- Woolley, L. (1930). Excavations at Ur, 1929-30. *The Antiquaries Journal*, 10(4), 315-341.
- Woolley, L. (1931). Excavations at Ur, 1930-1. *The Antiquaries Journal*, 11(4), 343-381.
- Woolley, L. (1932). Excavations at Ur, 1931-2. *The Antiquaries Journal*, 12(4), 355-392.
- Woolley, L. (1934). *Ur excavations II: the Royal Cemetery*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Woolley, L. (1939). *Ur excavations V: the ziggurat and its surroundings*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Woolley, L. (1950). Excavations at Atchana-Alalakh, 1946. *The Antiquaries Journal*, 30(1,2), 1-21.
- Woolley, L. (1954). *Excavations at Ur: a record of twelve years' work*. London: Ernest Benn Limited.
- Woolley, L. (1955). *Alalakh: an account of the excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937-1949*. London: Society of Antiquaries.
- Woolley, L. (1961). *Mesopotamia and the Middle East*. London: Methuen.
- Woolley, L. (1965). *Ur excavations VIII: the Kassite period and the period of the*

- Assyrian kings*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Woolley, L. (1982). *Ur "of the Chaldees."* London: Herbert Press.
- Woolley, L., & Mallowan, M. E. L. (1976). *Ur excavations VII: the Old Babylonian period*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Wright, J. C. (1994). The spatial configuration of belief: the archaeology of Mycenaean religion. In S. E. Alcock & R. Osborne (Eds.), *Placing the gods* (pp. 37-78).
- Wright, J. C. (1995). Review: Nanno Marinatos, Minoan religion. Ritual, image, and symbol. *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 95.03.17. Retrieved from <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/1995/95.03.17.html>
- Wright, J. C. (2004a). Mycenaean drinking services and standards of etiquette. In P. Halstead & J. C. Barrett (Eds.), *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece* (pp. 90-104).
- Wright, J. C. (2004b). The Mycenaean feast: an Introduction. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 121-132.
- Wright, J. C. (2004c). A survey of evidence for feasting in Mycenaean society. *Hesperia*, 73(2), 133-178.
- Xénaki-Sakellariou, A. (1958). *Les cachets minoens de la collection Giamalakis*. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Yahya, A. H. (2005). Archaeology and nationalism in the Holy Land. In S. Pollock & R. Bernbeck (Eds.), *Archaeologies of the Middle East* (pp. 66-77).
- Yasur-Landau, A. (2008). Hard to handle: aspects of organization in Aegean and Near Eastern feasts. In L. Hitchcock, R. Laffineur, & J. L. Crowley (Eds.), *Dais*, *Aegaeum* 29 (pp. 353-358).
- Yates, T. (1990). Jacques Derrida: "There is nothing outside the text." In C. Tilley (Ed.), *Reading material culture* (pp. 206-280).
- Yokoyama, S., & Matsumoto, K. (1990). The graves at Tell Songor B. *Al-Rafidan*, 11, 189-199.
- Yon, M. (2000). 1929-2001: Ugarit's secrets revealed. *NEA*, 63(4), 185-184.
- Yon, M. (2006). *The city of Ugarit at Tell Ras Shamra*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Yon, M., Caubet, A., Mallet, J., Lombard, Pierre, Doumet, C., & Desfarges, P. (1983). Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ougarit 1981-1983 (41e, 42e et 43e campagnes). *Syria*, 60(3), 201-224.
- Yon, M., Gachet, J., & Lombard, P. (1987). Fouilles de Ras Shamra - Ougarit 1984-

- 1987 (44e-47e campagne). *Syria*, 64(3), 171-191.
- Yon, M., Karageorghis, V., & Hirschfeld, N. (2000). *Céramiques mycéniennes*. Paris: ERC-ADPF.
- Younger, J. G. (1987). *The iconography of late Minoan and Mycenaean sealstones and finger rings*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press.
- Younger, J. G. (1991). *A bibliography for Aegean glyptic in the Bronze Age*. CMS Beiheft 4. Berlin: Gebr. Mann.
- Zarins, J. (1986). Equids associated with human burials in third millenium B.C. Mesopotamia: two complementary facets. In R. H. Meadow & H.-P. Uerpmann (Eds.), *Equids in the ancient world* (pp. 164-193).
- Zeder, M. A., & Lapham, H. A. (2010). Assessing the reliability of criteria used to identify postcranial bones in sheep, Ovis, and goats, Capra. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 37(11), 2887-2905.
- Zettler, R. L. (1984). The “Small Shrine” of Enlil at Nippur. *JNES*, 43(3), 231-238.
- Zettler, R. L. (1991). Administration of the Temple of Inanna at Nippur under the Third Dynasty of Ur: archaeological and documentary evidence. In M. Gibson & R. D. Biggs (Eds.), *The organization of power* (pp. 104-114).
- Zettler, R. L. (1996). Tell es-Sweyhat, 1989-1995: a city in northern Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium B.C. *Expedition*, 38(1), 14-26.
- Zimansky, P. (2005). Archaeology and texts in the ancient Near East. In S. Pollock & R. Bernbeck (Eds.), *Archaeologies of the Middle East* (pp. 308-326).