

Ritual Offering and Termination Rituals in a Middle Bronze Age Sacred Area in Qatna's Upper Town *

Daniele Morandi Bonacossi

Introduction

The archaeology of ritual is one of the most difficult and elusive theoretical issues in current archaeological research concerning the ancient Near East and had been almost neglected by archaeologists working in the field until cognitive archaeology appeared.¹ In the framework of this wide (and still largely unexplored) research field the practice, which was a common custom in the ancient Near East from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic onwards, of ritually burying temples,² votive offerings, the remains of cultic consumption, old disused temple furnishings and damaged temple paraphernalia which could no longer serve in the cult,³ has attracted the attention of few archaeologists and constitutes a still rather neglected theoretical issue.⁴ This is due to

* I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude for their continuous involvement with and support for our work to the Director General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria, Dr. Bassam Jamous, and to the Director of the Excavation Service and Archaeological Studies and co-director of the Syrian-Italian excavation at Mishrifeh, Dr. Michel Al-Maqdissi. Thanks to the intense and friendly collaboration with our Syrian colleagues, the Italian-Syrian cooperation at Mishrifeh has grown through the years into a real partnership involving joint excavation as well as shared research and publication of excavation results and the education of Syrian post-graduate students.

1 Osborne 2004: 2–3.

2 See for instance the ritual termination of the PPNA ceremonial building at Göbekli Tepe (Southeastern Anatolia), which was intentionally buried under a thick earth deposit (Schmidt 1998; 2001: 46).

3 For burial rituals of cultic objects, see Garfinkel 1994.

4 For several significant case studies, see Garfinkel 1994; Marchetti & Nigro 1997; Müller 2008; Strasser 1999. For a recent review of the archaeological evidence concerning votive offerings found in repository pits in the ancient Levant, Egypt, the Aegean world and Cyprus, from pre-Classical to Classical and Islamic periods, cf. especially Kletter *et Al.* 2010: 201–206. For the religious de-sacralizing and “de-commissioning” of temples by termination rituals including the deposition of “fill deposits” just before the temple was abandoned or leveled up for rebuilding or burial, see Bjorkman 1994; 1999; Clutton-Brock 1989; Kletter *et Al.* 2010: 199f.; Na’aman 2002; Oates *et Al.* 2001; 2008, Papaconstantinou 2010; Zuckerman 2007.

the scarcity of relevant archaeological evidence⁵ and especially to its elusive character and difficulty of definition, not to mention the challenge of matching archaeological and textual data.⁶

This article presents a contribution to the study of the thorny, but intriguing, subject of the sacred open areas that surrounded temples in Middle Bronze Age Northern Levant and the repository pits (*favissae*) into which votives or sacrifices were placed in primary contexts and/or disused cult material originating from temples was deposited (secondary contexts). It is based on the results of current archaeological excavations conducted at Mishrifeh/Qatna.

I offer this paper as a token of gratitude to Frederick Mario Fales, whose teaching and research have contributed greatly to my own thoughts on the history and archaeology of the ancient Near East.

More than fifteen years of extensive archaeological excavations carried out at Qatna, first by a French team directed by Robert du Mesnil du Buisson in the nineteen-twenties of last century,⁷ later by a Syrian Mission under the direction of Michel Al-Maqdissi from 1994 to 1998,⁸ and finally by Syrian, Italian-Syrian and German-Syrian Missions from 1999 onwards,⁹ have enormously enlarged our knowledge of the archaeology and history of Mishrifeh during the Bronze and Iron Ages, but have not yet succeeded in shedding light on the religious life of this important urban centre of Inner Syria during the MBA and in particular on its cultic buildings.

The new excavations conducted by the Italian component of the joint Italian-Syrian Mission to Mishrifeh in Areas H and J on Qatna's upper town have brought to light a MBA monumental building¹⁰ and a vast open area, most likely a square, located to the north of it and occupying the northern flank and the foot of the acropolis central mound, immediately to the south of the late MB IIB Royal Palace façade (Fig. 1).¹¹ The careful study of the few (and regrettably badly preserved) remains of

5 The deplorable habit of many archaeologists of excavating only the temple structures and not the open areas adjoining religious buildings where these cultic activities were performed does certainly not contribute to increasing our knowledge and understanding of these religious practices. The importance of open air cult areas related to town temples for the celebration of religious ceremonies during the EB and MB has been recently stressed by Nigro 1996; Pinnock 2009.

6 See for instance the Hittite magical texts recording the disposal of damaged cult objects by burial in sealed clay jars or by incineration, and their importance for the interpretation of the context in which a bull figure from Boğazköy was found (Alaura 2001: 6f.).

7 Du Mesnil du Buisson 1935.

8 Al-Maqdissi 1996a; 1996b; 1997.

9 For recent comprehensive presentations of the main results of these international cooperation projects, see Morandi Bonacossi 2007; Al-Maqdissi, Morandi Bonacossi & Pfälzner 2009.

10 Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 85–92.

11 On the dating of the construction of the Royal Palace to the end of the MB II, see Morandi Bonacossi 2007a; Al-Maqdissi & Morandi Bonacossi 2009. For a higher chronology (MB IIA), see Novák 2004; Pfälzner 2007. The recent discovery of a burial chamber (Hypogeum 7) containing over 50 secondary depositions under Room DA in the north-western wing of the Royal Pal-

this building and the production and cult installations adjoining it offers a first gleam of understanding of Qatna's religious architecture and the cult activities connected to the main temples of the Amorite city.

The summit of the central acropolis mound (Area J):
the public building and the pottery production area

At the very beginning of the MB I, a major modification in the function of the summit of the central acropolis mound was introduced (Area J), and the late EB III and EB IV intensive storage facilities were replaced by a monumental official building and a large-scale intensive pottery production area related to it (Fig. 2).¹²

The preservation of this monumental building was unfortunately seriously compromised by the erection of a massive concrete water tower built in the 1970s to supply the modern village of Mishrifeh with water. The tower largely destroyed the eastern and northern walls of the building¹³ and cut off the stratigraphic connections linking it to the surrounding archaeological contexts (Fig. 3). The pottery assemblage recovered from the intact foundation trench of the northern external wall of the building, however, made it possible to date its construction to the beginning of the MB I.¹⁴

The walls of the building, of which only the north-eastern corner was reasonably well preserved, were probably originally plastered with a thick layer of lime with a polished surface, several fragments of which were recovered from the debris immediately to the north; they survived to a height of over 7 m (including foundations) and were almost 4 m wide. The building was abandoned at the end of the MB II. The Phase J 11-10 pottery factories expanded westwards, incorporating it, and new pottery kilns were dug into its walls. At this point the building lost its function and was largely demolished to its base.¹⁵

ace confirms the late chronology of this monumental building. The excavators suggest an interpretation of this hypogeum as the secondary burial of individuals originally interred in the Royal Grave, whose skeletons, personal ornaments and grave goods were later removed from their original location to make room for new burials (Pfälzner & Dohmann-Pfälzner 2010: 77f.). The archaeological materials found in the grave date from the end of the MB II (MB IIB), thus indicating that the dead were buried in their original collective grave during this period. If the functional interpretation of the new "secondary" hypogeum proposed by the excavators is correct, it would imply a late MB IIB date for the earliest stage of use and the construction of the Royal Grave. Since the Royal Hypogeum belongs to the original construction phase of the Royal Palace (Phase G 9a: see Novák 2004: 311; Pfälzner 2007: 40f., 56 and fig. 10), the discovery of the new burial chamber adds new weight to the dating of the erection of the palace to the end of the Middle Bronze Age. This low chronology can now be regarded as established.

¹² The ceramic production area is presented in Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 92–114; 2010.

¹³ These walls extended to the south beyond the water tower and to the west under the modern Greek Orthodox cemetery.

¹⁴ Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 87, fn. 48.

¹⁵ For a presentation of the archaeological evidence and its interpretation, see Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 87–90.



Fig. 1: Topographic map of Mishrifeh with excavation areas (map A. Savioli).

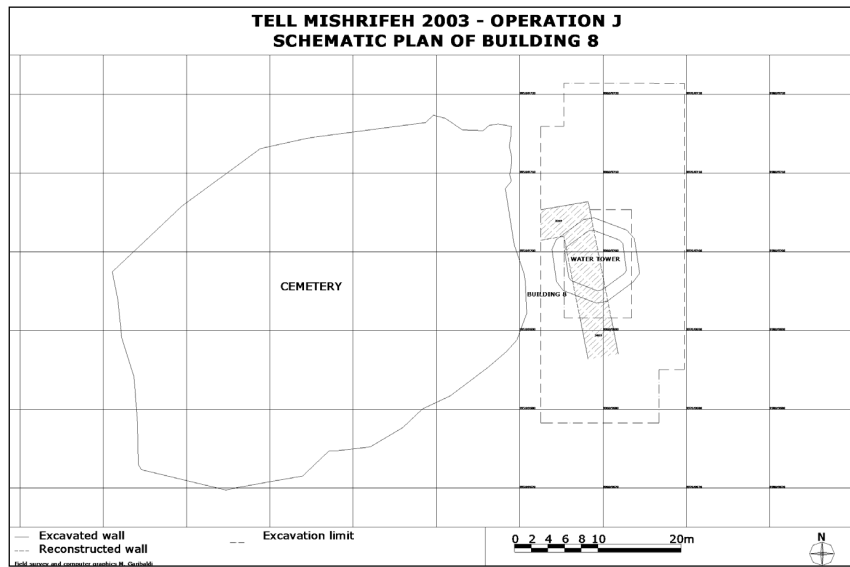


Fig. 2: Schematic plan of the excavated remains of the Area J monumental building (plan M. Garibaldi).

Fig. 3: View of the remains of the Area J monumental building seen from the west. To the right the circular cut of the water tower foundation trench is clearly visible. (photo M. Cusin)

Immediately to the north of the building, at the bottom of a large late MB IIB/early LB I pit, the dolerite statue of a headless king wearing the typical thick-bordered “Syrian Cloak” and sitting on a throne with a votive cup in his right hand was found wrapped in a straw mat, the decomposed remains of which were detected underneath the left shoulder (Figs. 4–5).¹⁶ This votive statue of a Qatna king was the

Fig. 4: Dolerite royal statue
(photo M. Cusin).

Fig. 5: Dolerite royal statue
(drawing S. Tinazzo).

work of a late Old Syrian royal atelier and had probably been buried in this pit with religious ceremony after displacement from its original location and the removal of its head.¹⁷

¹⁶ For the finding context of the statue, its iconographic and stylistic characteristics and chronology, see Morandi Bonacossi 2006. For other examples of statues of enthroned kings at Qatna, see the two unfortunately very fragmentary basalt figures recovered from the *Coupoie de Loth* and the *Ouvrage Clermont-Ganneau* (du Mesnil du Buisson 1935: 43–45, pl. V) and the two royal statues which flanked the entrance to the Royal Hypogeum under the Royal Palace (Al-Maqdissi, Dohmann-Pfälzner, Pfälzner, Suleiman 2003: 189–218; Pfälzner 2009: 205–207).

¹⁷ The removal of the head, which was joined to the body of the statue by a dolerite tenon or a metal rod, might reflect a sort of ritual de-sacralization of the royal image performed during a termination ritual before the statue was buried in the pit. On the other hand, it is also possible that the statue’s head was removed because it was made of or covered with a precious material (gold or silver), such as (e.g.) the Old Syrian cultic Ishtar head from the vestibule of the Ishtar Temple in the lower city of Ebla (Matthiae 2001). For the Early Syrian tradition of composite

A fragment of a second royal statue was found in the stone foundations of an Iron Age III house built above the MB building, thus indicating the original existence of a pair of Old Syrian royal statues of remarkable artistic value.

Interestingly enough, the same area also yielded a number of monumental basalt architectural elements, including two thresholds, a small column, several hewn basalt blocks and a probable large column base.¹⁸ It seems plausible that these architectural elements, which were all recovered from the same area and were well stratified, although not found in their primary contexts, had been reused several times from the late MB IIB/early LB I, through the Iron Age up to modern times and originated (together with the royal statues) from the robbing of the MB monumental building situated in the very same area. In fact, given that they were found in close proximity to the MB building, and their considerable size and weight, it seems reasonable to assume that the architectural elements were originally part of the fittings of this building.

We shall take up again below from a wider perspective the problem of the function of this large building, with an annexed production area which manufactured mainly storage jars and votive clay figurines, probably under the direct control and on behalf of the institution based in the building itself. For the time being it will suffice to remark that several features already allow us to identify it as an important public building, which must have played a central role in Qatna's urban life: its monumentality, its prominent topographic location on the summit of the central mound of the acropolis, i.e. on the highest and most central part of the city, the likely presence of a pair of royal statues¹⁹ and other basalt monumental architectural elements in it, and

statues or statues covered with precious metal sheeting, see the two recently-found figurines of queens probably belonging to a standard from the northern quarter of Palace G on the Ebla acropolis (Matthiae 2009a; 2009b) and the texts from the Palace G archives recording the storage of various quantities of gold and silver to be used for covering the faces of statues of gods in wood and stone (Archi 1988; 1990; Fronzaroli 1996).

18 For details, see Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 91 and fns. 54–57.

19 The available archaeological evidence from Ebla shows that royal statuary in MB Western Syrian cities was normally associated with temples in particular. Votive figures of enthroned kings often accompanied by standing statues of queens were placed in temples, probably on both sides of the entrance, thus indicating that their authority was religiously legitimated and protected by the god. See, for instance, the remains of two pairs of archaic Old Syrian basalt figures from the Ishtar Temple P2 vestibule at Ebla, the pair of royal statues of the later classical Old Syrian period from the same place and the contemporary acephalous statue of a sitting king from the vestibule of the MB II HH2 temple (Matthiae 1992; 2006, 481 and fig. 28). Albeit found in a secondary context, the Idrimi statue from an annexe of the Temple of Alalah IB is also an example of this tradition of setting statues of enthroned kings in temples (Woolley 1955: 88f., pl. 12b; for a new attribution of the Idrimi statue to Level IVB, see Fink 2010). However, even if statues of enthroned royal figures at Ebla were erected apparently exclusively in temples (but see the pair of royal statues of the late classical Old Syrian period flanking the entrance to the Royal Grave at Qatna; Al-Maqdissi *et al.* 2006: 53–62; Pfälzner 2009: 205–207), statues of standing kings were put up in open places and palaces. The continuation of this tradition during the Iron Age is attested by the very fragmentary colossal statue of an enthroned king from Tell Ta'yinat (origi-

the fact that it was erected at the very onset of the second millennium BC²⁰ and remained in use for almost the whole MB. In this regard it is a significant observation that the dismantling of this public building on the summit of Qatna's acropolis at the very end of the MB II does not appear to have been an isolated and casual event, but rather part of an extensive reorganization programme of the urban layout of Qatna's acropolis, which was accomplished at the end of the MB II and included at least two other extremely important contemporary projects: the abandonment of the Area T 2-3 MB II Eastern Palace (Fig. 1)²¹ and the (already mentioned) construction of a magnificent new Royal Palace in Areas G, H and R.²² As far as we can judge on the basis of the chronological resolution allowed by the archaeological materials found, both initiatives were undertaken approximately at the same time.²³

The sacred area (Area H)

A vast open space immediately to the north of the Area J public building extended along the flank and at the foot of the acropolis central mound. This square was buried at a depth of about 2.5 m below the present-day tell surface and could thus only be explored for an area of 300 sq m in the southern part of Area H (Fig. 1). The flooring of the square, which extended from the Royal Palace in the north presumably to the Area J public building in the south, consisted of a very compact and thick (3–4 cm) beaten earth surface. The excavation brought to light a sequence of four similar floors in this open area, which was intensively used and quickly and repeatedly raised; all the floors abutted the original southern façade of the Royal Palace and were therefore laid after its construction during the MB IIB (Fig. 6). The pottery lying directly on these floor surfaces and from the deposits which accumulated on them dates from the end of the MB IIB or the MB-LB transition,²⁴ as do also the ceramics found on an

nally stated to have been found in the citadel Gateway VII [Haines 1971: 41–66], but probably erected in the courtyard of Building XIV [see Harrison 2009: 179]) and the standing royal figures from the King's Gate square of Carchemish (Woolley & Barnett 1952: pls. B53–54), the Hilani J at Zincirli (von Luschan & Jacoby 1900: 288f., 362–369, figs. 194, 261–268, pl. 64) and the Lions Gate at Arslantepe (Delaporte 1940: 35–38, pls. 14, 26–28). For a recent discussion of the typologies and locations of Old Syrian royal statues and their meaning and function, see Matthiae 2010: 282–293 (with bibliography 526–528).

20 Within the framework of a central re-organization programme of the city's urban plan, which underwent a decisive change with respect to the preceding EB IV (Morandi Bonacossi 2007b: 72f.; 2009, 63f.).

21 Morandi Bonacossi *et al.* 2009: 71–73.

22 See fn. 11, *supra*.

23 The shaping of an imposing new royal citadel during the following LBA included also the construction of at least two subsidiary palaces encircling the Royal Palace: the Southern Palace (Al-Maqdissi 2003: 235–238) and the Lower City Palace (Morandi Bonacossi *in press*), thus creating a novel political, ceremonial and administrative hub that replaced the previous (and currently less well known) MB administrative centre.

24 See also Morandi Bonacossi 2007a: 231f.

analogous outer floor excavated by the German team immediately to the west of the palace.²⁵

During the subsequent LB IB, an annexe consisting of at least 10 rooms was added to the Royal Palace. It abutted the original southern façade and cut the underlying external floors (Figs. 7–8).

During its earliest phases of use, the square was equipped with a system of drains which was probably used to gather rain water in a large underground cistern 6823 (Figs. 9–10). The cistern, which had a stone-lined opening with an inner diameter of 0.85 m that had been cut by a later Iron Age II pit, was 5.23 m deep (elevation 501.96–496.73 m a.s.l.) and bell-shaped in section with a pointed bottom. Its walls, which had been dug into the marly bedrock and underlying layer of clay and gravels, were well-plastered with a thick mortar coating that had a high ash, chaff and charcoal content and still adhered to the lower part and the bottom of the cistern and its opening shaft, under the stone lining of the cistern's mouth.²⁶

The cistern was probably functionally related to a 7.6 m long drain found some 6 m to the north, which was subsequently cut by the walls of Rooms CL, CH and CF of the later palace annexe (Fig. 11). The drain had a WSW-ENE orientation and was not directly connected to the underground cistern, though it cannot be excluded that a smaller drain, similar to the one running approximately east-west to the west of the main drain (under Room CL of the LB I annexe), served as an inlet into the cistern, branching off from the other in the area which was later destroyed by the NW corner of the annexe's Room CI and the Iron Age II pit.

The uncovered drains ran parallel to the contour lines of the central acropolis mound and probably gathered the surface run-off into cistern 6823. It may well be that the cistern was part of a series of similar installations dug into the bedrock and connected by drains that still lie buried in the unexplored part of the square, similar to the system of underground cisterns arrayed in two rows parallel to the foot of the acropolis in the southern half of the MB Square of the Cistern at Ebla.²⁷ In its original stage, therefore, the open place located between the Royal Palace and the Area J monumental building fulfilled, as in Ebla, the function of draining and collecting the rainwater which ran down the northern flank of the acropolis central mound.

In the latest stage, which, according to the pottery assemblages recovered, can be dated to the end of the MB IIB or to during the MB-LB transition, the square was raised for the last time by a layer of compacted beaten earth that represented the fourth and last refurbishing of this open area (Fig. 8). The last floor of the square excavated in Area H was equipped with a series of installations which find remarkable parallels

25 See Paoletti 2005, who dates this pottery assemblage to the MB II. In the present author's opinion the published diagnostics (see for example pls. 14a: 6–7, 14b: 3–4 and 16a: 7) indicate that this surface should be dated to the end of the MB II or the MB-LB transition.

26 Many detached plaster fragments were found on the bottom and in the fills of the cistern.

27 Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 5f. and fig. 4.

Fig. 6: Detail of one of the sequence of open-area floors which abutted the original southern façade of the Royal Palace and were cut by the later palace annexe, Area H (photo G. Garna).

Fig. 7: View of the latest open-area floor (Phase 2) abutting the original southern façade of the Royal Palace and cut by the later palace annexe, Area H (photo G. Garna).

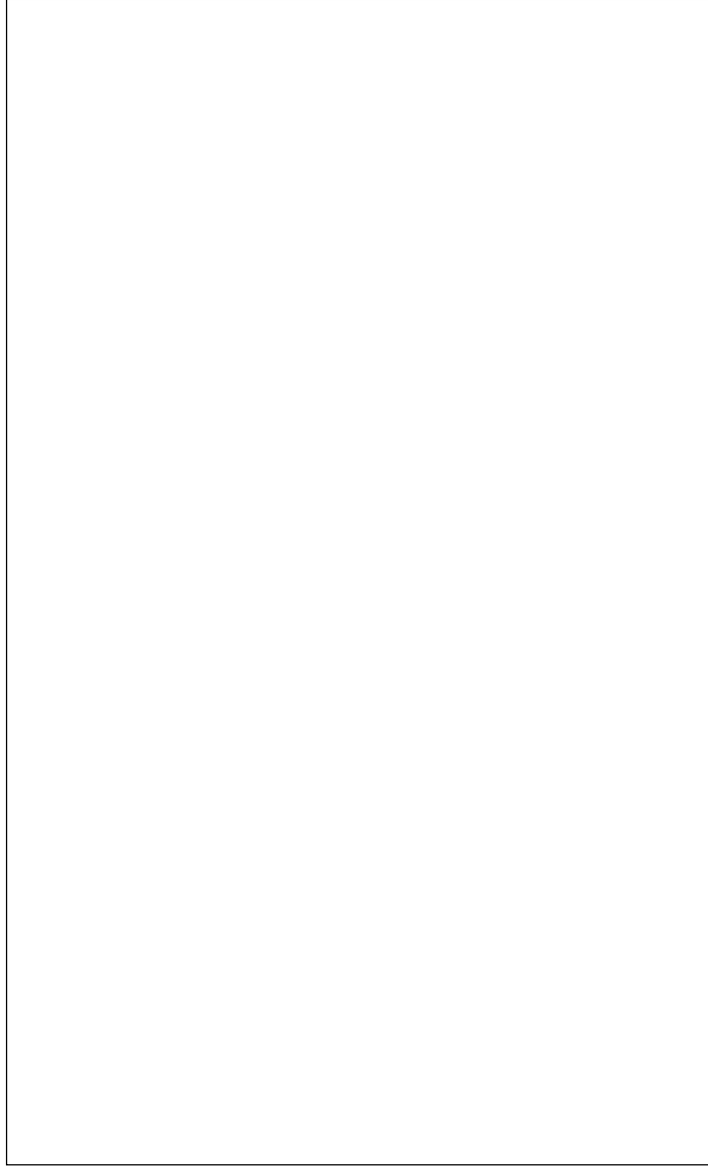


Fig. 8: Plan of the latest phase (Phase 2) of the sacred area cut by the later palace annexe, Area H
(plan A. Savioli).

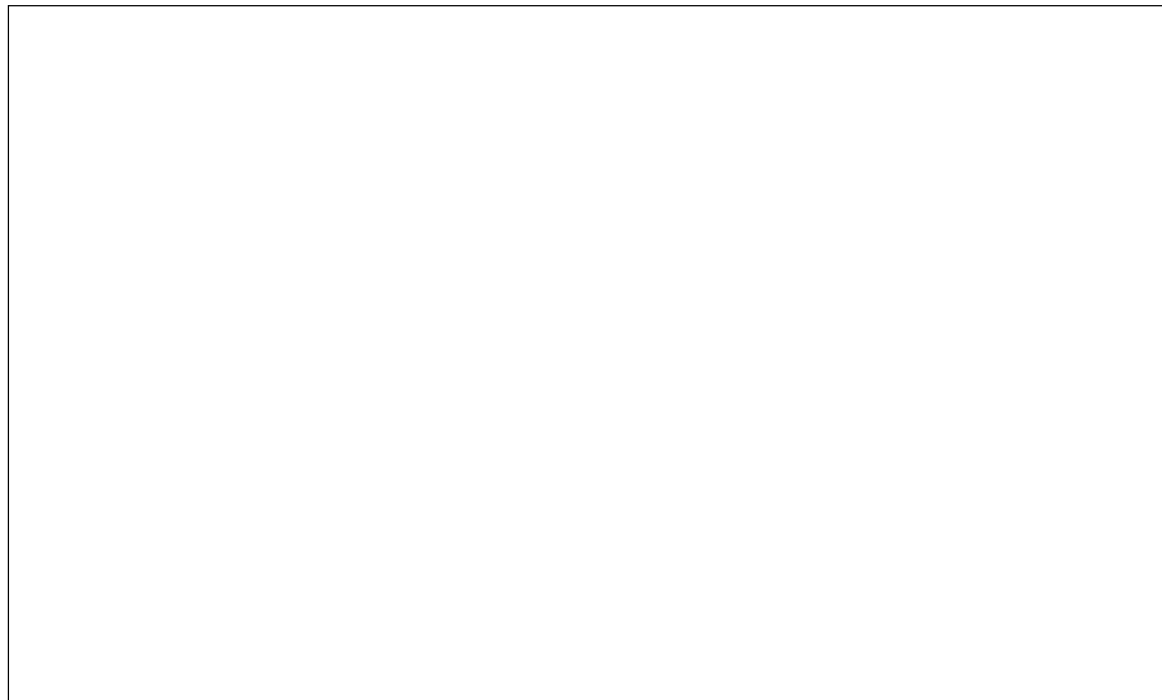


Fig. 9: Plan of the earliest phase (Phase 1) of the sacred area cut by the later palace annexe, Area H (plan A. Savioli).

in the MB sacred area of Ishtar at Ebla²⁸ and make it possible to interpret this surface as an open space used for cult activities involving the deposition and burial of ritual food offerings (solid and liquid) and of disused temple furnishings or votives, which was probably functionally related to a nearby temple.

Fig. 10: Schematic section of underground cistern 6823, Area H
(plan A. Savioli).

28 For the Ishtar sacred area, its religious buildings and installations and the Square of the Cisterns, see Matthiae 1993; 1997; Marchetti & Nigro 1997; 2000; in press.

The archaeological evidence from this sacred area included *favissa* 7262 in which a considerable amount of intact or broken (but complete) jars and jugs were ritually deposited, the double burial of two dogs and three pairs of symmetric and regularly arranged, but puzzling, square imprints left on the muddy surface of the sacred area by movable installation-bases or other unidentified objects. All these installations had been dug from or built on the last floor of the square.

During the latest stage of the square the underground cistern 6823 continued to be used as a container for storing rainwater and its stone-lined opening was raised. Whether at this point the cistern was used for water collection within a cultic context cannot be ascertained. The previous drains present in the earlier stage, however, were not found on this floor.

Fig. 11: View of the earliest open-area floor (Phase 1) abutting the original southern façade of the Royal Palace and of the drain cut by the walls of the later palace annexe, Area H (photo G. Garna).

During the following LB I the cistern lost its original function and was re-used as a burial place for five individuals who were interred without grave goods (Fig. 12).²⁹

²⁹ All burials were of children and sub-adults with ages ranging from 8 to 17–20 years. Of the five skeletons, two are males and one female, whilst two are unsexed. All individuals belonged to a group which was very homogeneous in terms of age and health status, with evidence of poor physical condition, suggestive of a modest quality of life and a probably low social rank.

These burials were associated with pottery fragments dating to the LB IB and faunal remains.³⁰

The construction in this area during the LB IB of the palace annexe, which seems to have immediately followed the deposition of the five inhumations in the abandoned water cistern, obliterated the sacred area, although its cultic installations, which were evidently still visible and recognizable as such, were apparently piously respected by the annexe (Figs. 8 and 13). The three pairs of imprints of objects or movable installation-bases, for instance, were spared by the walls of Rooms CF-CM. Furthermore, the *favissa* and the underground cistern were positioned at the centres of the overlying Rooms CO and CI (respectively), so that the whole annexe gives the impression of having been planned in its internal organization with the intention of maintaining these cultic installations as the invisible focal points of the overlying rooms.

Fig. 12: View of cistern 6823 with Grave 27, Area H
(photo R. Ercolino).

³⁰ Numerous remains (122 bones or bone fragments) of sheep and goats, in some cases showing butcher's and consumption marks, and few gazelle, horse and cattle bones, together with the complete skeleton of a probably intrusive mustelid, most likely a stone marten.

Fig. 13: View of the LB IB palace annexe and the underlying sacred area from the north-east, Area H (photo G. Garna).

Favissa 7262: from the stratified contents to the ritual activities

Favissa 7262³¹ is a 6.15 m deep (elevation 502.86–496.71 m a.s.l.), regularly dug cylindrical pit with an average diameter of 1.5 m (Fig. 14), which to the south cut into a step of the irregular Pleistocene terrace on which the city's acropolis developed,³² whereas to the north it was sunk into earlier archaeological deposits. The stratigraphic analysis of the *favissa*'s fills provided important information about the ritual practices with which it was associated. Twelve different earthy fills were identified in the repository pit of offerings and discarded vessels,³³ consisting of compact brown earth resulting from the decay of mud-bricks and in many cases containing

31 Due to the difficulty of distinguishing between the different types of ritual burials of cultic objects on the basis of the archaeological evidence, the term *favissa* is commonly used in archaeological terminology with a wide spectrum of rather different meanings, ranging from repository pits into which cultic equipment was deposited in a secondary context at the end of its working life (to thus discard broken cultic paraphernalia or votives, with due religious ceremony, and make room for new objects), to pits where sacrifices were performed and votives placed in a primary context (Kletter *et al.* 2010: 200–203). In the present article no attempt will be made to propose a more detailed and precise terminology, such as that recently suggested by Fiedler (2005), who discarded the term *favissa* and distinguished between “cult pits” (*Kultgruben*: where sacrifices and votives were placed in primary context) and “votive pits” (*Votivgruben*: where materials originating from temples were deposited in a secondary context). Since both phenomena often occur together in the same cultic installation (see our *favissae* and those at Ebla), we feel that the adoption of a new and more detailed terminology would only add confusion to the present situation.

32 The terrace consists here of a sequence of weathered limestone, clay and gravel deposits and bedrock.

33 On the function of the *favissa* and the vessels found in it, see below.

mud-brick fragments. In three of the deposits animal bones were also found,³⁴ whilst small quantities of pottery fragments were recovered from half of them.³⁵ Most of the pottery consisted of sherds of MB II jars and bowls. It was not possible to reconstruct complete or even semi-complete vessels. Unlike the situation found in the Square of the Cisterns at Ebla, where – besides numerous small jars deposited as containers for food supplies – the two *favissae* 5237 and 5238 also contained hundreds of complete or crushed bowls and small vessels that in some cases still contained burnt food offerings (dove and goat bones) arranged in rows or thrown in from above,³⁶ the Qatna repository pit fills yielded only small fragments of unreconstructable open and closed vessel-forms. Thus we may safely assume that the ceramic fragments recovered from the various *favissa* fills were not parts of vessels intentionally deposited, placed in the pit as food offerings containers or the discarded remains of communal feasting, but rather refill material thrown into the cultic installation during its backfilling. Similarly, the rather limited amount of faunal remains recovered from only three fills of the pit indicates that we are not dealing with food offerings or remains of communal consumption of food, but with earlier butchery and food-consumption refuse contained in these deposits. This seems to match well the evidence concerning the distribution of the jugs and jars in the pit,³⁷ which indicates that it was a cultic installation that was built just for one cultic event, had a very short life and was backfilled with the same earthy deposits that had been excavated when it was dug.

The following items can also probably be considered part of the refill material of the *favissa*: an isolated highly fragmentary female terracotta figurine with open arms and parallel combings on the back and on the front representing the pubes (Fig. 15), typologically referable to a MB IB horizon;³⁸ two fragmentary spindle whorls made from potsherds³⁹ and a third unfinished one;⁴⁰ and an ostrich egg fragment.⁴¹ In the MB IB-IIA *favissa* 5238 (layer i) of the Square of the Cisterns at Ebla, spindle whorls were present along with numerous votive clay figurines of the naked female type, which is commonly related to fertility aspects of the Ishtar cult.⁴² In the Qatna cultic

34 Stratigraphic units 7261, 7289 and 7291 contained 66 bone fragments. The following taxa are recorded: *Ovis aries*, *Capra hircus*, *Ovis/Capra*, *Sus domesticus*, *Bos taurus* and possibly *Vulpes* sp. Many bones bore butcher's marks, but no signs of burning. The fills of the *favissa* seem to have contained a mix of butchery and consumption refuse and some intrusive elements such as the remains of a small carnivore.

35 About 100 sherds from stratigraphic units 7261, 7289, 7291, 7454, 7459, 7472.

36 Marchetti & Nigro 1997; 2000.

37 See below.

38 SF 7261.701; for parallels, see for example Fiorentino 2006: figs. 49:b; 51:a.

39 SF 7289.705–706.

40 SF 7283.702. In this case the perforating hole of the spindle whorl was unfinished.

41 SF 7261.703. Fragments of ostrich egg were also recovered from layer 5 of the LB I *favissa* P. 5213/ii at Ebla (Marchetti & Nigro in press).

42 Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 22, 29 and fig. 11.

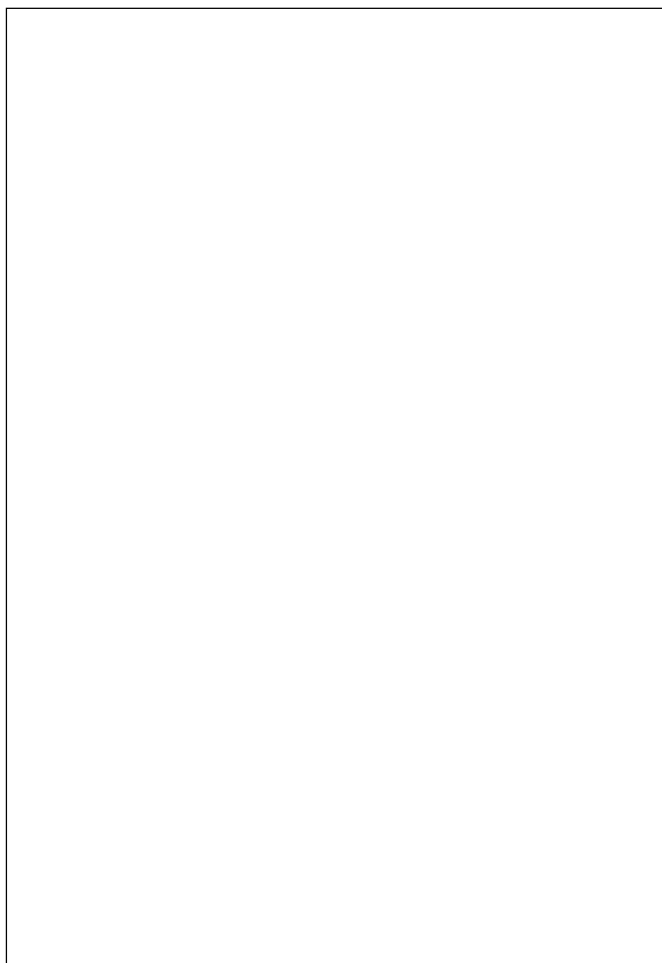


Fig. 14: Schematic section of *favissa* 7262, Area H
(section A. Savioli).

pit, however, only one clay figurine and three spindle whorls from different fills of the installation were found. Their contemporary occurrence in the *favissa* seems unlikely to be significant; the highly fragmentary materials contained in the pit back-fills are probably residual in character and not connected with the cultic activities performed in it.

On the other hand, clear evidence of the ritual activities enacted in the *favissa* is shown by the large group of intact or broken, but complete, closed-form vessels recovered from six different fills of the Area H repository pit.

Fig. 15: Clay female figurine from a fill of *favissa* 7262, Area H
(photo M.A. Giovinazzo).

An assemblage of 19 mainly intact or complete mid-sized jars and jugs and one slightly broken (though nearly complete) Black-Burnished Ware bottle were found in the *favissa*. The “jars and jugs” inventory contained 13 jugs,⁴³ four jars⁴⁴ and two double-handled jars.⁴⁵

Three different categories of vessel preservation can be distinguished:

- a. Entirely complete and undamaged vessels with no breaking;
- b. Broken but complete and restorable containers;
- c. Broken and only partially-preserved vessels. The last class includes a variety of preservations, ranging from nearly intact and complete vessels (lacking only the rim and part of the neck) to extremely fragmentary ones, of which only the rim and neck were found.

These preservation groups are probably the result of different practices regarding ritual burying of cultic objects in the *favissa*. The complete and restorable vessels (b) found broken in the repository pit were most likely intentionally smashed by having been thrown into the pit (as is shown by the fact that the fractures were old and the fragments often not clustered together, but scattered in the *favissa* at a considerable

43 Of which nine were intact or complete (SF 7287.702, 7289.701–702, 7468.703–705, 707–709), whereas of three jugs only a few sherds were recovered (SF 7285.702–703, 7287.701). Numerous fragments of a fourth jug were found distributed in seven different fills located at different elevations within the *favissa*, with a vertical range of 4.50 m (Fig. 14; SU 7282, 7285, 7289, 7291, 7293, 7454, 7459). The archaeological evidence regarding this jug is extremely important for the interpretation of the cult activity associated with the repository pit (see below).

44 Two were intact (SF 7282.701, 7468.701), the rim of one jar was missing (SF 7459.701), whilst of another jar only the rim and neck were found (SF 7289.703).

45 One jar was complete though crushed (SF 7468.702), whilst part of the neck and rim of the second were missing (SF 7468.706).

distance from each other). This suggests that these vessels were either votives that had been placed in a temple, and were then removed to make room for new offerings and buried in the repository pit, or temple furnishings no longer in use. In both cases they could not be discarded as ordinary refuse because they had acquired a sacred status on account of their presence in the temple and were therefore ritually buried and intentionally broken by throwing them into the pit in a termination ritual meant to ensure that the vessels would not be used any more.⁴⁶

The same also holds true for one double-handled jar and a simple jar with wavy combed decoration,⁴⁷ both of which were intact, with the only exception of part of the neck and rim which were missing (c). This suggests that these vessels too were votives or part of temple furnishings, which were decommissioned and ceremonially de-sacralised in an obliteration ritual.

A jar and three jugs were deposited in a very fragmentary state of preservation (c),⁴⁸ presumably because they were either already broken or had been intentionally smashed in order to impede their future use before being discarded in the *favissa*. Only a portion of these vessels,⁴⁹ which again were probably temple equipment or votives, was then thrown in the pit after their de-sacralisation.

The function of the intact jars and jugs, though, must have been entirely different (a); in all probability they were carefully deposited in the pit as food containers for offerings and not as ritually smashed and discarded temple equipment or votives.

It seems likely that the jugs, which are pouring vessels, were containers for libations (wine?), whilst the mid-sized jars contained some valuable solid food offering, possibly animal fat.⁵⁰ In both cases, however, we are dealing with vessels for food-stuff sacrifices in the form of libations and solid food supplies.

A noteworthy proportion of intact or broken, but complete, vessels exhibit major or minor irregularities of shape,⁵¹ although it is impossible to ascertain whether these

46 On the ritual obliteration of votives or temple fittings, see also Lipiński 2003, 301; Kletter *et Al.* 2010: 200. On the archaeological evidence related to termination rituals in the ancient Near East and Cyprus and its interpretation, see recently Zuckerman 2007; Papaconstantinou 2010 with further bibliography.

47 Respectively SF 7468.706 and SF 7459.701.

48 SF 7289.703 and SF 7285.702-703, 7287.701 respectively.

49 The most characteristic, namely rim, neck and – in case of the jugs – the handle or part of it.

50 It has not yet been possible to analyse the inner walls of the jars for the presence of preserved lipids, which would offer the opportunity of determining the nature of their contents. Lipid residue analysis *via* gas chromatography (GC), GC-mass spectrometry (GC/MS) and GC-combustion-isotope ratio-MS (GC-C-IRMS) has enabled the detection and characterisation of a wide range of commodities including ruminant adipose fats, non-ruminant adipose fats, dairy fats, plant waxes and oils, beeswax and plant resins (for Qatna, see James *et Al.* 2009; Mukherjee *et Al.* 2007; Mukherjee *et Al.* 2008). MB I mid-sized jars from *favissa* 5327 from the Ishtar sacred area at Ebla exhibited on the inner walls thick incrustations of organic material which were interpreted as animal fat by the excavators (Marchetti & Nigro 2007: 16). No analysis seems to have been performed, however.

51 Jars 7282.701 and 7468.701 and jugs 7287.701–702, 7289.702, 7468.703, 7468.707–708. Fur-

flaws fall within the normal range of imperfection typical of a mass manufacture of vessels like the MBA one or if they should be considered statistically significant and meaningful.⁵²

Observations on the fill stratification of *favissa* 7262 indicate that it probably had a very short life. The distribution of the sherds of a broken jug in different fills⁵³ shows that the use of the repository pit must have been limited to one single cultic activity, which included a sequence of distinct ritual actions in which vessels were deposited or thrown into the *favissa* in order to offer food sacrifices as well as to de-sacralise and terminate discarded votives and/or temple furnishings in an obliteration ritual. The association of the *favissa* with one major cultic episode consisting of a series of six ritual actions is clearly indicated by the fact that the vessels were concentrated in six distinct layers, one directly above another or separated by ritual fills. However, as has already been mentioned, fragments of a jug with a vertical burnish, which had probably been intentionally smashed outside the *favissa*, were found distributed in seven different fills located at the top, centre and bottom of the pit.⁵⁴

This evidence can only be interpreted to mean that the separate ritual burials of vessels deposited or thrown into the *favissa* were performed within the framework of one major cultic event, which was accompanied by the repeated ritual throwing of fragments of the same “terminated” jug into nearly all fills of the pit (with the exception of only the two uppermost fills⁵⁵ and a central one). *Favissa* 7262 was therefore a religious installation which was built specifically for the execution of a single cultic performance (which included distinct individual ritual activities of diverse nature and meaning) and its life span was very short.

In the lowest layer containing vessels (SU 7468), at the bottom of the *favissa*, a large group of nine vessels was found (Fig. 16): six jugs, two double-handled jars and one jar (SF 7468.701–709). Only the jar was intact, whereas all other vessels were smashed.⁵⁶ A rite of obliteration accompanied by a food sacrifice in the mid-sized jar is the most convincing hypothesis for this kind of ceramic burial. It is remarkable that the most valued vessels were deposited or thrown into the pit during this first and (with respect also to the number of buried vessels) most important ritual action.⁵⁷

thermore, the outer surfaces of many vessels show not perfectly homogeneous firing atmospheres indicated by the presence of several strongly oxidized areas.

52 In the pottery assemblages from the Ishtar sacred area at Ebla a considerable number of vessels are also irregularly shaped (Marchetti & Nigro 1997: figs. 6–9).

53 See fn. 43, *supra*.

54 Sherds found in fills 7282 and 7285, 7285 and 7454, and 7285 and 7459 located at the top and the bottom of sequence could be pieced together (Fig. 14).

55 Which contained no vases.

56 The sherds showed ancient fractures.

57 It included the burial of two imported double-handled jars, which reached Qatna either from northern Palestine or from the northern Levantine coast (see below), and six jugs of which three had a vertically-burnished surface. For the prestige character of these jugs, see below.

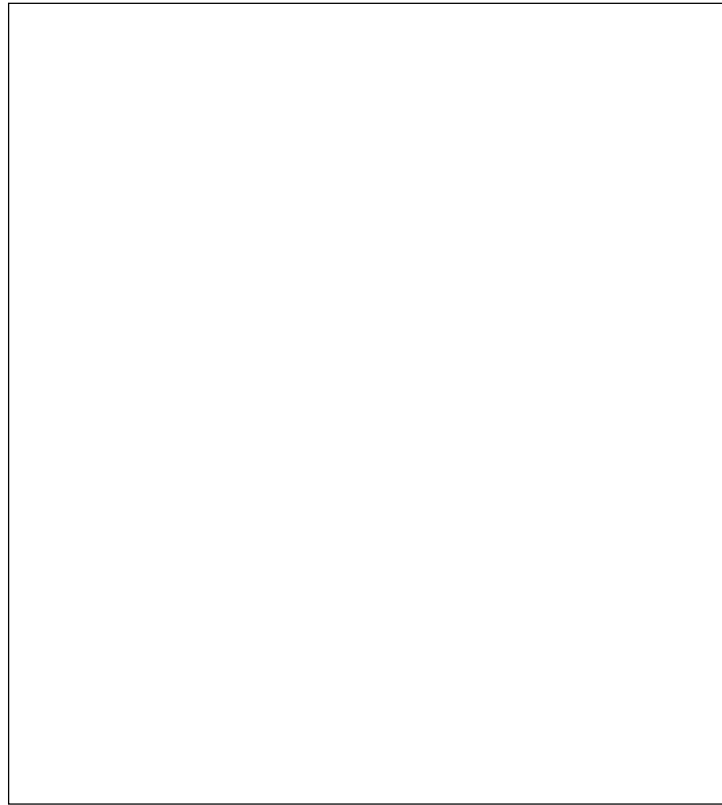


Fig. 16: Plan of fill 7468 of *favissa* 7262 with some of the vessels found in it, Area H (plan A. Savioli).

The overlying layer (SU7459) contained a jar which had been deposited after having been ritually terminated through the breaking of its rim and neck. Three ritual fillings devoid of any pottery container followed (SU 7454, 7293, 7291). In the subsequent layer 7289 three vessels were uncovered at different elevations: two intact jugs (SF 7289.701–702) and the neck and the rim of a vertically burnished jar with double everted rim (SF 7289.703). Whilst the former two were most likely libation vessels containing some valued liquid, perhaps wine, to be sacrificed and were ritually buried probably after their contents had been poured out, the latter attests to an obliteration ritual in which a jar was thrown into the *favissa* after having been intentionally broken.

A very fragmentary, but archaeologically complete, jug and an entirely intact one (SF 7287.701 and 702) were found in the following fill, indicating again the combination of obliteration and offering (libation) rituals.

Somewhat different is the situation recorded in the overlying fill SU 7285, in which a broken but nearly complete Black Burnished Ware bottle (SF 7285.701) and two highly fragmentary jugs (SF 7285.702-703) were found. The BBW bottle was entirely preserved, with the exception of a fracture of the neck from which a small part was missing. It is difficult to ascertain whether this might have been due to the accidental breaking of the bottle after its deposition, the fabric of which was very fragile, or could have instead represented the intentional de-sacralisation and termination of a votive or a temple furnishing (which probably contained perfumes or precious oils), as in the case of the two broken jugs from the same fill. However, the fact that the broken upper parts of the neck and rim were found may indicate that the bottle was deposited in the pit with its contents inside.

This ritual action was separated from the following one by an empty fill (SU 7282), after which the last layer contained an intact jar with double everted rim and two combed bands at the bottom of the neck (SF 7282.701). This jar, which most probably contained a solid food offering, bore witness to the ritual action with which the *favissa* was closed. It was covered by an overlying 70 cm thick layer of sandy soil containing ashes, which was devoid of any other kind of archaeological remains, fauna or buried vessels (SU 7281). This fill seems to be very similar to the 1 m thick fills containing nothing but some small burnt wood sticks laid on top of the other deposits in the *favissae* 5237 and 5238 at Ebla and interpreted as layers of ritually pure soil brought in from outside the town which sealed the ritual vessel burials.⁵⁸

Finally, the pit was closed by a layer of earth (SU 7261) rich in bone and ceramic backfill materials.

The vessels from *favissa* 7262: typology, chronology and function

The pottery assemblage consisting of the twenty vessels found in the Qatna repository pit is very specialized and consists of a larger group of 13 jugs (65%), a smaller group of four jars (20%), two imported double-handled storage jars (10%) and one Black Burnished Ware bottle (Fig. 17).

This material comes from a chronologically quite homogeneous horizon which can be dated mainly to the MB IIB, although three out of four jars can be assigned on the basis of typology to a slightly higher chronological frame, ranging from the MB IB to the MB IIA.

The jars

The earliest vessel present is the mid-sized jar 7282.701 with double everted rim and two combed bands below the neck, ovoid body and convex base, found at the top of the sequence just below the sterile layer sealing the *favissa* (Fig. 18). This type is very characteristic of the MB IB ceramic horizon of Inner Syria and appears at Ebla at the

58 As in our case, no re-deposited archaeological materials were found in them; see Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 7–9.

Fig. 17: The jars, double-handled jars and jugs from the *favissa* 7262.

end of the MB I (Mardikh III A2), where it is largely used as a funerary furnishing, especially in the Tomb of the Princess, and as a votive or offering vase in the *favissae* of the Ishtar sacred area.⁵⁹

To the same period dates a fragmentary jar from fill 7289 (SF 7289.703), of which only the rim and the neck had been thrown into the *favissa* (Fig. 19). The jar, which is hard-fired and has a “clinky” sound, is distinguished by thin walls, a double everted rim, a combed band at the centre of the neck and a vertically burnished dark grey surface. These characteristics suggest that the jar might have been an imitation of metallic prototypes in bronze/copper or silver. The fabric indicates that the jar belonged to a local production, although it shows parallels with similar large jars from the coastal region.⁶⁰ More difficult to date accurately is the fragmentary jar SF 7459.701 found almost at the bottom of the *favissa* (Fig. 20). It is a globular mid-sized jar with a broken neck, missing rim, flat base and a scrabbled wavy decoration framed between two bands of comb-incised lines on the shoulders. Such a decoration is very common, especially between the MB IB and IIA.

⁵⁹ Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 16, figs. 6: 39–40, 7: 39, 41; Nigro 2002: 106.

⁶⁰ At Tell Arqa, for instance, similar jars have been recovered from the MB I Level 14 of Phase N (Thalmann 2006: pls. 88: 6–10, 89: 1). Although vertical burnishing is a very characteristic surface treatment at Arqa in Phase N, these jars have a smoothed surface.

Fig. 18: Jar 7282.701.

Fig. 19: Jar 7289.703.

Fig. 20: Jar 7459.701.

Finally, a fourth jar was recovered from the first ritual burial of vessels at the bottom of the *favissa* (SF 7468.70p1; Fig. 21). It is a mid-sized globular jar with a rounded grooved rim and a decoration on the shoulder consisting (from the top) of two bands of oblique comb-impressed lines, two combed bands and a scrabbled wavy decoration. The parallels with comparable specimens from Ebla's Northern Palace allow us to date this jar to the MB IIB.⁶¹

Fig. 21: Jar 7468.701.

The double-handled storage jars

Among the vessels associated with the first and most important ritual activity performed in the repository pit were two imported mid-sized double-handled storage jars (SF 7468.702, 706; Figs. 22–23). Neither the types nor the fabrics of these amphorae with strap handles are local or characteristic of Inner Syrian sites. Both stor-

⁶¹ Pinnock 2005: pl. 35:11, 13–14.

age jars were probably imported to Qatna from a site in northern Palestine or the northern Levantine coast.

SF 7468.702 has a slender elongated body, convex base, slightly everted grooved rim and two combed bands under the neck. Similar storage jars are known from northern Palestinian sites of the Jezreel/Beth-Shean Valleys of the late MB IIA and the MB IIB, such as Tel Qashish,⁶² Beth-Shean⁶³ and Hazor.⁶⁴

SF 7468.706 is a more ovoid storage jar with flat base, ridge under the neck and a vertically burnished surface. Unfortunately part of the neck and the rim were missing. Parallels are known from coastal sites such as Tell Arqa in MBA I and II levels⁶⁵ and from Tel Qashish in the Jezreel Valley in MB IIB contexts.⁶⁶

Fig. 22: Double-handled storage jar
7468.702.

Fig. 23: Double-handled storage jar
7468.706.

The Black Burnished Ware bottle

Black Burnished Ware is a typical MB IB-II ceramic class, which in the *favissa* is represented by the bottle with inner stepped rim, a triple ridge at the bottom of the cylindrical neck, ovoid body and ring-base found in fill 7285 (SF 7285.701; Fig. 24).

62 Ben-Tor & Bonfil 2003: fig. 76: 6 (Stratum X).

63 Maeir 2007: pl. 22:3 (Stratum R5-b).

64 Yadin *et al.* 1960: Area C, pl. CXIII: 4–5; Bonfil 1997: 33 and fig. II.11: 3, Garfinkel 1997: fig. III.6: 2; Maeir 1997: Tomb 1181, fig. IV.9: 1.

65 Thalmann 2006: pls. 89: 3, 5 (Phase N) and 104: 2 (Phase M), the latter with vertical burnishing.

66 Ben-Tor & Bonfil 2003: figs. 78: 18, 92: 4 (Strata IXC and VIII).

As in the case of the jar with double everted rim 7282.701, the BBW bottles – which are normally considered as containers of perfumes or precious oils – are also very common in the burial assemblages, as well as in the two *favissae* of Mardikh.⁶⁷ Our specimen's best typological parallels are a BBW bottle of the MB IIA found at Tell Tuqan⁶⁸ and, especially, an example from Alalakh VII kept in the British Museum,⁶⁹ thus indicating a date in the MB II.⁷⁰

Fig. 24: Black Burnished Ware bottle 7285.701.

The jugs

The bulk of the *favissa* ceramic assemblage consists of 13 mid-sized jugs with simple mouth, slender ovoid or globular body with high pronounced shoulders, strap handle and flat base. They were distributed in nearly all the ritual fills of the pit that contained buried vessels (Figs. 25–35). The jugs had an average height of 36 cm and the largest specimen reached 44 cm. They were distinguished by high firing and thin walls which gave a “metallic” sound when struck, an often reduced/oxidized core sandwiched between oxidized/reduced exteriors and a fabric containing mainly rounded fragments of volcanic glass, associated with micritic limestones and subordinate chert, quartz, plagioclase, calcite and opaque minerals (Mishrifeh, petrofabric 3) or quartz, chert, micritic limestone and microcrystalline calcite (Mishrifeh, petrofab-

67 Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 12–13, fig. 6:17–21; Nigro 2002: 106 with further references.

68 Peyronel 2006: 184, fig. 7.

69 BM WA 130742.

70 Whilst the MB IB BBW bottles have a rather slender piriform body, the MB II specimens seem to be characterized by a globular shape.

ric 8).⁷¹ In few cases the outer surfaces of the jugs were vertically burnished,⁷² whilst most of the jugs had a single⁷³ or a fourfold ridge⁷⁴ below the neck and one jug also four knobs along the bottom of the neck.⁷⁵ Whilst all jugs with ridges were fired in oxidizing atmospheres and had therefore orange or reddish outer surfaces, all three jugs with greyish or blackish surfaces fired in a reducing atmosphere did not have ridges (7287.701, 7289.701 and 7468.703). This is unlikely to be considered accidental, but is probably the result of an intentional choice.

The high firing characteristic of the jugs from the *favissa*, the ridges at the neck base, the four knobs along the bottom of the neck found in one specimen, the occasional surface burnishing and the very thin walls are all elements which suggest that these jugs may derive from metal prototypes, though similar bronze or silver vessels are currently unknown from the MBA II archaeological record of Inner Syria.⁷⁶ The fact that all three jugs with a blackish or greyish outer surface were not ridged could perhaps be related to the fact that their derivation from metal prototypes was already indicated by their dark “metallic” colour. There was therefore no necessity to emphasize their origin from bronze or silver vessels by the addition of a slight or pronounced ridge, since their role as luxury vessels was already suggested by their external colour.

The single-handled jugs do not have precise parallels in the ceramic repertoires of Inner Syria or the coastal region, nor from the Euphrates or the Jezirah, though similar specimens – even if slightly more globular and larger – were recovered from the late MB II pottery horizons of the Northern Palace at Ebla⁷⁷ and the “Zimri-Lim” Palace at Mari,⁷⁸ whilst a smaller example comes from Tomb III at Mtoune in the Leja region of Southern Syria.⁷⁹

Besides the group of jugs from Ebla’s Northern Palace, hardly any other ceramics resembling our jugs can be found. Jug 7289.702 (Fig. 29) is paralleled by a similar fragmentary jug from a MB IIB outer surface abutting the western façade of the

71 For archaeometrical analyses of the Bronze and Iron Age ceramics from Mishrifeh, see Maritan *et Al.* 2005. For petrofabrics 3 and 8, *ibid.* 728f.

72 Two out of 13 jugs had vertical burnishing: SF 7468.709 and the broken jug which was distributed among SU 7282, 7285, 7289, 7291, 7293, 7454 and 7459. The burnished jugs always have a ridge below the neck (see the following fn.).

73 Jugs 7287.702, 7289.702, 7468.704, 7468.708-709 and the broken jug mentioned in fn. 72. Ridges on the jugs can be slight or pronounced.

74 Jug 7468.707.

75 Jug 7468.705.

76 For a different hypothesis, according to which single-handled jugs originated from North-Syrian/Cilician Painted Ware pottery jugs, see Pinnock 2005: 97f.

77 A total number of 11 jugs; see Pinnock 2005: 56f., 97f., pls. LIV–LV.

78 Parrot 1959: 114f., fig. 83: 859. Parrot noticed that some pottery materials found in the area of the palace could have been derived from later MBA intrusions (*ibid.* 114).

79 Braemer & Al-Maqdissi 2002: 32 and pl. XVI-B: 77.

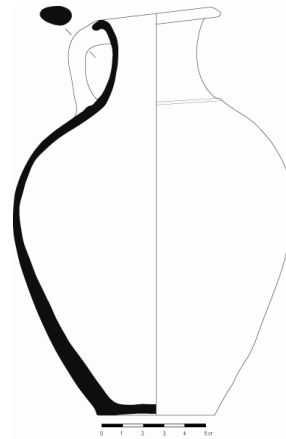


Fig. 25: Jug 7285.702. Fig. 26: Jug 7287.701.

Fig. 27: Jug 7287.702.

Fig. 28: Jug 7289.701.

Fig. 29: Jug 7289.702.

Fig. 30: Jug 7468.703.

Royal Palace at Qatna,⁸⁰ but no similar vessels seem to be recorded from other sites. We are therefore apparently dealing with a specialized and rather rare vessel type,⁸¹

⁸⁰ Trodden floor Inst. 1871, Area BW; see Paoletti 2005: fig. 16b: 1.

⁸¹ In this respect, however, it has to be remarked that the actual frequency of occurrence of single-handled jugs is difficult to estimate due to the poor diagnostic character of their rims (see also Pinnock 2005: 97). If only sherds are found, it is usually difficult to attribute them to the jug category unless part of the strap handle is found. This normally leads to a rather systematic over-representation of the jars with respect to the jugs in the MB II ceramic record.

Fig. 31: Jug 7468.704.

Fig. 32: Jug 7468.705.

Fig. 33: Jug 7468.707.

Fig. 34: Jug 7468.708.

Fig. 35: Jug 7468.709.

which seems to be typical especially of the MB IIB and to be found mainly in prestige contexts related to palatial (Ebla, Mari) and temple environments (*favissa* at Qatna).

In her study of the MBA II pottery assemblage from Ebla's Northern Palace, Pinnock considers the jugs a good chronological indicator for the MB IIB since they evidently cluster in this period and are not found in the previous phases of the MBA,

even though the shape sporadically occurs for the first time in the middle of this period.⁸² Two jugs with strap handle, thickened rim, ridge below the neck and flat base similar to the ones documented in the later Northern Palace at Ebla appear already at the end of the MB IB and during the MB IIA in the Tombs of the Princess⁸³ and the Lord of the Goats respectively.⁸⁴ In both cases the jugs with simple cylindrical mouth were paired with trefoil mouth jugs and probably constituted a set for serving beverages (perhaps water and wine). Another similar specimen dating to the late MB IIB was recovered from the northern sector of the Western Palace at Ebla.⁸⁵

Due to their rare occurrence at Ebla and their concentration in the Northern Palace, Pinnock considers this group of 11 jugs as luxury pouring vessels produced in a palace environment and used perhaps to contain and serve wine.⁸⁶ The discovery of similar single-handled jars with cylindrical mouth from *favissa* 7262 at Qatna indicates that this vessel typology was not exclusive to Ebla, but was also produced at other important contemporary Inner Syria urban centres and that, besides in palatial contexts where they were probably used to serve valued beverages during communal ceremonies, these jugs were also utilized for libations in religious buildings or installations, such as the *favissa* of the Area H sacred area.

The composition of the *favissa* 7262 ceramic assemblage is rather different from those recovered from *favissae* 5237 and 5238 of the Ishtar sacred area and *favissa* 9308 of the MB II Temple HH2 at Ebla.⁸⁷ In Qatna, only jugs and jars were found together, with also one Black Burnished Ware bottle and two imported double-handled storage jars, but no bowls, small or large jars, incense burners, miniature vessels, no clay figurines (except for a fragmentary female one which should probably be considered as part of the backfill material of the pit), no personal ornaments such as beads or pins, nor votive objects such as bronze snakes, metal tools or weapons. This evidence also indicates that the cult activities performed in the repository pit of Qatna's sacred area differed from those documented in the *favissae* of the Square of the Cisterns and Temple HH2 at Ebla. The latter case involved only the ritual obliteration of dismissed temple furnishings or (to a minor extent) votives, whilst most of the vessels found broken or intact in the pits were complete bowls or jars, that is vessels which had been used for offerings involving the communal consumption of food. According to the excavators, the pits of the Square of the Cisterns provide evidence for a connection between the *favissae* and rites probably associated in some way

82 Pinnock 2005: 56, 97.

83 Matthiae, Pinnock, Scandone Matthiae 1995: 495, no. 441 (TM.78.QIA.61).

84 Pinnock 2005: 56.

85 Room L. 3111. See Matthiae, Pinnock, Scandone Matthiae 1995: 448, no. 339 (TM.80.Q.59/1).

86 Pinnock 2005: 57. According to Pinnock the reduced diameter of the jug mouths was intended to facilitate the closure of the vessels and the conservation of the precious liquid contained in them. This feature can also be observed in the set of jugs from our *favissa*.

87 Matthiae 2007: 514–518; Pinnock 2009: 199–202.

with the adjacent Monument P3, which had been performed by a considerable number of people and included food consumption.⁸⁸

In our *favissa*, on the contrary, most of the vessels – although complete and reconstructable – were already broken before burial, whilst some others were incomplete. This means that they were already that way when discarded into the pit, perhaps as old temple equipment or votive vessels which had been broken during rituals outside the pit or by having been thrown into the *favissa* in order to prevent their reuse. However, the significant number of intact jugs and jars suggests that, after having been consecrated, these vessels were ritually deposited in the *favissa* as containers for liquid (wine?) or solid food offerings.

Two different types of cult activity are therefore found in the Qatna *favissa*: the burial of deconsecrated and intentionally broken vessels (temple fittings or votive vases) and the offering of (wine?) libations and food.

The double dog burial

About 10 m to the north-west of the cistern, immediately to the south of the MB IIB Royal Palace façade, a grave which contained two adult dogs was dug from the latest square floor (Figs. 8 and 36). Associated with the dog skeletons was a small number of scattered ovicaprid, gazelle and bovid bones. The skeletons of the dogs were found lying on their left sides with the legs stretched out.⁸⁹ The size of the nearly complete dog skeletons⁹⁰ and the thinness of their bones, features which are both comparable with those of the Persian Greyhound or Saluki found in the ritual filling of the late Akkadian sacred quarter of Area FS at Tell Brak,⁹¹ indicate that the Qatna and Brak dogs may belong to the same breed. Three MB I greyhound burials, of which two occupied the same grave, as in Qatna, were found in the Ishtar sacred area at Ebla.⁹² Other burial pits containing sacrificed donkeys and puppies were recorded in the courtyards in front of two Palestinian MB *in antis* temples at Tel Haror⁹³ and Tell Abu Hureyra⁹⁴ and in the MBA Lachish cultic area.⁹⁵

88 Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 31.

89 The dogs' skeletons presented no cut marks, making it unlikely that their flesh had been eaten.

90 The estimated shoulder height of the largest dog as calculated from the lengths of the limb bones is 60 cm, whilst the shoulder height of the smaller animal would have been 54 cm, on the basis of the length of the radius.

91 Clutton-Brock 1989. The estimated shoulder height of the Brak dog is 54.7 cm (*ibid.* 223). For the archaeological context, see also Oates *et al.* 2001; Oates *et al.* 2008.

92 Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 29 and fig. 18.

93 The case of the Tel Haror dogs as temple offerings is clear-cut. These were complete skeletons of puppies less than 6 months old deposited in small *favissae* near an altar in the central courtyard of the precinct. The puppies had been killed by having their necks broken. See Oren 1997: 264; Klenck 2002.

94 At Tell Abu Hureyra in the Wadi Ghazza burial pits containing donkeys and puppies (killed by having their necks broken) were found in the courtyard in front of an MB temple with an altar

Fig. 36: The double dog burial from the north
(photo M. Cusin).

Skeletal remains of dogs were not found in the animal pits and the offering pits of late Middle Kingdom and Hyksos Tell el-Dab^ca, which contained respectively the burials of donkeys, sheep/goats and lambs and the relics of cultic meals, that is pottery vessels used for consumption and large amounts of animal bones (cattle, sheep/goat, a few bones from pig, birds and fish).⁹⁶

near which there were food offerings and miniature vessels (Marchetti & Nigro 1997: 29, fn. 89).

95 At Lachish a dog burial was found near offerings of miniature vessels associated with burnt animal bones (Ussishkin 1996: 26–30, figs. 22–25).

96 Müller 2002; 2008.

Finally, dog burials have also been recently discovered in the Umm al-Marra mortuary complex of the third quarter of the third millennium BC, where the interment of animals – especially equids,⁹⁷ but also puppies,⁹⁸ as well as infants, in separate installations, accompanied by rituals involving pouring (suggested by the presence in the installations of spouted jars), were an important component of the mortuary rituals enacted in the acropolis complex in honour of those buried in the adjoining tombs.⁹⁹ According to Schwartz, the animals might have been employed as sacrificial offerings to deities or ancestors; in case of the equids, they may have been intended as transportation for the afterlife.¹⁰⁰ In any case, whatever their precise function was, in the Umm al-Marra mortuary complex equids and dogs were prestige animals associated with the local elite¹⁰¹.

From the epigraphic evidence, we know that in MBA Syria equids were sacrificed to seal treaties in a religious and ritual context.¹⁰² Several texts from Mari suggest the sacrifice of puppies instead of donkeys.¹⁰³ In this respect it may be significant that in Installation C of the third-millennium mortuary complex of Umm al-Marra an adult dog had been buried between two equids.¹⁰⁴

The combined archaeological evidence from temple sacred areas and *favissae* in Syria and Palestine and that from written sources thus indicates that dogs and puppies were of marked importance and ritual value and fulfilled the role of prestige animals which could be substituted for equids in ritual sacrifices associated with temples and sacred areas. This is probably the cultural and cultic setting in which the evidence concerning the double dog burial in Qatna's MB IIB sacred area on the city's acropolis should be understood.

The imprints of movable installation-bases or unidentified objects

Finally, five enigmatic features arranged at regular intervals of about 8 m in three symmetrical southeast-northwest oriented rows were identified on the surface of our

97 Jill Weber has recently suggested that the equids were the much-prized donkey-onager hybrids referred to by the name of *kunga* in the third millennium BC texts from Ebla and southern Mesopotamia (Weber 2008). The king of Nagar was constantly asked to send *kungas* to the ruler of Ebla, who used them himself and also donated them as gifts to other elites (Archi 1998: 9).

98 In Installation B two groups of three puppies were identified (Schwartz 2007: 42). In Installation C the skeleton of an adult dog was found between equids (Weber 2008: 503).

99 Schwartz 2007: 51f.

100 *Ibid.*: 52.

101 The *kunga* was a valuable animal, which in third millennium southern Mesopotamia could cost up to six times more than a donkey (Zarins 1978: 14). Texts from Ebla inform us that a *kunga* cost up to 5 minas of silver (Archi 1998: 9).

102 Lafont 2001.

103 Charpin 1993: 182–186.

104 See fn. 98, *supra*.

open place (Fig. 8). They were perfectly regular, 1.25 m wide square imprints left on the beaten earth trodden floor of the open area by the bases of movable installations (or other unknown objects) which rested on this surface (Fig. 37). At the position where

Fig. 37: Imprints of movable installation-bases from the south.
The imprint to the left has been partially removed by a later Iron Age pit.
(photo G. Garna)

the sixth imprint of the westernmost row might have been expected, two juxtaposed low L-shaped mud-brick installations were located.

The function of these features is unknown. However, they may have been caused by the presence in this open place of some kind of movable furnishings made of perishable material somehow related to the sacred area and the cult activities enacted within it. A remarkable fact is that none of these imprints were damaged by the walls of the LB IB southern palace annexe; the floors of Rooms CF, CG, CH, CI, CL and CM sealed and protected them. Only the Iron Age II pit, which cut the underground water cistern 6823, also cut the north-western corner of the imprint located underneath Room CI of the palace annexe.

Conclusions

The archaeological evidence from Areas J and H at Qatna indicates that, immediately to the north of the monumental building that would have towered over the city's urban landscape from the summit of the acropolis central mound, during the late MBA a sacred open area was located, which extended along the side of the mound and where cult activities were enacted. These activities included the ritual burial in a *favissa* of probably decommissioned and intentionally broken votive vessels or temple fittings and of food offerings (solid as well as liquid) deposited in in-

tact jars and jugs, which were carefully laid and buried in the pit and were probably related to the offering of libations and food during rituals. These ritual actions were performed in a series of distinct stages, which were, however, part of one single cultic act. The *favissa* had therefore a very short lifetime and – according to the most recent ceramic assemblage found in the pit – may be dated to the late MB IIB.

To this sacred area seem also to have belonged a nearby underground water cistern, a burial containing two greyhounds and numerous imprints left on the floor surface by installation bases or other movable objects.

This much seems clear. But the crucial issue at this point is: was this sacred area (which was located only about 45 m to the west of the Eastern Palace¹⁰⁵ and immediately to the south of the newly built Royal Palace) related to a nearby temple?

The presence on Qatna's upper town of a sacred area equipped with cultic installations and associated with public monumental architecture in close proximity to it justifies a positive response to this question. Many Middle and Late Bronze Age palaces in Syria and Palestine are situated close to temples, usually of the *Langraum* type *in antis*. To mention just the most important examples: at Ebla the complex of the Northern Palace, Temple P2 and Monument P3 in the area sacred to Ishtar, the Western Palace and Temple B1 and Sanctuary B2, the Royal Palace E and Ishtar temple D on the acropolis,¹⁰⁶ the Alalakh VII Royal Palace and temple,¹⁰⁷ the Royal Palace A and Temple E at Tilmen Höyük,¹⁰⁸ and (for the LBA) Alalakh IV,¹⁰⁹ Tell Brak¹¹⁰ and Tel Hazor.¹¹¹

But if there was a temple associated with the sacred area with its cultic installations, where was it located? Since to the north and east of the square the Royal and Eastern Palaces were situated, the only possible candidate is the Area J monumental building, which was erected about 70 m to the south of the *favissa* in a prominent position on the summit of the upper town's central mound. As has already been observed, this public building controlled an adjacent extensive area devoted to large-scale pottery production with installations for clay preparation, such as settling and levigation tanks, basins and underground canals supplying the water used to work the clay, working and drying surfaces for the pottery and numerous kilns of different types (some still containing vessels). Besides pottery, votive clay figurines possibly related to cult activity were also produced in the ceramics workshop.¹¹²

105 The building was in use from the late MB IIA to the end of the MB IIB (see Morandi Bonacossi *et al.* 2009).

106 For a recent overview, see Matthiae 2010.

107 Woolley 1955.

108 Marchetti 2006.

109 Woolley 1955: figs. 44–45, pl. 14.

110 Oates, Oates, McDonald 1997: fig. 12.

111 Bonfil & Zarzecki-Peleg 2007: fig. 2.

112 Fragmentary naked female figurines, as well as male and zoomorphic figurines, miniature furnishings (possibly replicas of cult fittings) and chariot models have been recovered from

Pottery production areas associated with temples and related to cult and temple needs are known also from second millennium Palestinian sites, such as LBA Hazor (in the temples of Areas C and H),¹¹³ whilst other production areas, such as those related to metal industries (fabrication of votive figurines), can also be connected with temple precincts, as is indicated by finds made at Tell el-Hayyat in Transjordan,¹¹⁴ Nahariya¹¹⁵ and the Area A temple at Hazor.¹¹⁶

Many lines of evidence therefore suggest that the Area J monumental public building might have been one of MBA Qatna's temples and, by virtue of its topographic position, perhaps even the most important: its location on the highest and most central part of the site, the possible association with a pair of statues of enthroned kings (strongly characteristic of northern Levantine MBA temples), its closeness to a sacred area equipped with a *favissa* – used for sacrificial offerings and the ritual burial of votives or disused temple fittings – and other cultic installations, the existence of a large ceramic and votive clay figurine workshop adjacent to it and its proximity to the Eastern and Royal Palaces.

However, though plausible, this interpretation must remain hypothetical for now. In the future it might be decided to move the graves of the Greek Orthodox cemetery located immediately to the west of Area J, which would make it possible to continue the excavation of the remainder of this building and thus obtain new archaeological evidence which supports or contradicts this proposal.

The Qatna acropolis sacred area, together with *favissa* 7262 and the other Area H ritual features and the possible religious building of Area J, allow us for the first time to start to outline the sacred topography and religious layout of the city during the first half of the second millennium BC, which has been completely obscure until now.

Furthermore, the discovery of a short-lived repository pit used for cult activity including the offering of (wine?) libations and solid food, the ritual termination of discarded votive vessels or temple equipment and their ritual burial, adds new important evidence to our still meagre knowledge concerning the cultic performances and the offering and termination rituals enacted in the sacred areas related to temples in MB Syria.

the pottery production area. For a complete naked female clay figurine from the Area J workshop, see Morandi Bonacossi 2008: 111 and fig. 38.

113 For the temples in Areas C and H of the beginning of the LB II and the LB I respectively and their potters' workshops, see Bonfil 1997: 89 and 95. In the pottery kiln of the Area H temple many bowls (among them votive bowls) were found (Yadin 1972: 82; Yadin *et al.* 1989: 230).

114 Dated to the MB IIC (Falconer & Magness Gardiner 1989: 256–259).

115 For a figurine mould from the MB IIB temple, see Dothan 1956: 20f.

116 Two moulds (one for casting a figurine, the other for jewels) were found next to the steps leading to the courtyard east of the LBA temple of Area A. They might indicate that in this area a metallurgy workshop used to produce objects for cultic use related to the temple was located (Bonfil 1997: 100).

Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to Karin Kopetzky, Aren M. Maeir, Lorenzo Nigro, Eliezer D. Oren and Jean-Paul Thalmann for discussing with me the material from the *favissa*, and to Nicolò Marchetti and Lorenzo Nigro for providing me with the as yet unpublished manuscript of their article on the MBA IIB-LBA I *favissa* from the Square of the Cisterns at Ebla. The Qatna *favissa* and its archaeological materials were excavated in 2006 under the supervision of Riccardo Besana; the cistern, the dog burial and the imprints of the unidentified objects (perhaps movable installation-bases) on the floor of the sacred area were dug by Giancarlo Garna in 2007. I greatly benefited from the many discussions I had with them. The faunal evidence from the *favissa*, the cistern and the dog burial was studied by Emmanuelle Vila, who also took the time to examine with me the results of her analysis. The skeletons of the five individuals buried in the abandoned underground water cistern were studied by Alessandro Canci. The vessels were restored by Isabella Finzi Contini, drawn by Cristina Fior, Paolo Vedovetto and Valentina Vassileva, processed by Silvia Perini and photographed by Massimiliano Gatti and Javier Ballester Serrano. To each of them goes my heartfelt gratitude for their relentless involvement and effort in all the phases of our work.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alaura, S., 2001. "Überlegungen zur Bedeutung der Fundumstände einer fragmentarischen Stierfigur aus dem Winklerschen Grabungen in Boğazköy/Hattuša", in Th. Richter, D. Prechel, J. Klinger (eds.), *Kulturgeschichte: Altorientalische Studien für Volker Haas zum 65. Geburtstag*, Saarbrücken, 1–17.
- Al-Maqdissi, M., 1996a. "Reprise des fouilles à Mishrifeh en 1994", *Akkadica* 99–100, 1–14.
- 1996b. "Reprise des fouilles à Mishrifeh-Qatna", *Le Monde de la Bible* 97, 36.
- 1997. "Mishrifeh/Qatna", in H. Weiss, "Archaeology in Syria", *American Journal of Archaeology* 101, 132–133.
- 2003. "Ergebnisse der siebten und achten syrischen Grabungskampagne 2001 und 2002 in Mishrifeh – Qatna", *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 135, 219–245.
- Al-Maqdissi, M., Morandi Bonacossi, D., 2009. "Das Rätsel des Königspalastes. Wann wurde er errichtet?", in Al-Maqdissi, Morandi Bonacossi, Pfälzner (eds.) 2009, 172–173.
- Al-Maqdissi, M., Morandi Bonacossi, D., Pfälzner, P. (eds.), 2009. *Schätze des alten Syrien. Die Entdeckung des Königreiches Qatna*, Stuttgart.
- Al-Maqdissi, M., Dohmann-Pfälzner, H., Pfälzner, P., Suleiman, A., 2003. "Das königliche Hypogäum von Qatna. Bericht über die syrisch-deutsche Ausgrabungen im November-Dezember 2002", *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 135, 189–218.
- Archi, A., 1988. "Minima eblaitica 6: igi-dub=ba-nu-ú: lame, feuille pour le visage, visage", *N.A.B.U.* 1988, n. 77.
- 1990. "Données épigraphiques éblaites et productions artistiques", *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale* 84, 101–105.
- 1998. "The regional state of Nagar according to the texts of Ebla", *Subartu* IV (2), 1–15.

- Ben-Tor, A., Bonfil, R., Zuckerman, Sh., 2003. "The Stratigraphy and Pottery Assemblages of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in Area A", in A. Ben-Tor, R. Bonfil, Sh. Zuckerman (eds.), *Tel Qashish, A Village in the Jezreel Valley: Final Report of the Archaeological Excavations (1978–1987)*, Jerusalem.
- Bjorkman, J., 1994. *Hoards and Deposits in Bronze Age Mesopotamia*, unpublished Ph.D. Diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- 1999. "How to Bury a Temple: The Case of Nuzi's Ishtar Temple A", in D.I. Owen, G. Wilhelm (eds.), *Studies on the Civilization and Culture of Nuzi and the Hurrians*, Vol. 9, Winona Lake, 103–122.
- Bonfil, R., 1997. "Area A", in A. Ben-Tor, R. Bonfil (eds.), *Hazor V. An Account of the Fifth Season of Excavation, 1968*, Jerusalem, 15–176.
- Bonfil, R., Zarzecki-Peleg, A., 2007. "The Palace in the Upper City of Hazor as an Expression of a Syrian Architectural Paradigm", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 348, 25–47.
- Braemer, F., Al-Maqdissi, M., 2002. "La céramique du Bronze moyen en Syrie du Sud", in M. Al-Maqdissi, V. Matoïan, Ch. Nicolle (eds.), *Céramique de l'Âge du Bronze en Syrie, I*, Beyrouth, 23–50.
- Charpin, D., 1993. "Un souverain éphémère en Ida-Maras: Išme-Addu d'Ašnakkum", *Mari. Annales de Recherches interdisciplinaires* 7, 165–191.
- Clutton-Brock, J., 1989. "A Dog and a Donkey Excavated at Tell Brak", *Iraq* 51, 217–224.
- Delaporte, L., 1940. *Malatya. Arslantepe, I, La Porte des Lions*, Paris.
- Dothan, M., 1956. "The Excavations at Nahariya. Preliminary Report (Seasons 1954/55)", *Israel Exploration Journal* 6, 14–25.
- Du Mesnil du Buisson, R., 1935. *Le site archéologique de Mishrifé-Qatna*, Paris.
- Falconer, S., Magness Gardiner, B., 1989. "Bronze Age Village Life in the Jordan Valley: Archaeological Investigations at Tell Hayyat and Tell Abu en-Ni'aj", *National Geographic Research* 5, 335–347.
- Fiedler, M., 2005. "Kultgruben eines Liber Pater-Heiligtums im römischen Apulum (Dakien)", *Germania* 83, 95–125.
- Fink, A. S., 2010. *Late Bronze Age Tell Atchana (Alalakh) Stratigraphy, Chronology, History* (BAR International Series 2120), Oxford.
- Fiorentino, R., 2006. "Gli oggetti", in F. Baffi (ed.), *Tell Tuqan. Ricerche archeologiche italiane nella regione del Maath (Siria)*, Lecce, 112–140.
- Fronzaroli, P., 1996. "À propos de quelques mots éblaites d'orfèvrerie", in Ö. Tunca, D. Deheselle (eds.), *Tablettes et images aux pays de Sumer et d'Akkad. Mélanges offerts à Monsieur H. Limet*, Liège, 51–68.
- Garfinkel, Y., 1994. "Burial Rituals of Cultic Objects: The Earliest Evidence", *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 4, 159–188.
- 1997. "Area L", in A. Ben-Tor, R. Bonfil (eds.), *Hazor V. An Account of the Fifth Season of Excavation, 1968*, Jerusalem, 177–294.
- Haines, R. C., 1971. *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch II* (Oriental Institute Publications 95), Chicago.
- Harrison, T. P., 2009. "Neo-Hittites in the 'Land of Palistin'. Renewed Excavations at Tell Ta'ynat on the Plain of Antioch", *Near Eastern Archaeology* 72/4, 174–189.
- James, A. M. et Al., 2009. "High prestige Royal Purple dyed textiles from the Bronze Age royal tomb at Qatna, Syria", *Antiquity* 83, 1109–1118.

- Klenck, J. D., 2002. *The Canaanite Milieu: The Zooarchaeological Evidence from Tel Haror, Israel* (BAR International Series 1029), Oxford.
- Kletter, R., Ziffer, I., Zwickel, W., 2010. *Yavneh I: The Excavation of the "Temple Hill" Repository Pit and the Cult Stands* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, Series Archaeologica 30), Fribourg.
- Lafont, B., 2001. "Relations internationales, alliances et diplomatie au temps des rois de Mari", in J.-M. Durand, D. Charpin (eds.), *Mari, Ebla, et les Hourites, dix ans de travaux*, Paris, 213–228.
- Lipiński, E., 2003. "Phoenician Cult Expressions in the Persian Period", in W.G. Dever, S. Gitin (eds.), *Symbiosis, Symbolism, and the Power of the Past: Canaan, Ancient Israel, and Their Neighbors from the Late Bronze Age through Roman Palestine*, Winona Lake, 297–308.
- Maier, A. M., 1997. "Tomb 1181: A Multiple-Interment Burial Cave of the Transitional Middle Bronze Age IIA-B", in A. Ben-Tor, R. Bonfil (eds.), *Hazor V. An Account of the Fifth Season of Excavation, 1968*, Jerusalem, 295–340.
- 2007. "The Middle Bronze Age II Pottery", in A. Mazar, R. A. Mullins (eds.), *Excavations at Tel Beth-Shean 1989–1996, Volume II. The Middle and Late Bronze Age Strata in Area R*, Jerusalem, 242–389.
- Marchetti, N., 2006. "Middle Bronze Age Public Architecture at Tilmen Hoyuk and the Architectural Tradition of Old Syrian Palaces", in F. Baffi, R. Dolce, S. Mazzoni, F. Pinnock (eds.), *Ina kibrat erbetti. Studi di Archeologia orientale dedicati a Paolo Matthiae*, Roma, 275–308.
- Marchetti, N., Nigro, L., 1997. "Cultic Activities in the Sacred Area of Ishtar at Ebla During the Old Syrian Period: The Favissae F.5237 and F.5238", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 49, 1–44.
- 2000. "The Favissa F.5238 in the Sacred Area of Ishtar and the Transition from the Middle Bronze I to the Middle Bronze II at Ebla", in K. Van Lerberghe, G. Voet (eds.), *Languages and Cultures in Contact. At the Crossroads of Civilizations in the Syro-Mesopotamian Realm. Proceedings of the 42th RAI (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 96)*, Leuven, 245–287.
- in press. "A Third Favissa in the Sacred Area of Ishtar and the Transition from Middle Bronze II to Late Bronze I at Ebla", in J.-C. Margueron, P. de Miroschedji, J.-P. Thalmann (eds.), *Proceedings of the Third International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Paris.
- Maritan, L., Mazzoli, C., Michielin, V., Morandi Bonacossi, D., Luciani, M., Molin, G., 2005. "The Provenance and Production Technology of Bronze Age and Iron Age Pottery from Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna (Syria)", *Archaeometry* 47/4, 723–744.
- Matthiae, P., 1992. "High Old Syrian Royal Statuary from Ebla", in B. Hrouda, S. Kroll, P. Z. Spanos (eds.), *Von Uruk nach Tuttul. Eine Festschrift für Eva Strommenger*, München, Wien, 111–128.
- 1993. "L'aire sacrée d'Ishtar à Ebla: Résultats des fouilles de 1990–1992", *Comptes rendus (des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres)*, 613–662.
- 1997. "Tell Mardikh 1977–1996: Vingt ans de fouilles et de découvertes. La renaissance d'Ebla amorrhéenne", *Akkadica* 101, 1–29.
- 2001. "The Face of Ishtar", in J.-W. Meyer, M. Novak, A. Pruss (eds.), *Beiträge zur Vorderasiatischen Archäologie, Winfried Orthmann gewidmet*, Frankfurt am Main, 272–281.

- 2006. “Un grand temple de l’époque des archives dans l’Ébla protosyrienne: fouilles à Tell Mardikh 2004–2005”, *Comptes rendus (des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres)* 2006/1, 447–493.
- 2007. “Nouvelles fouilles à Ébla en 2006. Le Temple du rocher et ses successeurs protosyriens et paléosyriens”, *Comptes rendus (des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres)* 2007/1, 481–525.
- 2009a. “The Standard of the *maliktum* of Ebla in the Royal Archives Period”, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie* 99, 270–311.
- 2009b. “Temples and Queens at Ebla. Recent Discoveries in a Syrian Metropolis between Mesopotamia, Egypt and Levant”, *Baal Hors-Série* VI, 2009, 117–139.
- 2010. *Ebla. La città del trono*, Torino.
- Matthiae, P., Pinnock, F., Scandone Matthiae, G. (eds.), 1995. *Ebla. Alle origini della civiltà urbana*, Milano.
- Morandi Bonacossi, D., 2006. “A New Royal Statue from Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna”, in E. Czerny, I. Hein, H. Hunger, D. Melman, A. Schwab (eds.), *Timelines. Studies in Honour of Manfred Bietak (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 149)*, Vol. III, Leuven, 53–62.
- 2007a. “The Chronology of the Royal Palace of Qatna Revisited. A Reply to a Paper by Mirko Novák, Egypt and the Levant 14, 2004”, *Egypt and the Levant* 17, 221–240.
- 2007b. “Qatna and Its Hinterland during the Bronze and Iron Ages. A Preliminary Reconstruction of Urbanism and Settlement in the Mishrifeh Region”, in Morandi Bonacossi (ed.) 2007, 65–90.
- 2008. “Excavations on the Acropolis of Mishrifeh, Operation J. A New Early Bronze Age III – Iron Age III Sequence for Central Inner Syria. Part 1: Stratigraphy, Chronology and Architecture”, *Akkadica* 129/1, 55–127.
- 2009. “Tell Mishrifeh and Its Region during the EBA IV and the EBA-MBA Transition. A First Assessment”, in P. J. Parr (ed.), *The Levant in Transition (Palestine Exploration Fund Annual Series IX)*, London, Leeds, 56–68.
- in press. “The Lower City Palace of Qatna”, in P. Pfälzner (ed.), *Qatna and the Networks of Bronze Age «Globalism» (Qatna Studien)*.
- Morandi Bonacossi, D. (ed.), 2007. *Urban and Natural Landscapes of an Ancient Syrian Capital. Settlement and Environment at Tell Mishrifeh/Qatna and in Central-Western Syria. Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Udine, 9–11 December 2004 (Studi Archeologici su Qatna 1)*, Udine.
- Morandi Bonacossi, D., Da Ros, M., Garna, G., Iamoni, M., Merlino, M., 2009. “The ‘Eastern Palace’ and the Residential Architecture of Area T at Mishrifeh/Qatna. Preliminary Report on the 2006–2008 Excavation Campaigns of the Italian Component of the Syro-Italian Archaeological Project”, *Mesopotamia* 44, 61–112 and Pls. I–VI.
- Müller, V., 2002. “Offering Practices in the Temple Courts of Tell el-Dab’a and the Levant”, in M. Bietak (ed.), *The Middle Bronze Age in the Levant. Proceedings of an International Conference on MB IIA Ceramic Material in Vienna, 24th–26th of January 2001 (Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie 26)*, Wien, 269–296.
- 2008. *Tell el-Dab’a XVII: Opferdeponierungen in der Hyksoshauptstadt Auaris (Tell el-Dab’a) vom späten Mittleren Reich bis zum frühen Neuen Reich (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Untersuchungen der Zweigstelle Kairo des Österreichischen Archäologischen Institutes XXIX)*, Wien.

- Mukherjee, A. J. *et al.*, 2007. "Biomolecular Analysis of Ceramic Containers, Skeletal Remains, Anthropogenic Sediments and Organic Artefacts from the Royal Tomb at Qatna", in Morandi Bonacossi (ed.) 2007, 189–197.
- 2008. "The Qatna Lion: Scientific Confirmation of Baltic Amber in Late Bronze Age Syria", *Antiquity* 82, 49–59.
- Na'aman, N., 2002. "The Abandonment of Cult Places in the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah as Acts of Cult Reforms", *Ugarit-Forschungen* 34, 585–602.
- Nigro, L., 1996. "Santuario e pellegrinaggio nella Palestina dell'Età del Bronzo Medio (2000–1600 a.C.): recenti scoperte sulle aree di culto aperte e gli 'alti luoghi' dei Cananei", in L. Andreatta *et al.* (eds.), *Santuario, tenda dell'incontro con Dio. Tra storia e spiritualità*, Roma, 216–229.
- 2002. "The Middle Bronze Age Pottery Horizon of Northern Inner Syria on the Basis of the Stratified Assemblages of Tell Mardikh and Hama", in M. Al-Maqdissi, V. Matoian, Ch. Nicolle (eds.), *Céramique de l'Âge du Bronze en Syrie, I*, Beyrouth, 97–128.
- Novák, M., 2004. "The Chronology of the Royal Palace of Qatna", *Egypt and Levant* 14, 299–317.
- Oates, J., Molleson, Th., Sołtysiak, A., 2008. "Equids and an Acrobat: Closure Rituals at Tell Brak", *Antiquity* 82, 390–400.
- Oates, D., Oates, J., McDonald, H., 2001. *Excavations at Tell Brak Vol. 2: Nagar in the Third Millennium BC (McDonald Institute Monograph)*, London.
- Oren, E. D., 1997. "The 'Kingdom of Sharuhen' and the Hyksos Kingdom", in E. D. Oren (ed.), *The Hyksos: New Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*, Philadelphia, 253–283.
- Osborne, R., 2004. "Hoards, Votives, Offerings. The Archaeology of the Dedicated Object", *World Archaeology* 36, 1–10.
- Paoletti, V., 2005. "Eine Keramikassemblage aus der frühen Nutzungszeit des Palastes von Qatna", *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft* 137, 79–89.
- Papaconstantinou, D., 2010. "Abandonment Processes and Closure Ceremonies in Prehistoric Cyprus: In Search of Ritual", in D. Bolger, L. D. Maguire (eds.), *The Development of Pre-State Communities in the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of Edgar Peltenburg (Themes from the Ancient Near East British Association for Near Eastern Archaeology Publication Series 2)*, Oxford, 29–37.
- Parrot, A., 1959. *Le Palais 3: Documents et Monuments (Mission Archéologique de Mari II)*, Paris.
- Peyronel, L., 2006. "Stratigrafia e architettura", in F. Baffi (ed.), *Tell Tuqan. Ricerche archeologiche italiane nella regione del Maath (Siria)*, Lecce, 179–195.
- Pfälzner, P., 2007. "Archaeological Investigations in the Royal Palace of Qatna", in Morandi Bonacossi (ed.) 2007, 29–63.
- 2009. "Meisterwerke der Plastik. Die Ahnenstatuen aus dem Hypogäum", in M. Al-Maqdissi, D. Morandi Bonacossi, P. Pfälzner (eds.), *Schätze des alten Syrien. Die Entdeckung des Königreiches Qatna*, Stuttgart 2009, 204–207.
- Pfälzner, P., Dohmann-Pfälzner, H., 2010. "Qatna. Elefantenknochen und über 50 Schädel", *Antike Welt* 4/2010, 75–78.
- Pinnock, F., 2005. *La ceramica del Palazzo Settentrionale del Bronzo Medio II (Materiali e studi archeologici di Ebla 6)*, Roma.
- 2009. "Open Cults and Temples in Syria and the Levant", *Baal Hors-Série VI*, 195–207.
- Schmidt, K., 1998. "Göbekli Tepe", *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 48, 44–75.

- 2001. "Göbekli Tepe, Southeastern Turkey. A Preliminary Report on the 1995–1999 Excavations", *Paléorient* 26, 45–54.
- Schwartz, G. M., 2007. "Status, Ideology, and Memory in Third-Millennium Syria: 'Royal' Tombs at Umm El-Marra", in N. Laneri (ed.), *Performing Death. Social Analyses of Funerary Traditions in the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean (Oriental Institute Seminars 3)*, Chicago, 39–68.
- Strasser, T. F., 1999. "Bothroi in the Aegean Early Iron Age", in P. P. Betancourt et al. (eds.), *Meletemata. Studies in Aegean Archaeology Presented to Matholm H. Wiener as He Enters His 65th Year*, Vol. III (*Aegaeum* 20), Liège, 813–817.
- Thalman, J.-P., 2006. *Tell Arqa – I. Les niveaux de l'âge du Bronze (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 177)*, Beyrouth.
- Ussishkin, D., 1996. "Excavations and Restoration Work at Tel Lachish 1985–1994: Third Preliminary Report", *Tel Aviv* 23, 3–60.
- von Luschan, F., Jacoby, F., 1900. *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli*, IV, Berlin.
- 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 VIII (Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée 49)*, Lyon, 499–519.
- Woolley, C. L., 1955. *Alalakh. An Account of the Excavations at Tell Atchana in the Hatay, 1937–1949*, Oxford.
- Woolley, C. L., Barnett, R. D., 1952. *Carchemish. III: The Excavations in the Inner Town*, London.
- Yadin, Y., 1972. *Hazor: The Head of All Those Kingdoms*, London.
- Yadin, Y. et al., 1960. *Hazor II. An Account of the Second Season of Excavation, 1956*, Jerusalem.
- 1989. *Hazor III-IV: An Account of the Third and Fourth Seasons of Excavation, 1957–1958*, Jerusalem.
- Zarins, J., 1978. "The Domesticated Equidae of Third Millennium BC Mesopotamia", *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 30/1, 3–17.
- Zuckerman, Sh., 2007. "Anatomy of a Destruction: Crisis Architecture, Termination Rituals and the Fall of Canaanite Hazor", *Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology* 20/1, 3–32.