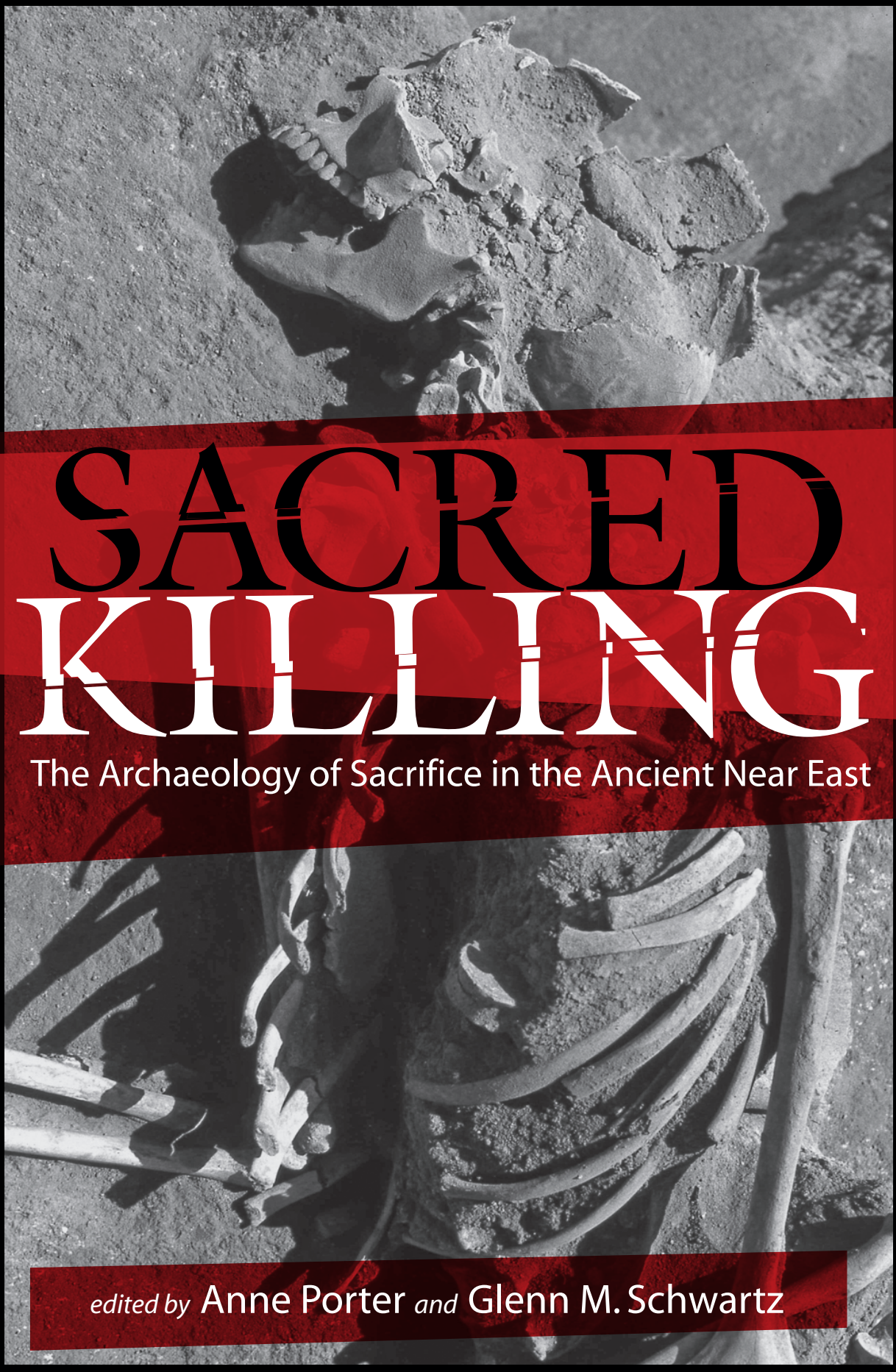


SACRED KILLING

The Archaeology of Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East

edited by Anne Porter *and* Glenn M. Schwartz

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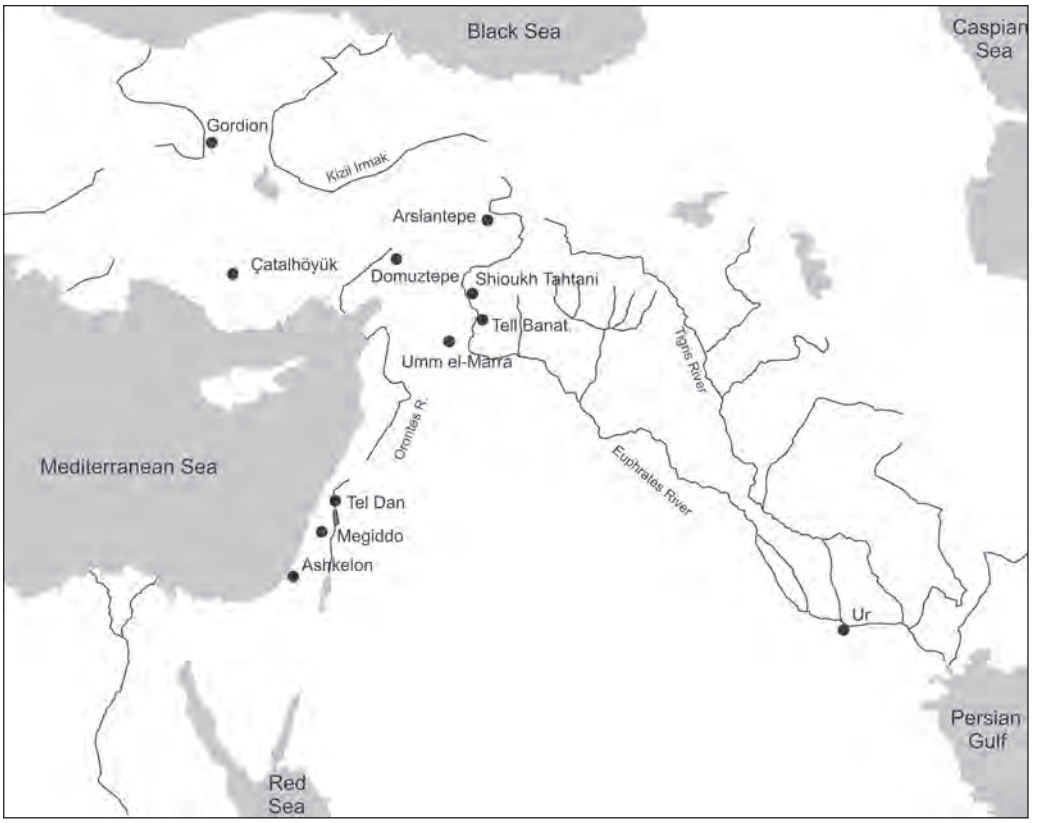
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Archaeology and Sacrifice

Glenn M. Schwartz

Although there is much debate about what it is and why people do it, it is clear that sacrifice was and is a central practice of the great majority of world religions. In the ancient Near East, sacrifice is frequently mentioned in textual sources, especially the Hebrew Bible, coloring and shaping Western scholarly attitudes toward the phenomenon (Das 1983). However, the presence and interpretation of sacrifice in the Near Eastern archaeological record has been more elusive and more challenging to deal with than has been the case for the textual record—and, indeed, one might say that the study of sacrifice in Near Eastern archaeology has rarely been accorded systematic consideration. We hope to begin to remedy that situation with the studies in this volume.

In recent years, results from Near Eastern archaeological contexts have provided new and often intriguing data on the practice of animal and human sacrifice in the ancient Near East. Having acquired some of these results from our own field projects, Anne Porter and I organized a two-part session at the American Schools of Oriental Research annual meeting in San Diego, California, November 2007, in order to examine some of these new data, to reconsider old material in new ways, and to see if it might be possible to develop new archaeological thinking on the topic of sacrifice. The papers in this volume build on that session and proceed beyond it, with contributions by Moses; Russell; Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler; Pongratz-Leisten; and Campbell solicited in order to broaden the chronological and geographical range covered, discuss relevant textual evidence, and provide commentary from a non–Near Eastern specialist on issues raised by the other contributors.

In this chapter, I explore different ideas on the nature and purpose of sacrifice and how it might be studied archaeologically. My aim is to provide a framework for the papers that follow and the range of issues that might be approached.

Beginning with the problem of definitions, we may remark that sacrifice is generally understood to be a religious activity—indeed, the etymology of the term is understood to derive from the Latin *sacer* 'sacred' and *facere* 'to make', meaning 'to make sacred' or, possibly, 'to perform a sacred act'. By religious activity, I mean actions involving the recognition of and interaction with supernatural entities (Renfrew 2007: 112–13). Campbell (in this volume, pp. 305–323) opposes the

Author's note: I am grateful to Ron Hendel and Ted Lewis for reading and commenting on a preliminary draft of this chapter and to Yoannis Mylonopoulos, Jason Tatlock, Jill Weber, and Ray Westbrook for discussions on some of the ideas contained within.

identification of sacrifice as a religious act, arguing that the separation of religious from nonreligious activities is a Western construct of questionable utility in societies in which almost everything is seen to have a connection to and involvement with supernatural forces. Similarly, several of the papers in this volume struggle with the distinction between religious sacrifice and "secular" killing, with some leaning toward the position that any ritualized killing of either animals or humans should be considered sacrifice (Hesse, Wapnish, and Greer in this volume, pp. 217–235). However, religion is not necessarily embedded in all aspects of life (Fogelin 2007: 60; Insoll 2004: 6, 27), and the consideration of all ritualized killing as sacrifice expands the concept so broadly as to be superfluous.[1]

Indeed, a workable definition of sacrifice, as with other broad concepts such as ritual, can be difficult to achieve (McClymond 2008: 1–2). Humphrey and Laidlaw (2007), citing Bloch (1992), propose that sacrifice entails the killing of a living thing, the offering of its life or life energy to entities in the supernatural world, and the acquisition of benefit to the sacrifier[2] through the consumption of some part of the offering. Eliminating the activity of consumption from this definition, Campbell (in this volume) defines sacrifice as ritualized action involving destruction and offering to supernatural forces. This sort of definition distinguishes animal sacrifice from other types of animal slaughter and differentiates human sacrifice from other ritualized killings such as the execution of criminals or ritualized warfare.[3] However, if the activity must include an offering to supernatural entities, we would be compelled to discard retainer, symbolic/dramatic, and some types of construction sacrifice (see p. 7 below). In his study of human sacrifice, Tatlock (2006) avoids this problem by defining sacrifice as "a slaying done with the direct intent of affecting the suprahuman realm of immaterial entities," a definition that leaves out the presentation of offerings.[4]

It may be that we must be content to live with these inconsistencies and dissonances, as Catherine Bell recommends in the case of the definition of ritual: "no field ever moves forward because a good number of people agree on the definition of some central concept that then allows them to get down to work" (Bell 2007: 283; see also Bell 1992). Work on sacrifice can proceed even when disagreement

1. For example, ritual warfare, the execution of criminals, and the ritual slaughter of animals purely for human consumption as in Islam or Judaism have significant differences from the activities commonly referred to as sacrificial. Note also that biblical passages (e.g., Lev 17:3–7, Deut 12:15ff.) condemn the slaughter of animals outside a religious context, which implies that these activities took place. I am grateful to Heath Dewrell for this insight.

2. In Hubert and Mauss's terminology (1964), the sacrifier is the person for whom the sacrifice is performed. The sacrificer, who performs the physical activity of sacrifice, may be a specialist rather than the person intended to benefit from the action.

3. See, however, discussions of modern capital punishment as a ritual of human sacrifice (Bell 1992: 114 n. 75; Purdum and Paredes 1989). Note also Humphrey and Laidlaw (2007), who maintain that not all sacrifice is necessarily ritualized.

4. McClymond (2008) considers the presentation of vegetal and liquid offerings to supernatural entitities as sacrificial activities, which would expand the definition of sacrifice beyond that of killing or destruction—although McClymond notes that the offering of soma vegetal material in Hindu ritual is referred to as "killing the plant."

exists on how to define it precisely. Keeping retainer, symbolic/dramatic, and construction sacrifice (see below, pp. 6–7) in the group of practices understood as sacrifice will be more useful than expelling them for purposes of definitional precision, given their common identification as sacrifice and their associations with and connections to other types of actions recognized as sacrificial. It will be important, at the same time, to ensure that the term does not become so broad as to lose its utility, as in defining all killing of humans or animals as sacrificial (Russell, pp. 79–95 in this volume; Hesse, Wapnish, and Greer in this volume). The important question is whether it is productive to consider the variety of activities generally understood to be "sacrificial" together, examining the different ways these activities resemble or fail to resemble one another cross-culturally in their meaning, practice, context, and social ramifications. Presumably, the results of the studies presented in this book will assist in determining whether this is the case.

In this volume, we consider both human and animal sacrifice. One might object that animal sacrifice is much more common and human sacrifice a bizarre abnormality. As René Girard (1977: 11) observed, scholars who study sacrifice in general rarely refer to human sacrifice, while those that study human sacrifice tend to focus on it exclusively, "dwelling at length on the 'sadistic' or 'barbarous' aspects of the custom."[5] Girard further comments that the separation of human from animal sacrifice presumes that one category of victim is unsuitable while another is eminently sacrificeable. But it is inappropriate to proceed *a priori* with such a notion, however distasteful the idea of human sacrifice may be. Similarly, recent work on the relationship between humans and animals has questioned the assumption that "nonhuman animals" are a distinct and subordinate category with respect to humans (Argent 2010; Miller 2006; Knight 2005; Latour 1993). Important to consider in this context is whether significant differences exist between human and animal sacrifice apart from the nature of the victims (Hill 1995: 105–6): are the intentions, perceived results, social ramifications, ritualized activities, participants, and types of societies associated with each type of sacrifice distinct, or might there be overlapping and 'dialogue' between the two types of sacrifice? The contributors to this volume often note the lack of a strict differentiation between animal and human sacrifice (e.g., Goslinga, pp. 33–56 in this volume; Weber, pp. 159–190 in this volume; Campbell in this volume); retainer sacrifice, for example, can include both human and animal victims, and the Shang offering pits discussed by Campbell include human and animal remains interpreted as offerings to elite ancestors.

Reasons for Sacrifice

Numerous explanations have been advanced for why people sacrifice, including several global or universal theories (e.g., Tylor 1874; Smith 1894; Hubert and Mauss 1964; Girard 1977; Burkert 1983). Although such general theories are "good to think," more-recent scholarship has tended to doubt that they can provide fully

5. See, for example, the title of the recent volume ed. Jan Bremmer (2007), *The Strange World of Human Sacrifice*.

satisfying explanations, because they fail to acknowledge the diverse historical and social peculiarities of each case and the great variability in the types and meanings of sacrifice (Bourdillon 1980: 23; Hendel 1989).

Perhaps the most commonly cited purpose for sacrifice is to present a gift to deities or supernatural entities (Tylor 1874; van Baal 1976). Indeed, the word sacrifice as used in modern European languages usually entails the idea of giving something that is valuable to the donor, if not the receiver. Frequently, the sacrificial gift is understood as nourishment for the gods, who are dependent on humans for their food. Mesopotamian myth, for example, explained that humanity was explicitly created to supply food for the gods, freeing them from arduous labor (Pongratz-Leisten, pp. 291–304 in this volume). In ancient Mesoamerica, sacrifices of human blood and human hearts were understood to furnish the divine world with crucial nourishment.

In giving up something of value, the sacrifier also indicates the extent of his or her devotion, in an act of self-denial or abnegation: "in any sacrifice, there is an act of abnegation since the sacrifier deprives himself and gives. The sacrifier gives up something of himself, but not himself proper" (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 100). But the gift, as is often the case, comes with the expectation of a favor returned, as encapsulated in the Latin phrase *do ut des*—'I give, in order that you may give'. The divine world is expected to provide benefits in return for the receipt of its gift (Pongratz-Leisten in this volume). Such benefits may be conjunctive, allowing humans to attain closer proximity to the supernatural world (e.g., acquiring good fortune or expressing thanksgiving), or they may be disjunctive, terminating unwanted contact with the supernatural (e.g., to avoid the effects of divine anger and resultant misfortune; Beattie 1980).[6]

In their classic essay on sacrifice, Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (1964) deemphasize gifting and instead focus on sacrifice as an opportunity for communication—and communion—with the divine. In this scenario, the victim is consecrated (made sacred) to serve as a mode of communication between the sacrifier and the deity, between the profane and the sacred (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 97).[7] William Robertson Smith (1894) also understood sacrifice to be an opportunity for humans to connect with the divine world, particularly through the consumption of the sacred meal that often followed the killing of the sacrificed animal.

Whether the sacrifice involves the presentation of a gift or communion with supernatural forces, we are still faced with the fundamental question: why do such actions require killing? Why not perform a creative act, as opposed to a destructive one? As Burkert notes (1987: 177), this question has been pondered at least since the time of Hesiod—"why must we *kill* the animals in order to turn them over to

6. Beattie (1980: 38–39) proposes four main goals of sacrifice: (1) to obtain or maintain closer contact with the divine or supernatural, (2) to achieve a degree of separation from the divine or supernatural, (3) to obtain for the sacrifier an increase or input of nonpersonalized "power," and (4) to achieve separation from, or the removal of, this power.

7. In their dichotomy of sacred vs. profane, Hubert and Mauss have been criticized for applying a Judeo-Christian world view to societies where these distinctions are not significant (see Goslinga in this volume).

the gods, the lords of life?" According to René Girard (1977, 1987a, 2005), who holds that violence is "the heart and secret soul of the sacred," the sacrificial victim serves as a focus for the violent inclinations of the society. The ritualized killing of a victim, sanctioned by the supernatural world, protects the rest of the community from its members' incipient tendency toward violence. In this scenario, the victim must be similar enough to the other members of the society to serve as an appropriate target but must be marginal enough that the killing does not engender actions of revenge. While it is unlikely that Girard's approach will explain the great diversity and historical specificities of the different manifestations of sacrifice, Girard provides one avenue to contemplating the centrality of violence in ritual.

Another perspective is offered by Walter Burkert (1983), who posits that the origins of blood sacrifice can be traced back to the Paleolithic era. Perceiving the killing of animals for food to be a crime, the hunters of the era ritualized and thus decriminalized the activity. While this proposition is useful for approaching the problem of sacred violence, the vast majority of documented cases of sacrifice involve domesticated animals, not hunted individuals.

Nevertheless, I would suggest that Burkert's focus on the connection between sacrificial violence and consumption is important. In order to live, humans must eat, which in turn requires killing—whether it be animal or plant food. Killing, therefore, is necessary to sustain life. Since sacrifice is often understood as a way to provide nourishment to the divine world (Trigger 2003: 475–84; Moses, pp. 57–77 in this volume), it would make sense that the gods must also be fed with animate beings that require killing before their consumption. The provision of sacrificed animals can certainly be construed in this way, and sacrificed humans were also offered as food for the supernatural world in pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and the Andes (Read 1998: 128; Carrasco 1999). In Aztec society, it was held that the sun's existence had to be ensured through the sacrifice of war captives, and the Maya also maintained that the blood of sacrificial victims nourished the divine world. For Shang China, Campbell (this volume) proposes that the human remains found together with animal parts in sacrificial pits were intended as food offerings to high-ranking ancestors. Whether human sacrifice as performed in the ancient Near East was intended for divine sustenance remains to be determined.

Obviously, such a global explanation will be subject to the same objections as those raised above, but I would suggest that the connection between violence and nourishment is relevant to sacrificial activity that concerns offerings or presentations to the divine world. The need for violence in other forms of sacrifice such as retainer, symbolic/dramatic, and construction is discussed below.

Only certain victims, whether human or animal, are typically deemed appropriate for sacrifice. It is often proposed that this is because the sacrifier must be associated as closely as possible with the victim (Hubert and Mauss 1964: 52). In this perspective, the victim is a stand-in for the sacrifier, whose own sacrifice would be the most extreme abnegation possible (Beattie 1980). Another human being is the closest one can achieve to a similarity with the sacrifier. In the case of human sacrifice, victims are often individuals of lower social status such as slaves, prisoners of

war, and children, ostensibly because their killing would involve fewer objections from powerful individuals than the killing of persons of higher rank.

If animals are the victims, domesticates are usually offered rather than wild animals (Russell in this volume). Ostensibly, this is because domesticates are associated with and live among the human community, as opposed to animals hunted in the wild (Beattie 1980: 30–31). Bloch (1992) notes that sacrifices of pigs are particularly common in New Guinea because pigs live with humans and are understood to be similar to humans in diverse ways.[8]

While Girard (1977) asserted that animals were domesticated in order to provide victims for sacrifice, Smith (1987) inverts the proposition, suggesting that sacrifice supplied a way to ritualize the killing of domesticated animals for selective breeding. Smith's proposal recalls the ideas advanced by Burkert with regard to ritualizing the killing of animals in the hunt (1983).

Sacrifice without Offering

Although the presentation of a victim in order to communicate with the divine world is probably the most common variety of sacrifice, other types of ritualized killing have been characterized as sacrifice. One such variety is retainer sacrifice, which entails the killing of people and/or animals after the death of a high-ranking person, presumably so that the retainers will serve their superior in the afterlife. One of the best-known examples of this phenomenon was provided by the archaeological excavations in the third-millennium B.C.E. Royal Cemetery of Ur in southern Mesopotamia, where up to 73 individuals were interred together with high-ranking persons upon their death. Sir Leonard Woolley, the excavator of Ur, posited that the retainers had taken their own lives by drinking poison, but the new results reported by Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler (pp. 125–158 in this volume) indicate that at least in some cases they were dispatched violently. Another well-known example of retainer sacrifice is supplied by the elite graves of Shang China in the later second millennium B.C.E., as discussed by Campbell (in this volume).[9] In both the Mesopotamian and Shang cases, animals as well as humans were included in the burial complexes, presumably to serve the elite individuals in the afterlife as the human retainers were expected to do. The third millennium B.C.E. equid burials at Umm el-Marra in northern Syria may provide examples of a similar practice, although Weber (in this volume) advances a different interpretation.

In his extensive discussion of retainer sacrifice, Testart (2004) maintains that the practice is a consequence of the bonds of personal loyalty established between leaders and their followers in early complex societies, in contrast to fidelity to a

8. Among the domesticates, certain types of animals may be deemed unsuitable for sacrifice. In the Hebrew Bible, for example, sacrificing "blemished" animals is prohibited, perhaps because the offering must be perfect as God, the recipient, is perfect. Likewise, a well-known second millennium B.C.E. text from Mari in Mesopotamia insists that donkeys are the only acceptable animals for treaty sacrifices (Lewis 2006: 347).

9. For examples reported by eyewitnesses from 19th-century C.E. Africa, see, for example, Wilks 1975, Sagan 1985, and Law 1985.

principle or institution.[10] Testart insists that this type of killing be excluded from consideration as sacrifice, because there is no offering involved. Indeed, it is certainly the case that there is no significant emphasis on communication with the divine world or the presentation of gifts to it. On the other hand, the practice is conducted with the intention of affecting the suprahuman realm,that is, the world of the dead, and so accords with Tatlock's definition of sacrifice.

Another category unconcerned with offerings made to supernatural forces might be called symbolic or dramatic. An example of this type is provided by ritualized killings of animals attending the conclusion of political treaties in the ancient Near East, a practice attested for early second millennium B.C.E. Syro-Mesopotamia (Hesse, Wapnish, and Greer in this volume; Lafont 2001) and occasional later contexts (Lewis 2006: 344). The implication is that the fate of the sacrificed animal is symbolic of the fate of the person who breaks the treaty, a concept made explicit in an 8th century B.C.E. treaty between Aššur-nerari V of Assyria and Matiʾ-ilu of Arpad:

> This spring lamb has not been brought out of its fold for sacrifice,[11] nor for a banquet, nor for a purchase, nor for (divination concerning) a sick man, nor to be slaughtered for [. . .]; it has been brought to conclude the treaty between Aššur-nerari, king of Assyria, with Matiʾ-ilu. If Matiʾ-ilu [sins] against th[is] sworn treaty, then, just as this spring lamb has been brought from its fold [and not behold] its fold again, (in like manner) may, alas, Matiʾ-ilu, together with his sons, daughters, [magnates], and the people of his land [be ousted] from his country, not return to his country, and not [behold] his country again. This head is not the head of a spring lamb; it is the head of Matiʾ-ilu, it is the head of his sons, his magnates, and the people of [his la]nd. If Matiʾ-ilu [should sin] against this treaty, so may, just as the head of this spring lamb is c[ut] off, and its knuckle placed in its mouth, [. . . .] the head of Matiʾ-ilu be cut off, and his sons. (Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 8–9)

Construction or foundation sacrifice consists of the killing of humans or animals for interment in building foundations, attested in East Asia and the Middle East. The rationale for such a practice is often said to be the provision of a solid and stable edifice (Campbell in this volume; Moses in this volume; Drake 1989: 273–74). In some East Asian cases, this type of sacrifice involves the presentation of an offering, as when the killing is intended to appease a supernatural entity displeased by the building project, but other foundation sacrifices are said to animate the building to protect it and provide a connection to the supernatural world (Wessing and Jordaan 1997).

An additional type of sacrifice that does not entail the presentation of an offering might consist of persons or animals killed in order to transport messages to a deity (Law 1985: 57). The Inca "ice mummies" (see p. 14 below) are interpreted in this light, with children understood to be particularly effective carriers of information from the human to the divine world.

10. See Pollock (2007) for an application of this idea to the Ur Royal Cemetery.

11. The term translated "sacrifice" (UDU.SISKUR) here refers to the slaughter of a sheep in a cultic context.

Social Aspects of Sacrifice

Although the religious thought and beliefs behind the practice of sacrifice are of great interest, these are often difficult to investigate archaeologically (Fogelin 2007). More approachable is the role that sacrifice plays in social and political contexts. How is sacrifice used by diverse actors in order to attain their goals?

Like other rituals, sacrifice can provide an opportunity to display and reinforce social identity and social differentiation (Detienne 1989b; Burkert 1983: 37; Smith 1894, 1903). Certain individuals are allowed to sacrifice, while others are excluded, such as strangers, slaves, and often women. Even within the group permitted to perform sacrifice, social differentiation can be effected through assignment of diverse ritual roles. Social differences and identities are also illustrated and perpetuated through the types of individuals chosen as victims, particularly in the case of human sacrifice, where the victims may be people with minimal power or legal rights in the society in question, such as prisoners of war, slaves, women and children. The presumed divine participation in the ritual legitimizes these models of social organization (Isaakidou et al. 2002).

There appears to be a particularly strong association between rituals of sacrifice—especially human sacrifice—and early states (Trigger 2003: 484–85). The period when authority is first established is often accompanied by an amplification of ritual, in order to legitimize and naturalize the new social order (Morris 2007). As Jay (1992: 148) observes, sacrifice is useful for monopolizing communication with the supernatural and acquiring divine legitimation of social inequality. Among the better-known examples of human retainer sacrifice in early states are those from Dynasty I Egypt, Shang China, and Early Dynastic Mesopotamia (Morris 2007; Campbell in this volume; Pollock 1991, 2007).

Among the Classic Maya, where human sacrifice was understood to nourish the divine world, rulers' participation in the practice sanctioned their political power and enhanced their prestige. The leader's ability to provide blood to feed the gods illustrated his efficacy and legitimacy as ruler. In the Aztec period, human sacrifice took on an even larger role and scale, legitimizing not just the individual ruler but the entire state and its expansionistic character (Demarest 1984; see also Graulich 2000). The explicit goal of the state was the acquisition of sacrificial victims from warfare in order to assure the continued functioning of the cosmos.

Human sacrifice may also play a role in intimidating the population, as Bruce Dickson (2006) has recently posited for the Ur Royal Cemetery.[12] In the 19th cen-

12. While Dickson emphasizes the terror-inducing aspects of retainer sacrifice at Ur, he also interprets the Ur evidence as a method of royal legitimation. He argues that the rulers of Ur represented themselves as divine and thus repeatedly had to demonstrate their divine status and connection with the supernatural through sacrifices. With the killing of retainers at the death of a ruler, the ruler was treated in a godlike way, affirming his or her divine status. At the same time, the rulers communicated their power over the bodies and lives ("bare life," in Agamben's words) of their subjects. One problem with Dickson's argument is that Mesopotamian rulers rarely claimed divine status (the first known ruler to be deified, Naram-Sin of Akkad, lived several centuries after the Ur Royal Cemetery rulers), and there is no reason to suppose that the Ur rulers had done so. Further, if the sacrificial rituals at Ur served to legitimate kingship,that is, make it accept-

tury, the king of the African polity of Asante is said to have commented: "If I were to abolish human sacrifices, I should deprive myself of one of the most effectual means of keeping the people in subjection" (Wilks 1975: 594).[13] However, the use of brute force to terrorize the populace is likely to be less effective in maintaining authority than establishing the ruler's legitimacy among the population, naturalizing the new political reality (Yoffee 2005: 40). It is not unlikely, therefore, that an extensive use of human sacrifice as a method of intimidation was characteristic of political elites who felt considerable insecurity and instability, as Davíd Carrasco (1999) has suggested for the Aztecs (but see Trigger 2003: 485).

The role of gender in sacrifice has been explored extensively in the work of Nancy Jay (1985, 1992), who remarked on the frequent exclusion of women from participation in sacrificial rituals—except, perhaps, as victims. She maintained that sacrifice is particularly common in societies with structures of intergenerational continuity and inheritance focused on productive property such as agricultural land and livestock (Jay 1992: xxiv–xxv).[14] In these societies, she argues, sacrifice serves to establish bonds of intergenerational continuity between males in a way that is independent of women and their monopoly on childbearing. As she puts it, sacrifice is a "remedy" to men for having been born of woman, providing an alternative method of male-to-male succession. While Jay's attention to gender is important, it is doubtful that sacrifice served as a metaphor for male-to-male descent as frequently as she suggests. It is true that most officiants and participants in sacrifice were males, but it does not necessarily follow that intergenerational male continuity was the main point of sacrifice, because public figures in many societies, especially complex ones, were typically male.

Sacrifice and the Archaeological Record

How can sacrifice be studied archaeologically? Our first task—and not an especially easy one—would be the identification of sacrificial ritual in the archaeological record. One of the few elements in our favor is the nature of ritual to be repetitive, so that repeated patterns of behavior that stand out from the usual might be discernible in the archaeological record (Marcus 2007: 68). A useful addition to material culture data, if available, would be apposite textual or iconographic evidence (Bourget 2006). Likewise, the prudent use of ethnographic analogies or ethnohistoric data is valuable when such material exists (Moses in this volume; Porter, pp. 191–215 in this volume; Voigt, pp. 237–290 in this volume; cf. Insoll 2004: 101ff.).

able and uncontroversial in the minds of the people, ostensibly there would have been little need to terrorize them into accepting royal authority.

13. It should be noted, however, that there is some question as to the tendency for European observers to characterize executions of criminals in Asante as human sacrifice (Wilks 1975).

14. In earlier publications (1985), Jay proposed that sacrifice is particularly characteristic of societies where patrilineal lineages are important structuring mechanisms, but she later stated that categories of intergenerational continuity such as patrilineal, matrilineal, and bilateral are too restrictive and oversimplifying (1992: 32).

Table 1. Archaeological Signatures of Sacrificial and Nonsacrificial Activities Involving Animals

Nonsacrificial Activities	*Offerings to Supernatural*	*Retainer Sacrifice*	*Construction Sacrifice*
Human consumption; fragmentary bones in domestic or midden contexts; with butchery marks; wide range of body parts, species or ages represented (while acknowledging the problem that sacrificed animals can be consumed by humans in domestic contexts)	Age-, gender-, and/or species-specific concentration of animals divergent from ages, genders and/or species of slaughtered animals elsewhere in community, preferably in ritual context, with other distinctive and repeating characteristics	Complete skeleton in mortuary context (vs. skeletal fragments with butchery marks in mortuary contexts)	Complete or near-complete articulated skeleton embedded in architectural foundations or walls, or adjacent to foundations
Not for human consumption or sacrificial use; complete or near-complete skeleton of nonfood animal in nonreligious contexts (e.g., midden, street)	Burned bones in religious context not interpretable as remains solely intended for human consumption	Complete skeleton in mortuary context in association with human retainers or in association with draft vehicles	
	Bones in religious context in association with offering feature (altar) with blood residue on feature		
	Certain parts of animal reserved for divine world attested repeatedly or in religious context		
	Complete skeleton in religious context (temple, altar)		

In many if not most cases, the identification of animal sacrifice (table 1) will be dependent on the discovery of remains in contexts understood to be devoted to religious purposes. Determining whether physical space was used for cultic functions can be challenging in and of itself, but criteria for the endeavor can include locational characteristics and architectural or portable features associated with sacred space as discussed by Renfrew (1985, 2007). Ancient textual evidence to help identify characteristics of sacred space will also be important if available.

If one finds animal bones with evidence of butchery in a cultic context, there are at least three interpretive possibilities: the remains of an offering to the gods, the remains of human consumption by people residing in, working in, or visiting the

sacred space, or meat remains intended for both divine and human consumption, as in the case of divine/human communal meals such as the biblical "peace" offering. How do we distinguish among the three possibilities? The specifics of each case will have to be considered carefully and contextual patterns analyzed accordingly. In classical Greece, for example, parts of the animal carcass were burned as an offering to the gods, while humans consumed the meat (Detienne 1989a: 3, 11; Detienne and Vernant 1989; Isaakidou et al. 2002).[15] Gebhard and Reese (2005) were able to distinguish between burned bones derived from a sacrificial burnt offering found near the altar and the unburned or partially burned bones left over from cooking for human consumption in their work at the sanctuary of Poseidon in 1st millennium B.C.E. Isthmia (see also Forstenpointner 2003).

In some cases, only certain parts of a sacrificed animal were reserved for the divine world, as the Biblical and Classical sources stipulate.[16] Therefore, the recovery of repeated examples of a specific part of the animal skeleton would lend itself to hypotheses of animal sacrifice, particularly if they were found in a context interpretable as religious or cultic. Gebhard and Reese (2005) identified such patterns in the faunal remains from 1st millennium B.C.E. Isthmia, as did Hamilakis and Konsolaki (2004) at the Mycenaean sanctuary at Ayios Konstantinos, where the nonmeaty parts were burned. Such selective presence of certain body parts should not be attributable to taphonomic causes (e.g., the differential survival rates of certain bones) or the logistics of carcass-processing (Isaakidou et al. 2002: 88).

Selective age representations in a restricted spatial area may also be useful, as in the case of the Iron II Tel Dan cultic installation discussed by Hesse, Wapnish, and Greer (in this volume). In this locus, the recovered bones originally indicated the presence of animals that were significantly younger than those in the rest of the community (Wapnish and Hesse 1991). Such age-related differentiation argues for different slaughtering activities from those carried out elsewhere in the community, and the cultic context suggests sacrificial practices.[17]

The recognition of traces of animal blood on features identified as part of religious contexts would also be grounds for the reconstruction of animal sacrifice.[18] Again, it would be necessary to differentiate between slaughter of an animal as an offering to the divine and slaughter conducted solely for human consumption.

If complete or near-complete animal skeletons without modifications from butchery or consumption are found in a religious context, this might also be understood as evidence of an offering to the gods. The unmodified skeleton would signify that the animal was not used for human consumption, and the religious context would imply the probability of sacrifice. However, instances such as these may not be common, because humans often consume the meat of the sacrificed animal.

15. Classical Greece is an example of a society in which most meat consumed by humans derived from sacrifice (see also Insoll 2010: 239).

16. See Leviticus 1–7; Isaakidou et al. 2002; Gebhard and Reese 2005; Ekroth 2008.

17. Note that this pattern could change as a result of the current analysis of a larger sample from this context.

18. Russell (in this volume). See Verano (2001) on the use of serological analysis to recognize and study blood residues in possible sacrificial contexts.

As the above discussion indicates, animal remains of restricted age, sex, species, and body part, as opposed to generalized animal refuse, will be of particular use for the recognition of animal sacrifice in the archaeological record. In all cases, the more examples, the better: individual instances of sacrifice will be the most difficult, if not impossible, to identify. Archaeologists must also be prepared for negative results: Insoll (2010) records cases in which people remove the remains of sacrificed animals from the locus of sacrifice, leaving little or no material evidence of the sacrificial event.[19]

Examples of the sacrifice of animals as "retainers" might be identified through the discovery of complete animal skeletons in human mortuary contexts without signs of butchery. The case would be strengthened if they are found together with draft vehicles, as in the Ur Royal Cemetery or the Shang elite burials, or if they are associated with sacrificed human retainers. One might not expect the remains of dramatic/symbolic sacrifice such as ancient Near Eastern treaty sacrifice to be common in the archaeological record, but these might be identified if specifics of the treaty ritual correspond to recovered remains (Way 2010: 214–15).[20] Construction sacrifice will be inferable if a complete or near-complete animal skeleton or skeletons are identified in the foundations of a structure.

Animal remains not interpretable as sacrifice might fall into several categories. Most common would be portions of animals slaughtered solely for human consumption. One would generally expect these remains to consist of fragmentary bones from food animals found in domestic or trash contexts. Remains such as these would tend to manifest a larger range of species, ages, sexes, and body elements than those from sacrifice, as noted above. These would also be likely to bear the marks of butchery activities. Also outside the category of animal sacrifice would be remains of nonfood animals such as dogs or equids that died a natural death or were killed for reasons other than food consumption or retainer, symbolic or construction sacrifice. These cases would be manifest as complete or near-complete skeletons without human modification discovered in middens or streets. Animals killed in natural catastrophes, fires, or enemy attacks would constitute an additional nonsacrificial category. In these cases, the skeletons should exhibit demographic patterns of a living herd, rather than ages and sexes selected for food consumption or other specific purposes.

The recognition of varieties of human sacrifice in the archaeological record will likewise be a challenging enterprise dependent on context, repetition, and sample size (table 2). The case of a person killed as an offering to the gods might be hypothesized if a complete or near-complete skeleton is deposited in a context understood as religious, especially if there is evidence for violent death or binding of the limbs

19. Similarly, material remains of sacrifice can be transported to nonreligious locales, for example, to domestic contexts where the meat from sacrificed animals is consumed. In these cases, evidence such as selective age, species, and body part may provide information to allow for a sacrificial interpretation.

20. Unfortunately, details of the material appurtenances and physical context of treaty sacrifices are usually not provided to a useful degree in the textual sources.

Table 2. Archaeological Signatures of Human Sacrifice and Nonsacrificial Behavior

Nonsacrificial Activities	*Offerings to Supernatural*	*Retainer Sacrifice*	*Construction Sacrifice*
Interments similar to others in community, without sacrificial characteristics noted in the second, third, fourth columns	Skeletal material in religious context; evidence for violent death or binding of limbs	Simultaneous primary interment of high and low-ranking individuals; low-ranking individuals with evidence of violence or binding	Complete or near-complete articulated skeleton in or adjacent to structure's foundations
Multiple interments of victims of infectious disease, battle, fire, or natural disaster	Age- and/or gender-specific interments with other distinctive and repeating characteristics		

(Sugiyama 2005). The larger the number of such individuals in a given location, the more vigorous a case for sacrifice could be made. It will be necessary to distinguish the primary deposition of the bones, which might imply sacrifice, from a secondary deposition that is less likely to be interpretable as sacrificial (Verano 2001). Human sacrifice would also be a plausible interpretation if skeletal evidence of persons who died violent deaths is found in association with architectural types otherwise associated with sacrifice, as in the D-shaped structures of the Wari (Cook 2001).

However, a hypothesis of human sacrifice as offering would have to present evidence rejecting the likelihood that the individual was buried in a religious context for other reasons. If religious specialists or other members of a community were routinely buried in a temple or other religious location, then such interments would need to be distinguished from the bodies of sacrificial victims. Violent death due to execution, murder, battle, or natural disaster would also have to be ruled out. Campbell (in this volume) reveals that in Shang China dead humans and animals whose bodies were chopped into small pieces were intended as offerings to the elite dead and were distinguished from retainers killed to serve their masters in the afterlife. Although human sacrifice is sometimes followed by cannibalistic feasting (Pijoan and Lory 1997; Carter, pp. 97–124 in this volume), evidence of cannibalism alone is not enough to confirm human sacrifice, because the persons whose flesh was consumed could have suffered death from other causes.

Evidence of human retainer sacrifice from a mortuary context might consist of the simultaneous primary interment of individuals with prestige goods together with individuals with few if any such goods and thus likely to be of lesser social status (Campbell in this volume). The recognition of simultaneous interment of bodies, as opposed to sequential interment, will be an important problem in and of itself. This evidence should consist of articulated skeletal remains from several individuals in similar states of preservation in the same stratigraphic context. The case

of retainer sacrifice will be all the stronger if the nonelite remains display evidence of violence or if they exhibit evidence of binding.

Construction sacrifice would be attested by the discovery of a complete or near-complete human skeleton interred in the foundations of a structure or adjacent to them. Evidence of the person's violent death would make for a stronger case, because the body of a person who died a natural death might have been interred (Verano 2001). Cases of symbolic/dramatic sacrifice would have to be assessed given the cultural specifics of each society under consideration.

Human mortuary remains that could be distinguished from cases of sacrifice would include interments that resemble others in the community in question, without the sacrificial characteristics noted above. Cases of the simultaneous interment of multiple individuals, while potentially interpretable as sacrificial, could also be attributed to mass death from infectious disease, possibly identifiable through paleopathological analysis, mass killing in battle, or mass killing of prisoners of war (Otterbein 2000). Deposition of nonsacrificial human remains outside mortuary contexts could be the result of death in a conflagration (in which case one would expect a demographic profile representative of the entire living population, perhaps a haphazard distribution of the bodies, with evidence of burning and without differentiation by age or other characteristics), war (the bodies scattered haphazardly, perhaps with evidence of associated weapons; Muscarella 1989: 32–36; Stronach 1991: 305–6), or natural catastrophe (haphazard scatter, no age or other differentiation).

In general, a large sample of interred individuals with salient characteristics that suggest sacrifice will be more convincing than one or two examples. In the case of the Inca "ice mummies," for example, the interred individuals are characterized by specific ages (children or young adolescents), are victims of violence, and are found in individual elaborate tombs in high-altitude locations far from the usual loci of interment (Ceruti 2003). The unusual location and funerary regalia mark these individuals as distinct from "ordinary" buried persons, while the evidence of violent death is unlikely to be attributable to execution for criminal offenses, given their age. Thus, stronger cases for sacrifice inferred from the archaeological record will have a combination of factors in their favor, and the availability of textual, iconographic, or ethnohistoric data strengthen the argument all the more.

Having determined that a case of sacrifice is likely, archaeology can then attempt to reconstruct the particulars of sacrificial ritual—where, when, and how sacrifice took place, and who was involved. The place of sacrifice can be considered: where was the ritual conducted, and where were its remains distributed spatially? Whether the activity took place in a setting that was indoor or outdoor, within a community or outside, public or private, monumental or ordinary, accommodating large numbers of people or restricted to a small group, are all questions that can be addressed (Campbell in this volume). The timing of the activity may also be investigated, with respect to the history of the broader society, the history of the local community, and the time of year (Moses in this volume). The association of sacrificial activity with ceremonies involving life passages (for example, births, weddings,

funerals) or other ceremonies relevant to the life of the community (for example, warfare, agriculture), kin group, or individual is also relevant for study. The nature of the victim and, if possible, other participants will be important to consider.

Having examined these variables, one may consider the sociopolitical context and ramifications of sacrificial behavior. Investigating the victims, participants, and spectators' species, gender, age, and social status, the location of the activity, the historical moment, and other relevant factors will be instrumental in studying the role sacrifice played in sanctioning hierarchy or integrating community. What part did sacrifice play in indexing social groups and their boundaries? Who was excluded, and who included?

Considering sacrificial ritual from a sensory perspective will be difficult given the usually fragmentary nature of archaeological data, but one may consider the possible presence and effect of music, dance, the screams of the victims, and the stench of corpses (Goslinga in this volume; Hesse, Wapnish, and Greer in this volume; Laneri 2010). Most difficult of all to attain will be an understanding of the meaning of the ritual and the beliefs that were associated with sacrifice. Relevant evidence could include iconographic data or repetitive behaviors that can be related to conceptions of the supernatural. For example, the presence of retainer sacrifice implies belief in an afterlife, the persistence of social rank into the afterlife, the propriety of high ranking persons to be served by social inferiors in the afterlife, and the efficacy of sacrifice for this sort of purpose.

Some Examples (and Frustrations)

I shall now try to illustrate briefly some of these points—and associated challenges—with examples from my excavations at Umm el-Marra in Syria, some of which are discussed in further detail in the chapters by Jill Weber and Anne Porter. Umm el-Marra is a site of some 20–25 hectares between Aleppo and the Euphrates in the Jabbul plain of northern Syria, occupied ca. 2800–1300 B.C.E., that is, throughout most of the Bronze Age (Curvers and Schwartz 1997; Schwartz et al. 2000, 2003, 2006, 2012). During the mid-to-late third millennium B.C.E., the acropolis in the site center was used as a burial place for elite persons. In one of the latest tombs, Tomb 1, dating to ca. 2300 B.C.E., two distinct episodes of interment were discerned, distributed in three layers. The earlier interment episode was manifested by the incomplete remains of an adult (probable female) associated with some pottery and silver fragments. Sometime afterward, two adult men were interred side by side, with an infant (age at death estimated at 3–5 months) at some distance from them near the tomb entrance, and then two young women, each with a baby (ages at death estimated at 1–2 and 1–3 months), were placed above them.[21] The women

21. According to analysis conducted by Ernest K. Batey, University of Arkansas (personal communication; Batey 2011), the ages of the two young women are estimated as follows: skeleton A, young adult (20–35 years), likely 20–25 years; skeleton D, adolescent (10–15 years), likely 13–15 years. The ages of the two men below are both estimated as young adult (20–35 years), with skeleton B likely 25–30 years and skeleton C likely 30–35 years. I am very grateful to Batey for supplying these data.



Fig. 1. Tomb 1, top level, from southwest.

were accompanied by personal ornaments of gold, silver, and lapis lazuli, while the men were much more modestly outfitted (figs. 1, 2).

It is likely that the men, women, and babies in the top two layers were interred at approximately the same time. The men's skeletons were well-preserved, which would be improbable had the young women's bodies been put in after the men's bodies had become defleshed. In that case, the men's bones would have been disturbed and in disarray, as was the individual in the lowest level. Thus, the women must have been interred at some point prior to the defleshing of the men's bodies.[22] Further, the symmetry and side-by-side arrangement of the adults in both levels also implies a simultaneity of interment.

Why were two men, two women and two babies interred simultaneously in pairs—along with an additional baby—and why were the women outfitted much more sumptuously than the men? There is no evidence for burning, which rules out death in fire, and death in battle is improbable given the diverse ages and sexes. Since there is no trace of severe physical trauma, there is little reason to infer death in a natural disaster. Intradynastic conflict might be a possibility, with members of an elite family or group dispatched by rivals in a fashion undetectable by present-

22. Given the relatively dry climate and burial conditions, it is likely that the bodies in the Umm el-Marra tombs were skeletonized by at least two years after death if not sooner (Schwartz forthcoming).



Fig. 2. Tomb 1, middle level, from east.

day skeletal analysis. Another explanation for the simultaneous interments would be the death of the interred individuals during an epidemic. Thus far, paleopathological analysis by Ernest Batey (2011) neither supports nor rejects this sort of interpretation; it is not unlikely that death from an infectious disease would have been too quick to leave any trace on the bones (Ortner and Putschar 1981: 104–5).

In the absence of a definitive conclusion on the above interpretations, we may consider the possibility of sacrifice. One scenario is retainer sacrifice (table 2). Two women of high rank were buried with wealthy accoutrements and their babies, both of whom died soon after childbirth, and were accompanied in death by male retainers, outfitted much more modestly.[23] Although there is no evidence of violence or of binding, the killings may not have left archaeological traces. If this interpretation is correct, then Tomb 1 offers evidence of the use of sacrifice to reinforce and legitimize social hierarchy in a period when complex and urban polities were just emerging. The killing of men to serve high-ranking women in the afterlife raises issues of gender and power relations: was the status of elite women especially in need of legitimation, as opposed to men? At the same time, the uniqueness of the observed patterns in Tomb 1 signals the rarity of the inferred practice and the probable special nature of the individuals or associated events.

23. Interment with lavish grave goods need not be associated with high social status (Parker Pearson 1999), but it often is.

Despite the attractions of retainer sacrifice as an interpretation for Tomb 1, we may question this interpretation on several grounds. The remains found in the two layers of Tomb 4, another well-preserved tomb in the complex, indicate that elite women may have typically been buried with more wealth than elite men, because the three women in that tomb of six individuals are more lavishly outfitted with costly personal ornaments than the men.[24] Likewise, it may be improbable that lower-ranking sacrificed victims would be buried in such close proximity to elite individuals; at Arslantepe and Ur, the sacrificed bodies were distinctly separated from the bodies of high-ranking persons (Frangipane et al. 2001; Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler in this volume). Finally, the simultaneous deaths of two elite women and their babies would have to be accounted for.

Alternatively, one might suggest that the two *women* (and babies?) were victims of sacrifice, given the unusual patterns of symmetry and grave wealth. For example, one could suggest that the women were priestesses ritually sacrificed in their cultic finery, as has been proposed for the graves of the Ur Royal Cemetery (Moorey 1977). The interred men would require explanation in this sort of scenario—were they also sacrificed, and if not, why did they both die simultaneously? Unfortunately, both the unique and fragmentary nature of our data precludes the possibility of a definitive decision as to the credibility of this interpretation, as was the case with the retainer sacrifice hypothesis. As with the Ur Royal Cemetery, a clear-cut explanation of the patterns evident in Umm el-Marra Tomb 1 is not likely to be attained quickly. Interpretations involving sacrifice must clearly play a part, but continuing analysis and discussion are necessary to achieve further progress.[25]

Considering the where, when, and how questions enumerated above, several observations can be made. If the upper two levels of Tomb 1 represent the remains of sacrificial activities, we are not aware of where the killings took place, who the perpetrators may have been, or the different steps of the ceremony; we only know the presumed victims' final resting place.[26] Still, we can infer that a large audience for the interments was unlikely, given the congested nature of the tomb complex, with little open space available (Schwartz et al. 2012: fig. 2). Although we are not apprised of many of the ceremonial particulars of the interments and thus the sensory aspects of the rituals involved, we must certainly consider the olfactory ramifications of a mausoleum containing decomposing bodies in the center of a living community.

Reconstruction of the beliefs associated with the ritual activities taking place in or around Tomb 1 will depend on which interpretation of those rituals we prefer, whether it be retainer or other kinds of sacrifice or an unusual interment due to an extraordinary death. Clearly, if retainer sacrifice is an effective interpretation, the

24. Note that analysis of the skeletal material by E. Batey has determined skeleton E in the lower level of Tomb 4, preliminarily designated as an adult male (Schwartz et al. 2006: 611), to be a probable adult female. Found near skeleton E were two small rectangular gold ornaments, an ivory "comb," and a miniature basalt table.

25. See Porter (in this volume) for further discussion of Tomb 1.

26. For further discussion of these issues with respect to the tomb complex as a whole, see Schwartz forthcoming.

Table 3. Installations with Animal and Human Infant Remains from Umm el-Marra Acropolis Center, Third Millennium B.C.E.[a]

Installation	*Type*	*Animals*	*Infants*	*Other Materials*
A	I	4 equids	cranial and post-cranial fragments estimated age at death: 1–2 months	incised ceramic stand sherds; decorated goblet
B	II	2 equids 1 equid skull 6 puppies sheep/goat and cattle bones	near-complete skeleton estimated age at death: 30–32 weeks to full term (stillborn) right femur, left tibia estimated age at death: 0–1 month	spouted jar
Outside B			partial skeleton (less than 25% complete) estimated age at death: 1–2 months	
Outside B			partial skeleton (less than 25% complete) estimated age at death: 0–1 month	
C	II	2 equids 1 dog	large jar with 3 infants[b] 2 ca. 50% complete, 1 less than 25% complete) estimated age at death: 1–1.5 months (postnatal)	spouted jar
D	II	6 equids	skull and post-cranial fragments estimated age at death: data not yet available	spouted jar
E	I	4 equids		globular jar 2 copper/bronze objects of unclear function
F	I	4 equids		clay bulla with cylinder seal impression
G	III	4 equids (upper pit) 4 equids (lower pit)		incised ceramic stand sherd (joins with those of Installation A)

a. The osteological results reported here are courtesy of Batey, who conducted the analysis in 2006. Faunal data are provided by Jill Weber, University of Pennsylvania. Only complete or near-complete equids or extra equid skulls are listed in this table; see Weber (in this volume) for further details. Note that Type IV installations comprise three examples of individual equids found outside or adjacent to other installations (against the eastern wall of Tomb 8, against the southern wall of Installation E, and in a pit below Installation G).

b. Two equid skulls, a spouted jar, and a large jar containing infant remains were associated with Installation D in Schwartz et al. 2006: 627, but further excavation of Installation C suggests that these remains are more likely to be associated with the latter feature. The infant remains inside the large jar were identified as a single individual in Schwartz et al. 2006, but subsequent analysis by Batey revealed the presence of three individuals (Schwartz 2007: 42, n. 8).



Fig. 3. Installation E, from east.

beliefs associated with this behavior detailed above could be inferred. The interment of the tomb occupants together with personal ornaments reveals that these ornaments were understood to be necessary in the afterlife, although whether they were personal possessions during life, gifts for the burial, or gifts intended for underworld spirits remains to be deduced. The east-west positioning of the bodies and the eastern doorway, facing the rising sun, may be hypothesized as a reference to death as a form of rebirth (Schwartz forthcoming).

In the vicinity of Tomb 1 and other nearby tombs were Installations A–G containing the skeletons of animals, particularly male equids, and, in several cases, human infants (table 3). Weber (in this volume) has recognized four varieties of installation based on architectural differences and differential ages of the interred animals. It seems likely that at least the younger equids, found in the installations designated as Type I (fig. 3), were sacrificed, although there is no sign of inflicted violence on the bone remains. Retainer sacrifice seems a likely interpretation, with the equids intended to transport the nearby elite humans in (and to?) the afterlife, because the evidence consists of the complete skeletons of nonfood animals in a mortuary context (table 1).In contrast, Weber (in this volume) advances a different interpretation, proposing that the animals were not examples of retainer sacrifice but constituted offerings to the supernatural, because they are represented by complete specimens found repeatedly in a special, "religious" context, with selective age, sex and species represented (table 1).

We may address further details of the rituals through consideration of variables such as place, timing, social implications, and sensory associations as detailed



Fig. 4. Installation B, from east.



Fig. 5. Installation B, south compartment, with human infant (left) and equid (right) remains, from northeast.

above. It is likely that the Type I sacrifices took place in the mortuary complex, with the animals led into the installation and slaughtered there, given the difficulties of installing a dead equid in a standing position.[27] While it seems probable that the equids were killed and interred at the same time as the elite humans buried nearby, it is not possible to demonstrate this. With respect to the participants in the ritual, it is likely that only a small group could have been present in the vicinity of the installation, given the absence of substantial open space. As observed above, the olfactory consequences of killing and interring animals or humans in the midst of a living community must have been significant, but the equids were buried in subterranean pits and covered over with soil, reducing unpleasant odors.

Social ramifications of the equid sacrifices are likely to revolve around the elite identity of the animals killed and interred. Because the equids were probably examples of the *kunga* hybrids highly valued in third-millennium Syro-Mesopotamia, their sacrifice would have served to advertise and naturalize the high status and wealth of the humans interred nearby. The older equids, which presumably died natural deaths, also were memorialized as high-status animals and may also have been understood to follow their masters into the next world.[28]

When considering the question of the potentially artificial dichotomy (Latour 1993) between human and animal, it is worth noting similarities between the equid installations and the human tombs nearby. These include the east-west orientation of both the human and animal bodies, with the heads to the west, as well as the side-by-side placement of animals in the type II installations, resembling that of the humans in Tomb 1. While there are significant differences between the human tombs and the equid installations with regard to contents and architecture, these commonalities suggest some congruence of ritual and belief associated with the elite humans and animals.

Also relevant to the question of the relationship between animal and human inclusions is the presence of human infants in burial features otherwise devoted to animals. Were the infants also sacrificed, with their bodies added to installations primarily intended for animals? Because the near-complete infant skeleton in Installation B has been identified as stillborn, this individual would not have been the victim of sacrifice (figs. 4–5). However, the other infants appear to have been alive for at least several weeks or months before their deaths. Consulting our criteria for identifying sacrifice (table 2), the infants that had not been stillborn could be hypothesized as offerings made to the divine world, given the repeating pattern of age-specific interments in extraordinary and probably religious contexts.[29]

27. However, it might have been possible to inter a dead animal in a standing posture once rigor mortis set in, or the equids' legs could have been placed in the compartments and then encased in soil (Schwartz forthcoming).

28. See now Way (2010) on equid sacrifices in the Bronze Age Near East.

29. One might consider that the infants were not killed or sacrificed but had died for other reasons and were interred in the animal installations after their deaths, but see Moses (in this volume) on the unsuitability of naturally deceased persons as offerings to supernatural entities. It could also be suggested that infants were the primary interments in the installations, but this is unlikely because the animals were inserted first and the installations were constructed so as to

Unfortunately, the reasons for the propriety of these offerings is by no means obvious. Infants can be favored as sacrificial victims due to their purity or their marginal status in society (Kamp 2001: 22; Clendinnen 1991: 110). Inca children were seen as especially effective communicants with gods (Hastorf 2003: 634), while Moses (in this volume) proposes that infants may have been sacrificed due to their liminal status, close to the beginning of life, or were understood to have close associations with the netherworld. Stavrakopolou (2004: 294) discusses biblical allusions to sacrifices of children offered to royal ancestors, perhaps intended to ensure the continuity of the dynasty. Left unexplained, however, is why infant sacrifice would have been deemed appropriate in contexts primarily devoted to animal inclusions.

As these examples from Umm el-Marra show, there can be many challenges to archaeological recognition and interpretation of sacrifice. Nevertheless, the attempt must be made, given the cultural importance and frequency of the practice.

Organization of the Volume

The chapters in this volume consider data from the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, and Hellenistic periods in west Asia. Our focus is therefore both diachronic and crosscultural. The virtues and advantages of a comparative method have been well documented in the history of scholarship (Trigger 2003),[30] but crosscultural patterns and similarities should not be allowed to overshadow the unique historical specificities of each case. As Campbell (in this volume) asserts, "sacrificial practices are historically as well as culturally embedded in particular times and places and . . . they can scarcely be understood without their specific historical contexts."

The reader will note a divergent array of approaches and intellectual styles in the papers presented here. Some participants prefer a fact-filled essay, while others opt for a more free-ranging interpretive approach. The editors deliberately aimed for this catholic presentation in order to represent the different approaches currently at play in the field and to provide a range of possibilities for considering the questions under scrutiny. Sometimes, this arrangement leads to conflicting interpretations, while at other times the different approaches lead to converging results.

Reporting the results of an ethnographic study of a goat sacrifice in India, Goslinga's chapter allows the reader to contemplate the spiritual, emotional, and sensory experiences the participant in a sacrifice might have had, in keeping with recent archaeological emphases on the experiential and phenomenological (for example, Tilley 1994; Boivin 2004; Laneri 2010). Goslinga also provides a discussion of the preparations, performance, and the meanings attached to sacrifice. In her study, the god Paandi is understood to communicate his desire for sacrifice in portents that

accommodate the animals (e.g., the bipartite Type II installations with a space for each equid, as on fig. 4).

30. In particular, an examination of similar phenomena from a diversity of societies can be of assistance in devising testable hypotheses and can facilitate new ways of looking at data.

require correct interpretation. The sacrificial event is considered to have mutual benefits for both god and human, in that the human gives up his/her "baser" desire for objects while the god acquiesces in his submission to humans by entering the sacrificial context and being revived by the process. Goslinga argues that modern Western hermeneutics are not effective in understanding this case of sacrifice and that the "prosaic hermeneutics" of her informants must be accepted and adopted for a more successful understanding of the phenomenon. Whether (and how) archaeologists might comprehend and adopt such non-Western varieties of hermeneutics in the cases of sacrifice that they study requires further consideration.

In the chapters by Sharon Moses and Nerissa Russell, data from Neolithic Çatalhöyük in central Anatolia are the subject of inquiry. Sharon Moses discusses the bodies of children installed in foundation deposits at the site. In the absence of specific physical evidence, Moses employs ethnoarchaeological, historical, and contextual data to conclude that the children were differentiated from other individuals and that their deaths were the result of ritual killing. She proposes that child foundation sacrifices were conducted to cement family alliances when new houses were constructed, legitimizing the change from a society based on kinship and clan houses to a "house" society characterized by social differentiation. Considering the evidence for animal sacrifice at Çatalhöyük, Nerissa Russell notes that earlier reconstructions of cattle sacrifice are subject to doubt. Her review of the faunal evidence from the recent excavations includes a discussion of the association of sacrifice with feasting and the difficulties of recognizing postsacrificial feasting archaeologically. Considering the role of space in sacrificial rituals, Russell observes the lack of large open areas at Çatalhöyük and doubts that large-scale sacrifice was conducted. In consequence, her chapter provides a case in which interpretations of sacrifice can be rejected through archaeological analysis.

Elizabeth Carter considers evidence from her excavations at Halaf period Domuztepe (sixth millennium B.C.E.) in southeastern Anatolia. Using a contextual approach, Carter interprets a thick deposit of human and animal bone found in a "Death Pit" as the remains of a communal event involving human sacrifice and cannibalistic feasting. She rules out different varieties of sacrificial behavior that would have produced the remains, narrowing down the range of possibilities but still leaving various options open. In her discussion, Carter brings in iconographic data to assist in interpreting and understanding the behavior and belief systems involved.

Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler reexamine the most famous case of human sacrifice known from the ancient Near East, the Royal Cemetery of Ur in third-millennium B.C.E. Mesopotamia. Employing Computed Tomography (CT) scans of the skulls of two attendants from the cemetery, they reveal that blunt-force trauma was the likely cause of death, contradicting the traditional view that the retainers took their own lives. Baadsgaard, Monge and Zettler also discuss new evidence on the postmortem treatment of the bodies, providing a fuller picture of the rituals conducted after the deaths of the Ur individuals involving heating of the corpses, costuming, display, and the enactment of a banqueting scene in perpetuity.

Focusing on the same period, Weber discusses the tombs of equids and other animals within the elite mortuary complex at Umm el-Marra in northern Syria. Employing the results of zooarchaeological analysis together with textual information, she proposes that the equids were hybrids of donkeys and onagers known as *kunga*s in contemporaneous written records, produced to serve as "royal" steeds and symbols of prestige. She recognizes a typology of interments, with some equids having been interred at a relatively young age, indicating their likely sacrifice, while others were buried at an advanced age implying that they were interred after dying of natural causes. Asserting that distinctions between humans and animals were not as sharp as might be expected, Weber proposes that both the sacrificed and nonsacrificed "royal" equids were interred as substitutes for high-ranking humans in order to provide legitimation for the ruling regime in times of stress.

Third-millennium B.C.E. Syro-Mesopotamia is also the focus of Porter's chapter, which discusses the evidence for, and interpretation of, human sacrifice. Porter notes that the provision of human retainers in elite tombs should be the most impressive of grave furnishings, but the evidence for such a practice is relatively rare. This rarity is all the more striking because retainer sacrifice is most common crossculturally in periods of the formation of hierarchical societies such as third millennium Syro-Mesopotamia. Porter discusses how human sacrifice might be recognized archaeologically and distinguished from other types of violence, and how the archaeological record, in combination with the many possible material culture manifestations of sacrificial behavior, can be used to advance a multiplicity of interpretations. Referring to ideas of death and the cosmos attested in contemporaneous textual documents, Porter hypothesizes that sacrificial burials were not necessarily products of retainer sacrifice but were the result of rituals enacted to connect the worlds of life and death, utilizing patterns of mirroring.

Hesse, Wapnish, and Greer discuss the problem of distinguishing animal sacrifice from other types of animal killings in societies where most behaviors were freighted with religious significance. They argue that a distinction between animal sacrifice and "secular" slaughter may not be desirable. Several archaeological cases that have been interpreted as evidence of animal sacrifice from the southern Levant are reviewed, and the ways that ritual scripts used for animal killing can be studied through osteological evidence are discussed.

In Voigt's chapter, textual evidence is conjoined with archaeological data to discuss sacrificial behaviors at 3rd-to-2nd-century B.C.E. Gordion in central Anatolia. Carefully reviewing stratigraphic and other contextual information, Voigt presents evidence of excavated deposits of human and animal bones with evidence of violent death imposed on both. Voigt employs historical evidence to interpret these data in the context of sacrifices practiced by the Celtic-speaking Galatian immigrants from central Europe who occupied Gordion in this period.

Focusing on the textual evidence alone, Pongratz-Leisten offers a review of the different types and contexts of animal sacrifice in ancient Mesopotamia. She distinguishes sacrifice as offering from other, less common ritual killings designed to restore the cosmic order. In her discussion, Pongratz-Leisten notes that sacrifice was

just one component of a complex sequence of rituals performed to establish regular communication with the gods, most often for the purposes of feeding them. Therefore, she argues that the phenomenon must be considered as part of a much larger ritual apparatus.

In the final chapter, Campbell presents comments on the approaches and conclusions of the preceding contributions and offers a discussion of the archaeology of sacrifice in 2nd millennium B.C.E. Shang China, recognizing a typology of human sacrificial behaviors and associated logics. He argues that studies of sacrifice should not be concerned with how well sacrificial practices "fit" with preconceived notions of the phenomenon. Like Pongratz-Leisten, Campbell stresses instead that we must be concerned with how these practices are integrated with other local behaviors, beliefs, and sociopolitical structures—what is the wider context of sacrifice?

Like other efforts produced in the recent upsurge of interest in the archaeology of religion and ritual (e.g., Insoll 2004; Barrowclough and Malone 2007; Kyriakidis 2007; Whitley and Hays-Gilpin 2008), the studies in this volume reveal the elasticity and equivocality of the central concept—in this case, sacrifice—while confirming that sacrifice represents a major aspect of human life and is thus deserving of archaeological examination. The contributors employ a diversity of approaches to study sacrifice through material remains but agree that an understanding of historical specifics, the context of the activity, and crosscultural regularities are all of signal importance. While social ramifications of the practice are particularly accessible to archaeological study, other facets of sacrifice are of equal significance and must be the subject of inquiry as well. In many ways, we stand at the beginning of the journey to understand sacrifice archaeologically, given the difficulties of its recognition in the archaeological record, but further progress can be anticipated through continued systematic investigations and the framing of new questions.

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On Cakti-*Filled Bodies and Divinities: An Ethnographic Perspective on Animal Sacrifice and Ritual in Contemporary South India*

Gillian Goslinga

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with an Introduction by Anne Porter

Introduction (by Anne Porter)

The following description of a sacrifice observed in India by Goslinga cannot begin to capture the impact of the film that those of us attending the session on sacrifice at ASOR (from which this volume originated) experienced. But it does serve to do what none of the other papers here can—it makes us think about what it meant to participate in this sort of performance from multiple perspectives. The raw power of sacrifice is something that we who deal with only uninflected descriptions of it, or the meager, bare-boned remains of it, find hard to imagine in our envisioning of its significance, let alone its performance. This essay is intended, therefore, in a spirit completely different from the other essays in this book, not as an analytic, etic interpretation of what sacrifice is and what it does, but as an emotive, sensory experience in which relationships between observer and participant, archaeologist and material, believer and unbeliever, worshiper and worshiped shift even as we read.

From Moses's argument that infants were sacrificed to establish new kin houses, Weber's sectioned and upright equid remains with baby human and canine accompaniments, to Carter's cannibalistic "death pit" and Voigt's sacrifice as divination—how those remains got there, what people saw and felt when they experienced sacrifice as witness and even participant, what they were meant to feel,

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Author's note: The ethnographic film Anne Porter refers to in her opening remarks is *The Poojari's Daughter* (2010) and is distributed by Documentary Educational Resources. Research was conducted in 2000–2002 with the help of an IDRF Social Science Research Council fellowship.

I would like especially to thank Anne Porter and Glenn Schwartz for their thoughtful and incisive readings and suggestions on several earlier versions of this essay. All errors are of course mine. I also want to thank Rajathiammal, who so generously shared with me the intimacies of her life, thoughts, and experiences of the Pāndi of Madurai, as well as the hundreds of devotees with whom I spoke. I would also like to acknowledge my fieldwork assistant, Krishnasamy, for his tireless work and intellectual contributions to both this essay and my research at large. Acknowledgement is also owed to several of my mentors on the larger project: Donna Haraway, James Clifford, Triloki Pandey, Lisa Rofel, Janet Hoskins, and Gelya Frank. Their influences are everywhere in this essay.

are singularly absent from our analyses. Perhaps only Ur (Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler pp. 125–158 in this volume) and Anyang (Campbell, pp. 305–323 in this volume) sacrifices are capable of conveying the drama and spectacle implicit in their remains because of their sheer size, although I suspect that to western eyes it is the wealth of these burials, in terms of commodities as well as bodies, rather than their power, that impresses. Of course it is certainly possible that the killing of animals, such a regular activity in Near Eastern cultic practice, is, as described by Humphrey and Laidlaw (2007), a truly mundane act taking place outside the ritual moment itself and executed with simple efficiency, although the nature of the remains in several cases in this volume indicates a good deal of ritual behavior to do with bodies that I think we cannot separate from the moment of death. Despite its shockingness to sheltered Western eyes, it is certainly arguable that those for whom this sort of sacrifice is the norm simply would not have experienced much reaction. Nevertheless, Goslinga's work shows that the dispatching of even a single goat can have great power because of the boundaries this kind of sacrifice transgresses: the boundaries between animal, human and divinity. It is not accidental, I think, that many of the sacrifices in the essays to follow involve the deliberate manipulation in sacrificial contexts of human and animal remains together.

Of central significance to me in this essay, then, is the relationship between priestess and animal, the blurring of boundaries between their beings that takes place as the animal emulates the woman even before she erases those boundaries altogether by consuming the life-force of the animal, its blood. I do not mean to suggest that what happens in this Indian sacrifice is what happens in Near Eastern sacrifice or that the rituals in each place are necessarily performed the same way or even with similar materials (cf. Winter 1999). It does provide a warning to archaeologists though—the sheer drama of this sacrifice is not matched by any commensurate material residue. All that is likely left is, maybe, a decapitated goat, and perhaps the sword that accomplished the act or some faint trace of the food substances involved in preparing the various elements. Nor would I assume that the meanings that can be taken from the Indian example are the meanings to be attributed to Near Eastern ones. However, the ontological premises that underpin this act are the same in Goslinga's example and at least some of these Near Eastern examples presented here: they each assume "a living world in which the human or social actor is only one part, though an instrumental one, of a larger whole" (Goslinga, pers. comm., and cf. Porter, this volume). In the archaeology of the Near East, the otherworldly beings that also comprise a part of that whole are largely left out of the discussion, thought only discernible through epigraphy, but they are surely implicit, complicit in fact, in the act of sacrifice. No, the significance of this moment in India for Near Eastern archaeology, as well as offering a far more immediate sense of the experience of ritual than otherwise accessible to us, is that it raises a whole set of questions that archaeological treatments need to consider when dealing with materials that may be the remnants of sacrifice, one of which is agency, the other, the presence of the divine. In focusing on sociopolitical ramifications of sacrifice, the human manipulations of animal and human bodies in the accom-

plishment of human goals, we ignore at our peril the very realness of the agency of the divinity and the religious framework in which sacrifice is constituted. The two of course are by no means mutually exclusive, but neither, as Goslinga ably argues, is one more real than the other.

* * * * *

> *I am not able to bear it. Such a wondrous thing, my God does.*
>
> — Rajathiammal, priestess and sacrificer

The ritual goat sacrifice I examine in this essay took place in 2001 at the Pāndi Muṉisvaran temple (Pāndi Kōyil, henceforth) on the outskirts of Madurai, Tamil Nadu, South India, in the Tamil month of *Vaikāci* (mid-May to mid-June).[1] Pāndi Kōyil is a popular family-owned temple administered jointly with the State's Department of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Administration. The ritual cost upwards of one lakh rupees the year I participated as anthropologist and videographer, some 2,000 dollars, a considerable amount by local standards. Its most unusual feature is that a woman performs the goat sacrifice; in 2001, Rajathiammal had been the *periya pūcāri* 'important, big priest' at the temple since the death of her father in 1992, gathering the resources and labor for the annual ritual year after year. Her father had been the prior generation's *periya pūcāri*, a man of formidable reputation in the region for the accuracy of his divining and his ability to bind ritually the *cakti,* power, of the god Pāndi. He was also regionally famous for the feat of ritual 'goat cutting,' *kaṭā veṭṭu*, at Pāndi Kōyil. That his daughter Rajathiammal, his only issue, succeeded him was very unexpected; at least one male cousin in the extended family openly contested the succession, a young man who had already been serving at the temple for some years as one of its main priests and also a successful *kōṭaṅki*, ritual specialist in divination and exorcism. The unlikely housewife and mother of four not only supplanted her younger cousin in his claim to the post but also, to everyone's surprise, began to perform, the very year of her father's death, the difficult goat cutting that had made him famous. In this ritual, Rajathiammal beheads a goat and drinks the blood gushing from the animal's severed neck, as her father had.

1. A note on the Tamil transliteration: Transliterating Tamil, especially village Tamil, presented me with a dilemma. The predominant convention in South Asian studies as well as the anthropology of South India has been to follow, more or less, schemata developed by scholars of Sanskrit or scholars of high Tamil. Thus, words and concepts indigenous to the rural peoples of Tamil Nadu are quietly sanskriticized or rendered literate, which papers over important cultural, historical and even political differences between groups. On the other hand, when a Sanskrit word is shared, its local valences risk disappearing into already-in-circulation scholarly usages. So while I follow here the University of Madras transliteration schema, I have remained faithful to local vernaculars and idioms rather than "transpose" these into more literate terms. The ritual sacrifice is, for example, *kaṭā veṭṭu* 'the goat cutting', rather than the more commonly used term *pali* 'sacrifice'. I also transliterate people's names without diacritics and as they would write their names. Commonly used Sanskrit words such as *bhakti* or *prasad* are used in their anglicized spelling.

The ritual as it was arranged and conducted in 2001—its 10th year with Rajathiammal as officiating priestess—is the focus of this essay. The priestess was my principal interlocutor during this period, and her version of the ritual intimately informs the narrative that follows.[2] But I have also chosen to write descriptively and biographically because, as I hope to demonstrate, the metaphysics at play in *any* South Indian ritual of goat cutting become intelligible only when analysis is attentive to these dimensions. Conversely, the generalizing methodologies of conventional academic analysis, what Dipesh Chakrabarty (1997) has called provocatively the "generalizing impulse of the sociological imagination," obscure or misrecognize these metaphysics. This essay is therefore also an essay about the politics of representation. It proposes to follow the hermeneutics of Pāndi devotees. Indeed, 'reading the signs', *kuṟi pārkkiṟatu*, and acting in keeping with them accounted, in their world view, for the thrust, meaning, and success of Pāndi Kōyil's 2001 goat cutting, a success writ small in the conduct and behavior of ritual objects during the *pūjā* and writ large in individual boons of *cēmam* 'well being, safety', *aṟivu* 'wisdom, knowledge', and *celvam* 'prosperity, wealth (including children)' that many participants reported to experience in the ritual's ensuing weeks and months.[3] I argue that a prosaic hermeneutics, rather than a *formalist* analysis of the ritual, is a better window into the world of Tamil ritual, making possible a reckoning of how the *cakti* of divinities encodes—as a force called *aruḷ*—in the bodies of sacrificier, sacrificer, and sacrified.

Before turning to my narrative, a note on *aruḷ*: *aruḷ* in the local cosmology is a tangible and qualitative force whose manifestation can be as gentle as a spontaneous tearing up or as violent as an involuntary trembling and shaking in the body; both manifestations are examples of what Tamils call 'god-dancing', *cāmi āṭi*. Pāndi also speaks directly through the mouths of god-dancers: this is *aruḷ vākku* 'graced speech', an oracular speech that imparts insight into personal situations and also courses of action, ritual and ordinary. My view is that this substance, *aruḷ*, is the critical ingredient in, of, and for ritual life in South India.

A Dream-Oracle Initiates the Ritual

I begin my narrative some five months before the ritual took place, in what was to me a chance encounter in the home of the priestess Rajathiammal. The encounter quickly became a teaching moment for the priestess. From her standpoint, the events of the morning powerfully revealed Pāndi's *vēlai*, his labor in orchestrating everyday events. I had assumed that Pāndi's *periya pūjā* was an automatically recurring annual event, provided resources could be gathered, but I was mistaken: each year Pāndi must authorize and initiate the preparations. In 2001, this authorization

2. The priestess and I had agreed at the onset of my larger research project (about the boon of children, Pāndi's "specialty") to make a film about the temple in which she would be featured as an expert-witness of sorts. As my research progressed, the film narrowed to the goat cutting ritual and the gender politics of her performance of the act.

3. I was in the field 10 more months after the ritual. There was a reverse effect reported as well: people spoke of the escalation of their difficulties, too.

implicated my fieldwork assistant and me, in an ironic twist that all but collapsed the objective distance I am expected to uphold in the field. The events of the morning helped me understand what Rajathiammal and others had in mind *materially* speaking when they spoke of Pāndi's *uttaravu* 'command, permission'.

Rajathiammal had asked me to meet her at her home without my fieldwork assistant on that particular morning and for the first time. I happily obliged. But almost as soon as I arrived so did my assistant Krishnasamy, to my acute embarrassment and Rajathiammal's consternation. It so happened that Krishnasamy "had seen a dream" in the early hours of the morning, at the crack of dawn, a time of day Hindus recognize as especially conducive to a heightened and more authentic state of consciousness.[4] Dreams at this hour are considered to be especially significant and dreams in which a *cāmi* 'holy figure, Lord, God' appears, even more so. Krishnasamy had dreamed in this register of "*cāmi* dreams," and for the first time ever. The dream vaguely recalled Pāndi Kōyil and was so vivid and disturbing that he had been compelled to bring it to Rajathiammal's attention at once before it faded from memory. He arrived at her door unshaved and unbathed after an hour of travel by bus.

The dream was indeed curious; its central image was an animal sacrifice. It featured a holy man dressed in an ochre cloth, secured atypically with a belt, a detail Krishnasamy pointed out because it struck him as unusual. He found himself talking with this holy man at what looked like a Kaṟuppa Cāmi 'Black God' temple that sat on a small hill next to a large lake, somewhat like Pāndi Kōyil, which is next to one of Madurai's large water reservoirs. Kaṟuppa Cāmi is a common guardian deity effigied at the boundaries of many village temples, including Pāndi Kōyil, and typically is the deity to whom animal sacrifices are offered. In the dream, a group of people came by leading a black male goat so large "it almost looked like a cow" and the holy man, putting up a cloth screen in front of the god, asked them to wait explaining that he still had to bathe the god and perform the morning ablutions. But the group was in a hurry and went ahead with the sacrifice without waiting for the morning's ablutions to be completed. The deed was done poorly, as a consequence: there was blood everywhere and the decapitation left part of the goat's head attached to the body, an inauspicious sign. Krishnasamy in the dream had been horrified and very worried. The dream went on after the botched sacrifice; he soon found himself stranded on a crumbling wall looking at people bathing in the lake below. The "scenes" in the dream had deeply disturbed him.

His telling of the rather lurid dream over, Rajathiammal surprised us both by breaking into a wide smile. Without missing a beat, she announced that the dream was the portent that she had been waiting for to initiate preparations for the *periya pūjā*. Several details in the dream served as confirming clues. Unbeknownst to Krishnasamy or to me, Pāndi's shrine is screened off with a cloth during the affair

4. Gods and goddesses are awakened and given their morning baths at dawn. The truly devoted will rise at that hour to receive this first *daršan*, "to see and to be seen." Dawn is considered the most fruitful time to meditate.

as the god is, on the occasion of this ritual, treated as a vegetarian god.[5] The goat, I learned, though offered in his name, is sacrificed in front of Muṉiyāṇṭi, one of his two guardian deities who, Rajathiammal explained, are the equivalent of the Kaṟuppa Cāmis at other temples. Another detail neither Krishnasamy nor I knew was that Rajathiammal's father was in the habit of accessorizing his *vēṣṭi* 'cloth' skirt with a belt. He lived the later part of his life at the temple as a renouncer in a hut that sat on a very small promontory directly overlooking Pāndi's shrine, where Rajathiammal today divines and heals weekly on temple days. And finally, Pāndi Kōyil is adjacent to the Eastern edge of one of Madurai's enormous water reservoirs, which Rajathiammal interpreted as the lake of Krishnasamy's dream, an association Krishnasamy had made as well. Thus, she read screen, belt, hill, and lake as evidence that Krishnasamy had had a dream specifically about her father and the ceremony of goat cutting at Pāndi Kōyil. Adding that the goat that is sacrificed must be completely black and without blemish and that devotees bring this goat to the temple uncommissioned, a beaming Rajathiammal concluded: "Pāndi has given his *uttaravu* 'order, permission' for us to start the preparations."[6]

Rajathiammal also thought other synchronicities were at play the morning of Krishnasamy's dream. She joked, for example, alarming me some, that Pāndi had arranged for this "chance" convergence of Krishnasamy, dream, myself, and priestess at her home so that I, Pāndi's American and secular researcher, could witness *nēraṭi* 'directly' how Pāndi worked in the lives of those he 'caught,' *piṭiccatu*. Much later, with distance and while reflecting and analyzing my notes for the morning, I was struck by how Rajathiammal applied a *same* hermeneutic to both the convergence of dream and ritual details and the convergence of our presences in her home, orders of experience (for example, dream, ritual, American, South Indian, but also attributions of causality and effect) that my own cultural location as well as academic habits of thinking would have domained otherwise. For example, I would have been inclined to read Krishnasamy's dream as a reflection of his own private psyche or social circumstance, and our convergence in her home as a random coincidence. Michel Foucault's examination of hermeneutics in *The Order of Things* (1970) enabled me to grasp both the importance and nature of Rajathiammal's "same" hermeneutic as a manner of inhabiting the world that in turn shed light, as a heuristic, on the "text" of the goat cutting ritual itself. I briefly turn to Foucault next.

The Prose of the World

In *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault advances that a profound reordering of the very structures of perception and knowledge ushered in the modern epoch.

5. Pāndi is ascribed vegetarian status at other times of the year as well but usually according to the private understandings of devotees who explain that the sacrifices they perform are to his guardian deities, Muṉiyāṇṭi and Samaya Kaṟuppan, a claim I have heard Rajathiammal make as well on occasion. This can be read as an instance of sanskritization (Srinivas 1967) or of South Indians' noted ease with ambiguity (Trawick 1992: 37).

6. In South India, all sacrificial animals must ideally be blemish free. This is understood as both a mark of respect and the gods' wish. Pāndi in addition is known for a preference for pure black goats.

The book offers an archeology of this reordering through close historical readings of how "words and things" relate to each other in the respective knowledges of medieval, classical, and modern elites. Foucault's starting point is the "Prose of the World" *episteme* of the Middle Ages immediately before the great *taxonomia* of the Classical age that in turn segued into the modern metaphysics of objectivity. At issue is the emergence of "representativity" in the Classical period, contends Foucault, a manner of making knowledge that opened a space in the subject for what we now call objectivity. Representativity, Foucault proposes, did not exist in medieval knowledge as such; the organizing principle of knowledge was "resemblance." He explains: "to search for meaning [in this period] is to bring to light a resemblance. To search for the law governing signs is to discover that things are alike. [And] the grammar of beings is an exegesis of these things" (1970: 29). In the *episteme* of the Middle Ages, "man's body is always the possible half of a universal atlas" (1970: 22), unlike that of the Classical age, when the very idea of the taxonomy posits a "Subject who knows," that is, a subject who could represent knowledge to himself and "think" the table. In the Middle Ages, semiology rested on a thin semiotic layer; the world has no spatial *interiority* or *depth*, no outside position from which to think it (onto a page), no representativity. Correspondences of many kinds—mimesis, synchronicity, sympathy and antipathy, analogy, convenience and propinquity, parity, emulation, and so on—were its grammar, a prose that ordered what one could know. Foucault explains: "'Nature' is trapped in the thin layer that holds semiology and hermeneutics one above the other; it is neither mysterious nor veiled, it offers itself to our cognition, which it sometimes leads astray, only in so far as this superimposition necessarily includes a slight degree of non-coincidence between the resemblances" (1970: 29).

Bracketing for a moment the chronology Foucault the historian follows (itself a modern standpoint on history one might argue) and the post/colonial and admittedly risky politics of likening Rajathiammal's hermeneutics to the prosaic hermeneutics of Europe's Middle Ages, Foucault's attention to similitude and its many forms *as method* for knowing something about the world does offer important insights into the priestess's hermeneutics the morning of Krishnasamy's dream, a hermeneutics I came to understand as a widely honed and cultivated practice of great ritual significance in South India at large.[7] To illustrate its scope briefly: the *periya pūjās* of Lord Aiyappan in the Western Ghats between Kerala and Tamil Nadu are authorized so far each year by a mysterious ball of light that appears at dusk against the dark mass of the mountain right above the temple, exactly as a large star makes its first annual appearance above the mountain at this same location, an extraordinary recurring coincidence that marks as well as justifies the site of

7. Valentine Daniel makes a related argument in *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), where he details both the ritual and everyday importance of the "indexical," in the Piercean sense, of Tamils' reckoning of life and selves. I found Foucault's explication of the "Prose of the World" more helpful in deciphering what I call a "prosaic hermeneutics," for Daniel's account through Piercean semiology, while brilliant, formalizes this hermeneutics in a way that removes it for the embodied and biographical, thus introducing a distortion vis à vis academic audiences.

the temple complex itself. A second example: at an appointed ritual time, a pair of eagles yearly circles the gold temple tower (*kūṭam*) of Madurai's goddess Meenakshi; their sight initiates preparations for the goddess's wedding to her consort Shiva, a festival that locks the city in ten days of frenzied ritual and procession in the month of *Cittirai* (March to April). What turns these eagles into auspicious augury is not just the timing and location of their appearance but the facts that the eagle is Vishnu's animal mount and Vishnu is the goddess's brother and so the most important guest to invite to her wedding. A third and final example, of central concern to this essay: a goat offered in sacrifice cannot and will not be "cut" in an honest ritual unless and until the hair along its neck spontaneously stands up on end (like goose bumps) as soon as it has been consecrated for sacrifice. This involuntary *kulukku*, literally 'jolt, shake, trembling', is recognized as the auspicious descent into the body of the sacrificial animal of the god or goddess in the form of *aruḷ*, the manifest energy that also animates, *in like manner, with the same jolting and trembling*, the bodies of men and women who god-dance.[8] I will return to this mimicry between goat and god-dancer in the context of Rajathiammal's 2001 goat cutting below.

In Foucault's explication of the "Prose of the World," correspondences visible on the surface of things speak of kinships hidden from sight, unspoken. These visible marks thus function as "signatures" of "invisible analogies," the "words" of the world (1970: 25–26). In my examples above, mysterious ball of light, soaring pair of eagles and trembling goat, as well Krishnasamy's dream and our convening in Rajathiammal's home, all function in the sense of Foucault's prosaic account of the medieval signature. I would argue that they each sign, from the perspective of devotees, for an underlying *correctness* in the matrix of things, for its *dharma*. Thus, should the goat's *kulukku*, a 'signature' *par excellence*, not occur (I witnessed several cases where it did not), people will conclude that there is an underlying and often unacknowledged *kuṟai* 'short-coming' (frequently moral) in the reckoning, *kaṇakku*, of the offering having to do with the ritual sponsor. This *kuṟai* must be accounted for before re-presenting the goat in sacrifice, or serious misfortune is likely to follow. The very flesh of the goat thus indexes both the *aruḷ* of the deity—the god's visible descent—*and at the same time and through the same sign,* the moral reckoning of the biographical and spiritual milieu of the ritual patron, a "hidden analogy" indeed. The goat's *kulukku* thus functions as a "signature" for the *righteousness* inherent in the offering.

8. There is a politic in my choice to speak of the god's *aruḷ* here rather than his *cakti* 'divine power, creative energy' though devotees in some contexts use the terms interchangeably. *Aruḷ,* typically translated as 'divine grace', is a core concept/experience of the South Indian *bhakti* movement since its inception in the medieval period (see Kaylor 1976). Also translated as divine 'mercy', 'benevolence', or 'compassion', the impression can be of a psychological and private experience; *cakti,* a Sanskrit term, on the other hand, as treated in the indological literature, refers to divine energy (usually feminine) manifest in creation and matter. Thus, I speak of "*aruḷ*" because it is a *South Indian* term and the one most often used by devotees to index the physical manifestation of male or female divinities. A second consideration is the Christian undertones of "grace" implicit in this translation of *aruḷ* (Eliza Kent, personal communication).

It follows, then, that the most important measure of ritual success is the *right* conduct of ritual objects, for they literally speak the *dharma* of the whole. To read the "signs"—both those anticipated, such as a sacrificial goat's *kulukku*, or those spontaneous, such as our convergence in Rajathiammal's home—is to read in this hermeneutics a divinity's *uttaravu* 'command, permission'. The conduct of ritual objects (including *cāmi* dreams) serve as clues or keys to the correctness of a course of action. From Rajathiammal's perspective, the synergies between my assistant's dream and the ritual details of Pāndi's *periya pūjā* would stand out as a communication from her god. From her perspective, the convergence of my presence with Krishnasamy's in her home would be significant because, as she later reminded me, she had been shown in dreams of her own in prior years that a foreigner would film her performing the goat cutting. From her standpoint, then, events of the morning auspiciously announced not only the start of ritual preparations but also that I would likely be filming it, a long-standing wish of hers that she had attempted in years past without success.[9]

I want to conclude Foucault's analysis transposed to the South Indian context by emphasizing that the "murmur of words" of the "whole teeming world" (1970: 26) is, in the world of Tamil devotees, explicitly the speech of particular gods and goddesses.[10] Pāndi in fact belongs to a class of deities spoken about as *pēcūm teyvam* 'divinities who will speak to you', often literally and personally through the mouths of god-dancers. To hear their speech—'to see/read the signs', *kuṟi pārkkiṯatu*, to divine by portent—is theoretically everyone's purview because it is simply the exercise of a prosaic hermeneutics, in Foucault's words, of "[finding] a way from the visible mark to that which is being said by it and which, without that mark, would lie like unspoken speech, dormant within things" (1970: 32). But as is clear from Rajathiammal's reading of Krishnasamy's dream above, in practice, this prosaic hermeneutics requires both cultural skill and experience, even intuition; it is in this sense that this method by portent must be cultivated as well as honed.

Rajathiammal is skilled in this regard; in fact, I would argue, she deliberately chooses to operate by portent in most of her affairs. The method is at once pragmatically and politically useful. She will put a request to Pāndi (or to her deified deceased father)[11] in prayer and meditation (for example, shall we carry out the goat cutting this year?), take no action whatsoever, and quietly wait for unfolding synchronicities and propinquities to decide, confirm, or amend a course of action. For Pāndi's *periya pūjā*, for example, a multiplicity of actors from ritual assistants to musicians to cooks and so on must come together in such a way that the parts

9. Commissioned videographers in years past encountered obstacles: illness the day of the ritual, technical difficulties, sleeping through alarms, and such. My own filming of the ritual was subsequently thrice confirmed through the throwing of cowrie shells, a common divination technique. And the shoot took place despite some serious technical and human errors as well as some exceedingly trying moments for me and my crew such as losing our principal camera operator 10 days before the shoot and another the first day thereof.

10. Each god and goddess has their own gestures, manner of speaking, and wants, which they make known to devotees.

11. See Hart (1980) for an excellent account of ancestor worship in Tamil culture.

flawlessly choreograph into an auspicious and successful whole, the ritual. That year after year since her father's death a variegated and changing collective of such people have come together from close and far to orchestrate the two-day long ritual—many motivated by dream, nudged by hunch or desire, or ordered directly by Pāndi from the mouths of god-dancers—proves on the one hand that *this* priestess, Rajathiammal, has the moral purity (and faith) to serve as Pāndi's chosen conduit *and* that Pāndi does work through and around her. This is not to say that Rajathiammal does not act or organize details or that groups or individuals do not hold rights to officiate in designated positions or perform certain services but that, by refraining, consciously and deliberately, from explicitly soliciting or commissioning ritual details, Rajathiammal allows the preparations to happen spontaneously in and around her, such that a true collaboration may happen. Money, cloth, ritual objects, people offering services, folk such as Krishnasamy bearing information in dreams or visions, all coalesce around her. This is most dramatically the case for the blemish-free, pure black goat that will be principally sacrificed (and the sword that beheads it). Such exceptionally rare goats (their perfection an accident of birth) cannot be commissioned even if Rajathiammal wanted to. In 2001, this perfect goat was found and brought to Pāndi Kōyil only the day before the sacrifice. "Chance" happenings such as this ultimately and powerfully give the impression that Pāndi is organizing his own ritual himself, especially details of intimate concern to him such as the goat chosen for sacrifice and the person who will officiate as sacrificer on behalf of the gathered community, in this case, the priestess Rajathiammal.[12]

The impression that Pāndi is organizing his own ritual thus lends great force to Rajathiammal's oft-stated claim that she is "Pāndi's favored daughter." She is of course vulnerable and at times challenged on this point and has, over the years, accumulated a vast and generative repertoire of fascinating stories about Pāndi-orchestrated serendipities, some more dramatic than others, that bolster her claim to be in unique relationship with the god and which she uses to defend herself if doubted. That she has been able for 20 years at the time of this publication both to gather the necessary resources and to carry out the dramatic *kaṭā veṭṭu* as her father did before her does cement her authority and following in her community and at the temple. In her retelling of stories—the morning of Krishnasamy's dream was immediately added to her repertoire I might mention—Rajathiammal conveys that she humbly follows Pāndi's commands. To operate by way of portent affirms her authenticity, the authenticity of the ritual, and therefore, ultimately, the ritual's promise of genuine boons in a prosaic reciprocity of signs and signatures between devotees and Pāndi.

12. The male cousin (now deceased) who most challenged Rajathiammal's succession to her father's post attempted more than once to carry out his own *periya pūjā* but could gather the resources only once in 10 years to do so. This ritual was also videotaped and in stark contrast to Rajathiammal's goat cutting, as we shall see, the goat when approached by this man turned its head away each time until the priest rather clumsily chopped it off. This poor execution was noted by devotees and the ritual deemed a failure. This gentleman died young of a heart attack in 2007. There was talk that his untimely death was caused by his misuse of his spiritual gifts and his personal hubris.

Modernist Hermeneutics

Writing about how sacrifice is read in anthropological discourse, Veena Das (1983) has also made the suggestion that a change in hermeneutics is required if one is to understand sacrifice in the Indian context. The hermeneutics she proposes are similar to those of my Foucauldian discussion above. Usefully, though, Das identifies in anthropological writings on sacrifice a bias for rendering agency as the exclusive prerogative of human participants and reducing the ritual event of sacrifice to the sacrificial act in and of itself. She argues these two biases are paradigmatically tied to the Judeo-Christian roots of European culture and therefore scholarship and suggests, "at the risk of some oversimplification, [that] anthropological discourse on sacrifice assumes that the sacrificator is bearer of pollution, sin or guilt and the sacrificial cult provides the means for cleansing the person or the social body of these moral stains" (1983: 445). This Judeo-Christian bias makes the sacrificial act the "center of gravity" of all analyses because it is assumed that the violence in the victims' immolation is what separates what "has wrongly been united" (or wrongly separated in so-called rites of propriation). For this reason, the sacrifice itself is typically read as the moment of greatest symbolic significance in the anthropological literature and the animal appears structurally as the "victim" because it "naturally" bears on its body the violence that should accrue to the "guilty" patron (cf. Girard 1977). It also becomes logical to speak of the animal as a "substitute" identified with the sacrifier (Schwartz, pp. 1–32 in this volume; see also Samanta 1994: 798 for a similar critique).

Das rightly calls for a reevaluation of the "system of classification of human acts," which the morning of Krishnasamy's dream and my examples of prosaic correspondences above certainly suggest. A ritual's "center of gravity" must be understood as plotted along a multitude of centers of gravity, on either side of the act itself, and in and around the humans, converging on the ritual from the past and the future and many dispersed points in the present. These centers of gravity taken together express, quite literally through the everyday biographies of humans and ritual objects, one *particular* instantiation or perhaps orchestration of the relationship between the collective of devotees and the divinity. As I have already argued, this very orchestration hinges on the moral righteousness of each part, a righteousness communicated in toto, at the moment of the consecration of the goat, in the auspicious "signature" of the involuntary goat's *kulukku*. In the language of South Indian Saivism, the right conduct of ritual objects (inclusive of humans) at once expresses *and enacts* the worldly principle of *dharma*, the righteousness at the heart of created life (see also Davis 1991: 25–29).

I shall return in more explicit detail to the behavior of ritual bodies as evidence of the moral reckoning of Pāndi's 2001 *pūjā* in the next section. Das, in her explication of sacrifice as prescribed by the Mimansa School of Ancient India, further and usefully distinguishes between rites "for the sake of sacrifice," *yāga* and *homa*, and rites for the sake of a person, *dāna* (1983: 458). Whereas the latter are restricted to offerings made on behalf of humans and concern desires for worldly objects, the

former two move along two related "axes": desire for heaven and its fruits and "the creation of a cosmogonic order by establishing the supremacy of the sacrificial act through which alone *proper connexions* between the visible and the invisible world may be made" (1983: 458, emphasis added). Echoing Foucault's "Prose of the World" explication that "man's body is always the possible half of a universal atlas" (1970: 22), Das explains that these Vedic offerings for the sake of sacrifice constitute "the interior of the sacrifice while gods constitute the exterior" (1983: 455). The Vedic sacrificial act, she argues, is what *makes* "proper connexions" between the visible and invisible world. In other words, something does happen during a ritual properly conducted: a *proper* order is created, manifested, or perhaps instantiated in the act itself. In the Vedic injunction to sacrifice, unlike in Judeo-Christianity, a deep, prosaic reciprocity is acknowledged in the world's very material fabric, a reciprocity that literally *manifests* at the moment of sacrifice. I paraphrase Das's account of this reciprocity: the human willingly and first forgoes desire for objects—sacrifices their baser or animal self, a subtle intention—while the divinity, subtle and invisible, willingly submits to the human by taking material form and "entering the sacrificial arena [to be] revived by sacrifice" (1983: 460). As Das describes this process, both god and human transubstantiate their respective forms in mutual reciprocity: the god becomes "living presence" in the very object(s) "consumed," a presence augmented by the sincere desire of the sacrifier for heaven's fruits, and the sacrifier in her very own flesh becomes more divine, more refined, more subtle. The "sacred" does not stand in this practice in structural and reified opposition to the "profane" as is often characterized in modern, secular discussions of the religious. Suchitra Samanta, in her fine examination of goat sacrifice in the context of contemporary popular Kali worship in Bengal and following Das, explains this mutuality eloquently and with precision: "Where a condition of divinity is one of 'wholeness' (*purnatva),* the *jiva-pasu* [self-animal, sacrifier-goat] is a 'part' that seeks to be whole. Severing the animal enacts the complementarity between self and divinity, part and whole—where the whole is reaffirmed by its separation into parts" (Samanta 1992: 798).

Though writing about different geographic and historical periods (Das, ancient India; Samanta, modern Bengal; both about Brahmanic traditions), the relationality they describe between human and divinity (more symbolic admittedly in Samanta's words quoted above) is also evident ethnographically in South India. When the sacrificial act is conducted properly, with the right intention, it is *cakti* or *aruḷ*—as tangible, physical force—that acts on itself, literally and materially so, at once cleaving *and* bringing together in the ritual moment two poles of creation, divinity and humanity, and restoring the "proper connexions" in between and therefore in the world. This is why devotees at Pāndi Kōyil speak of the success of a ritual in terms of feeling, in their bodies and hearts, a deep and satiating satisfaction, *tirupti*, which uplifts body and soul, which promises good things to come. God and human become of a piece during a *periya* sacrificial ritual, though they are also, as we shall see, never fully identical or equivalent to each other. Samanta (1994: 787) helpfully suggests that the very chain of causalities—or rather, the *metaphor* of cau-

sality itself—is misrecognized in the anthropology of sacrifice insofar as humans are thought to *act* on the god or the god on humans as like agents. She speaks of "ingestion/digestion" as a more apt metaphor to account for the relationship: humans first morally appeal to the divinity to ingest/digest and in so doing transform the moral impurities of a situation or their person and then, consuming the meat of the sacrificial offering now imbued with the superior qualities of the deity (*prasad*), transubstantiate their own being for the better (1994: 787).[13] In the ritual at Pāndi Kōyil, as we shall see, this transubstantiation occurs also in the 'witnessing', *daršan*, of the sacrificial act itself: to see is also to ingest, through the eyes and one's body (cf. Eck 1985).

To grasp this ontology of transubstantiation fully, one must practice a prosaic hermeneutic. In contrast to the patterned generalizations required of academic analysis, analysis must "descend" into the biographical specificities of a given ritual if its prose, "its grammar of being," is to be understood.

Ritual Bodies as Moral Barometers

In the months that preceded the ritual the priestess Rajathiammal often spoke to me of her deep distaste for the act of cutting the goat: the thought of slaughtering a goat and drinking blood gushing from its neck was repulsive and frightening, also because she aspired to the celebrated vegetarianism and concomitant spiritual purity of upper-caste, Brahmanized yogic practices.[14] Yet she felt compelled to submit to Pāndi's *uttaravu* because he came to her in dreams (as did her father) and often spoke through her when she god-danced.[15] She attributed to her father the *cakti* behind her ability to carry out the act, despite her diabetes (which her father also had) and chronic physical weakness. Veeramalai on his death bed had also commanded his daughter to bury his body on temple grounds so that he could continue to work for the people in the form of a deified ancestor. His burial mound is consequently the first ritual stop for all rituals conducted during the two-day long *pūjā*, from the initial worship to invite all three deities enshrined at Pāndi Kōyil to the goat cutting ceremony the following morning, to the sacrificial ceremony itself the dawn of the second day.

Rajathiammal's first experiences of *aruḷ,* her father's *aruḷ* specifically, happened just days after her father's death. She describes a series of sensations and surges

13. Samanta reviews on this page several important discussions of this metaphor of ingestion/digestion in the South Asian studies literature. To mention a few salient texts she discusses, all about North India: on the ingestion of food as a metonym for the maintenance of social and cosmic order, Parry (1985: 612), Inden and Nicholas (1977) and Khare (1976); on a recipient's obligation to digest the sins contained in gifts as *daan* in North India, Goodwin-Raheja (1990: 91); on the idiom of "eating one's sins" when suffering the consequences of moral wrongdoing, Wadley and Derr (1990: 139). On eating "evils" in Tamil Nadu, see Mines 2005: 70.

14. Rajathiammal is not impervious to the hierarchical caste and colonial politics of the region that pit "high" non-meat eating Brahmins against "low" meat-eating castes. See Mines (2005) for an excellent ethnographic account of these politics in the village of Yannamalai, some 10 kilometers from Pāndi Kōyil, and how ritual life is used by caste groups to carry out alternatively vicious politics of exclusion or oppositional politics of inclusion.

15. For more on "god's forceful call" in Tamil Nadu, see Moreno (1985).

in her body that were followed by vivid dreams in which her father and Pāndi, and often both together, wrote *mantras* on her tongue. Once and memorably they transmitted to her a brilliant light, "*oru oḷi*."[16] These dreams and experiences of *aruḷ* initiated her divination skills such that her "speech was true." Along with a collective village memory of an unusual birthmark on her forehead in the shape of Vishnu's symbol written on foreheads by devotees, this *aruḷ* vetted Rajathiammal in the eyes of the majority of her community as her father's rightful heir and Pāndi Kōyil's *periya pūcāri*.[17]

I emphasize these early biographical details to suggest that Rajathiammal's body was then and is still acknowledged by many as *already* substantively different from others in ability and in effect. In many ways, to her community and devotees, the priestess is herself a "signature" in Foucault's Prose of the World sense, her body a surface text where the visible and invisible worlds meet. Because *aruḷ* is a physical force whose intensity fluctuates and whose onset is unpredictable, it makes sense that the body of a ritual specialist, unlike that of ordinary devotees, would be or come to be a fine-tuned instrument capable of ingesting as well as digesting this tangible force in ever-greater concentrations. Purity is what decides this ability *proportionately*, which is why the pure, innocent body of a goat is the chosen ritual vehicle; in its spontaneously perfect form, the blemish-free goat can withstand a high concentration of pure *aruḷ*. Rajathiammal's purity, on the other hand, is both bestowed on her and contingent on her intentions, hence the spiritual discipline and importance of working by portent for her. In their perfect forms, goat and priestess enter the ritual arena *alike* and *already* in prosaic correspondence, this vis à vis the ritual's reigning patron, or sacrifier, the god Pāndi himself.[18]

I will let Rajathiammal describe the experience of the sacrificial act herself. By way of exposition first: the goat cutting took place shortly after dawn on a Wednesday, on a day and time deemed auspicious astrologically in the Hindu calendar, in front of the shrine of the second god in Pāndi's retinue of guardian deities, the *kaṟuppu* ('black') Muṉiyāṇṭi.[19] As in Krishnasamy's dream, after morning ablutions were performed, Pāndi was screened off but not before the customary ritual offering to South Indian gods and goddesses of a pot of *Poṅkal,* sweet milk rice. *Poṅkal* must also be thought of as a ritual 'body'. Cooked over slow fire by the married women of Rajathiammal's extended and priestly family, the boiling mixture of

16. Such transmissions of spiritual powers between the generations are not uncommon; I collected several cases, including another father-daughter transmission.

17. Rajathiammal also performed a miraculous healing of a man 'slapped by the *muṉi*', *muṉi aṭi*, in the dead of night, for having crossed the *muṉi* in a state of uncleanliness.

18. The purity of an animal is never questioned because its innocence is undisputed, but the purity and hence efficacy of a ritual specialist is. I was part of several conversations in which the authenticity of Rajathiammal or other god-dancers was debated.

19. All three deities were ritually invited to the goat cutting and feast the first day of the *pūjā*, a Tuesday, a customarily auspicious temple day in South India (see Nabokov 2000: 154–57 for a detailed discussion of this class of rites). The dates of the festival must also coincide with Rajathiammal's rotation into the shrine, whose everyday tending she shares with 10 other branches of her extended family in this generation that all descended from the temple's founding pair. Through archival work, I have provisionally dated this founding moment to the mid-1860s.

rice, jaggery, and milk was closely watched and the wood fire beneath it carefully tended. An even and calm thick frothy foam rising indicates a righteous offering. The instant the boiling substance reached the rim of the curved pot in this fashion, several women spontaneously broke out in ululations in an upsurge of *aruḷ*. In the 2001 *pūjā,* this moment was also auspiciously timed with an upsurge of *aruḷ* in Rajathaimmal, who began to god-dance energetically and joyfully at that very instant. The priestess then grazed the top of the boiling mixture with her fingers as she added a handful of raw rice to the pot, without burning her hand. This feat, and the intensity and timing of her god-dancing, were read by devotees as very auspicious signs.

The Muṉiyāṇṭi shrine in front of which the sacrifice takes place is a raised platform under an open dome and without a statue. The large crowd of devotees gathered on the southern and western sides of the clearing in a semicircle, because no one should face Rajathiammal during the goat cutting. If they do, she explained to me, "they will have health problems, or even die." This is because a great amount of *aruḷ* both builds up to and is unleashed by the decapitation. This *aruḷ* is mostly directional; its greatest intensity is in the direction facing away from the priestess, northeast. It is so concentrated a force at this moment that only persons of like purity (*cukam* 'clean') can withstand it without harm. In other words, only persons of like purity are constitutionally capable of digesting this concentrated *aruḷ*. The build-up of *aruḷ* also began to register visibly on several of the women devotees' bodies in the crowd behind Rajathiammal as she broke into god-dancing when the goat gave its *kulukku*.[20]

The sickle-sword, *aruvāḷ*, used to decapitate the goat in 2001 dates to the first sacrifice Rajathiammal performed in 1992 and was brought to her through portent, by an individual unknown to her who was told to do so by her father, who was known to him, in a dream.[21] An *aruvāḷ* is at once heavy and dangerously sharp and is further sharpened the day before the ritual. That Rajathiammal handles it while god-dancing but once a year for the decapitation with such easy and uncanny dexterity is another register to those present that her *aruḷ* is authentic. She first reached for it at her father's burial mound, where the *periya pūjā* begins, and picked it up with great ferociousness, even clasping the blade with her bare hands above her head. From Rajathiammal's perspective, as she knows herself to be incapable of such handling of the sword, it is her father-cum-deity whose *cakti* enables her to do so, and so it is "he" who performs the beheading by means of her body. Recalling a famous line from the *Bhavagad Gita*, Rajathiammal will say that she is not the doer of the deed but the mere instrument of her god's desires and needs.

Before the sacrifice, offerings of cut lime smeared with vermillion paste and a bottle of spirits are made to the lesser spirits who are said to be drawn to the site as moths to flame.[22] A troupe of *mēḷam* drummers from the Paraiyar caste accompanies,

20. This and other details discussed in this section can be seen in the footage of the ritual in *The Poojari's Daughter* (Goslinga 2010).

21. Other sickle-swords have been brought to her in other years, which she has used.

22. This is a widespread view of temples to gods and goddesses of Pāndi's class, deities whose specialties are often "exorcisms" and the removal of spiritual poisons. "Exorcism" is a heavily

and the rhythms they play dramatically mimic the tempo of a heartbeat, helping induce the state of consciousness Rajathiammal requires to merge with her father-cum-Pāndi for the goat cutting. (This troupe drummed during all rituals.) This is how Rajathiammal described her process to me in an interview taken in the week immediately after the ritual; I quote at length:

> I don't know how men feel about cutting a goat, but for me it is a fearful act. I grow confused about whether it will happen or not. People are watching me and should it go wrong, I worry that it will bring me and my god a bad name. For three months before the pūjā, I will pray and cry to my father.[23] The one thing he told me [at his death] is that I must be brave and that he would take care of everything. And it's been ten years since I started doing this. Until I am at his grave [the morning of the sacrifice], I will have butterflies in my stomach and I will be afraid, my heart will pound, I will be sweating. I can hardly speak until I reach his grave! At the grave, I light the camphor and pray to him. When I pick up the *aruvāḷ,* my father will come over me. Thereafter I am without any fear. Once he holds (*piṭi*) me, I feel I have the power of an elephant.[24] He will dance in bliss, wielding the sword about. People have to step away. The sword is very sharp and can easily hurt the person or someone else when mishandled. Just a nick and blood will flow. But he holds it firmly in his hands.[25] The very sight of the *aruvāḷ* makes me freeze! No one can walk next to him as an equal! He will then run to the spot where the goat is cut. The person who sacrifices the goat must wear black, so I will change into a black sari with a black blouse. I get ready as if I am only waiting to cut the goat and drink its blood. I then will feel as if I am floating in the air; I have no contact with the ground. The god will make the goat stand in the perfect position. It will look up at my face and my father in me, and it will surrender. My god will walk around and he will laugh with happiness. He doesn't have to strain to slay the goat: it will be as easy as cutting a sponge. It will not be hard. After the cutting, he will drink the blood. I will still be in an unconscious state but I can feel the warm substance going down my throat. This year a piece of flesh got stuck in my teeth. I will faint for a few minutes once the blood is drunk.

Helpfully, I was able to identify the moments Rajathiammal describes in this interview in the footage of the ritual itself, since photographic images always capture more than a filmmaker intends. Helpfully because at the time of filming, I had not fully grasped the significance of the *conduct* of ritual objects, including Rajathiammal's body or the goat's, and so had not pointed my camera to these details, my vi-

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inflected Judeo-Christian concept. In my months of fieldwork, I witnessed and documented several such depossessions: Pāndi, prompted by the ritual specialist, *kōṭaṅki*, "brings out" these lesser spirits who then are coaxed to tell their often tragic stories and death through the mouth of their victims. Their departure is then negotiated, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. For rich and detailed accounts of Tamil exorcisms, see Nabokov (1991, 2000).

23. Though she has received the go-ahead to move forward with the ritual, Rajathiammal contests the need to sacrifice a goat, an act distateful to her. She asks for multiple confirmations, almost in protest; see part three in *The Poojari's Daughter* (Goslinga 2010).

24. This is a common metaphor used by god-dancers to describe the suprahuman strength they experience when they god-dance. Other feats that happen in this trance-state include holding a searing camphor flame in the palm of their hand without being burned or standing barefoot on sharp blades, a feat for which Rajathiammal's father was famous.

25. The referent here is ambiguously both her father and Pāndi, who combine in their possession of her. The Dravidian view (Hart 1980) is that humans can transubstantiate into divinities, in life and in death, through ritual austerities or virtuous deed or even a noble death.

sion caught up in broader, more structural questions such as the who, what, when, where, and why of the ritual.

What I now see when I look at the footage is the following: the goat is consecrated with turmeric water and neem and marigold flowers, a purification and mark of respect, in the same way Rajathiammal bathed in the very early dawn. I am struck that goat and priestess are *alike* offerings with respect to the god Pāndi. After the consecration, the crowd standing around Rajathiammal watches the goat, as does she. A few of the women behind her are already experiencing *aruḷ,* as mentioned above. Their bodies tremble, and they work to control the sensation by gripping their hands together and breathing. As soon as the goat's *kulukku* happens, Rajathiammal and those paying attention fold their hands in a gesture of *vaṇakkam* (*namaste)*: the deity has authorized the ritual and has begun his descent. The *mēḷam* troupe responds to this moment as well: the drum beat shifts, and the tempo speeds up. The goat now struggles in between ropes held tautly by the ritual assistants.[26] Then, suddenly and dramatically, the goat stills completely. Within seconds its body is violently jolted a couple of times in a clear rhythmic undulation. In remarkable synergy, the camera catches Rajathiammal's body likewise jolting in rhythmic unison. The stillness is the moment Rajathiammal speaks of as the goat's surrender, the moment when she and goat exchange a glance. Pāndi's *aruḷ* then unleashes in *both* their bodies simultaneously. Priestess and goat at this point both *incarnate* the deity.

I would like to stress that this moment is not one of mere symbolic identification, though it can of course be read as such. It is instead, I would argue, a moment of stunning prosaic, mimetic correspondence. The bodies of Rajathiammal and the animal are *in contact* from the moment of the jolt onward, mirroring each other with respect to the divinity. Their relationship represents what Foucault, speaking of the similitude of *aemulatio* in the "Prose of the World" *episteme*, describes as "a fold in being" (1970: 20). Here the divinity cleaves itself in two, descending equally and alike in both priestess and sacrificial animal, only to be reunited in the drinking of the blood.[27] This raises the interesting question of who is "consuming" whom during the sacrifice: is the god perhaps taking form in order to consume his own essence, now incarnate in the *aruḷ* infused blood of the goat? Rajathiammal has elaborated about this moment in subsequent interviews. In addition to feeling "like she is floating in the air," she also describes losing sense of *who* people around

26. The ritual assistants during the sacrifice were all men, including Rajathiammal's two sons, attendants who customarily work in the inner shrine, and another male relative of Rajathiammal's who is a great devotee.

27. On the parity of the human and animal in the sacrificial moment, compare with Samanta (1994: 788), who notes that, during the goat immolations she observed, the first incantation is spoken from the subject-position of the goat who states the *bali'*s objective: "Speaking in the first person, the goat desires that its blood be transformed by death to the quality of *subudhi*, the perceptive 'faculty of intelligence and discrimination.' The *bhava,* or emotion-intellectual essence represented by the blood of the 'animal' (*pasu*), wishes to achieve that of divinity. The animal expresses a desire to be born again as a man its next life." Likewise, Rajathiammal and participants concede a subjectivity to the animal. The synergy between their bodies, as well as the look priestess and goat exchange, do suggest that the goat is a subject not just an object of this ritual.

her are. She sees forms but not identities. She is at once present and not present, experiencing the physicality of actions but not their ordinary identity. Of the blood flowing down her throat, she says above, for example, that she only experiences its warmth. From her perspective, something other than herself is indeed performing the deed. On other occasions, she spoke of the god replenishing himself for all the *cakti* he expends on behalf of his devotees during the year.

The goat having given its consent, Rajathiammal god-dances toward the outermost shrine to Samaya Kaṟuppan, Pāndi's fiercest guardian deity. This apparently happens every year. She then doubles back. Her dancing is regal and masculine; her beautiful features look manly, an observation I heard repeatedly made by those present and which she has heard year after year. Those who knew her father well and had seen him perform this ritual say they see him in her features. Back in the clearing, she approaches the goat as though herself again for a brief moment, but lifting the *aruvāḷ* high, she brings it down effortlessly on the neck of the goat, with tremendous precision and swiftness. It is an esthetically beautiful gesture, full of grace because of its flawlessness: she does decapitate the goat as though "cutting a sponge," in one clean and fast stroke. Devotees take the flawless and effortless decapitation as a "signature" that Pāndi-cum-Veeramalai, Rajathiammal's father, are indeed performing the deed and that the act is therefore motivated by true *aruḷ*. One participant explained that the sight of the pristine immolation moves her to tears despite its being a gruesome act.[28]

As soon as the goat is immolated, Rajathiammal raises the headless body to her mouth with the help of her ritual assistants. As soon as the artery of the goat's neck is in her mouth, the *aruḷ* upsurges in her body once again and she drinks for what seems like a very prolonged time. She then drops the headless body to the ground and faints, reviving only moments later for an even more vigorous bout of god-dancing. Her eyes are ablaze with a fiery joy and she laughs with genuine pleasure, a laugh that in god-dancers characterizes Pāndi.[29] The *mēḷam* drums increase in intensity as they accompany her. She is a wild sight.

The sacrificial ritual closed with a brief but forceful *aruḷ vākku* 'oracular speech' at Muṉiyāṇṭi's shrine, which Rajathiammal gave to a man I was told came from

28. Compare with Samanta (1994: 784): "A successful *bali,* namely, a clean immolation with one stroke of the sacrificial sword, is perceived as being critical to the 'well-being' (*mangal)* of the sacrifier and his family. Conversely, a failed *bali,* that is, where more than one strike is required, is seen as a condition of 'being stuck' (*atke jaowa*) or being hindered (*badha para)*. Its consequences are perceived as being catastrophic, the sacrifier or his family being in danger of death and general calamity, such as insanity, poverty, and disease." At Pāndi Kōyil, such botched immolations betray a moral deficiency in the patron's motives for sacrificing, or that the goat cutting proceeded without the *kulukku*. Reparations are typically offered in penance at once, with devotees pleading Pāndi to illuminate the *kuṟai* 'shortcoming' at play.

29. Experienced devotees can discern a particular god or goddess in a god-dancer even before "the mouth is opened" by noting what the body of the dancer does. As each deity was a "person" before they died and were deified, they have individual attributes as well as desires that get expressed through the god-dancer, sometimes verbally, always physically. Pāndi is exceedingly fond of jasmine flowers, which devotees offer in abundance. Interestingly, many god-dancers shared anecdotes about how the smell of jasmine will often announce Pāndi's imminent descent.

one of the five neighboring villages that contribute to the ritual's expenses by right (*urimai*).[30] I include this *aruḷ vākku* next because it demonstrates the intimate familiarity between a *pēcūm teyvam* 'a god who speaks' and his devotees. It also demonstrates the emphasis Pāndi puts on sincerity of devotion and righteous conduct *for righteous conduct's sake*, a requirement, to return to Veena Das's explication of Vedic sacrifice, if a ritual is to make "the proper connexions between the visible and the invisible world" (1983: 458).

> *Man*: So this is your habit, Pa? [That is, the drinking of the blood; *Pa* is colloquial for *Appa*, or Father.]
>
> *RA-cum-Pāndi-cum-her Father*: Who are you to decide whether or not I come and do this? Only a human being with the greatest bhakti [devotion] will come and stand before me [as I drink]. Think of it this way always! I shall only say it once, today: My child [Rajathiammal] has danced, she has drunk the blood. For this, no invitations are sent out; not even the important towns will receive invitations! That you stand here before me doing this work is good: blessings shall accrue to you!

In this short *aruḷ vākku*, Pāndi lays out the principal tenets of South Indian *bhakti*: God's very nature is grace, *aruḷ*; grace is spontaneous, a divine prerogative, yet it is also and paradoxically a response to sincere devotion (see Kaylor 1976). The sacrificial act, conducted in the right spirit, accrues blessings to all those present; their very decision to attend (or their chance attendance) the signature of an underlying kinship with *this* god or at the very least an opportunity to be 'caught' (*piṭi*) by Pāndi.[31]

The *aruḷ vākku* also makes clear that the sacrifice is not a function (no invitations are sent out), but a privilege owed to Pāndi's orchestration of events. Not only does this speech corroborate the "method of portent" discussed above (and Rajathiammal's use of it),[32] but it positions the very *act* of goat cutting as a form of *piracātam* (*prasad*, henceforth), of return gift by the god to his community of believers. Diane Eck (1985) famously speaks of visuality as touch in the practice of *daršan* in Hindu worship. Following Eck, I argue that the visual consumption of the immolation at Pāndi Kōyil—not just to see it but to stand before it—is a form of *daršan* that is also *prasad*. The bodies of those present, not just the bodies of priestess and goat, are from the moment of *kulukku* to the close of Rajathiammal's *aruḷ vākku* 'ingesting' and 'digesting' the god's *aruḷ*. This contact—a "proper connexion"—is literally registered in the *cakti*-filled bodies of priestess and goat and the unleashing

30. These villages constitute Pāndi's territory, and villagers reciprocate his protection and beneficence by offering him the first measure of all harvests, their first child (by naming the child after him, a condition Pāndi will demand), and a proportionate gift from whatever prosperity accrues to them.

31. Samanta (1994: 791) remarks that the Kali devotees of her study likewise repeatedly emphasized "that the essential and unseen component of *bhog* [the goddess's daily meal of the sacrificial meats offered to her] is the quality of devotion (*bhakti*) and purity of intention, not only of the offerers but also those who want to partake of it as *prasad.*"

32. Margaret Trawick, also working in Tamil Nadu, makes this apt remark about possession: "There is a complex relationship, and a partial identity, between the personality of a possessing spirit and the personality of the possessed" (1990: 24).

of *aruḷ* when the goat is beheaded, a force that touches all those present but more intensely those whose bodies and intentions are morally blemish free. I cannot emphasize enough the materiality of this bestowal, registered most vividly in the *kulukku* of the goat, Rajathiammal's god-dancing, and the spontaneous trembling of bodies among the devotees. By all local measures, including its filming, the 2001 *pūjā* was a memorable success.

The morning sacrifice was followed by an afternoon feast. The meat of the sacrificed goat was distributed into large pots of mutton stew that fed more than five hundred people through the afternoon, a second *prasad* and ingestion of *aruḷ*.[33] A third *prasad* was a *daršan* of Rajathiammal herself, once she had been tonsured and bathed. For more than two hours at her father's burial mound, she dispensed to a long line of devotees and families *vipūti* 'sacred ash' that had been on the sacrificial ground during the morning ritual (and hence also "received" *daršan*, turning it into *prasad*). The fiery glow in her eyes had not subdued by then, and her body gave me the impression of being as solid and rooted as the trunk of a giant tree. She was hot to the touch as well. Devotees took ash from her hand or offered their foreheads to her which she smeared or dabbed; many dropped to her feet and touched them in an act of humble surrender. Others garlanded her in swaths of roses. At the end of her sitting, she was buried under garlands just as Pāndi is in his shrine on worship days. The identification was complete, both in appearance and in constitution. Rajathiammal was that afternoon the god incarnate, her flesh transubstantiated by *aruḷ* into a divine offering.

Of the experience, devotees spoke of *tirupti* 'satisfaction, gratification': their minds were calm, their stomachs satiated, their hearts full. *Tirupti* is the feeling induced by an experience of prasad, of *cakti*-filled *prasad*. It too is a measure of a ritual's success. In all the sacrificial feasts I attended during my fieldwork, large or small, there was always at some point private and also public discussion of this emotion, of its degree and intensity, in relation to the conduct of ritual objects, the taste of ritual food, or benefits reaped such as the quieting of emotions or of a worried mind. Prosaically speaking, the emotion of *tirupti*, either narratively or experientially or in a combination of both, indexes that the deed was righteously carried out, in keeping with the *uttaravu* of the divinity. *Tirupti* thus stood as a good predictor of blessings likely to follow: good fortune, the boon of a child, robust or improved health, protection from harm, a serene heart or mind, the resolution of problems, success in business, and so on.

In the week following the *pūjā,* Rajathiammal remained in a quasi-state of trance and stayed in a small room she had had built on the rooftop of her home before the *pūjā* after receiving *uttaravu* (here, permission) from Pāndi to renounce her "family life." I filmed and interviewed her in this "hut" as well. She spoke of a feeling of absolute bliss as well as acute psychic sensitivity. She is still ablaze in the footage ("bright" is how people spoke of it, using this English word in contrast to "dull"

33. A total of 21 goats were brought by devotees for sacrifice, including the blemish-free goat of the ritual. These goats were also ritually sacrificed, by attendants. The meat of the main sacrificial goat was distributed into all the cooking pots.

as a measure of wellness). She foresaw events before they happened (for example, the alcoholic death of a man residing in the lane behind her house), answered the questions of her visitors before they were asked, did not react in anger to her family over disputes as she usually would, and so on. She experienced new qualities of being in herself, which enthralled her. This heightened state of *aṉanta-cukam* 'limitless bliss', as she put it, and *aṟivu* 'true knowledge', subsided roughly after 10 days as she found herself increasingly entangled in "family life." It has remained, in all our conversations since, a hallmark in her spiritual life. At the time of publication of this essay, she had continued to receive the *uttaravu* (here, 'command') to perform Pāndi's *pūjā* in all intervening years, despite her failure to fully renounce her "family life." Rajathiammal is also caught by the gender politics of her social location and not just by Pāndi, but that is a subject for another essay.

Concluding Remarks

I have argued that in order to appreciate the metaphysics of sacrificial rituals as they take place in South India, one must suspend the Judeo-Christian inflected, secular hermeneutics that organize modern methods and knowledge-making about sacrifice and adopt instead a prosaic hermeneutics attentive to the "speech" of everyday yet extraordinary serendipities, correspondences, timings, and their regularities, written in the biographical conduct of objects: what Foucault describes as the "Prose of the World." I have also argued against placing undue weight on the "symbolic" or the "social" or the "psychological" as structural "realities" that explain ritual practices or beliefs *in toto*. I have sought to demonstrate that *more* is at stake in South Indian sacrificial ritual than just politics of status or instrumentalism, or symbolic expiation and appeasement. I have argued that a prosaic hermeneutics opens up a window onto the *moral kaṇakku* 'reckoning' of a ritual and its biographical context, returning us, if precariously, to idioms of auspiciousness, purity, and *dharma*. This moral reckoning is not an abstract calculus but a concrete one registered in the very conduct of ritual objects, from the bodies of priestess, goat, and certain devotees, to the way in which a brew of milk, jaggery, and rice will rise and foam, to the good feeling devotees have when they ingest the ritual meal or take sacred ash from Rajathiammal's hand. Foucault's "Prose of the World" is an apt phrase: the world of Pāndi's *periya pūjā* is a speaking world; it *is* a world of *cakti*-filled bodies that are not to be read as mere representations but rather as emitters of hidden analogies of moral significance, for which one must employ a prosaic hermeneutics. This difficulty, clearly, is that this hermeneutics can be and is easily misrecognized or dismissed by a modern, secular standpoint wedded to an Enlightenment metaphysics of the world and the human.

Not without some trepidation in an academic setting, I have followed Rajathiammal and her devotees into this world of prosaic speech and suggested that Pāndi is a real phenomenon, with a knowable nonanthropomorphic "body," a material-semiotic "speech" that communicates, but not on the model of human language. This speech is also a politics, evident in the *sense* of his *uttaravus* 'commands, permissions' that seem at their more exciting to be about right living, about *dharma*.

This requires, as South Indian Saivism and *bhakti* teaches, to dance on the head of our lower, demonic selves, our personal as well as social and all-so-human hubris. While I very well could have read the 2001 *pūjā* through the conventional logics and theoretical preoccupations of my disciplinary location and told an equally, if not more, for certain publics, persuasive story about ritual life in South India, I have chosen not to, both out of respect for my interlocutors in the field, and for the mystery that Pāndi, when all is said and done, remains for me and for his devotees. After all, who are we to decide whether the god comes or not?

I close with an anecdote of shocking human sacrifice that happened at the customary place of the *periya pūjā* sacrifice, in front of the Muṉiyāṇṭi shrine, a coincidence that was noted by many Pāndi Kōyil regulars. A man one tragic day was seized with *aruḷ* and began to god-dance. He grabbed a sickle-sword, *aruvāḷ*, that happened to be resting against a tree that lines the clearing and decapitated in a single stroke a woman vendor who had set up shop in front of the shrine. Her death was instantaneous. The man came to without awareness of what he had done. Though he is spending his life in jail for first-degree murder, the local view is that he was Pāndi's hapless servant who, for reasons only known to the god, took the blood and life of this innocent and well-loved woman at Pāndi Kōyil. After all, Pāndi's Kōyil is Pāndi's abode, his *Kō*, and all who walk the ground, his subjects. In this tragic tale, the clash of realities—secular, prosaic—could not be more vivid.

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Sociopolitical Implications of Neolithic Foundation Deposits and the Possibility of Child Sacrifice: A Case Study at Çatalhöyük, Turkey

Sharon Moses

Throughout the Neolithic Near East and Aegean, excavations have uncovered infant and child foundation deposits and "special" burials in floors, platforms, below-floor cell grids, walls, caves and other highly ritualized spaces. Some of these have prompted speculation as to whether they represent examples of child sacrifice (Kenyon 1957: 72–73; Mellaart 1964: 182; Özdoğan 1999: 44–51; Perlès 2001: 276; Rollefson 1983: 29–38, 1986: 73–82; Simmons and Najjar 2006: 90; Speiser 1935: 142; Whitehouse 1992: 68–70).

We continue to hear about foundation deposits peripherally, tucked away in excavation reports or within the general overview of a site. However, due to the lack of conclusive evidence to support an argument for ritual death, these special child burials have been largely excluded from any in-depth discussions in the literature, despite the Neolithic florescence of ritual practices and symbolism that heavily utilize concepts of death.

Child sacrifice as a social reality seems more readily identifiable in social reconstructions for later periods because of their association with complex societies, state formation, and clerical elites. Sacrifice of human beings is often used to maintain and perpetuate systems of power and is consistent with our perceptions of those types of hierarchal societies.

On the other hand, egalitarian societies, as has been the designation given to the sociopolitical reality during the Neolithic, are theoretically characterized by the belief in and cultural practice of maintaining equality among society's members. Political, social, and economic concerns are addressed in pragmatic ways designed to benefit the community, and there is no clear-cut class division or privileged access to resources. Leaders are not born but are created through actions, skills, and charismatic appeal; these may be connected to kinship lines but without inherited status as one finds in early state formation societies. Individuals who stand out because of their talents are expected to utilize them to benefit the community

Author's note: I wish to thank the National Science Foundation; Ian Hodder for granting me a place in the Çatalhöyük Research Project to investigate the children of Çatalhöyük; Human Remains specialists Lori Hager and Başak Boz, whose reports were integral to understanding the physical aspects of the skeletal remains; Çatalhöyük faunal specialist Nerissa Russell; and all the members of the project teams who discussed different aspects of Neolithic life at Çatalhöyük with me.

rather than harness them for personal aggrandizement; these are the hallmarks of egalitarian society. Therefore, at first glance child sacrifice in the Neolithic does not immediately come to mind as a social dynamic one would expect to find. Çatalhöyük may help to change that picture, because there are other social considerations exemplified at this site that suggest *egalitarian* as a blanket term may be too simplistic or limited for a balanced understanding of Neolithic ideologies. Other considerations include, first, that "megasites" found in the Neolithic and ancient Near East defy stereotypical definitions of *egalitarian* most commonly associated with smaller-scale community governance. Çatalhöyük is a prime example; at its peak it was home to 3,500 to 8,000 people (Hodder and Cessford 2004: 17–40). While architecture and burials generally support the egalitarian claim because of a lack of wealthy display or external differentiation, there are questions with regard to organization and efficiency in a population this size (Johnson 1982: 389–421). Second, it has been suggested that the Neolithic was a period of social tensions when populations may have been presenting an egalitarian appearance but working toward stratification (Kuijt 2000: 137–64). Deeply ingrained traditions linked to ancestors and egalitarian ideals may have made overt displays of differentiation unacceptable. However, I hope to demonstrate that other ways of negotiating social change and the beginning of stratification may have been made possible through existing cosmological views of death and ancestors.

Çatalhöyük provides a number of examples of child foundation deposits that can be examined in detail, and these will be used to demonstrate patterns of child sacrifice and its sociopolitical implications. There is no definitive or confirmed case to date of child sacrifice at Çatalhöyük based purely on forensic evidence that would include stabbing, broken bones, and/or other manifestations recognizable as violent ritual deaths. However, this in itself does not preclude the possibility that death was brought about through suffocation or other means that would have left no trace on the human remains in the archaeological record. Rather, I suggest that context and historical circumstances may make up for the absence of physical evidence.

Sacrifice, for the purposes of this article, is defined not as an act of willful loss or appeasements made in fear, but as a means to create sacred spaces, imbue houses with sacred power, create bonds between people, and act as a supernatural link to the ancestors. Western conceptualizations of sorrow have no place in this definition. I propose that in the Neolithic scenario, sacrifice would also have been performed with a notion of honor for the family of the victim.

Further, I propose the existence of infant sacrifice in the Neolithic may have originated as a means of creating highly specialized sacred spaces but eventually was used as a means for negotiating incipient social change. Infants may have been perceived as those most closely associated with the Other World, perhaps because they had most recently entered into the Living World. As some of my examples will demonstrate, neonates and youngest infants seem to have been given special consideration in burial placement indicating a separate category of social membership.

Intramural burials reincorporated certain individuals back into the houses and death appears as a central concept in Çatalhöyük's symbolism and rituals. People

literally slept over the dead on platforms where the deceased were interred. Conceptualization of death among the inhabitants was likely quite different from our own, and we cannot allow our own biases about death or children's place in death rituals to be clouded by them. Intramural burials were not uncommon in the Neolithic and suggest that death was a concept that generated not fear but reverence. The dead shared lived spaces, suggesting an ongoing connection and influence on the living.

A population struggling with overburdened egalitarian governance but locked in the conformity of egalitarian traditions and ideology could employ infant sacrifice as a legitimate means to add new ideas based on older traditions. Acts of sacrifice would have straddled existing concepts about death, the ancestors, and creation of the sacred, while establishing sacred bonds between different houses of nonrelated families for allegiances and influence. The architecture of Çatalhöyük seems one of the most salient examples of conformist tradition materially expressed over the centuries. As a platform of change, death would appear to have been an obvious point of negotiation for social change while presenting an image of conformity to egalitarian tradition.

My goal in this essay is to contribute to and expand on the discussion of child foundation burials and ritual killing by relying more on a contextual and theoretical examination of each case in lieu of conclusive physical evidence. I propose this as a constructive alternative to suspending debate on a widespread phenomenon many prehistoric excavations have uncovered, out of fear that such a debate will be labeled "speculation." By entering the discourse as a valid topic, the social and ideological ramifications previously unexplored can add a new dimension to understanding Neolithic ritual and religion.

I will give a brief overview on the burials at Çatalhöyük in order to establish what constituted "typical" intramural funerary characteristics in order to contrast them with those that are differentiated by special placement patterns; specifically, foundation deposits. A brief review of the physical analyses of skeletal remains from specialists' reports will be included with regard to the mortuary population.

Children, particularly neonates and infants, seem to be preferred foundation deposits. I will place this criterion in a wider context of belief systems that demonstrate why a scenario of ritual killing may be more plausible in certain circumstances than the deposit of a lifeless body. Finally, I will look at the sociopolitical ramifications of ritual killing as it may have evolved in later levels of the site and how this may have benefited a changing social agenda.

Çatalhöyük's Burial Distribution

Child burials make up the majority of intramural burials found at Çatalhöyük. See fig. 1. Although children outnumber adult burials on the East mound of Çatalhöyük,[1] it must also be pointed out that the total mortuary population does

1. Çatalhöyük is made up of two mounds: the East and West. The East Mound is Neolithic, accounting for Levels pre-XII.E-A up to II.1 and represents up to 1,200 years of occupation with

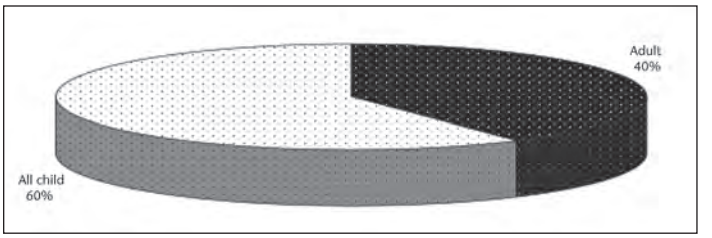


Fig. 1. Child and adult burials: 1995–2006 data, Neolithic Çatalhöyük, Turkey.

not adequately account for the estimated population of the mound overall (Hodder and Cessford 2004: 17–40). Therefore, one must be careful not to draw conclusions about the general population directly from intramural burial data. In essence, the individuals selected for burial in the settlement and in the houses were all "special." That is to say, based on unknown criteria these individuals were selected for intramural burial, while the majority of the population was not. Considering their limited number, we can deduce that these intramural burials represent a distinct segment of the population, perhaps were individuals fulfilling an ideological criterion. Furthermore, intramural burials seem to suggest an association symbolically linking these individuals to the settlement and to specific houses. It has been proposed that certain houses were clan houses, perhaps where leadership families resided in order to explain why some houses have more burials compared to others of similar size (Hodder 2006: 178–79). They may also be individuals outside direct kinship lines as we define them residing in another house brought to a central clan house for burial. Therefore, not all burials may represent actual inhabitants of the house or even related members of the household in which they are buried.

What is known is that the funerary treatment for the majority of the inhabitants of the settlement excluded them from in-house, in-settlement burial. By reverse association, this too represents a distinct segment of the population as a collective group. Although the settlement has been labeled egalitarian, this distinction between members of the population suggests a certain amount of social differentiation, although not necessarily hierarchal; there are many factors that can make individuals special. We do not know how the majority of the population was disposed of; there is no evidence of an external cemetery and exposure to elements or animals may have removed any evidence of them archaeologically.

While individuals buried in the settlement suggest a different designation of their place in society, it is equally feasible that these individuals were randomly selected to represent their kinship lines or a special group or society. Burial on the mound may have given them special status in death that they did not enjoy in life. It is difficult to say how intramural burials defined or favored this group without comparative burial data as to funerary treatment, level of effort expended, or kinds of associated grave goods for symbolic or economic value. We can only compare

3,500–8,000 at its maximum population (Cessford 2007: 59–101; Hodder and Cessford 2004: 20–21). The West Mound is primarily Chalcolithic, although ongoing excavations may change our understanding of it (Pollard, Shell, and Twigg 1996: 59–71).

burial data among the mortuary population on the East mound and the houses or areas in which they were interred. Because the houses are externally similar and none of the associated grave goods can be considered evidence of wealth, insofar as they are exotic materials in abundance, and so on, we must consider the possibility that egalitarianism and the appearance of parity ruled in some way, even for these burials.

The majority of intramural child burials are primary at Çatalhöyük; these may be single or multiple, while secondary burials account for only a small percentage (Andrews, Molleson, and Boz 2005: 261–78; Hamilton 1996: 250–51; Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 279–300). Conversely, James Mellaart, who conducted the initial excavations in the 1960s, suggested that the majority of burials were secondary with a variety of funerary treatments that have since been discounted.[2] Mellaart misinterpreted multiple burial events in platforms and floors and disturbance to earlier burials as evidence for secondary burial (Mellaart 1962; 1963; 1964; 1967).[3] In reality, secondary burials at Çatalhöyük were not common.

Neonates and infants were sometimes placed inside small baskets with or without lids for burial.[4] The woven, coiled pattern of baskets can be seen as phytolith deposits around the skeletal remains. From 1995 to 2006, 41 neonate and 57 infant burials were excavated. The burial data indicate that approximately one-fifth of all neonate and infant burials were basket burials. Questions arise as to whether children's burial baskets were made exclusively for that purpose or recycled from household service. The time and energy spent on burial preparation may give significant clues to the ideology involved as it pertained to children's burials. Willeke Wendrich states that "phytolith evidence suggests that adult burials are associated with mats made from sedge; whereas neonatal burials used baskets made from a distinctive wild grass" (Wendrich 2005: 338).

Wendrich suggests that some baby burial baskets show trace wear, indicating they may have been used in a limited way before being used in funerary practices (Wendrich 2005: 338). In deference to a high infant mortality rate, mothers may have constructed small baskets with the possibility of funerary use in mind but employed them for other purposes unless or until the funerary need arose.

However, Rosen stipulates that because some small baskets were constructed with a certain type of wild grass, *those* baskets were created specifically for burial purposes and not household use:

2. Mellaart believed most of the dead were excarnated before burial, using exposure to vultures, other birds and insects, boiling (for infants and children), and in one instance suggested ossuaries housed the dead (Mellaart 1967: 204–5; 1964: 92–93).

3. For a full recounting of Mellaart's excavations and interpretations, see his preliminary reports and monograph (1962: 41–65; 1963: 43–103; 1964: 39–119; 1966: 65–191; 1967).

4. A neonate is an infant less than one month old; the term has been used interchangeably with *newborn* in some excavation reports and may mislead readers to believe this is synonymous with *stillborn*, which is not necessarily the case. This is a crucial difference, particularly when foundation deposits are largely neonates, who could have been viable infants but ritually killed before reaching a certain age. The term *infant* is used to differentiate from the *neonate*; an infant is more than one month and up to two years of age.

Table 1. Summary of Çatalhöyük Burial Area Concentrations: Neonate and Infant Basket Burials on the East Mound

	Neonates	*Infants*	*Total*
South Area	5	8	13
North Area	3	3	6
4040 Area	1	1	2

> Finally, there was one unique type of grass phytolith that may have only been used in the production of neonatal burial baskets. This type of multicelled phytolith is similar in appearance to phytoliths from the wild grass Agropyron sp. Although not all neonate containers are made of this grass, when it does occur, it is only in these infant burial baskets (Rosen 2005: 210).

Neonate and infant burials found to date seem to be more concentrated in the South Area of the mound. See table 1.

The South Area of the mound is where James Mellaart's original excavations were concentrated and where new excavations have continued and expanded under Ian Hodder since 1993. The level of occupation associated with this area is primarily Level VII. The North Area excavations are VIII–VI, and the 4040 Area are VII–IV, though not all buildings and spaces in this area have been correlated with levels of occupation yet.[5]

Besides a preponderance of child burials found in the South Area of the mound, the south areas of houses also tend to be where neonates and young infants are buried, to the exclusion of other age groups. This means not that neonates and infants are not buried elsewhere in the house but only that funerary options are age-graded when it comes to certain spaces within the house.

A little more than one-fourth of all child and adult burials have grave goods: 40 out of 164 children and 30 out of 120 adults. Children's grave goods are typically comprised of loose or strung beads, obsidian flakes, colored stones, clay balls or fragments, and faunal pieces.

To summarize, the typical child grave at Çatalhöyük has no grave goods. Those that do are not remarkable for wealth. It seems that the grave goods among the youngest children have symbolic purpose rather than reflect a personal or economic value attached to the deceased. Approximately 20 percent of neonates and infants are basket burials. Of these, a specific type of grass basket has been found exclusively in neonate burials, while other types of grass baskets have multiple uses, including burials. Baskets made of other grasses and materials used for baby

5. The new excavations under Ian Hodder, since 1993, are correlated with levels established by Mellaart; levels are assigned across the mound to maintain continuity. However, the designation "Level" is somewhat artificial, as occupation was obviously not punctuated in such an arbitrary or complete manner by the inhabitants. Levels are only meant to distinguish generational and progressive activity over time. As part of this progression, overlaps are not only inevitable but expected.

burials sometimes show trace evidence of prior household use. Neonates and young infants appear to have exclusive right to burial along south walls of the house.

Trauma, Infant Mortality, Infanticide, and Evidence for Causes of Death

Generally speaking, there are only a few examples in the Çatalhöyük burial data where trauma is evident among adults or children, but few are considered the direct cause of death (Hager et al. 2005; Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 297). These traumas were primarily fractures (arms, legs, ribs, clavicles, vertebrae, skull injuries, and so on) and seem consistent with injuries sustained in accidents. Because houses were entered through the roof via ladders, such a scenario is quite plausible. Furthermore, there is evidence for heavy burden bearing activity among the population (Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 290). If one combines lifting, twisting, and climbing while toting heavy supplies and falling, injuries of this nature would be expected.

Some fractures show signs of healing. Other injuries appear to be related to pathological conditions the individual suffered from in life and probably contributed to a shortened life span. Human remains specialists, Molleson, Andrews, and Boz state:

> The fractures have healed poorly, . . . failure to heal may be due to an underlying bone condition. . . . Other signs of trauma were rare. A female (2115) had a healed injury on the forehead; (1364.4) damages to T12-L1 vertebrae; and (2527) a twisted coccyx, possibly the consequence of a fall down a ladder (Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 297).

Only one individual has been noted as having an injury likely resulting from violent behavior. This was an old adult male, more than 50 years old, buried in Building 1, Space 110 in the North Area of the mound. He had a "healed parry fracture of the left ulna" (Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 297). There was phytolith evidence on the body suggesting the man may also have been bound at the time he was buried.

Another individual dubbed the "midden man" was a young adult male (3368) who suffered from a bone disease that affected most of his upper body (Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 295). This individual survived a number of fractures in his lifetime and was crippled; when he died, he was buried in a midden rather than given an intramural burial; his hands and feet were also bound. This suggests that, although he was selected for settlement burial, he was segregated from the others; an indication that there was some element of perceived contagion or pollution associated with his crippled and distorted body.

Many of the infant deaths have been attributed to a high infant mortality rate due to infectious diseases and low resistance, congenital conditions, and nutritional deficiencies. If one were to take the mortuary population at face value and consider the number of infant burials as a reflection of the general population, the number would be considered nearly twice that of average infant mortality rates expected for preindustrial or prehistoric populations (Molleson 1991: 113–22). Infanticide and early weaning are often factors when there is an unusually high infant mortality



Fig. 2. Artist's reconstruction of various practices at Çatalhöyük that have been found along a north wall, which seems to be a regulated access area of the house: crossed infant basket burials in a northeast corner; plastered wild bull bucrania that often appear on a north wall, and stylized handprints (child sized) found in mid-levels of the site along the lower register of northwest, north, and northeast walls. Illustration by author.

rate. However, analysis of nitrogen isotope levels in infants indicate that weaning practices at Çatalhöyük occurred around the age of two, which would *not* be considered an early age for weaning (Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 281). Infants did receive the full benefit of mother's milk at an important phase of their young lives, and this, at least, was not a root cause for early infant death.

Infanticide often results in a disproportionate surviving male-to-female population, when one gender is valued over the other. As we do not have the burial data for the remainder of the population, we cannot know if males or females reflect favored numbers. Some argue that there is no evidence for infanticide at Çatalhöyük because "the ratio of infants to children is consistent with very high neonate mortality followed by high juvenile mortality; further the adult male-female sex ratio is not biased" (Molleson, Andrews, and Boz 2005: 281). However, as noted previously, one cannot assume the number of burials in any category has a direct correlation to the death rate of the general population. At any rate, breakdown of child burials with updated data indicates that neonates accounted for 15 percent, infants for 21 percent, juveniles for 16 percent, and adolescents for 7 percent of the total child burials.[6] Added together, all categories of child burials total 60 percent of the East mound burials. See fig. 2.

6. Adults account for 40 percent of the total burials on the mound. See fig. 1.

If one looks at the breakdown of child burials by age category, they do *not* reflect a pattern of "very high neonate mortality followed by a high juvenile mortality" as has been hypothesized. Infants rather than neonates seem disproportionately chosen among all child categories to be buried on the mound. The range of child age categories and their numbers suggest that they are a reflection of selective burial practices rather than a reflection of a naturally occurring mortuary population.

Ritually Distinct Child Burials

Foundation Burials

Excavations of Building 1 in the North Area of the mound uncovered three neonate burials (2515), (2199), and (2197), placed at the threshold area between two rooms: Space 71 and Space 187. A fourth neonate (2532) with an adult female (2527) was buried closer to the north wall but within the same foundation level as the other three neonate burials (Cessford 2007: 415–19). These may be a mother and child pair. All four neonates constitute the *only* four neonate burials out of 62 burials in the lifespan of the house (Hodder and Cessford 2004: 17–40). The significance of these burials located at thresholds, deposited during construction activity, and a restricted age category, differentiates these from all other burials within the house.[7]

In the 2004 season, there was a burial consisting of a woman (11306) in a flexed position, clutching a partially plastered skull (11330) to her chest; she was buried in a pit associated with the foundation level of Building 42. The plastered skull is the first and only one found thus far at Çatalhöyük. Building 42 was constructed over a previous midden. This is significant because most new buildings were built over the top of a predecessor and often architecturally identical to it (Hodder and Cessford 2004).[8] Also associated with this unique burial was an infant (10498), approximately two to six months old, placed in the corner of the same burial pit located in the northeast platform. Evidence suggests these individuals and plastered skull were likely buried in one event (Boz and Hager 2004).

An Extramural Ritual Burial

An extramural burial of a neonate (4841) was found in Space 199, Feature 525 of the current South Area excavations. The neonate was in a basket and placed in a shallow grave in an open area, approximately five meters east of a wall (F.551). Its extramural status makes this a very unusual burial and is the only one of its kind discovered to date. The burial was found in the beginning of Level XII, one of the

7. For other examples of special deposits marking internal or external thresholds in Neolithic-Chalcolithic Near Eastern sites, see also Dikaios 1953 (tholos VII), Mallowan 1946, French 1998: 25, Campbell and Baird 1990: 65–78.

8. The average lifespan of a house is estimated to have lasted approximately 50 to100 years, at the end of which time the house received a termination ritual such as infilling, removing posts, plastered bucrania and ritual deposits of artifacts. Its remnant walls and foundation may have stood idle for a time. The practice of rebuilding an identical structure over the old and following the same architectural pattern is striking, particularly when this practice lasted over some houses for several hundred years (Hodder and Cessford 2004: 22). In that context, establishment of a new building with no predecessor may have been perceived as a significant ritual event.

earliest of Çatalhöyük's settlement and is another example of a change of space. This was a transition area, much like the construction of Building 42. That is to say, at the beginning of Level XII, the baby burial was located in an area of transition: the end of a long-term midden replaced by the construction of a sheep/goat penning area. Charcoal residue from oak wood fire was found near this burial. Evidence suggests the oak wood bonfire was a singular event rather than a repetitive community use area, and it sealed the baby burial archaeologically (Cessford 2007: 93):

> a thin layer of in situ burning (4826), which was most intense towards the southeast corner and gradually petered out towards the west. This seems to represent the burning of a specific deposit and contained distinctive botanical remains; it appears to mark the transition to Level XII activities in this area and is probably associated with burial F.525.

This is a marked contrast to the private intramural burial rituals that would have been visible to only a select few. The baby burial and bonfire together suggest a consecration ritual of some kind and the importance of the sheep/goat herd to the community rather than to a single household or family. It comprised a large area: "It covered . . . in excess of 2.6 m east-west by 1.3 m north-south, and was between 2 and 8 mm thick" (Cessford 2007: 93). It is likely that a perception of liminality, purity, or closest association to the Other World based on pre-personhood status, made neonates and infants up to a certain age preferred vessels for foundation rituals. The community would likely have considered establishing an important house or creating a new space for the care and maintenance of its sheep and goat herd as particularly important.

When Ritual Killing Is Necessary

Çatalhöyük's inhabitants were bound by tradition and ritual repetition. Centuries of maintaining architectural continuity through exact replicas of houses over and over again on the same foundations attest to this. Although I am not suggesting that all changes of space necessitated sacrifice, to the inhabitants of Çatalhöyük, erecting new pens over a previous midden area, constructing a special building—perhaps a central clan house where no architectural predecessor had been established, may have been portentous if not done properly. To forestall any harm being visited on the inhabitants or jeopardizing important community assets such as the herd, a special ritual likely would have been required to appeal to the spirit world for protection, blessing, and consecration.

Neonate and infant foundation deposits have been found in a number of Neolithic settlements where households yield burials; they have been largely dismissed as probable opportunistic ritual burials in absence of conclusive evidence for ritual killing. That is to say, after having died natural deaths, many reconstructions suggest deceased infants were then used in foundation rituals. While this may be the safest interpretation, it does not always synthesize well with the contextual evidence of highly charged ritual dynamics occurring in the Neolithic period. I would argue that these special burials were more likely to represent unnatural deaths, based on the patterning and context.

Building 1 contained no other neonates for the duration of its house-life, which constituted 62 burials (Hodder and Cessford 2004). This further emphasizes the specific and limited ritual nature of the four neonate threshold/foundation burials. Burial of an adult female with a rare plastered skull in Building 42 suggests a ritual event worthy of a sacrificial catalyst. The shared burial suggests the woman and plastered skull required the offering of an infant to accompany them as a foundation deposit. The plastered skull highlights this as a special event linked to construction and establishment of a new house of special meaning; mudbrick production and other construction activities would have been limited to a season when building activities were possible. All of these suggest forethought and planning. I propose that contextual evidence outweighs the lack of physical evidence for ritual killing in these cases.

Similar ritual acts in other cultures support the likelihood that naturally deceased individuals would not have been acceptable offerings in dedicatory or consecration ceremonies. Thresholds around "sensitive" spaces, special buildings and other ritually charged areas are potentially "dangerous" and require consecration or apotropaic precautions. Rituals where humans or animals are the offering typically requires taking the life of the offering. The offering is not the lifeless body but the life force within a living body—the blood or perceived spirit. The purpose of the ritual is not just to bury but to release that life force (Brewster 1971; Green 2001: 165–69; Whitehouse 1992).

Strained Egalitarianism

Neolithic architecture was primarily mudbrick, and most buildings from this period exhibit little or no differentiation. Certain houses at Çatalhöyük occasionally contained more internal elaboration, for example, wall paintings, plastered reliefs, or artifacts, than others. Larger buildings with more internal elaboration also had more intramural burials, and some suggest these represented clan houses (Düring 2003: 13). The majority of individuals' primary burials and funerary treatments seem designed to promote the appearance of equality. However, the extent to which equality and egalitarian principles were practiced in reality has been questioned, particularly with the development of Neolithic megasites such as ʿAin Ghazal and Çatalhöyük where the population has been estimated in the thousands at times, would surely have strained an egalitarian form of governance (Feinman 1995: 255–79; Kuijt 2000: 137–64, 311–22; Rollefson 1987: 2–32; Simmons 2007: 175–94).

There seems to have been a concerted effort to maintain egalitarian traditions long after hunter-gatherer lifestyles had shifted to predominantly sedentarism and domestication (Kuijt 2000). There are some examples for non-residential, elaborated and public buildings in Neolithic Anatolia at Çayönü, Nevali Çori, and Aşıklı Höyük, for example (Esin and Harmankaya 1999: 115–32; Hauptmann 1999: 65–86; Özdoğan 1999: 35–64). Ethnographic and historic examples of ritual or built environments suggest more complex organization in the midst of supposedly egalitarian villages. Hopewellian people of the Illinois River Valley, for example, built

earthworks over a 300-year period that can be considered monumental for the purpose of mortuary rituals (Buikstra and Charles 1999: 201–28). It has been posited that their mortuary mounds became the locus of negotiation through which an ancestral cult and burials were utilized to validate resource rights and territory, although their early villages were considered "egalitarian."

Ritual structures often serve to help reinforce group decision-making, settle differences and tensions that arise out of sedentary living, and maintain a sense of cohesion around a commonly held ideology based on an egalitarian tradition (Byrd 1994: 639–66). At Çatalhöyük, houses can be considered simultaneously dwellings and ritual structures because evidence suggests household ritual was intertwined with secular life. Social negotiation of new groups with decision-making rights centered around the houses would be consistent with this paradigm.

Plastered skulls, skull caching and other "skull-cult" activities practiced in the Near Eastern Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period (PPNB), suggest a tradition of singling out specific individuals for commemoration and remembrance. In 2004, the partially plastered skull discovered in a burial at Çatalhöyük suggested, at the very least, interaction with populations in the Levant and adoption of some ideology and/or associated symbolism. Kathleen Kenyon (1957) interpreted burial arrangements of plastered skulls excavated in Jericho as representative of an ancestor cult. At Çatalhöyük, there also seems to be a concept of "ancestor" imbued in the plastered skull. The skull was in a foundation burial for Building 42; it was interred with a young woman and had been placed on her chest; analysis shows it had been a kept object for a time before having been deposited in this burial (Boz and Hager 2004). This was a unique and differentiated burial, and it was clearly associated with the establishment of the new house; interpretation of the significance of the plastered skull seems weighted toward kinship and ancestral legitimacy.

By the eighth millennium B.C.E., Çayönü exhibited evidence of social changes with its Skull Building and differentiation between individuals by grave goods (Özdoğan 1999). Blood residue tests on a black flint knife and a stone slab "altar" found in the Skull Building was purported to be human and animal, and was subsequently posited as evidence for sacrificial practices (Loy and Wood 1989: 458).[9] However, this conclusion has been contested and rejected in recent analyses (Smith and Wilson 2001: 313–22). Cut-marks on a number of vertebrae belonging to several of the human skulls deposited in the Skull Building suggest postmortem decapitation rather than sacrifice, based on evidence of decomposition in the bone at the time the cuts were made. The knife and stone slab may have acquired blood residue from human and animal remains in the process of removing skulls postmortem as well. Whatever the practices that led to combined animal and human blood residues on a knife and stone "altar," it is clear that ritual and cosmological symbolism at Çayönü were expanding to include both animals and human beings and that a shift in ideology was occurring.

9. Blood residue analysis has proven possible on artifacts up to 100,000 years old (Loy 1987). This analysis was based on hemoglobin crystals; two types were found: human and *Bos primigenius* (aurochs). Both human skulls and bucrania have been found in the Skull Building.

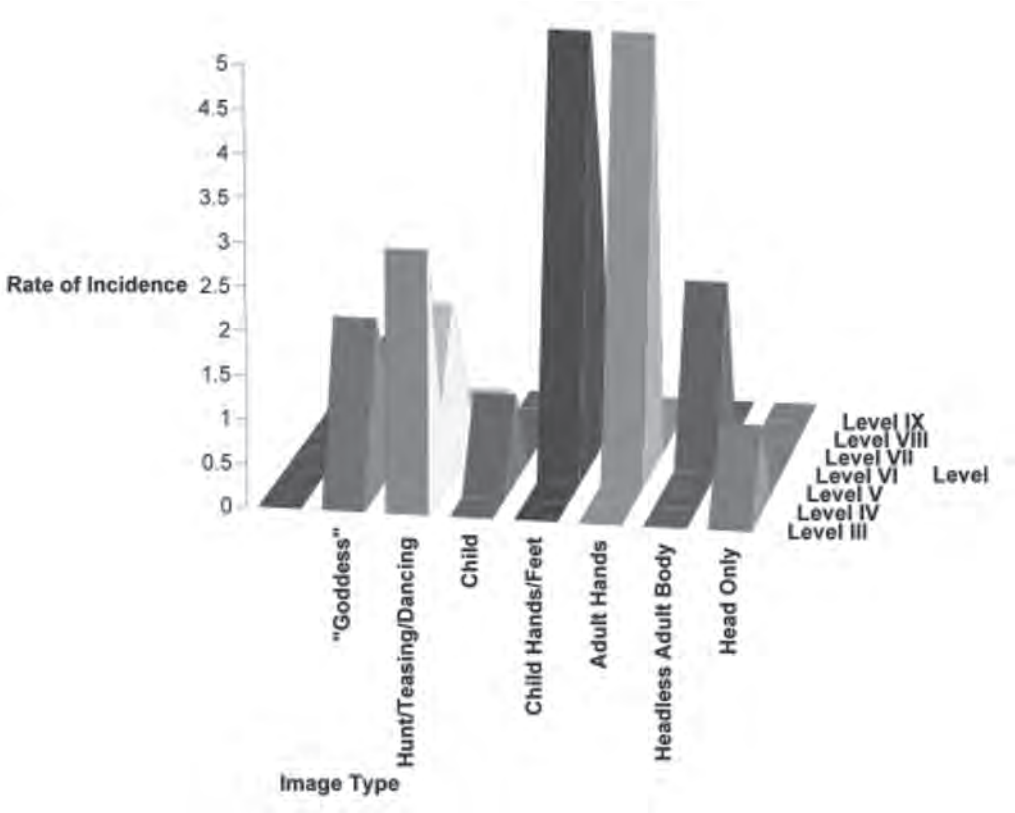


Fig. 3. Human elements in the wall paintings, per level.

At Çatalhöyük, there is evidence for ideological shifts taking place by mid-levels of its occupation, specifically in Levels VII, VI and V. This shift is indicated by studies independently conducted of one another, of different aspects of the site by members of the Çatalhöyük team. They include: knapped stone distribution, architectural traditions, figurines, wall art and child burials (Conolly 1996: 173–98; Düring 2002: 222–26; Hamilton 2005: 211; Moses 2009: 226). Conolly detected changes in lithic distribution around the site by these mid-levels with lithics becoming more concentrated in and around buildings that had more internal elaboration. Düring noted that in mid-levels architectural continuity that "defines the . . . early levels of Çatalhöyük" had begun to change, and by Level V, continuity was abandoned (Düring 2002: 222). Hamilton suggested that the figurine assemblage became more representative of anthropomorphic figures and wall art displayed more males or male-oriented scenes, which she interpreted as ideological changes regarding sex and gender. My research on children's burials reveals that infant and neonate burials also seem more elaborately positioned (crossing one another or "mirroring" each other rather than simply deposited) in association with corners and are present in access ways or foundation deposits rather than adults alone in

foundation levels. Wall art with regard to child-related images are primarily stylized children's hands and feet, adult hands, headless bodies, and in a few instances possible child figures, which appear more frequently in wall paintings during Levels VII–V. I propose that mid-level social changes at Çatalhöyük were occurring, suggested by these studies. See fig. 3.

At times, child hand or feet images imply movement along west and north walls; fingers and hands turn from vertical to horizontal, with fingers splayed and rows of hands pointing the way around west and north corners. Some are concentrated around room-to-room doorways. This location suggests a repeated symbolic theme as neonate foundation deposits are also situated near doorways and thresholds. Child-sized hands and feet images are more numerous along the bottom registers of walls nearest platforms and floors.

There are also changes in neonate and infant burial patterns between early to mid-levels of the site. Child burials in general seem more concentrated in the South Area of the settlement than in others in early to mid-levels, for example, Building 17, Level IX to Building 6, Levels VIII–VII. However, by upper levels in the South Area, neonate and infant burials specifically become less distributed throughout the houses. In Building 1, which represents Levels VII–VI, neonate burials were present only as foundation deposits for the entire occupational cycle of the house (Hodder and Cessford 2004).

Sociopolitical Change and the Child's Role

"House society" in the Lévi-Strauss model is described as a collective entity, that is, household members and the house itself are considered one and the same; material and immaterial wealth are perpetuated by the "name" of the house, kinship, and power (Lévi-Strauss 1982). Further, the Lévi-Strauss model also dictates that (1) house societies occur in communities with clear social ranking or in which major social changes are taking place; (2) kinships are often open ended or perpetuated through both male and female lines; (3) houses are often used to display differences in wealth or status by their architecture; (4) houses and kinships are usually associated with or have access to certain resources or territories; and (5) rituals, sacrifices, and special events are often linked to kinship or created kinship / alliances and are primarily performed in and around the house.

The Lévi-Strauss definition of *house societies* is too rigid to be applicable to egalitarian systems or prehistoric communities and has been of limited use to most archaeologists until recently. New variations on the "house society" model have expanded its usefulness to include analysis of in-house relationships, symbolism, and daily behaviors, memory and identity building, and house memberships defined beyond kinship descent (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995: 1–46; Joyce and Gillespie 2000). This revised model of house societies lends itself more toward understanding social dynamics at sites such as Çatalhöyük with regard to foundation deposits, changes detected in mid-occupational levels of the site, and, I believe, hints that egalitarian house-to-house collective relationships may have been shifting to selective between-house alliance building.

Perhaps initially, children from within a single kinship line were used as foundation deposits to consecrate new clan houses or other sacred spaces and events in keeping with established cosmological beliefs and rituals. Other individuals selected for burial in the settlement could also have been used to reinforce clan or family unity and tradition.

In time, however, I propose children from *other* kinships across the mound would have been used to *create* relatedness, particularly in founding new clans or central houses, and more importantly, new alliances.[10] Incorporating new and influential kinships based on alliances is a way to accumulate power and is a natural step in sociopolitical negotiations leading away from egalitarian governance while maintaining the appearance of tradition.

Children within a certain age group would seem to have been the first criteria for selection, as foundation deposits are typically neonates or very young infants. This seems to imply liminality or "transition" and would correlate with the establishment of something new such as a clan house or family alliance. When adults are found in foundation deposits, there may have been an element of liminality or transition associated with their stage of life as well—such as menopausal women, young women who had just experienced their first menses or other criteria that was culturally rather than biologically determined that would also serve to place individuals in a transitory status. Because 60 percent of intramural burials are children, and the vast majority of foundation burials are children or are accompanied by children even when an adult is included, I would argue that children were considered necessary for foundation deposits. Even the plastered skull burial with the young woman in Building 42 had an infant placed in the corner of the same burial cut, suggesting that whatever significance or manner of death the woman represented, an infant was still necessary to consecrate the burial.

There does not appear to be a privileged gender in the social dynamics displayed at Çatalhöyük, and so it is impossible to judge whether the sex or gender would have played a role (Hodder 2005: 34–41). To cement a family alliance, it may have been necessary to sacrifice a child from both houses upon the establishment of the new clan house, which may account for some of the foundation deposits in corners where two children are placed in mirrored positions or crossing one another. We may never know the exact criteria involved in victim selection.

One might argue that arranged marriages between houses could more easily offer an efficacious method and one without emotional toll for securing alliances, but that would be giving in to our own biases about the legitimacy and value of sacrifice in other cultures. Sacrificial victims who were selected not from captive groups or slaves but from within the community, were often regarded as inhabiting roles of *honor*; this is a crucial concept we must embrace in order to move forward with examining human sacrifice. Too often we correlate marriage with happiness and celebration and sacrifice with sorrow and loss, when in actuality sacrifice was a time of celebration as well in the cultures that practiced it.

10. Future DNA analyses may help to shed light on this matter.

Furthermore, children as ritual offerings would produce sure and immediate results sanctified by ritual, whereas marriage and survival of offspring to unite families would have required a longer period to be realized and a riskier alternative in terms of possibility of failure. Most salient to consider is the widespread ideology and symbolism in the Neolithic and Çatalhöyük in particular, which seems to indicate they embraced death and death symbolism as part of the fabric and strength of a house. This may be difficult for a modern, Western mind to comprehend, but nevertheless, we must consider the value system of the culture and its context.

In this scenario, houses would come to represent multiple rather than single kinship lines, wielding more influence compared to other houses with fewer or no alliances. Burial patterns for foundation deposits and other activities in and around more elaborated houses in the mid- to upper levels of the site suggest the sociopolitical focus was shifting, becoming even more centered on specific houses than in earlier levels. I propose that kinship was being negotiated so that more economic and political control could be manipulated by key houses and begin a process that would eventually subvert an outdated egalitarian system of governance.

History demonstrates that a way to negotiate social change is to employ religion, ritual and/or tradition to legitimize change. It is plausible that Çatalhöyük was undergoing a transition from kinship and clan houses to a house society, with incipient social differentiation occurring and being emphasized by the latter half of the site's occupation.

Conclusion

Ethnographic and historic examples such as the private farms, temples and public structures in Romano-British England where foundation deposits of animals and infants have been found suggest the release of a life force, *anima*, or last living breath is important to have value as a sacrifice, rather than the deposit of an already lifeless body (Green 2001). In order to create reciprocal relationships with deities or ancestors, consecrate spaces, or bring about apotropaic effects, the release of the life force or living blood spilled is usually necessary in rituals where human beings or animals are the "gift" or supernatural intermediary. This is not to say deceased individuals as ritual deposits did not have value, because obviously at Çatalhöyük they did in order for intramural burials to have been practiced. However, the value and purpose of the dead must be considered as well as the manner and timing of the death, as appropriateness in the type of deposit surely informed their choices.

Burial contexts should be considered as important as the physical evidence in special burials. Lack of conclusive evidence for ritual killing or infanticide should not preclude discussion, particularly for a period of time when ritual, symbolism, and cosmological ideals experienced a florescence in human history and where human and animal remains both play important roles in ritual deposits. Mortuary data at Çatalhöyük do not necessarily reflect a typical high mortality rate normally associated with prehistoric societies but rather reflect a selective process for intramural burials.

I have proposed that foundation deposits and special burials may have become a way to negotiate social stress in an obsolete egalitarian system. The original dynam-

ics between households and kinship lines as settlements grew would have changed as resources, organization and authority were stressed. Çatalhöyük and other Neolithic megasites would have needed to find mechanisms to facilitate the shift in governance and organization to deal with burgeoning populations while maintaining the appearance of honoring entrenched egalitarian traditions. Families could acquire benefits through alliances between influential houses to exert more control over resources, or influence organization and governance at Çatalhöyük. Incipient group differentiation would have been legitimized through religion and ritual and based on commonly held ideology involving death, ancestors, children, and houses.

Centuries of traditional and ritual observances suggest the level of conformity that was expected. Using foundation deposits as part of the accepted ritual and tradition would be one way to lend an air of legitimacy to a non-egalitarian agenda.

Kinship lines and household-to-household relationships in an egalitarian system help maintain a balance of power by creating interdependence among families while prohibiting personal or household aggrandizement. It would seem, however, that social differentiation to some degree was already operating at Çatalhöyük with its selective on-mound burials versus the majority of the mortuary population located elsewhere. As the population grew, households may have needed ways to negotiate new standards of inclusion and exclusion, as more members may have challenged the status quo. The debate over why some houses at Çatalhöyük had more burials than others has been ongoing; most have assumed that concentrated burials represented clan centers. DNA testing may shed more light on actual relatedness of the mortuary population in the future. In actuality, Houses may have begun incorporating nonfamily or influential individuals to buttress their status, or multiple family alliances. Foundation deposits comprised of infants from multiple families would certainly have created a very real and symbolic bond in the construction of the new House, representing new alliances. Recently, a study of dental morphology taken from a sample of 266 of Çatalhöyük's burials, conducted by Marin Pilloud and Clark Spenser Larsen and published in 2011, concluded that intramural burial criteria were "minimally related to biological affinity" (Pilloud and Larsen 2011: 527), or, in other words, relatedness among those buried individuals was minimal or nonexistent. This would seem to support the idea that burials and possibly sacrifices may have followed other criteria than bonds of blood alone.

We see evidence of changes in the way children's burials were distributed over time as neonates, once found throughout the mortuary population of a house, becoming more symbolically harnessed and segregated by mid- to upper levels, and appearing as foundation deposits *only*, for example, in Building 1. This suggests that the symbolic currency of neonates, foundation deposits, and other special rituals involving them had become more focused. At the same time, child-related imagery and anthropomorphic figures in general gain symbolic importance by mid-levels of the site. Other changes in behavior indicate some activities became more concentrated around bigger, more elaborated houses and that architectural traditions were being challenged or dispensed with as a way of shifting from egalitarian to more complex organization.

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Hunting Sacrifice at Neolithic Çatalhöyük

Nerissa Russell

Çatalhöyük has played the role in discussions of animal sacrifice of a favorite site claimed to exhibit early evidence of sacrifice for those who locate sacrificial origins prior to the classical period (for example, Burkert 1983; Rice 1997; Testart 2006). The site is a large (13 ha.) Neolithic tell in central Anatolia (see fig. 1), dating to roughly 7400 to 6200 cal. B.C.E. (Cessford et al. 2006). Its stratified mudbrick buildings contain both wall paintings and animal parts set into plaster as architectural installations. Despite extensive excavation and still more extensive surface scraping and mapping of structures, public architecture is lacking. The evidence from burials and house contents indicates a largely egalitarian social structure with production located within households and no significant occupational specialization. The diet was based on domestic cereals and legumes, supplemented by wild plant foods, and domestic and wild animals. While domestic sheep dominate the faunal assemblage, wild animals are the focus of ritual at the site (Russell and Meece 2006). James Mellaart (1962, 1963, 1964, 1966, 1967) first excavated the site in the 1960s; Ian Hodder (1996a, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b, 2007) has directed a new project at the site since 1993. Mellaart defined 14 building horizons numbered from top to bottom (Levels 0–XII, with VI divided into VIA and VIB), while the current Çatalhöyük Research Project has defined four additional levels below Mellaart's. The discussions of sacrifice at Çatalhöyük have so far been based entirely on Mellaart's work; here I review it in light of what we have learned in the current project.

The Narrative of Sacrifice at Çatalhöyük

The arguments for animal sacrifice at Çatalhöyük have been based on two paintings often referred to as "hunting scenes" that may represent cattle sacrifice (in fact, these interpretations rest largely on the painting on the north wall of Mellaart's building F.V.1; see fig. 2), on Mellaart's designation of some of the buildings as shrines, on the clear symbolic value of cattle at the site and the display of cattle horns in houses, and on the belief that Çatalhöyük was a center of cattle domestication (Perkins 1969). I begin by reexamining these premises.

The Bull Paintings

The interpretation of the two paintings from Çatalhöyük featuring large cattle as central figures surrounded by numerous human figures has always been contested.

Author's note: I am grateful to Louise Martin, Katheryn Twiss and my other colleagues on the Çatalhöyük zooarchaeology team whose work has created our database and whose insights have helped shape my thoughts. This chapter has benefited from the comments of the editors and the anonymous reviewers; its deficiencies remain my own.



Fig. 1. Map of the Near East with Çatalhöyük and other sites mentioned in the text.

Both of these paintings were located on the north wall of buildings from the later levels of the site. Building F.V.1 from Mellaart's Level V has depictions of animals and humans on all four walls, including equids, deer, bear, boar, and cranes. In what is probably the best-known image from the site, a disproportionately large red bull dominates the north wall. The bull is placed above a series of equids (which continues onto the west wall) and is surrounded by a number of animated human figures (Mellaart 1966). In Level III, Building A.III.1 has a larger and a smaller room, with paintings of human and animal figures on most of the walls (the south wall of the main room is unpainted). Being near the surface of the mound, the paintings here are not as well-preserved as those from Building F.V.1. Most depict deer and human figures, while the north wall again has a large red bull accompanied by small animated human figures (Mellaart 1967: 170–76).

Starting with Mellaart, these paintings have usually been called "hunting scenes," even by those who reject this interpretation. However, some do see them as more-or-less straightforward depictions of hunting (Garfinkel 2003: 60; Hodder 1987: 48; Rice 1997: 42). Rice (1997: 81) suggests that the lolling tongues of the bulls and some other animals means that they are dead, and the hunters or slaughterers are celebrating around the carcass. Mellaart himself feels that the paintings depict not the actual hunt but a dance or ceremony related to hunting (Burkert 1983: 16; Fisher 1979: 229; Matthews 2002: 93; Mellaart 1962: 64–65; Rice 1997: 42). For

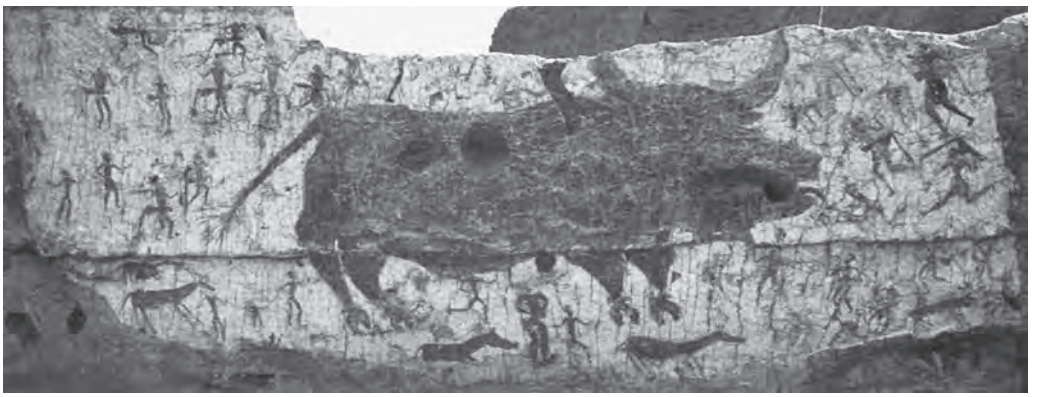


Fig. 2. Painting from north wall of Building F.V.1; photograph by Ian Todd.

Burkert, who derives sacrifice from hunting rituals, this implies either a ritual hunt that is a proto-sacrifice or the sacrifice of a captured bull released for ritual slaughter with the trappings of a hunt. However, Garfinkel (2003: 60) rejects the interpretation of these paintings as representations of dance, because the motions of the human figures are not coordinated so as to convey rhythm. Moreover, Cauvin (1972: 30) argues in another context that people do not depict rituals, because rituals are already representations; thus, the paintings are more likely to evoke a myth or vision. Cauvin's contention that people do not depict rituals is certainly not universally true, however; representations of sacrifice on classical Greek pottery come to mind (van Straten 1995).

Mellaart (1984: 39) later decided that the people in these paintings are not hunting but capturing the animals, perhaps in order to tame or domesticate them. But because many of the animals depicted (bears, crane, and so on) are not domesticated, he suggests that in fact the capture was a religious sport. This leads to perhaps the most popular interpretation of the paintings, as representing a bull game that may be the forerunner of the famous Minoan bull-leaping practices (Cauvin 1994: 49; Collon 1994; Rice 1997: 75; Serrano Espinosa 1998; Sipahi 2001). Cohen (1970) links the two interpretations by positing that the activity depicted is part of the domestication process (isolating the bull from the herd) made into a sport. This is an unlikely method to initiate domestication but could plausibly be an elaboration of husbandry practices for an established herd. Forest (1993) has tentatively suggested, but rejected, the idea that the paintings show people teasing or taunting animals prior to sacrifice. Rather, he believes the paintings are purely metaphorical, with the bull representing society and the human figures its enemies who futilely threaten it. Matthews (2002), though, interprets the paintings as indicating capture of wild animals for use in ceremonies where they were publicly taunted and killed, which would equate to sacrifice by some definitions (ritual killing). Rice (1997) also entertains the possibility that the paintings depict sacrifices, although he favors bull games.

We will probably never arrive at a definitive interpretation of any piece of prehistoric art. The Çatalhöyük bull scenes are not straightforward depictions of sacrifice, with a knife or axe brandished over a bound animal, for example. They do certainly illustrate the symbolic importance of cattle (only one of the paintings is actually marked, somewhat ambiguously, as a bull). In this, Çatalhöyük fits with other Near Eastern Neolithic sites, particularly those of the PPN Upper Mesopotamian region, where cattle are depicted at sites such as Göbekli Tepe in southeast Turkey and Jerf el-Ahmar in northern Syria (Cauvin 1994; Helmer et al. 2004; Schmidt 1999). The Çatalhöyük paintings seem to emphasize the power of the bull by rendering it as huge in comparison to the surrounding human figures.

Shrines

Mellaart (1967) designated the buildings he excavated at Çatalhöyük as houses or shrines. Shrines, while similar to houses in size and layout, had more burials and were more elaborately fitted with paintings, reliefs, and animal part installations such as bucrania. He believed that he had excavated a "priestly quarter" (Mellaart 1967: 71) with a high density of shrines as well as living quarters for the priests and priestesses but lacking the workshops of the specialized craftworkers he assumed must have existed at the site.

Subsequent work in other areas of the site, as well as reanalysis of Mellaart's excavations, paints a different picture. There is no sign of full-time craft specialization or spatial differentiation. Neither the burials nor the architecture suggest the presence of a priestly or other elite. The variation in elaboration of the houses may have more to do with how thoroughly they were stripped at abandonment than with their differing functions during use. The presence and number of burials, however, remains a significant variable, perhaps marking the residence of lineage heads. All buildings appear to have been dwellings, with no special-purpose shrines or temples (Hodder 1996b, 2004, 2006b).

Mellaart (1967: 77) explicitly argues that the "shrines" were not loci of animal sacrifice. He notes the lack of altars, pits to catch blood, and caches of bones. He also points out that the entry through the roofs of the houses would have made it very difficult to maneuver a living animal inside, especially a large bull. He suggests, however, that sacrifice might have occurred outside, with pieces brought into the shrines to offer on the hearth. Certainly the picture of a formalized priesthood with dedicated shrines has contributed to the belief that animal sacrifice was practiced at Çatalhöyük. Removing the religious aura imparted by the term *shrine* opens other possibilities for the interpretation of the displays in buildings.

Cattle Horn Installations

This is not the place for a comprehensive review of the Çatalhöyük art and architectural installations (but see Last 2006; Russell and Meece 2006). Rather, I focus on the element most relevant to discussions of sacrifice: the cattle horn installations. In both Mellaart's and the current Çatalhöyük Research Project's (CRP) excavations, large cattle horns have been recovered in situ and dismantled from architectural installations (Twiss et al. 2009). These horn displays include clay heads set with genuine cattle horns, single horns set into walls, benches with multiple sets of cattle



Fig. 3. Plastered cattle heads with real horns, Building E.VI.10; photograph by Ian Todd.

horns, and pairs of horns in clay pillars on the edges of platforms (see figs. 3–6). Additionally, the CRP has revealed concealed cattle horn deposits in the walls and below the floors of buildings (Russell et al. 2009).

The concealed deposits suggest that horns and other animal parts held power that may have protected the houses into which they were incorporated. This is probably also true of the displayed horns; the two sets of horns on pillars that fence off a platform containing human burials in Building 77 certainly have a protective air. However, the displays also seem likely to have served as trophies commemorating hunts, sacrifices, or feasts. There may not be a neat distinction, as a feast is likely to have accompanied a successful cattle hunt or sacrifice. Simoons (1968) notes the similarity of these displays to those of mithan (another cattle species) skulls and horns in the hills of northwest India and Burma. These displays attest to the sacrifice of mithan and hosting of feasts of merit, a badge of status. Testart (2006) uses this parallel to suggest that cattle sacrifice originated at Çatalhöyük. However, there are also ethnographic examples of the display of heads and horns as hunting trophies.

Cattle Domestication

Dexter Perkins never produced a full report of the faunal remains from Mellaart's excavations (but for a more thorough analysis of part of the collection, see Ducos

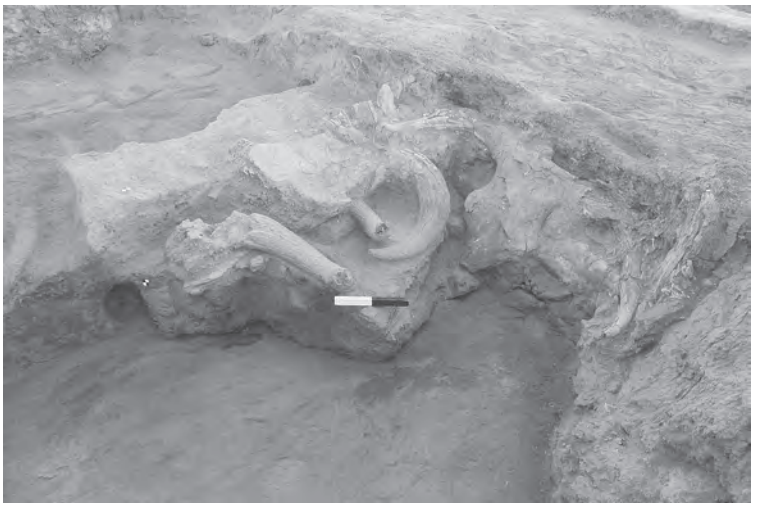


Fig. 4. Cattle horns set in collapsed bench in Building 52; photograph by Jason Quinlan.

1988). His brief preliminary report (Perkins 1969) claimed that cattle formed 70 percent of the fauna and that cattle were locally domesticated during the occupation of the site, showing a size reduction by Level VI. This has established Çatalhöyük as a, if not *the*, center of cattle domestication in the mind of the general public and many archaeologists. Perkins' sample was small and his methods may have been flawed (Grigson 1989), so zooarchaeologists have long been unsure of this claim. The bones themselves, however, have been lost, impeding reanalysis.

The CRP provides an opportunity for reevaluation, and indeed a very different picture emerges. First, the numerical dominance of cattle turns out to be the result of unsystematic recovery due to hand-picking in the earlier project. With systematic screening, the current project has shown that cattle form about 20 percent of the fauna in the earlier levels, declining to about 10 percent in the later levels. Sheep and goat (mostly sheep) predominate, accounting for about 70 percent of the fauna in the earlier levels, 80–85 percent by the later levels. These sheep and goats are nearly all domestic from the beginning of the sequence. At least through Level VI (the later levels have been excavated only in the more recent phase of the CRP, not yet fully analyzed) the cattle are now shown to be not only morphologically wild but hunted rather than herded (Russell and Martin 2005; Russell et al. 2005).

Cattle appear to be domestic at Höyücek, west of Çatalhöyük and immediately following it in time (de Cupere and Duru 2003), and at Erbaba by 6500 cal. B.C.E., equivalent to the later part of the Çatalhöyük occupation (Arbuckle and Makarewicz 2009). The generally small numbers of cattle at Near Eastern Neolithic sites make it difficult to trace the beginnings of domestication, but current evidence suggests herding began in Upper Mesopotamia several centuries before the beginning of occupation at Çatalhöyük (Helmer et al. 2005; Peters et al. 1999). Thus, Çatalhöyük is not the center of Near Eastern cattle domestication, and in fact the cattle are wild at least through most of the Neolithic sequence. As I will discuss further below, this is significant because sacrifice is generally associated with domestic animals.



Fig. 5. Cattle horns in clay pillars on the edges of the northeast platform of Building 77; photograph by Jason Quinlan.

Why Sacrifice?

Recent work at Çatalhöyük therefore weakens some of the underpinnings of past arguments for animal sacrifice at the site but certainly does not rule it out. What, then, in the theoretical and ethnographic work on sacrifice might suggest that it is likely to occur at a settlement such as Çatalhöyük? Schwartz (pp. 1–32 in this volume) has reviewed theories of sacrifice, so I will not attempt a comprehensive discussion here but rather will focus on relevant elements relating to the context of sacrifice.

One key question is whether sacrifice is limited to domestic animals. Many have argued that only domestic animals can be sacrificed, because one can only offer what one owns, or because sacrifice is in essence a substitution of victim for sacrificer, which can only occur if the animal is tied to the sacrificer by bonds of care (van Baal 1976; Bonte 1995; Firth 1963; Hamayon 1990; Ingold 1987, 1994; Smith 1987). Others (Hahn 1896; Isaac 1971; Maringer 1960; Sauer 1969) place the origins of sacrifice prior to animal domestication and therefore admit the possibility of sacrificing wild animals; indeed, some posit the need for a supply of sacrificial animals as a motivation for domestication. Ethnographically, there are clear cases of ritual killing of captured wild animals, of which the Ainu and Siberian bear festivals are the best-known but not the only examples (de Sales 1980; Hamayon 1990; Maraini and Delaby 1981; Pohl 1991). To deny that such cases constitute sacrifice seems a purely semantic distinction. On the other hand, my survey of the ethnographic and archaeological evidence for sacrifice indicates that the vast majority of sacrificial victims are indeed domestic animals (Russell 2012). At Çatalhöyük, then, the domestic sheep, goats, and dogs would be more likely objects of sacrifice than the cattle.

Some (e.g., Burkert 1983) see sacrifice as a survival of hunting rituals, such that it might occur in virtually any kind of society. Smith (1987) takes the opposite view: that sacrifice always involves domestic animals and is primarily a feature of states. He sees sacrifice, with its requirements for particular kinds (color, age, sex) of animals, as a ritualization of selective breeding. Certainly, sacrifice is most fully



Fig. 6. Single cattle horn set into an internal wall of Building 1; photograph by the author.

institutionalized in states, such as those of the classical world. However, sacrifice is well-attested in many "middle-range" societies, for example the famous Nuer of East Africa, where, as in classical Greece, virtually all meat derives from sacrifice (Evans-Pritchard 1940).

As a mega-village lacking centralized institutions such as temples and palaces, with its subsistence based on agriculture and herding, Çatalhöyük is a plausible location for sacrifice. However, for pastoralists such as the Nuer, domestic cattle embody human social relations (as wealth, bridewealth, blood money and other payments, loans, and so on) and are symbolically and affectively central, the subject of songs, blissful contemplation, and identification (with people naming themselves after their cattle, for example) in addition to being victims of sacrifice. At Çatalhöyük, a single species does not fulfill all these roles. Wild cattle (and to a lesser extent other wild animals) seem to hold the symbolic salience, while domestic sheep and goats would form the nexus of property relations. The situation perhaps more closely resembles that of the Kom of Cameroon, who keep goats primarily for bridewealth and other payments and for sacrifice, but attribute no admirable qualities to goats (in contrast to some other wild and domestic animals) and never represent them in art or folklore (Shanklin 1983).

Sacrifice can occur in a variety of social contexts: at seasonal ceremonies; life cycle ceremonies such as weddings, funerals, and initiations; to cure illness; to avert or reverse bad luck; to purify those rendered unclean; when setting off to war or embarking on other enterprises; and so on. While individuals may occasionally offer small sacrifices in private, most sacrifice is public and participation is often crucial in defining group membership (Durand 1986; Jay 1992). The lack of public facilities (public architecture, plazas, or other open spaces) at Çatalhöyük means that sacrifice on any substantial scale is unlikely to have occurred on site. Any such larger-scale ceremony would need to take place on the plain surrounding the settlement.

Some sacrifices end with the destruction or burial of the entire animal. While these are more readily identifiable archaeologically, ethnographically and historically it is far more common that a sacrifice is followed by a feast in which the participants consume the victim (for example, de Heusch 1985; Ekroth 2002; Lewis 2002). It is often particularly this commensal act of consumption that defines group boundaries. While feasts are often archaeologically visible, it is much more difficult to infer whether the meat derived from sacrifice or ordinary slaughter. Therefore, we probably vastly underestimate the frequency of prehistoric sacrifice.

The definition of sacrifice is in fact crucial to its archaeological detection. If the key element of sacrifice is an offering to a deity or the release of life force, it will typically be very difficult to find in prehistory, though it may have been extremely common. If the key is the surrender of an individually owned animal to a larger cause, often including its communal consumption, feasting on domestic animals becomes essentially coterminous with sacrifice. If sacrifice is seen as a very common mechanism to overcome the guilt of slaughtering a domestic animal for which one has cared, or inducing owners to permit the reduction of their herds through slaughter, then the mere evidence of eating domestic animals attests to sacrifice.

For present purposes, the most useful definition of sacrifice is ritual slaughter. This permits us to focus on evidence of ritualization, through devices such as framing and emphasis (Bell 1992; Bradley 2005; Verhoeven 2002). This does not solve all the problems of recognizing sacrifice in prehistory, however, because we rarely have access to the conditions of slaughter. It is rare that evidence of the cause of death (slaughter technique) is discernible after post mortem processing and consumption. In practical terms, archaeological evidence for animal sacrifice has tended to be deposits of intact or unconsumed animals (for example, Crabtree 1995; Grant 1984; Pollex 1999), or altars suitable for slaughter, perhaps with blood residues (for example, Loy and Wood 1989 [although this residue evidence is now questioned]; Zeuner and Cornwall 1957), unless there is textual evidence for sacrifice, in which case the association of animal remains with a temple is sufficient (for example, Crabtree and Monge 1987; Jarman 1973; Villari 1991). Much sacrifice, however, occurs in less-formalized spaces that will be harder to detect. Therefore we will frequently have to assess the presence of sacrificial practices from the remains of the victims after disposal.

Unfortunately, feasts that do not originate in sacrifice are also subject to ritualization. Because of this indeterminacy, we will rarely be certain of prehistoric sacrifice where the victims were consumed. We can build the strongest case where the remains of domestic animals are linked to ceremonies that include more than just feasting and to occasions such as life cycle events and building construction that often include a sacred element. This is not to say that the sacred, and sacrifice, might not be present in more everyday contexts, but they will be harder to detect.

Sacrifice at Çatalhöyük Reconsidered

Because we now have doubts about some of the evidence previously used to argue for animal sacrifice at Çatalhöyük, and, on the other hand, now have much

more complete and better-contextualized information on the animal remains, how might we go about exploring the possible occurrence of sacrifice at the site? As noted above, by the most expansive definition, the clear signs of consumption of domestic sheep and goats would imply sacrifice. Most of these sheep and goats appear to have been eaten in the context of daily meals at the household level. Such sacrifice, then, would not be a public event. It could, however, have been ritualized and filled with sacred meaning.

At prehistoric Çatalhöyük, we lack on-site facilities for sacrifice. Unfortunately, due to contemporary land tenure issues, there has been little investigation around the margins of the site. The one area (known as KOPAL) excavated at the edge of the site has intriguing deposits that suggest large-scale feasts may have occurred in the vicinity. But there are no indications of altars or structures for sacrifice, and the animals here are mainly wild (Russell and Martin 2005).

There is evidence of feasting at Çatalhöyük, in the form of concentrations of large numbers of animal bones that are less heavily processed than usual (Russell and Martin 2012). There are a few instances where sheep and goats feature in feasting deposits, but most feasts seem to have centered on wild animals, mainly cattle (and in fact especially bulls). Here we have evidence of consumption on a scale larger than the household, with hints that many of these feasts were tied to the life cycles of houses and their inhabitants (Russell et al. 2009). These are very much the social contexts in which we might expect sacrifice, but unless a (ritual?) hunt counts as sacrifice (contrary to most definitions), we would have to imagine, with Testart (2006), that aurochsen (wild cattle) were captured and held for some time before ritual slaughter. It would be extremely difficult and dangerous to capture and control an adult aurochs bull in order to slaughter it ritually, so it would probably have been necessary to raise a young animal for years. At the moment we have no evidence for such a practice.

Perhaps the most likely feasting remains to result from sacrifice at Çatalhöyük are those found as part of abandonment deposits in many houses (Russell et al. 2008). These are very fresh, minimally processed bones, primarily from sheep and goats. They contrast with the more heavily processed and generally somewhat less fresh (that is, less rapidly buried) remains of daily meals. They are usually deposited together with what appear to be stores of food and raw materials that are dumped around the house along with these feasting remains. Along with bones, there are signs of other "ceremonial trash" that may be associated with the preparation of the feast and associated costumes and paraphernalia. These remains are clearly linked with ceremonies of house closure (or house construction, because the closing of one house is often the beginning of the construction of a new one above it).

We do not know what motivated the closing of a house. Some suffered from slumping walls, although we also see attempts at shoring up. It could be occasioned by the death of the household head or other key person; certainly the pattern of intramural burials suggests strong links of houses to ancestors. The deposition of such ceremonial trash in the houses suggests that it carries power to protect the house, or to prevent ancestral spirits associated with the old house from causing

harm, or to honor and feed such spirits. In any case, these are the kinds of social contexts in which sacrifice often occurs. These deposits suggest a model of sacrifice where the goal is to release or incorporate the vitality of the animal, accomplished through slaughter, consumption of the meat, and burial of the remnants (see Moses, pp. 57–77 in this volume).

There are a few cases of intact, unconsumed animal carcasses at Çatalhöyük. Most of these are dogs. While one is a puppy placed in an abandoned house on a platform below which people are buried, and thus is perhaps a ritual deposit, most seem to result from disposal of dead dogs in middens. The remaining intact animal offers much clearer evidence for funerary sacrifice: a juvenile lamb in a human burial (Russell and Düring 2006). This animal was clearly killed in a ritual context during the burial ceremonies and is reasonably viewed as a sacrifice. However, it stands out as an atypical case. It is so far the only animal (apart from a weasel that may have been deliberately included in another grave) found in the hundreds of human burials excavated at Çatalhöyük. Moreover, it was placed with a mat or textile separating it from the human body, and its feet were held in the air while the grave was filled so that it would not touch the human. Sacrifice may or may not have been uncommon at Çatalhöyük, but including the sacrificial victim in a burial certainly was uncommon and evidently was considered out of the ordinary by those performing the burial.

Conclusion

Prehistoric sacrifice is hard to approach archaeologically, because the difference between slaughter and sacrifice is the social context and the intentions of the killers. It is therefore not surprising that it is difficult to make definitive statements about sacrifice at Çatalhöyük or in the Near Eastern Neolithic. Ducos (1966) originally interpreted a deposit of neonatal goats at PPNA El Khiam in Palestine as a first fruits sacrifice because this was seen as an irrational culling strategy, and they did not appear to be eaten (Cauvin 1972). However, later reanalysis showed that the neonatal goats were actually fetal ibex, and that this was a seasonal hunting camp (Ducos 1997). Loy and Wood (1989) claimed to have identified human and aurochs blood on a stone slab in the famous Skull Building at PPNB Çayönü in southeast Anatolia. They interpreted this as evidence for ritual processing and possibly sacrifice of humans and/or aurochsen. However, the residue identification method used by Loy and Wood has since been challenged and largely rejected (Smith and Wilson 2001). Dikaios (1953) suggests that human infant and sheep/goat burials under thresholds at PPNB Khirokitia on Cyprus are sacrifices for foundation deposits. Tsuneki (2002) more tentatively makes a similar argument for an infant human and an infant pig buried beneath a floor at Pottery Neolithic Tell ʿAin el-Kerkh in Syria. These latter two cases, along with Çatalhöyük's lamb burial, are plausible instances of sacrifice, or at least ritual killing.

Judging from the ethnographic record, it is likely that much of the feasting that is more widely evidenced at Çatalhöyük and elsewhere in the Near Eastern Neolithic is part of a sacrificial ritual; perhaps even the "ordinary" household meat

consumption results from sacrifice. However, this is hard to demonstrate. It is notable that the more securely identified instances of animal sacrifice in the Near Eastern Neolithic involve domestic animals, as much of the literature on sacrifice would suggest. All in all, while Çatalhöyük has been associated in the minds of many with cattle sacrifice, the evidence for this is extremely weak, although it is clear that cattle were important for feasting and trophy display and laden with symbolic meaning. These qualities may have destined cattle for sacrifice later, after they were domesticated.

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On Human and Animal Sacrifice in the Late Neolithic at Domuztepe

Elizabeth Carter

Domuztepe lies at the northwestern edge of the Syro-Anatolian frontier between the modern cities of Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş in southeastern Turkey. At 20 ha., it is one of the largest, if not the largest, settlement of the Halaf Period (sixth millennium B.C.E.). In the center of the south mound (Operation I), a poorly preserved level of rectilinear architecture was cleared just beneath the surface wash. These remains date to the Late Halaf Period, circa 5500 B.C.E. (Carter et al. 2003; Campbell 2007). Beneath this upper level was a dense deposit of human and animal bone in a pit we called the "death pit" (Gauld et al. forthcoming; Kansa et al. 2009b). The pit and its associated remains are well dated to circa 5570 cal. B.C.E. (figs. 1–3c; Campbell 2007). This essay argues that the rapid burial in a constructed pit (Kansa and Campbell 2004; Kansa et al. 2009b) of a large number of highly fragmented prime-age animals and humans represents an episode in a complex communal ritual, possibly a sacrifice.

Working backward from the final burial in the pit of human and animal bone to a recognizable behavioral pattern, such as sacrifice, is challenging in the absence of any textual records. Who were those interred in the pit? Were they sacrificial victims, either captives or possibly selected members of the local community? Were they enemies from outside the group? I cannot pretend to answer these questions. But this essay presents an overview of the archaeological and osteological evidence that allows us to place the data within a larger cultural and contextual framework that suggests that these are the remains of a human and animal sacrifice.

Sacrifice is defined here as the offering of something of value either in appeasement or homage to a higher power(s). The remains in the pit include a minimum of 35 individuals and substantial numbers of prime-age domestic animals (sheep/goat, pig, cattle, dog). The value of individuals and animals in good health, many in their prime breeding years, to a Late Neolithic settlement where herding and agriculture were the basis of the economy is evident. The archaeological record shows that both humans and animals in the death pit were killed and butchered in a systematic, not frenzied fashion. The people, where the skulls are well enough preserved to study, suffered blunt-force trauma, which was the likely cause of death. The only other animal killed in this fashion was the dog; the rest of the animals were butchered in a manner that was normal for the site. The stratigraphic record, rejoining the broken bones found in the pit (Carter et al. 2003; Kansa et al. 2009a, 2009b) and the narrow range of the four C-14 dates (table 1) point to the filling of

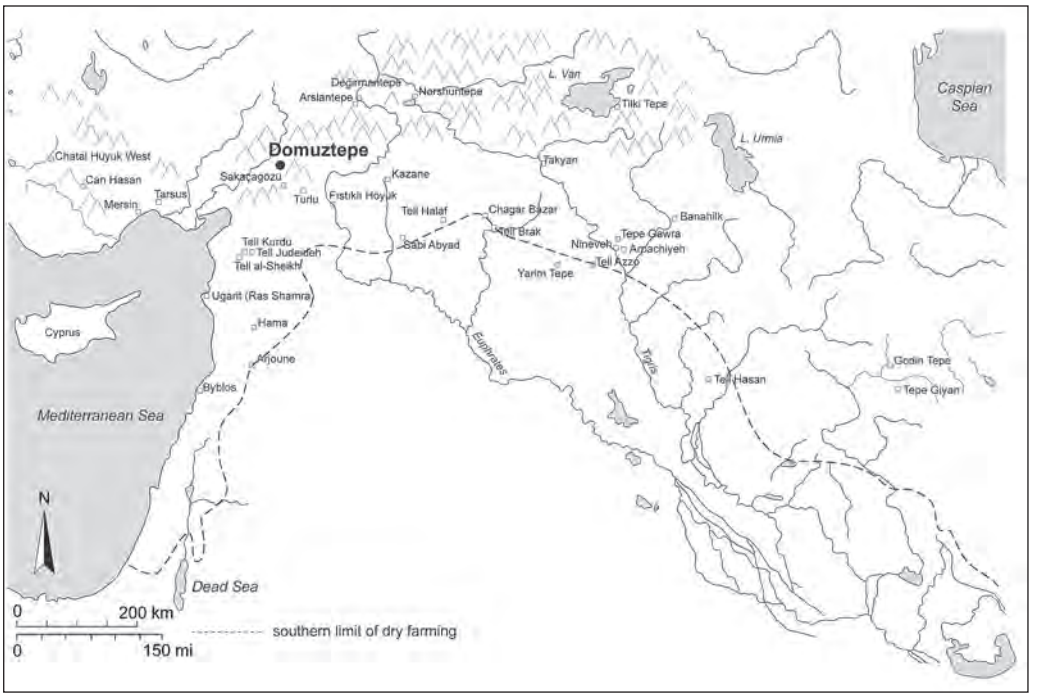


Fig. 1a. Map showing the location of Domuztepe in relationship to other Halaf sites.



Fig. 1b. Domuztepe from the northeast.

the pit in several closely spaced episodes. Moreover, detailed analysis of the human and animal bone showed little evidence of weathering or gnawing by animals. These observations provide evidence that this deposit accumulated and was buried

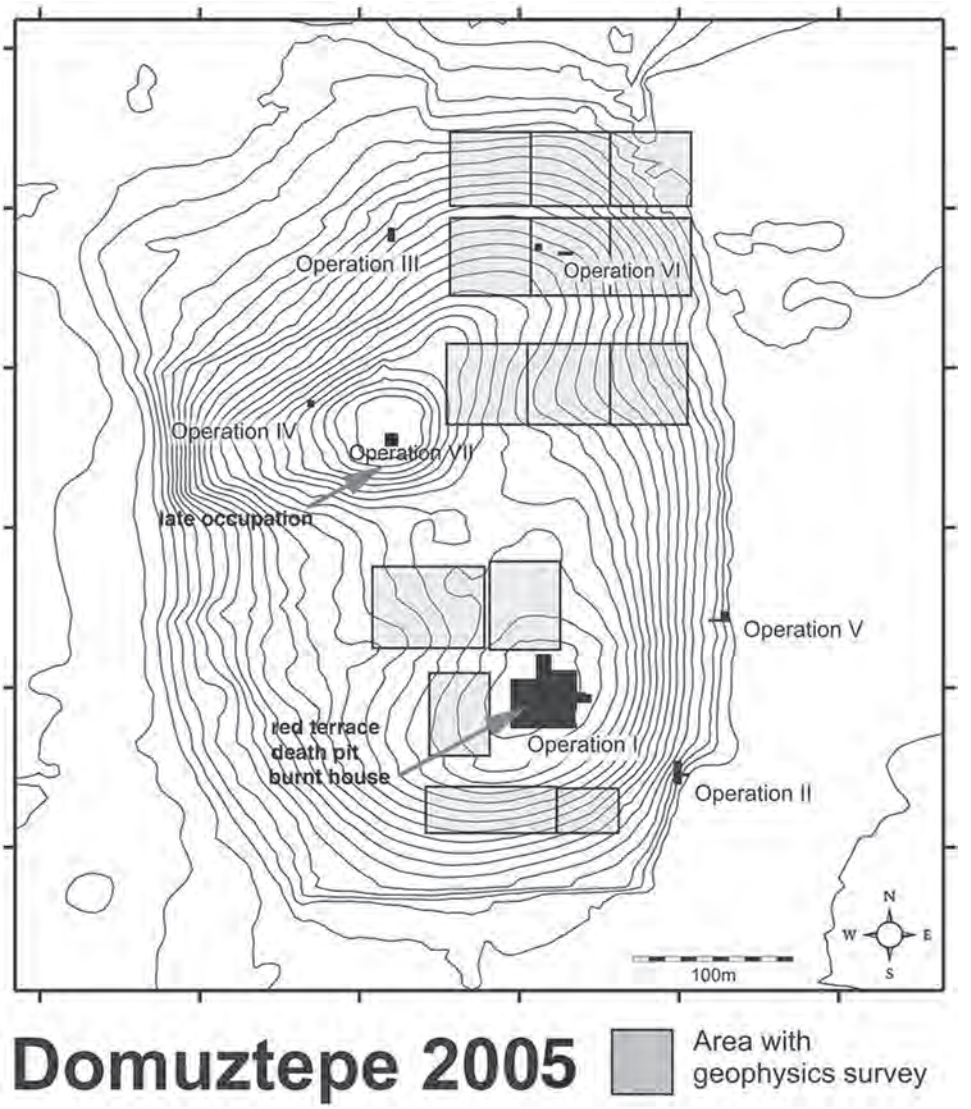


Fig. 2. Contour plan of Domuztepe.

over a short space of time. If death, burial, and feasting occurred in a deliberate and ritualistic fashion, then the deposit could well represent the remains of a sacrifice. Although it is easy to demonstrate that the contents of the pit were of great value to the residents of the Late Neolithic of Domuztepe, to determine the intentions behind such a ritually significant deposit must remain a matter of speculation.

Analysis of the Contents of the Pit

Analysis of the approximately 3000 identifiable human bone fragments indicates a minimum of 35 individuals representing both sexes and all age classes.

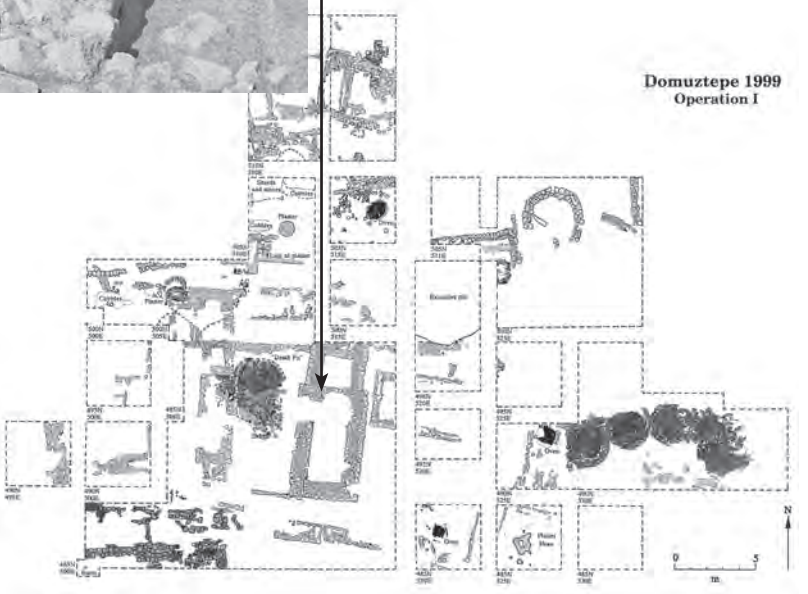




Fig. 3a (above). General view of Operation I at the end of the 1996 season, looking north.

Fig. 3b (left). Sounding beneath the upper level architecture that reached the top of the death pit ash.

Fig. 3c (below). Plan of the upper-level architecture overlying the death pit.



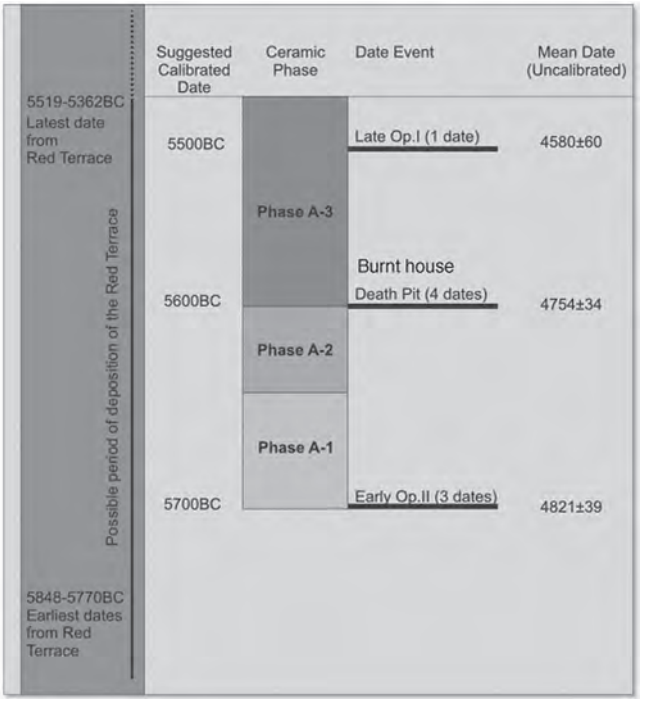


Table 1. Chronological overview of Operation I.

The population was in good health, and certain dental characteristics indicate that they were closely related (Gauld et al. forthcoming). The proportion of death pit individuals who died in prime age (15–40 years) is much higher (53 percent vs. 34–35 percent) than in other Pottery Neolithic burial assemblages, whose profiles conform to a pattern of attritional mortality—a mortality pattern characterized by an overrepresentation of the very young and the old. Mortality patterns like the one observed in the death pit in other human assemblages are indicative of "catastrophic" (single occurrence) death events, because their ages at death approximate the demographic profile of the living population. The evidence for cannibalism includes cut marks on the post-cranial bones consistent with those observed in other cannibalism sites, deliberate hammer stone impact damage, localized bone burning, pot polish (created when the edges of broken bones boiling in a pot repeatedly rub against the pot surface) on some bones (Kansa et al. 2009b; Gauld et al. forthcoming). To summarize: studies of the human bone from the pit demonstrate extensive corpse dismemberment very likely for purposes of consumption.[1] Evidence of butchering marks, scorching, and pot polish suggest cooking and consumption

1. Gauld et al. (forthcoming) note that the excellent preservation of fracture features indicate that processing took place while the bones were fresh and point to the patterned distribution of cut marks on the human bone, particularly dismemberment of all body segments and thorough defleshing of large muscle masses from the trunk, buttocks and limbs. Moreover, the cuts on the crania, mandibles, and cervical vertebrae are in locations consistent with scalping and disarticulation of the head and mandible.



Fig. 4a (top). View of upper level of the pit in 1997, with ash lens in foregrond visible in the balk.

Figs. 4b–c (bottom left, right). Excavating the pit in 1999.

of both human and animal meat prior to burial (Kansa et al. 2009b; Gauld et al. forthcoming).

The animal bone assemblage (1,909 identified fragments) from the pit shows a different composition from the rest of the site, with more cattle and dog, far fewer pigs, and an emphasis on prime age breeding stock. Human and animal bones are both heavily processed in much the same way, and the remains of the animals and humans are placed in close proximity within the pit (Kansa et al. 2009a, 2009b). The prime-age domestic animals comprise 96 percent of the fauna included in the pit. Sixty percent of the cattle are exactly the same age (one birthing year); the sheep and goats are also the same ages, suggesting perhaps that they were a normal

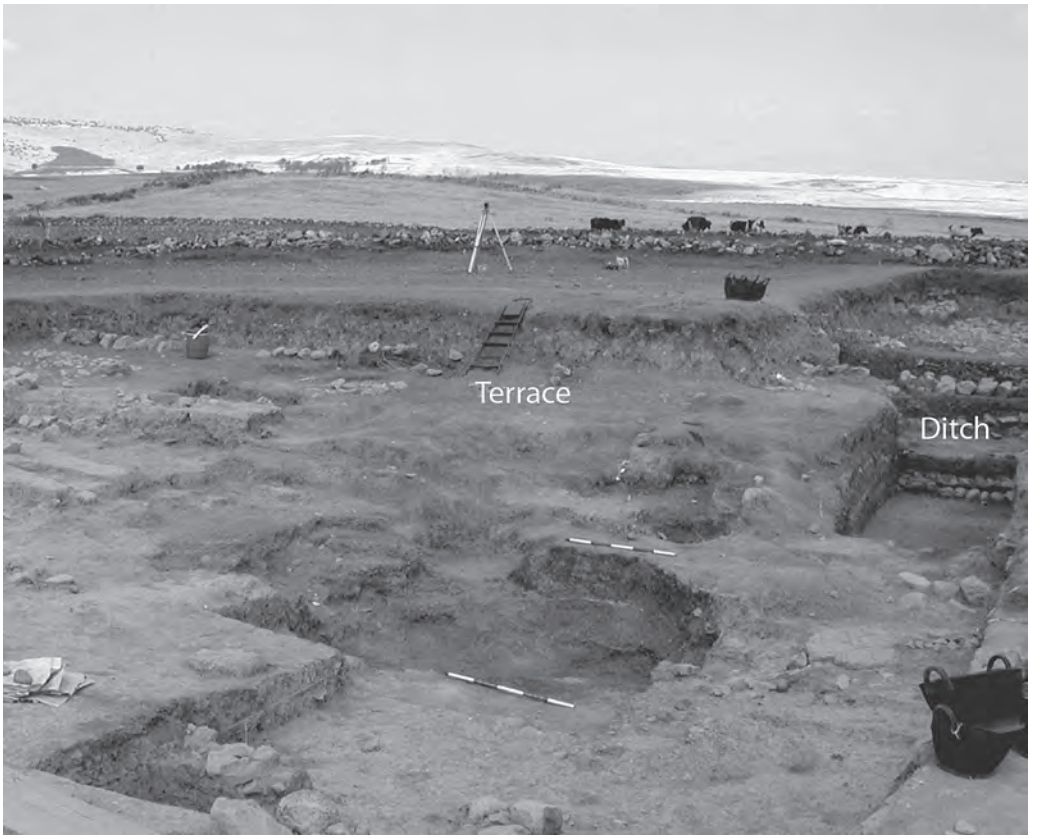




Fig. 5a (above). Death pit empty with terrace and ditch in the background.

Figs. 5b (left). Detail of one of the small (d. = 50 cm) pits and the base of the larger pit.

domestic herd (Kansa et al. 2009b). The prime-age domestic food animals included 11 cattle, 21 sheep/goats, and 8 pigs [minimum number of individuals]. Six dogs and a variety of wild animals were also included in the offering, but there are only 37 (2.3 percent of the assemblage) wild animal bones, and approximately 30 percent of them belong to birds. The rest of the wild animals in the pit, although small in number, are possibly of some symbolic significance, including wild cattle, *Bos taurus cf. primigenius*, wild goat, wild pig, jackal, and deer (red, fallow, and roe deer).

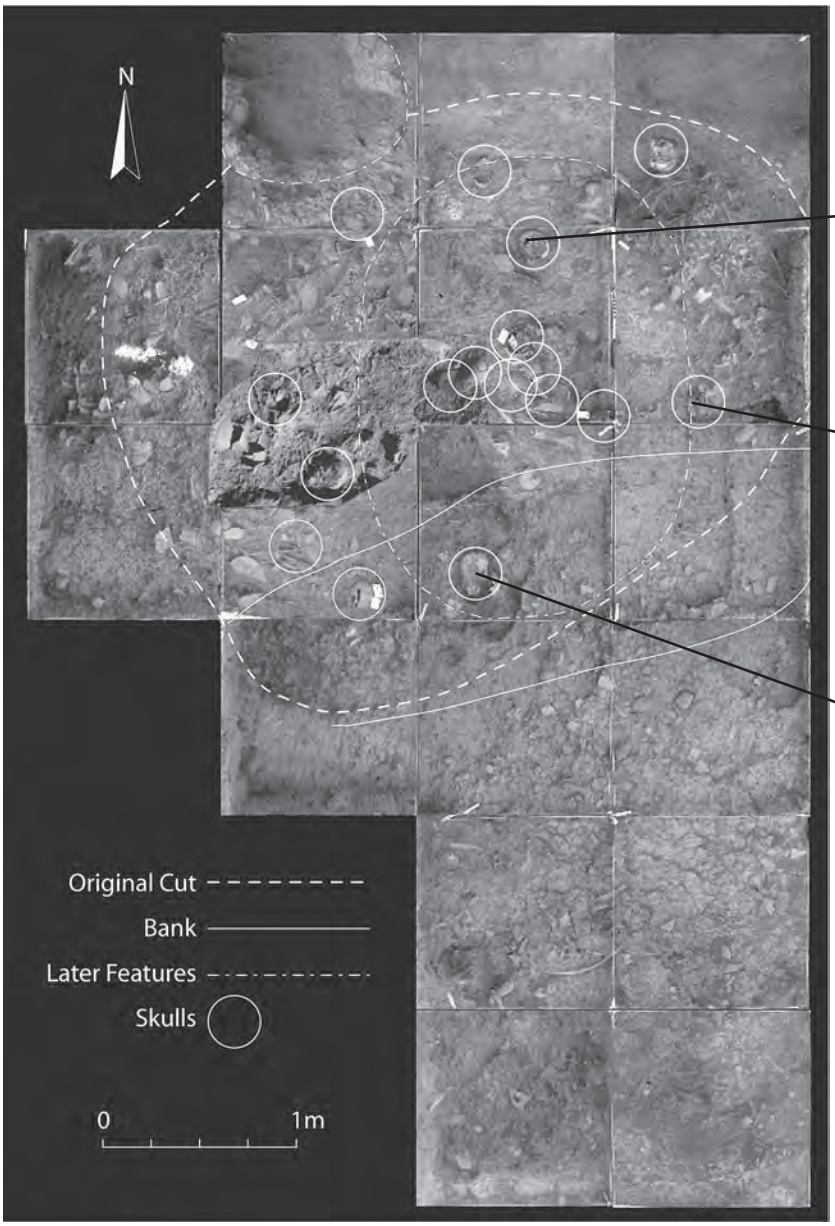


Fig. 6a. Photo mosaic of the upper layer of the death pit (S. Campbell).

There are also portions of two bear (*Ursus arctos*) paws, including one from a juvenile, that have cut marks consistent with skinning (Sarah Whitcher Kansa, personal communication). Birds, bulls, caprids, and cervids were of some special symbolic significance, to judge from the iconography on painted vessels (see pp. 111–113 below), and it is difficult to see the inclusion of these animals as accidental, given their rarity on the rest of the site. Although the archaeological record and the C-14 dates show that the burial took place rapidly, the quantities and ages at death of the

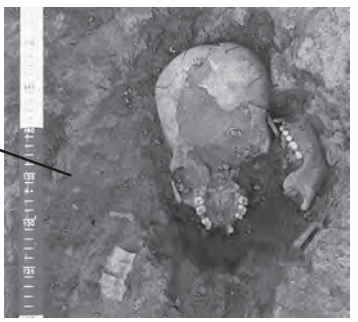


Fig. 6b. 1939/1.



Fig. 6c. 2631/2.

Fig. 6d. 1938/23.



animals show that longer-term preparation and planning must have taken place prior to the event.

Tell Majnuna in northern Syria provides an interesting, although much later (ca. 3800 B.C.E.), contrast to the Domuztepe death pit assemblage. The many skeletons found on the western edge of that mound show blunt-force trauma to the head, but the skulls seem to have rolled off the bodies when they were tossed into the pit and were not clearly cut off as in Domuztepe (Lawler 2007). At Majnuna (McMahon and Oates 2007) the bones appear less fragmented and there is more evidence of carnivore gnawing. The animal bones and ceramics are on top of the human bones at Majnuna, indicating a feast that took place after a battle, according to the excavators. At Domuztepe (Kansa et al. 2009a), fragmentation of human and animal bone is high and evidence of carnivore damage very rare; moreover, the animal bones and ceramics appear to have been placed below and comingled with the human bone above.

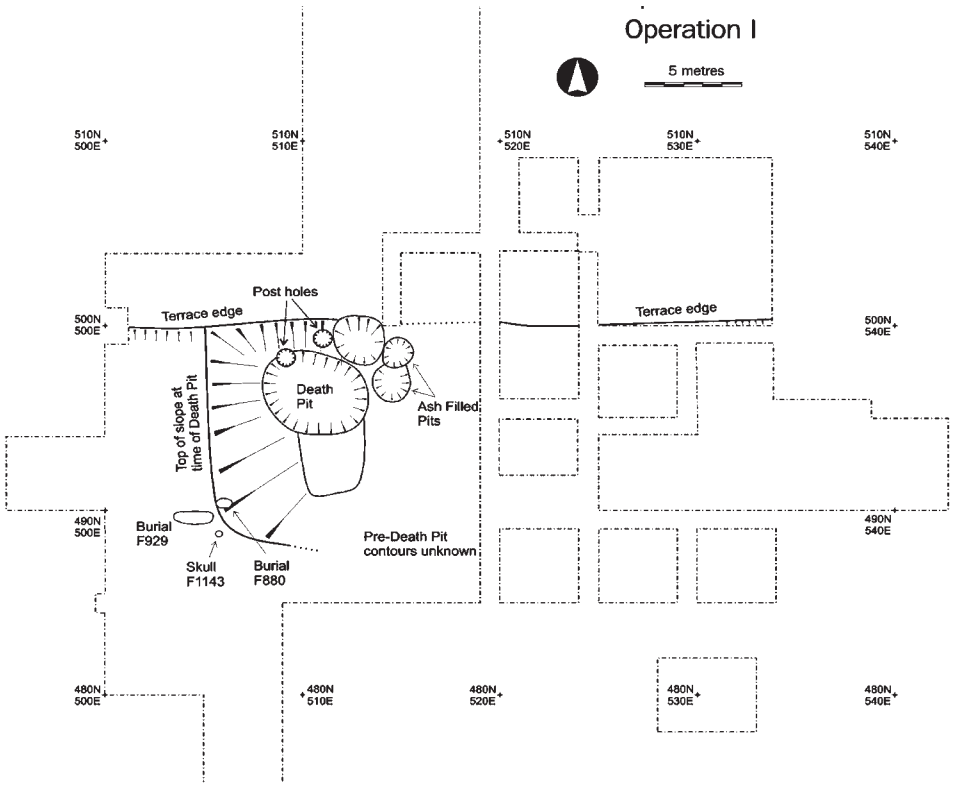


Fig. 7a. Schematic view of the death pit and associated features.

Archaeological Context

In 1997, when we removed the poorly preserved latest structures in Operation I on the west side of our trench, we discovered a 20–25 cm thick lens of dirt, sherds, and bones, possibly a leveling layer for the architecture above the pit. On removal of this lens, we began to excavate a grey-olive colored ash lens that appeared to derive from a fire outside the area of our exposure. Eventually, we found that the ash was heaped on the center of the pit and spread out to the south and the west, tailing off around seven to ten meters from the pit. The deposit was densest over the pit, which, as we were to discover, contained the mass grave under discussion here. Below this ash lens, we identified our first skeletal material (figs. 3a–c; Campbell et al. 1999).

In 1997, 5 human skulls, 5 cranial fragments, 17 partially complete limb bones, and 23 limb bone fragments were found in the fill along with 79 post-cranial fragments, implying their deliberate burial. In 1998, expansion of the square to the west led to the discovery of approximately 88 skull specimens, 13 of which represent partial crania placed at different points in the fill, including some above the beginning of the pit and some lower than the originally assumed bottom of the pit (figs. 4a–c; Campbell et al. 1999: 402–3, fig. 6).

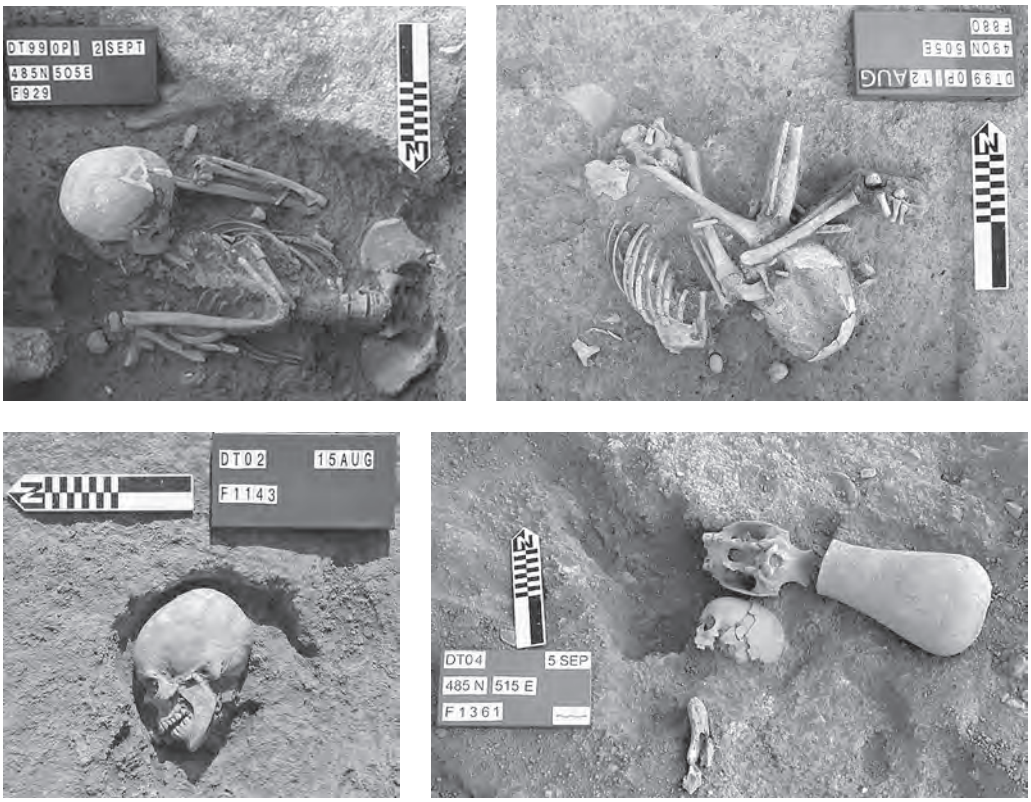


Fig. 7b (top left). Detail of burial F929.

Fig. 7c (top right). Detail of F880.

Fig. 7d (bottom left). Detail: skull burial, F1143.

Fig. 7e (bottom right). Detail: human skull, pig, skull, horn core and pot in F1361.

In drawing up the various excavated layers of bone, it became clear that two "groups" of three and, in one case, four skulls were arranged in a roughly circular fashion (Carter et al. 2003: fig. 11). The rest of the human bone was fragmented, and pieces of individual bones were distributed throughout the fill above the silt layer indicating that the human remains were not carefully placed in the pit. In 2000, we continued clearing the pit and assumed we were at the bottom, but the lower layers were more complicated than expected. The pit's sequence, as we now know it from the bottom up, begins with the excavation of several small round pits filled with animal bones (figs. 5a–b). These pits were dug into the bottom of a hollow at the edge of a red clay terrace lying to the north. Following these smaller excavations, silt layers covered the area, indicating rain or flooding, and subsequently dense amounts of processed animal and human bone were deposited, with the more complete human skulls tending to lie toward the top of the pile (figs. 6a–d).[2]

2. Kansa et al. 2009b provide detailed percentages of human and animal remains by phases.

Several baskets identified by their impressions in plaster near the bottom of the pit suggest that the bones were carefully placed, not randomly discarded into the hollow (Carter et al. 2003: fig. 16) and that there may have been a need for waterproofing. In any case, the remains were placed in the pit in a "structured" fashion (Richards and Thomas 1984; Kansa and Campbell 2004).

A fire, possibly used in preparing the funerary meal, yielded a large amount of ash that was heaped on the pit, perhaps while it was still hot (Kansa and Campbell 2004). Although we are unaware of the actual location of the fire, it must have been a highly visible event to yield so much ash. Between 25 and 50 cm of ash covered the pit itself, and the ashes spread widely to the south and southeast of the pit but stop at the terrace edge to the north. The west area is unexcavated (fig. 7a). Some of the skulls near the top of the death pit deposit appear to have been placed deliberately and are occasionally filled with the ashy debris of the upper layer, for example, skull 1939/1; skull 1938/23 rested inside its own ash-filled cut (figs. 6a–d), and skull 2631/1 had a lump of plaster in its mouth.

Finds aside from the bones included sherds, but on further examination, the ceramics failed to yield a significant number of whole vessels, although one sherd from the pit is intentionally cut, and a small number of fine painted vessels were identified that might have been suitable for social display (Irving and Heywood 2004). The only notable artifact from the pit was a headless (?) pendant figurine of orange stone (Carter et al. 2003: fig. 12a). Artifacts other than butchered animal and human bone were limited in number and variety (pot discs, sling balls, bone tools, lithics, beads, one sealing fragment and several stamp seals) and appear to come from the soil disturbance that took place in the construction and filling of the pit.

In addition to the large central pit, a number of smaller pits were identified to the northwest (fig. 7a). These seem to post-date the death pit but only by a short period of time. Of the two ash-filled pits marked in fig. 7a, the larger, pit F942, for example, appears to be linked to the burial pit, because it was filled with distinct deposits that mirror those of the death pit. Another small pit, F868, was cut into F942 and contained a human jaw. What these ancillary activities mean is unclear, but they are likely indicators of a complex ritual.[3]

To the south of the death pit but roughly contemporary with it was an almost complete skeleton of a juvenile (fig. 7c, F880), aged six years; the head was removed prior to interment and then reassociated with the body. A burial of a female, 30–35 years old, tightly flexed with head intact, was discovered nearby (fig. 7b, F929). An isolated skull (fig. 7d, F1143), carefully buried, had suffered blunt-force trauma and decapitation (Gauld et al. forthcoming). Farther to the south was a deposit (fig. 7e, F1361) consisting of associated materials in a shallow pit including a pot, the skull of a six-year-old, a pig skull, a horn core, and a loose piece of skull. This is the only

3. Later Hurro-Hittite rituals often involve digging and differential filling of pits. Pits served as a channel for the chthonic deities, both to ease their passage between worlds and as a door through which to receive offerings. Among the many items placed in these pits, pigs sacrificed in them were a means of ensuring fertility and of disposing of impurities by consigning them to the earth (Collins 2002: 225–26).

deposit that appears to have been made when the bones were no longer "green" or fresh (see p. 101 n. 1 above). Other activities related to the death pit were also identified just west of the main deposit. Feature 1123 (498N506E) was an artifact concentration that was discontinuous but sloped down toward the death pit edge. In its lower layers was an unusually high proportion of beads, a stone pendant shaped like a bird, and a silver bead (Carter et al. 2003: 127–28, fig. 14).

The terrace to the south could have provided an elevated area from which to view the burial and associated events taking place to the north in an open space (Mills 2004). Post-holes just north of the pit suggest that its place was marked. The area of the death pit was abandoned after the fire and, apart from the periodic burials and the artifact deposit just described, remained free of structures. After a lapse of something like two or three generations, a number of freestanding rectangular buildings with open courtyards were constructed in the southern part of Operation I (figs. 3a, 7; Carter et al. 2003). Thus, memory of the main burial appears to have had a considerable impact on later burial patterns and on settlement in this area of the mound, setting the space apart from the normal domestic structures discovered adjacent to it.

Given the large size of the site and the small amount excavated, we cannot determine whether this was a ceremony that was repeated frequently. There is tantalizing comparative evidence from a roughly contemporary context at Mersin that Domuztepe was not unique. Garstang (1953: 111–12) calls the Mersin burial a mass cremation grave. Unfortunately, few specific details are available in the publication, although we know that Garstang thought they had been killed in a battle.

Other Evidence of Communal Activity at Domuztepe

Other collective activities attested at Domuztepe include trash disposal, possibly linked to feasting, communal storage, and large-scale cooking or dairying activities (Carter et al. 2003; Carter and Campbell 2007). Here I will focus on trash deposits linked to feasting. A trash deposit discovered at the north end of Operation III that had a dense concentration of animal bones (mainly cattle) that predominantly belonged to meaty parts of the carcass has been previously interpreted as evidence of feasting (Campbell et al. 1999: 401–2); recent reexamination of this assemblage and of other deposits shows that there are scattered pieces of human bone in that deposit (Suellen Gauld and Sarah Whitcher Kansa, personal communication). Indeed, almost every trash deposit of any size on the site appears to contain some fragments of human bone along with the normal domestic animal assemblage of sheep, goat, cow, and pig, suggesting the practice of endocannibalism (Conklin 2001) on the site. The restudy of the faunal material for fragmentary human remains is now underway.

In Operation I, not far from the death pit and cut into the red terrace was a feature called the "ditch," which consists of a connected group of repeatedly recut linear troughs that were filled with gleyed soil—a soil having one or more neutral gray horizons as a result of water logging and lack of oxygen. The ditch dates to a somewhat earlier period than the death pit (5850–5750 cal. B.C.E.) (figs. 8a–d;

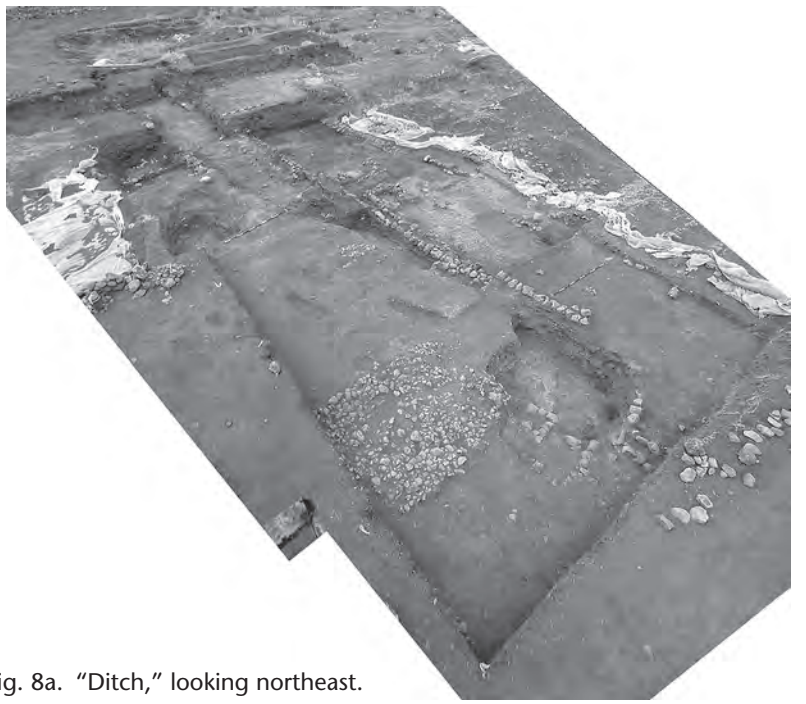


Fig. 8a. "Ditch," looking northeast.







Fig. 8b (above). Thick burnished vessels from the ditch; fig. 8c (above right). Interior of thick burnished vessel; fig. 8d (right). Exterior of thick burnished vessels.

Campbell 2007). Finds from this deposit included a very large number of broken pottery vessels (particularly "thick burnished wares"; figs. 8a–d), an exceptionally rich animal bone assemblage, a small amount of human bone, and several impor-





Figs. 9a–b. Vessel with two headless, naked figures and head (arrow points to head): drawing left; photo below.

tant small objects such as a handled obsidian mirror, a large number of stamp seals, and a male figurine head. This kind of communal "trash disposal" also suggests repeated feasting possibly accompanied by ritualized removal of symbolically important items (Carter and Campbell 2007).

Iconography

The iconography found on approximately contemporary decorated ceramic vessels from Domuztepe and other Halaf sites offers clues to the interpretation of the discarded bones in the death pit. With no contemporary written sources, these

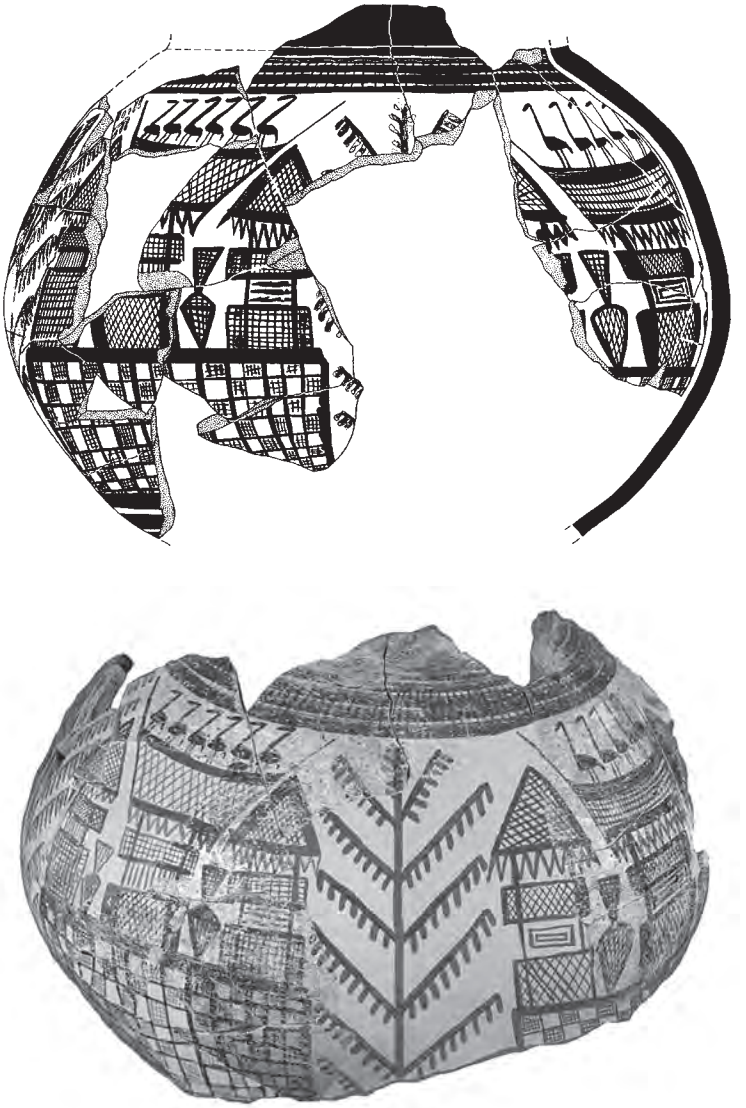


Fig. 10a–b. Pot showing structures separated by pots and trees; drawing above; photographic reconstruction below.

images are the only record available of Halaf thought. The most obvious example is a potsherd (figs. 9a–b) from the ditch decorated with a complex scene that shows two headless naked figures splayed on the ground, their bodies being picked at, or possibly surrounded by, birds. In the lowest register is a detached head. To the left of the figures is a leafy tree,[4] to the right is a larger figure, shown with a crescent-shaped profile and clothed in a skirt, holding an unidentified object in his hand. The two vertical design elements, the tree and the upright figure, bracket the prone,

4. Pollock et al. (2001) see this as stacked birds rather than a tree.



Fig. 11a. Bucrania.



Fig. 11b. Bucrania.

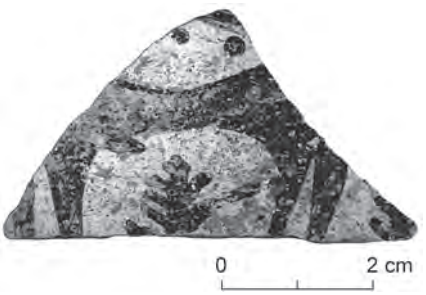


Fig. 11c. Caprids.

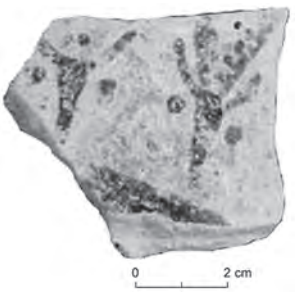


Fig. 11d. Caprids.

headless bodies that lie between them. The association of birds and trees is something we see on other decorated vessels from the ditch (fig. 10b). Similar trees and birds are fragmentary and rather rare but are known from other Halaf sites, for example, Fıstıklı Höyük (Bernbeck and Pollock 2003: fig. 22), Tell Halaf (von Oppenheim and Schmidt 1943: pls. 58–61), Sabi Abyad (Le Mière and Nieuwenhuyse 1996: figs. 3:53, 9, 10, 12, 14) and at Domuztepe (fig. 16a).

The contrast between the naked and clothed figures is well known in the later art of the ancient Near East. For example, the Narmer palette juxtaposes the standing clothed king and the naked headless captives, their severed heads placed neatly next to them. Thus, the Domuztepe scene might represent the rise of a chief through the defeat of the opposition. Or could it show the sacrifice of slaves, prisoners of war, or specially chosen members of the society? Or is it possibly a funerary rite, which



Fig. 12a–c. Caprid pendant showing front, side, and back views.

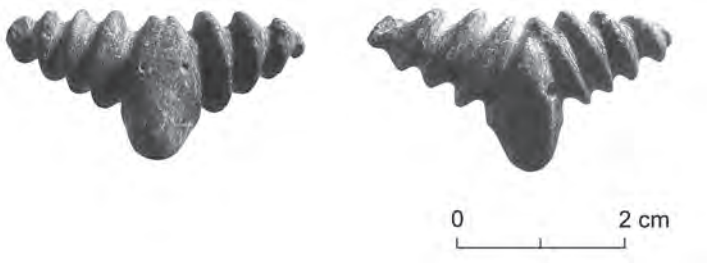


Fig. 12d–e. Ram pendant showing front and back views.



Fig. 12f–g. Terra-cotta pig figurine showing side and front views.

included decapitation? Or is it a timeless representation of a religious or mythological story, rather than a specific incident (Hodder 2006)?

Another decorated vessel from the ditch at Domuztepe is a jar shoulder, which shows swayed-back structures (figs. 10a–b). Again, similar leafy trees[5] and birds are depicted on this vessel. The trees divide the jar into four segments. Four groups of three peaked-roof structures made of posts and reed matting are placed around the shoulder of the vessel. The central building is shown from the broad side and has a bowed ridgepole on which a row of birds sits. The other structures are shown from their narrow ends and separated from one another by tall funnel-necked jars[6] (figs. 10a–b). The closest roughly contemporary parallel for the structural type is a

5. Bernbeck and Pollock (2003: fig. 22g) show another figure that wears a headdress that looks bird-like: possibly an egret?

6. The alternating placement of the structures may in fact be an attempt to represent a three dimensional structure on the two-dimensional surface of the vessel.

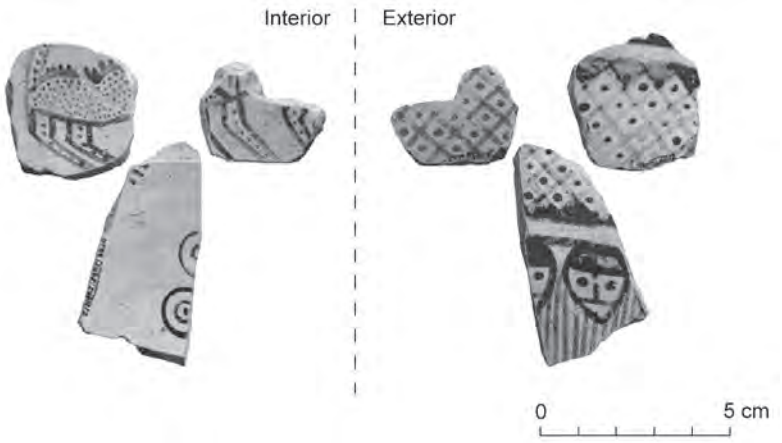


Fig. 13a. Interior (left) and exterior (right) of vessel decorated with leopards and human heads.



Fig. 13b. Vessels decorated with human heads.

seal-amulet from Arpachiyah (Mallowan and Cruikshank Rose 1935: fig. 51:4, pl. 8:11), which was fashioned to depict a similar structure in miniature. From Tell Halaf there is a bowl that is sketchily decorated but possibly similar in intent. The vessel surface is divided in panels by crudely rendered architectural elements; in one panel there are two figures with bird-like heads, their arms raised. Garfinkel (2003: 136) points out that the foot of one figure suggests a dance-like step. In an adjacent panel is a funnel-necked jar next to the structural frame and similar to those described for Arpachiyah and Domuztepe (figs. 15, 16b), and in the last panel is a headless figure with arms raised; beneath one of his upraised arms is a circular object (von Oppenheim and Schmidt 1943: fig. 6; pl. 10:7, 60:4). It is not unreasonable to see these persons and structures as having special religious or ritual functions because they are also depicted on other vessels from Domuztepe and elsewhere in the Halaf horizon, most notably Arpachiyah.

At Domuztepe and other Halaf sites, a wide variety of mortuary practices are attested (Akkermans 1989). Some skulls both in and adjacent to the death pit received

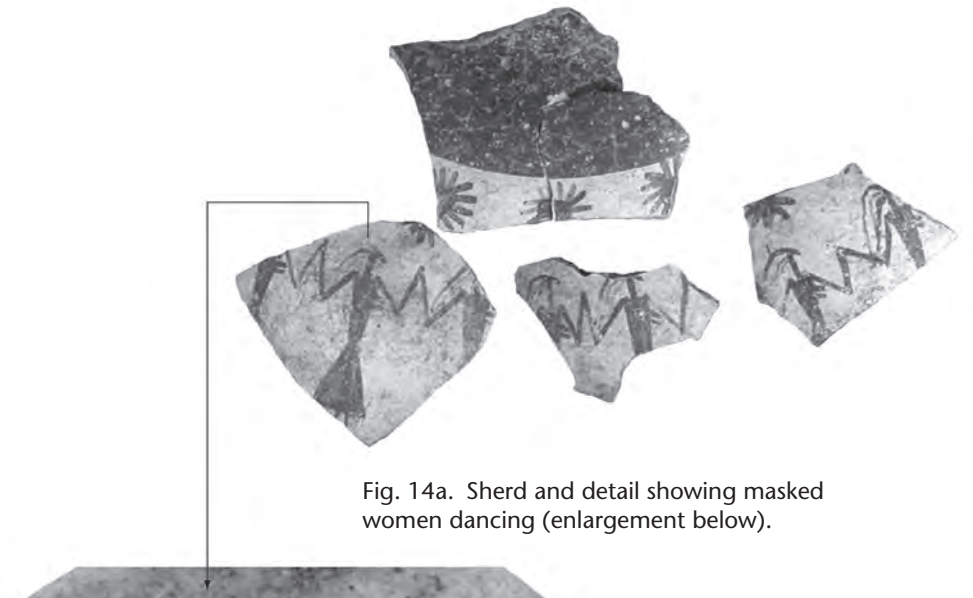
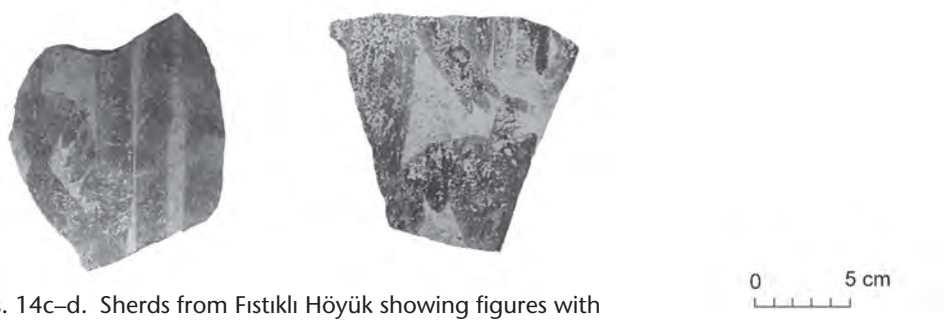


Fig. 14a. Sherd and detail showing masked women dancing (enlargement below).



Fig. 14b. Sherd with feathered arms and masked (?) or headless figures.



Figs. 14c–d. Sherds from Fıstıklı Höyük showing figures with feathered arms and masks (?).

special treatment (fig. 6). Skull interments are also known from the contemporary sites of Arpachiyah and Yarim Tepe II (Akkermans 1989). At Arpachiyah, skulls were placed in pottery vessels, and they were also accompanied by a number of vessels.

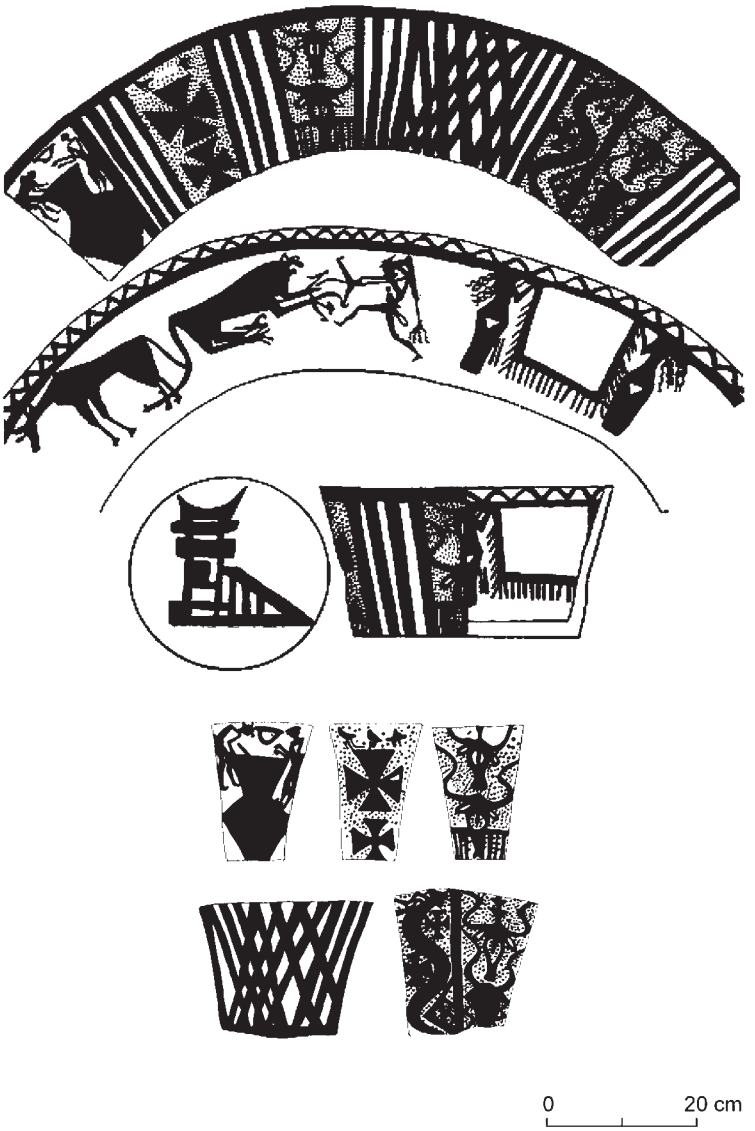


Fig. 15 Drawing of Arpachiyah vessel, profile, base, exterior, and interior rollouts above, exterior panels below.

One decorated pot (fig. 15) is an open form from burial 2 at Arpachiyah. The vessel has complex decoration inside and out that depicts humans, animals, hunting, and probable ritual acts. These images seem to summarize a large number of themes found in a less complete state of preservation elsewhere on Halaf sites. The vessel's context in a skull burial also relates it to funerary rites. On the outside of this vessel were four panels. One shows a huge pot with figures dropping something into it or possibly pounding on it; one of the figures may wear a horned headdress, the



Fig. 16a. Domuztepe sherd shows a structure to pot above in fig.10 and to that on the base of the Arpachiyah pot (fig. 15).



Fig. 16b. Sherd with pot, man, and bull above.

other a flat cap, and both have shoes with turned up toes. The second panel carries Maltese crosses beneath a row of birds; the third, stacked bucrania; and the fourth, a snake. The interior shows a hunting scene with a man carrying a bow and arrow

pursuing a leopard and possibly a deer; in the leopard's claws is a small human figure. Adjacent to the hunter are two women, identified by their flowing hair[7] and pubic triangles, holding a fringed "rug." On the bottom of the vessel is a shrine-like structure (Hijjara 1997: pls. 68–69; 47a) with a swayback roof not unlike the more detailed Domuztepe buildings illustrated on the pot described above (fig. 10a–b) or on the sherd in fig. 16a.

One of the more intriguing parallels between Arpachiyah and Domuztepe painted wares consists of a human figure "climbing" up the side of a large pot (fig. 15 compares with 16b).[8] The better-preserved Arpachiyah example shows two figures doing something on either side of large pot; perhaps they are drumming. A similar vessel separates the structures on the "architectural" pots described above (fig. 10a–b). The Domuztepe figure (fig. 16b), who sports dreadlocks and wears only a belt, is depicted with a bull standing directly above his head. Two additional examples of similar figures are known, one from Tell Yunus near Karkemish and the other on an incised rather than painted sherd from Sakçe Gözü, where the figure wears an animal tail (Garfinkel 2003: fig. 8: 3c–d).

The discovery of fragments of similar scenes at Domuztepe and at roughly contemporary sites in Syro-Mesopotamia suggests a symbolic system, parts of which were shared across a number of contemporary sites across northern Mesopotamia. Aside from these unusual vessels, Halaf iconography in which humans and animals are closely intertwined also provides some insight into the interpretation of the death pit. Animals and humans merge most clearly on a jar shoulder, which shows women, with long curly hair, who wear animal masks (goat or ibex?) and perform a communal circle dance with hands linked (figs. 14a–b). Another sherd from Domuztepe (fig. 13a) depicts a row of human heads on the inside of a vessel and a row of leopards (?) on the outside. The sherd in fig. 14b from Domuztepe shows figures wearing masks (?) or possibly headless and with "feathered arms," morphing into another unidentifiable fringed figure. "Bird figures" from Fıstıklı Höyük (figs. 14c–d)[9] on the Euphrates also seem to express a similar concept. The wings/arms are clear and the head deemphasized or possibly missing. Somewhat-similar winged shaman-like figures also appear on glyptic from the slightly later site Değirmentepe on the Euphrates (Esin 1994) and from Tepe Gawra (Rothman 2002: 432–33, pl. 24) east of the Tigris. From Sabi Abyad, one sherd painted in a similar style shows two winged figures (dancers), possibly carrying rattles,[10] facing right, with the feet of another partially preserved figure facing left (Nieuwenhuyse 2007: fig. 2.2.4:13); another sherd shows figures wearing tall headdresses, possibly animal masks, again moving right. The figure on the far left seems to have a long pointed

7. Although their bodies face front, their heads are in profile and disappear in the lip of the vessel; only their hair is visible.

8. Note here that the bull above (fig. 16b) appears fully represented. A similar large pot also appears on a vessel from Tell Halaf in association with human figures (von Oppenheim and Schmidt 1943: 46, abb. 6).

9. I thank Reinhard Bernbeck and Susan Pollock for permission to cite and use this sherd from Fıstıklı Höyük.

10. Another possibility is bows and arrows (Nieuwenhuyse 2007: 204)

nose and "hoofs" for hands, the second figure a bird beak nose and an animal tail (ibid. fig. 2.2.4:14 and cover).

Complex human-animal linkages in art and burial practices are also well attested for the PPNB (Verhoeven 2002) and at Çatalhöyük (Hodder 2006). Finally, at Çatalhöyük (7300–6200 cal. B.C.E.), the worked bones of cranes are interpreted as coming from wings used as part of the costume employed in celebratory dances (Russell and McGowan 2003). The death pit deposit in which human and animal body parts are buried together may somehow be linked to the figurative imagery found on Halaf pottery, in which anthropomorphic figures play key roles in communal activities, particularly dances (Garfinkel 2003: 127–35).

The animals included in the pit are all known from the iconography found not only on Halaf ceramic vessels but also in figurines, stone pendants, and seals. Bucrania (figs. 11a–b) are common throughout the Halaf horizon and, like humans (figs. 13a–b), are often represented only by their heads. Caprids and cervids (figs. 11c–d) are not infrequent, while pigs are less common but are represented on the "ritual vessels" in the form of a pig from Yarim Tepe (Merpert and Munchaev 1993: fig. 8.14:1–2), Arpachiyah (Campbell 2000: 27, A99a), and a pig figurine from Domuztepe (figs. 12e–f). Leopards, snakes, and various birds also appear in abbreviated iconic ways that suggest they were frequently duplicated and widely understood symbols. The array of animals depicted matches quite well with those animals whose bones are physically present in the death pit.

A Return to the Question of Sacrifice

Why did the residents of Domuztepe feel the need to sacrifice large numbers of humans and animals? Was it to placate higher powers and offer a communal feast to the organizers and survivors of the event (van Straten 2005)? The number of animals alone (at least 11 cattle, 21 sheep/goat, 8 pigs) points to feasting on a grand scale. The traces of butchering and burning and the very fragmented condition of both animal and human bones in the pit suggest that the flesh was consumed and the limb bones broken for their marrow. Thus, there is no evidence for animal sacrifice such as whole carcasses or an abundance of a specific part[11] (Schwartz, pp. 1–32 in this volume) but rather a deliberate destruction of human and animal resources far outside any need for sustenance (Kansa et al. 2009b). Because both human and faunal assemblages consist predominantly of prime-aged members, their expenditure would certainly have been profligate both in the near and longer term. The archaeological data suggest that the burial was a small part of a larger event that involved planning and advanced preparation and was an element of a complex ritual of which we have only small portions preserved.[12]

11. For example, Gen 15:9: "The Lord said to him, 'Take for me a heifer, a goat, and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.'" Gen 15:10: "So Abraham took all these for him and then cut them in two and placed each half opposite the other, but he did not cut the birds in half."

12. The complexity of cremation practices and associated animal sacrifices in Anglo-Saxon England offers a possible parallel to Domuztepe in the ties between human and animals in death

Some authors have proposed that human sacrifice is allied to the development of complex chiefly societies and not to fully developed civilizations. Sagan (1985, 1993) links human sacrifice to anxiety and notes that in early complex societies with strong centralized leaders, the death of the king or chief is almost always accompanied by a holocaust of victims. The "death pot" described above might be read "historically" and seen as the standing chief with prone victims behind him. It is even possible that somewhere near the pit, but not yet excavated, lies the chief and that the remains in the pit and adjacent areas of the site are sacrificed in association with his death. Watson (1983), citing trade and shared communication supported by the spread of Halaf material culture and symbolism, argues that Halaf-period settlements in Greater Mesopotamia were chiefdoms. On the other hand, Akkermans and Schwartz (2003: 150–52) view the shared material culture of the Halaf period as indicating a "strong egalitarian ethic" that "promoted a sense of cultural strength, identification, solidarity, unity and descent."

At Domuztepe, there is a lack of internal differentiation among the site's structures, and settlement pattern studies in the region show Domuztepe as an "island" at the edge of a marshy zone with the nearest contemporary settlement approximately 13 km to the northwest (Eissenstat 2004). Although Domuztepe is a large settlement for the time, the human remains discovered to date both from within the pit and on the site indicate a well-nourished population in good general health, not one suffering from chronic malnutrition as a result of competition for scarce resources, which might indicate a power struggle. Iconography offers some indications of the presence of complex rituals and "inalienable objects" such as masks, staffs, vessels, and specialized structures at Domuztepe and in Halaf societies in general (Mills 2007). The close association of humans and animals in the pit may be linked to an animistic and possibly shamanistic world view in which rituals and ritual specialists are used to negotiate the links between human and animal and the world of the living and the dead (Jordan 2001). Such a conspicuous display both underscores the power, wealth, and lack of self-interest of the donors and honors the spirits and gods tied to their earthly representatives (Mauss 1990: 16).

Although we have no direct evidence of chiefs or shamans and cannot know whether the humans and animals in the pit were captives or associated with a revered lineage, their destructive sacrifice and consumption must have created strong ties between the living and the dead, a communion (Rappaport 1999: 141–42). The burial, moreover, had an enduring effect on the structure of the settlement for several generations, further indicating the special nature of the deposit and the influence that the sacrifice and the events that surrounded it must have played among the survivors.

and burial practices. But these well-documented, elaborate multi-staged rituals serve to warn us about how little is actually known of the larger picture at Domuztepe (Williams 2001).

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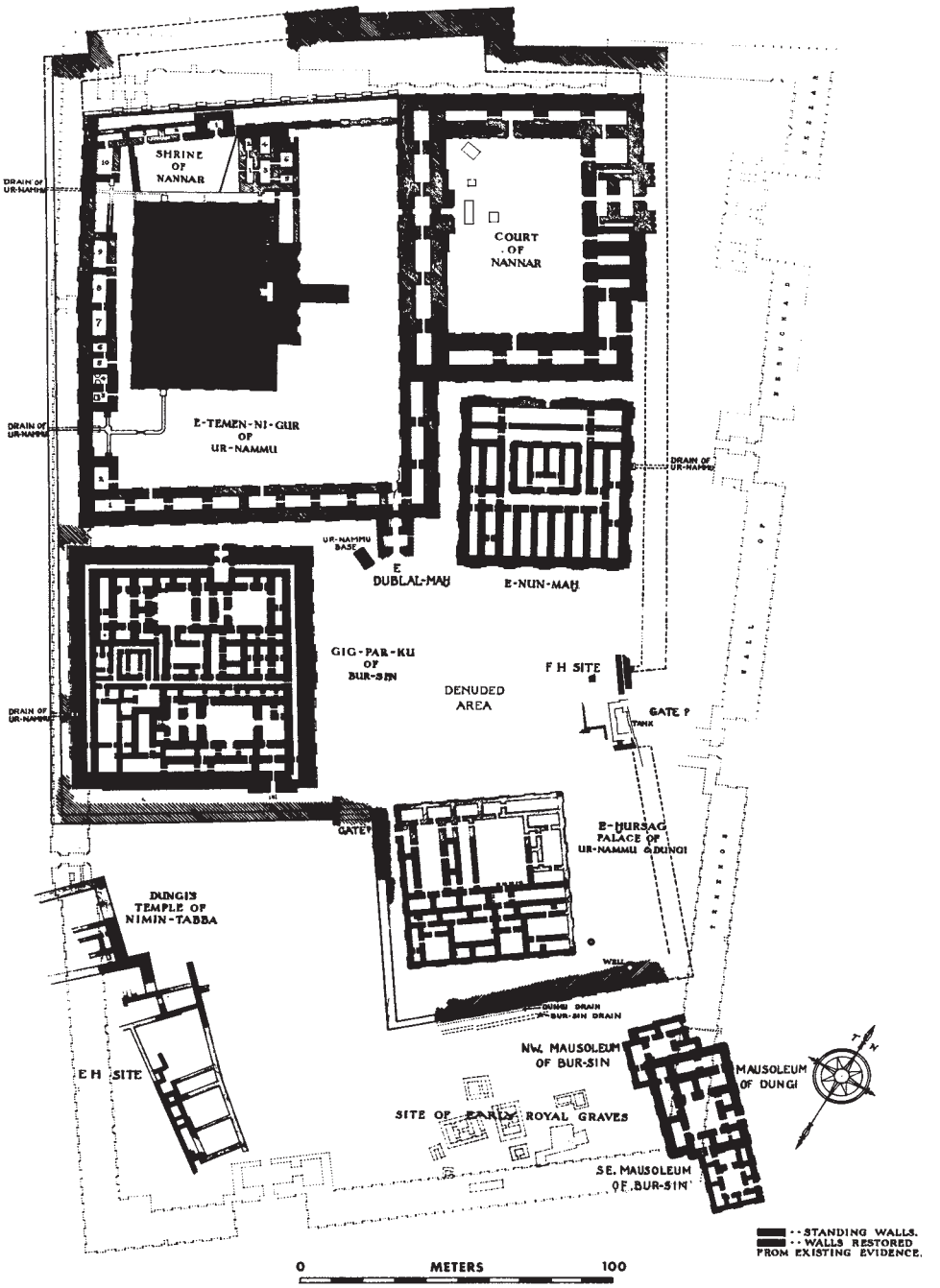
Bludgeoned, Burned, and Beautified: Reevaluating Mortuary Practices in the Royal Cemetery of Ur

Aubrey Baadsgaard, Janet Monge, and Richard L. Zettler

No account of human sacrifice in the ancient Near East would be complete without reference to Sir Leonard Woolley's discoveries in the Royal Cemetery of Ur. In addition to uncovering a spectacular array of grave goods in what he took to be the tombs of the kings and queens who ruled the city-state ca. 2500 B.C.E., Woolley made a startling discovery—the burial of dozens of presumed court attendants, musicians, and mourners with Ur's early rulers, evidence of human sacrifice in the "cradle of civilization." Headlines such as "Sumerian Art and Human Sacrifice," which introduced *The Illustrated London News*'s report on Woolley's excavations January 1, 1929, fascinated and shocked the reading public. In spite of the ongoing attention given to Woolley's finds, few archaeologists have questioned his initial interpretations, applying modern scientific methods and current social theories to analyze better and explain his discoveries. This article attempts to elucidate the nature of human sacrifice at Ur, to question whether the practice of human sacrifice best explains the evidence Woolley uncovered in the Royal Cemetery and, if so, to investigate its methods, motives, and social implications.

Hubert and Mauss (1964: 13) described sacrifice as a complex ritual action affecting the moral condition of both the victim and the social body accomplishing the act. As a ritual action, human sacrifice usually has as its impetus cultural and religious principles, and its practice is intended to produce or legitimize a particular social order (see Valeri 1985). In comparison with all other offerings, human sacrifices usually have the greatest efficacy since they approach the limits of sacrificial practice, hence bestowing a greater meaning. Most theories of sacrifice are based on the notion that human sacrifices are directed to a deity, perhaps a gift in return for favors, to initiate communication, as a representation of a divine act, or as a rite of transformation between the human and divine worlds (see review in Oestigaard 2000: 42). The total effect of sacrifice depends on social understandings of the perceived effect and a collective judgment of its accomplishments in achieving its intended goals.

The dimensions of human sacrifices, like their potential social impacts, are many and varied. The occasion(s) of sacrifice, the deities involved, the symbolic value of the offering, the treatment of the victim(s) during the entire process, and the intended purpose of sacrifice all depend on cultural, historical, and contextual factors



F·G·NEWTON.
A·S·WHITBURN, *ARIBA*
C·L·WOOLLEY, *Hon ARIBA*
MENS ET DELT · · 1922 – 1930.
A·S·WHITBURN, *ARIBA*
DELT · · JAN: 1930.

Fig 1. Plan of the late third-millennium B.C.E. Nanna Temple, with its ziggurat, showing the location of the Royal Cemetery. Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

(see Oestigaard 2000: 42). These dimensions have been explored, at best, only partially in the case of the Royal Cemetery, and this essay suggests that available data can help fill gaps in current knowledge. One of the best potential sources of evidence is the remains of the presumed sacrificial victims themselves, a few of which were preserved during the excavations and currently exist as museum artifacts, on exhibit but available for study. The results of their study are here interpreted in light of other evidence to reconstruct and to clarify some of the dimensions of human sacrifice in ancient Mesopotamia.

Ur and Its Royal Tombs: The Basics

Tell al-Muqayyar, ancient Ur, is located in southern Iraq, approximately 17 km west of Nasiriyah (Roaf 1990: 232 gives its geographical coordinates as 30° 56° N, 46° 08°). Today, the Euphrates runs east of the site, but in antiquity it curved southwest of Ur (Wright 1981: 327–28). The Italian nobleman Pietro delle Valle (1665) was probably the first Westerner to visit the mound of ruins locals called *muqeijer* 'pitchy',[1] because of the baked bricks originally set in bitumen that littered its surface. J. Taylor, British Vice-Consul at Basra, initiated excavations in 1853–1854. Taylor focused his efforts on Ur's most prominent topographic feature—a stepped temple platform, or ziggurat, first built by Urnamma, founder of the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 B.C.E.) and refurbished by the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus in the 6th century B.C.E. (Taylor 1854). The ziggurat was the key feature of the temple complex dedicated to Ur's tutelary deity, Nanna, the moon god. Inscribed finds from his excavations permitted Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, British Resident in Baghdad and an early decipherer of cuneiform languages, to identify Tell al-Muqayyar as Biblical "Ur of the Chaldees" (1850: 481; 1857: 47).

R. Campbell-Thompson (1921) and H. Hall (1930) worked briefly at the site in 1918–19, followed by Charles Leonard Woolley, who conducted extensive excavations at Ur during 1922–34. Woolley directed the Joint Expedition of the British Museum and University of Pennsylvania Museum (hereafter, Penn Museum), and these institutions today share the artifacts recovered from the site with the Iraq Museum, Baghdad (see Dyson 1977). Woolley dug with hundreds of local workmen, and he uncovered both monumental public architecture and substantial areas of densely packed private houses (fig. 1). But his most widely publicized discovery was the Royal Cemetery, an extensive late third millennium B.C.E. burial ground located approximately 250 meters southeast of the ziggurat complex (figs. 2–3).

Woolley initially reported 1,850 graves in the Royal Cemetery but unearthed an additional 260 burials in 1933–34 (1934: 33; 1955: 127–45) after publishing his monumental two-volume report. He estimated that the Royal Cemetery originally held twice that number of burials, many destroyed by later interments, looting, or construction. He recognized the burials occurred over a long time and divided them into distinct periods (Woolley 1934: 20–32). Most of the burials were simple

1. Muqayyar and Muqeijer are alternative English transliterations of the Arabic name of the archaeological site.

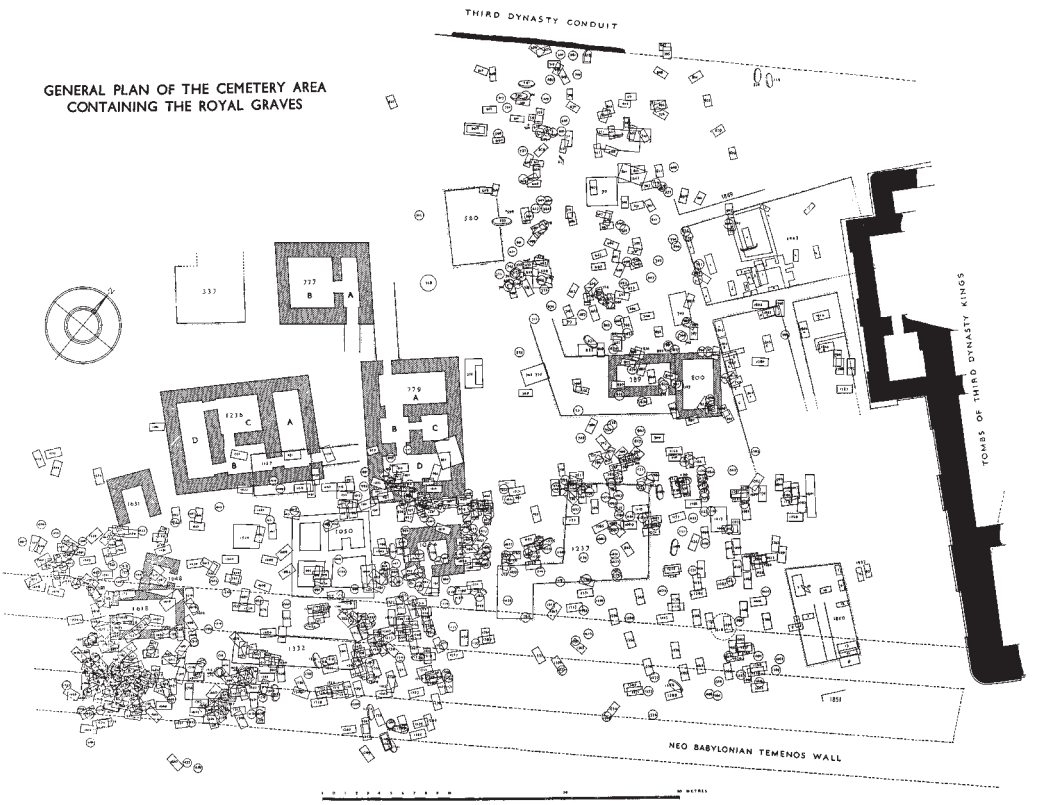


Fig. 2. Plan of the Royal Cemetery of Ur. Courtesy of the Penn Museum Archives.

inhumations, consisting of a body, wrapped in matting or placed in a coffin, accompanied by a few grave goods, for example, jewelry, cosmetic shells, cylinder seals, bowls, jars, comestibles, tools and weapons. Woolley (1934: 33) designated 16 "royal tombs," with their wealth and "peculiarities of structure and ritual" setting them apart (fig. 4). He assumed that they contained the burials of Ur's kings and queens, an assumption seemingly confirmed by cylinder seals inscribed with personal names and royal titles found in a few burials (Woolley 1934: 38).

Ur's royal tombs had a stone-built chamber, with one or more rooms, set at the bottom of a deep pit. The chamber served as the repository of the principal burial and sometimes contained other skeletal remains, presumed personal attendants to the royal personage. Additional bodies were found on the floor of the pit outside the chamber or in a subsidiary pit adjacent to it. Woolley dubbed these areas "death pits" and identified the bodies, which numbered from 4 to 74 in the largest pit, appropriately called the "Great Death Pit," as those of court attendants (see pp. 131–133 below).

The royal tombs date to Early Dynastic IIIA, 2600–2450 B.C.E., perhaps covering a span of about a century, their occupants possibly related by blood or marriage



Fig. 3. Aerial photograph taken March 12, 1930 during the excavations in the Royal Cemetery at the southeast corner of the Nanna Temple complex. Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

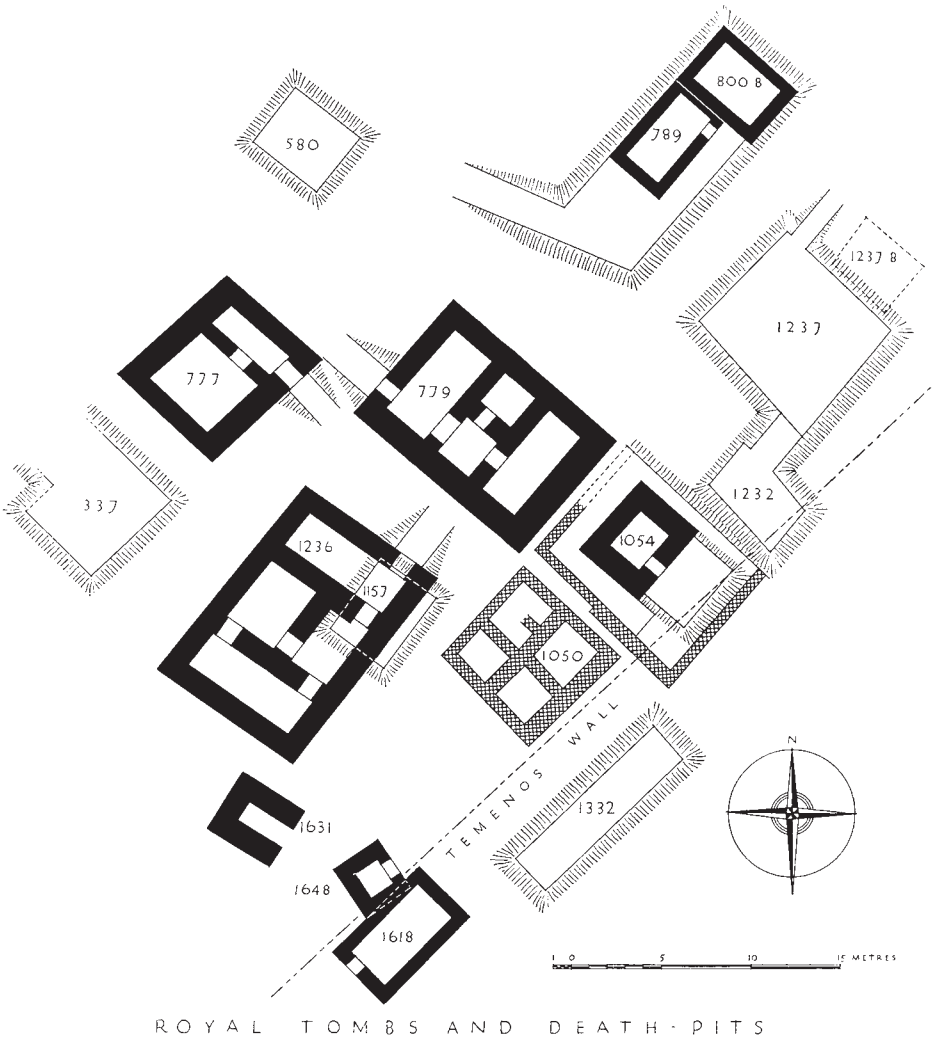


Fig. 4. Detail of Ur's Royal Cemetery, showing the 16 "royal" tombs. Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

(see Nissen 1966: 143; Reade 2001: 15–26). The layout and construction of the 16 tombs apparently changed through time (Zimmerman 1998; Reade 2001: 15–26). The earliest royal tombs had large and multiroomed structures with attendants inside and outside of them. Later tombs had smaller chambers meant exclusively for royal figures and their personal attendants, with large death pits accommodating substantial numbers of royal retainers. The wealth of burial goods included in the tombs also evolved over time, peaking with the construction of the largest death pits and falling off considerably with the latest royal tombs.

Woolley's most famous discoveries included the intact tomb chambers of two royal females: Private Grave (PG) 800 (Woolley 1934: 73–91), with its question-

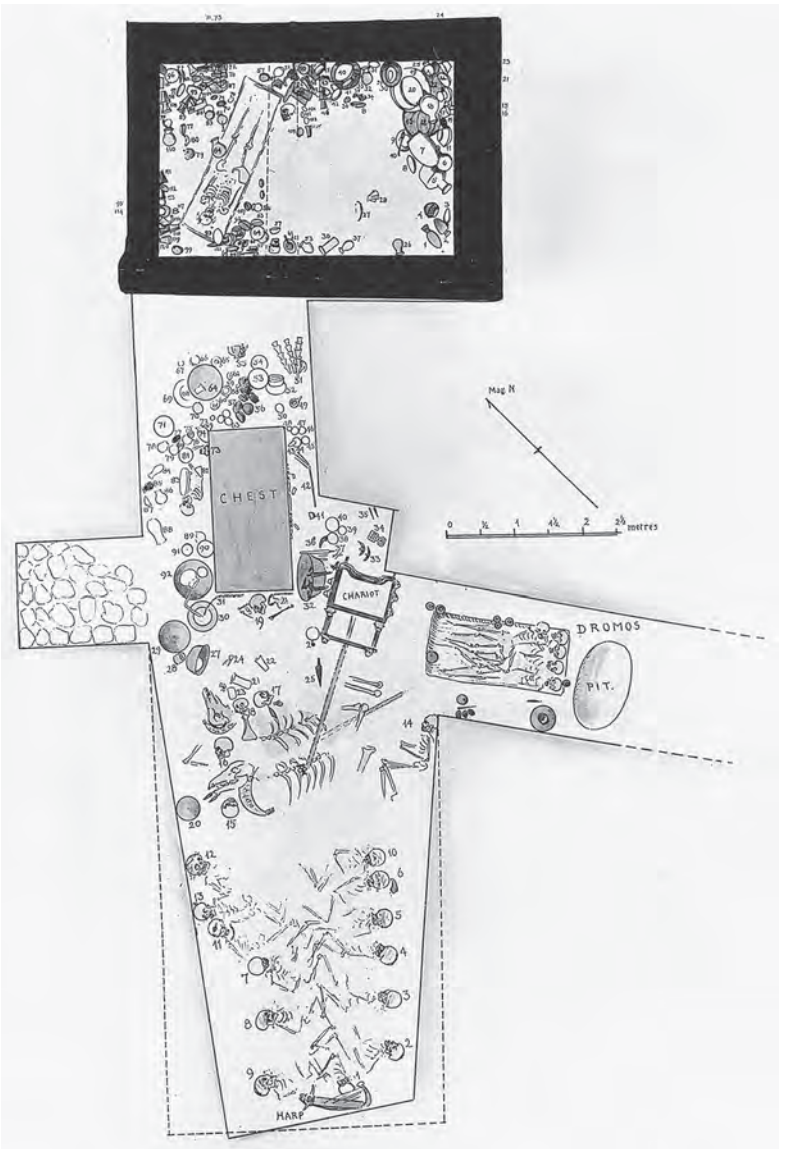


Fig. 5. Plan of Pu-abi's tomb (PG 800) showing both tomb chamber (above) and the death pit conventionally assigned to it (below). Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

able death pit (Zimmerman 1998: 17–19), belonging to a richly adorned queen commonly identified as Puabi (fig. 5), and PG 1054 (Woolley 1934: 97–107), with an unidentified female. Two large death pits were equally prominent in Woolley's reports: PG 789, called the "King's Grave," (Woolley 1934: 62–71), and PG 1237 (Woolley 1934: 113–24). PG 789's tomb chamber had been robbed in antiquity, but its death pit (fig. 6) was intact, with the bodies of 63 retainers: six soldiers at the entrance to the pit; two ox-drawn carts, with drivers and grooms; women along the southwest wall; and males and females lining a narrow passage to the tomb chamber. PG 1237 (fig. 7), with no surviving tomb chamber, held 74 retainers: 5 or

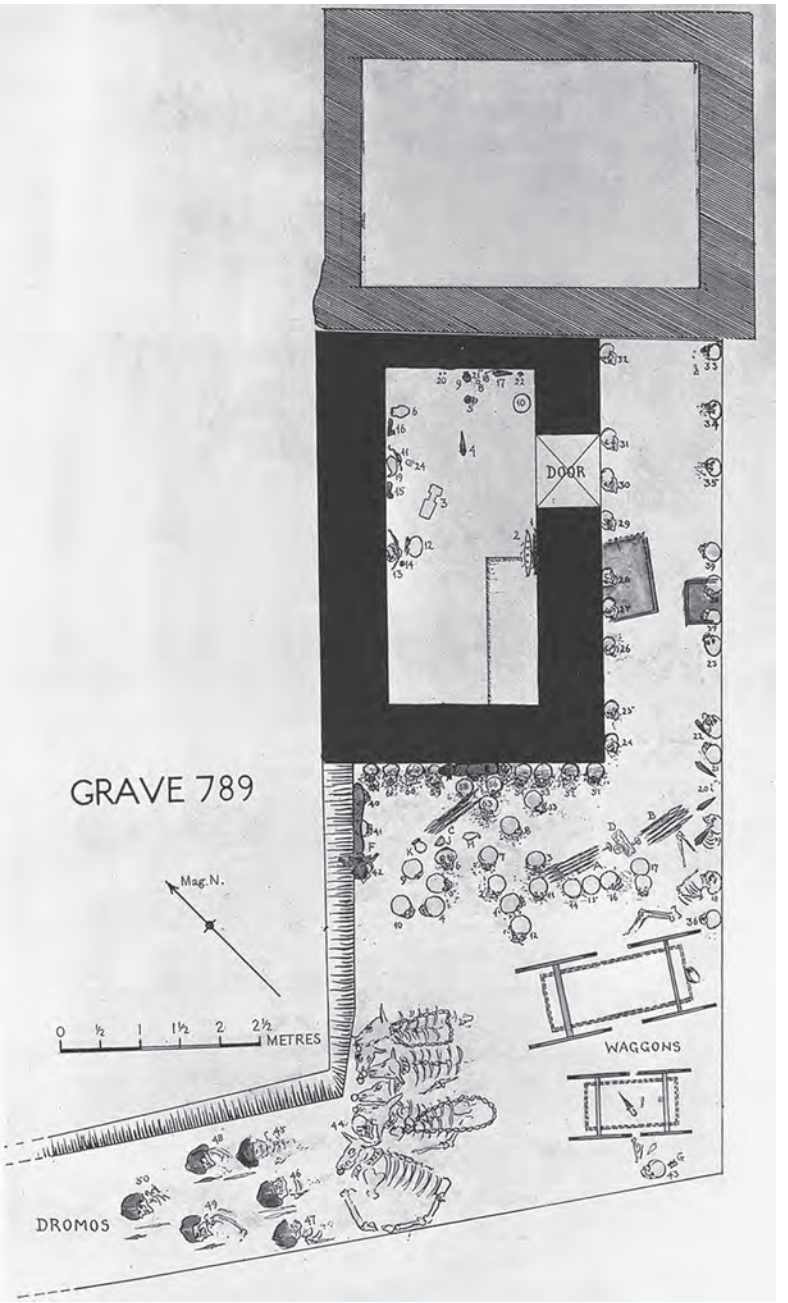


Fig. 6. Plan of PG 789 showing its tomb chamber (outlined in black) and adjacent death pit. Puabi's tomb chamber (hatched lines) is at top. Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

6 males along the northeast wall of the pit near the entrance, and 68 additional retainers, most elaborately dressed females, grouped around a set of musical instruments and in four rows across the length of the pit.

In the scenario Woolley presented in his final report on the Royal Cemetery (1934: 34–35), the construction of Ur's royal tombs began with a rectangular pit,



Fig. 7. Plan of the "Great Death Pit" (PG 1237). Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

which could be as large as 13 m × 9 m and dug 10 meters or more into the rubbish deposits of the cemetery.[2] A stepped and/or sloping passage provided access to the pit. The tomb chamber was built of rough-hewn limestone and mud plaster or cement with a roof that generally consisted of a corbelled vault made of the same raw materials, although the roof of PG 789 and PG 800 consisted of a barrel vault formed by contiguous ring arches made of baked bricks. When the stone chamber was completed, its principal occupant was brought down through the passage in a wooden coffin or on a bier. When the personal attendants of the deceased king or queen and the grave equipment had been deposited in the chamber, on the floor as well as on shelves lining the walls, the doorway was blocked with brick and stone rubble and plastered. Sometime later, a procession descended down the passage into an open death pit whose walls and floors were covered with reed mats. The procession included members of the royal court, soldiers, singers/wailers, perhaps mourners, musicians, drivers for ox-pulled carts, and grooms for their animals, each bringing a clay or metal cup. After some sort of ritual during which attendants took their appropriate positions in the pit, each member of the entourage drank poison

2. See P. Zimmerman (1998) for revised estimates for the depth of pits from 10 m to 3–4 m.



Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the scene in PG 789 just before the death of the royal attendants. *Illustrated London News*, June 23, 1928, pp. 1171–72.

from their cup, either from a previously prepared potion or something mixed in a large copper cauldron inside the pits, and collapsed on the floor. After the death of the royal retainers, the animals were killed, and the bodies of attendants neatly arranged. In some tombs the bodies were covered with reed mats and additional grave goods placed on top them. In PG 789's death pit, for instance, lyres were placed on top of the dead bodies. The pit was then backfilled. Various additional rites, including offerings, and additional grave gifts and attendants, might take place during the course of filling the shaft. Some kind of chapel or monument may have marked the grave on the surface, although none were located.

In his popular accounts, as well as his preliminary and final reports, Woolley noted that the bones of the court attendants he discovered were so "broken and decayed" that they could not yield any forensic evidence bearing on mode of death (Woolley 1928a: 424; 1929: 59; 1934: 36). Following the excavation of PG 789 and PG 800, he suggested that the court attendants, whom he described as chattel, had been killed. He questioned only whether they had been "marshaled in order and cut down where they stood . . . or whether they were slaughtered apart and then laid in the grave" (Woolley 1928b: 1171). For various reasons, he favored the former. *The Illustrated London News*'s noted illustrator Amédée Forestier (1854–1930) provided two reconstructions of PG 789 for its June 23, 1928 account of Woolley dis-



Fig. 9. Reconstruction of PG 789 after the death of the royal attendants. *Illustrated London News*, June 23, 1928, pp. 1173–74.

coveries. An often-reproduced sepia-tone, published across two full pages, showed the tomb chamber, with the royal entourage solemnly arranged in the death pit, awaiting their demise (fig. 8). Its caption read "Awaiting Death in a King's Tomb: Victims of Human Sacrifice—An Authentic 'Reconstruction.'" Woolley included the illustration in his final report on the excavations (Woolley 1934: pl. 30). A seldom-reproduced full-page black-and-white illustration showing the "grisly sequel," the scene in the pit after the death of the royal entourage, appeared on the following page (fig. 9). A caption above it read "King's Household Sacrificed: An Authentic 'Reconstruction,'" and one below it: "59 people—along with 6 oxen, sacrificed at a Sumerian king's burial: the 'shambles' beside the tomb . . . after the 'ritual murder.'"

Whatever his initial thoughts, Woolley settled on the scenario he included in his final report with the excavation of PG 1237. He had been struck by the neat

arrangement of bodies in PG 1237, and by the fact that the delicate headdresses the females in that "Great Death Pit" had worn were largely undisturbed (1934: 36). He concluded that the attendants had not suffered brutal deaths, and after discussions with his wife, Katherine, posited that they had drunk some "deadly or soporific drug" from cups found near their bodies. He speculated that the poison may have been in a large copper cauldron, found near the lyres, in the east corner of the pit. As the drug took effect, the attendants lay down and composed themselves for death, with the purpose of continuing their service to a deified king or queen in the netherworld.

Some archaeologists have challenged Woolley's identification of the bodies found with Ur's kings and queens as court attendants. Charvát (2002: 224–26), for example, has proposed that the bodies in the death pits belonged to individuals who wished to be buried near persons "whose charismatic significance is likely to have been acknowledged by the whole community." These individuals would have died and been buried during the king or queen's reign, their bones subsequently exhumed for reburial with the royal corpse. Dietrich Sürenhagen (2002), drawing on his excavations at Ahmad al-Hattu (and French excavations at Kheit Qasim) in the Hamrin, has suggested that Ur's royal tombs do not represent a single burial episode but instead reflect the use and reuse of collective burial space. He postulated that bodies in the death pits were interred at different times. When newly deceased were entombed, older interments, with their possessions and offerings, were unceremoniously pushed aside or transferred elsewhere.[3] Given the nature of the evidence (discussed below), these alternatives seem improbable, and the overwhelming majority of scholars have accepted Woolley's identification of the bodies found with Ur's kings and queens as court attendants, as well as his suggestion that they had gone willingly to their deaths. Some have sought a fuller understanding of the phenomenon of mass suicide, asking why court attendants might have willingly submitted to their deaths (Pollock 1991, 2007) or searched for similarities between Ur's Royal Cemetery and other documented ethnographic and ancient cases of human sacrifice (Dickson 2006).

Our approach to verify or refute Woolley's claim of human sacrifice at Ur relies on evidence recovered from the royal death pits, especially on the forensic analysis of two preserved skulls of presumed sacrificial victims in Penn Museum's collec-

3. Both Charvát and Sürenhagen, presumably influenced, at least to some degree, by Woolley's rudimentary plan of PG 789, suggest that many of the skeletons in the death pits of the royal tombs were disarticulated or consisted of skulls only. The skeletons in the death pits were poorly preserved. Woolley (1934: 65) noted, with reference to PG 789's death pit, "Most of the bones were so completely decayed, reduced in fact to a layer of brownish powder, that the attitudes of few of these could be definitely fixed and we had to content ourselves with noting the position of the skulls insofar as the presence of the teeth or of bead necklaces, earrings, and so on, betrayed their presence." However, most of the bodies would appear to have been intact when put in the tombs, as Woolley's recovery of jewelry (garment pins and belts composed of silver or shell rings) and tools/weapons (daggers and whetstones), typically worn on the torso, as well as other finds (cups and cockle shells with cosmetic pigments) from many of the individually numbered skeletons would suggest. Woolley was an exceptionally skilled excavator and routinely traced decayed wooden objects such as carts and lyres preserved only as white powder in the ground. But regrettably he made little effort to map the positions of skeletons with precision in the royal tombs.

tions: a soldier or bodyguard (B17312) from PG 789, the "King's Grave," and a young female (30-12-551) from PG 1237, the "Great Death Pit." These skulls offer a unique opportunity to verify whether intentional human sacrifice was indeed a component of Early Dynastic royal funerary rituals at Ur.

Human "Sacrifice" at Ur: The Evidence

For Woolley, human "sacrifice" was a hallmark of Ur's royal tombs. The bodies with the presumed primary interment could only have represented sacrificial victims. The fact that the skeletons he uncovered were articulated, even if poorly preserved, their jewelry and other possessions intact, and the elaborate tableaux in the death pits, seemingly depicting a royal retinue, with soldiers/bodyguards, ox-pulled carts, drivers and grooms, musicians, mourners, and so on, militates against Charvát's reconstruction of events (see Marchesi 2004: 154–55). The death pits did not contain random individuals. In addition, the tombs seemed to have been opened only once, ruling out Sürenhagen's proposal that they represented the disposal of families or members of other corporate groups, who died and were buried in collective tombs over a period of years. It is possible that some time elapsed between the interment of deceased royal personages and presumed attendants, but it appears the burial of both were accomplished as part of a single coherent set of funerary events. The death pits themselves appear to have been purposefully arranged with bodies, furniture, and other grave contents, then filled in (perhaps with some additional rites performed), suggesting presumed sacrificial victims were buried nearly simultaneously. The presumed age and sex of the skeletons also seemed to argue against familial relations among them, for example, the lack of couples buried together and the age/sex cohorts of attendants, dominated by young women and mature males, with few young children or older adults represented. No evidence suggests the death of large cohorts, for example, of mature males who might have died in battle. Even today, Woolley's conclusion that the bodies in Ur's royal tombs represent human sacrifices seems the most likely explanation.

Despite the fact that the number of human remains in the death pits together with their age/sex profiles (mostly young adults) constitute one of the best forms of evidence for the practice of human sacrifice at Ur, Woolley had no human osteologist on site during the Royal Cemetery's excavations, and his estimations of both sex and age have to be approached with skepticism. His sex determinations are based largely on grave goods, particularly jewelry and tools/weapons, associated with the bones, while skeletal age was rarely determined, although sacrificial attendants are assumed to have been mostly adults, with some perhaps as young as older adolescents or teenagers. Woolley identified one of the bodies (no. 10) from PG 800's death pit as a child, because the teeth were not "fully developed" (1934: 77); he noted that one body (no. 8) from the Great Death Pit (PG 1237) had very small bones as though belonging to a very young person (1934: 116–17).[4] He also noted the remains of children in other, nonroyal burials, for example, PG 1068 and PG 1133.

4. Woolley (1934: 117) notes that PG 1237 Body 9 had "small bones as of a very young person," but in his field notes, which we take as primary documentation, he says Body 8.

Woolley also only offered only one type of evidence—cups found near many bodies that he presumed were used to consume poison—to support his determined method of sacrifice, willing mass suicide. His field notes and published reports, however, seem to contradict his claims. Rather than being an "invariable" attribute of burial goods found next to bodies, the majority of attendants did not have cups. In PG 789, for example, fewer than half the attendants had pottery, copper-alloy, or stone cups or bowls, and none of the soldier/bodyguards or others identified as males.[5] If Woolley's attribution of artifacts to specific bodies in the crowded Great Death Pit is accurate (Woolley acknowledged that with the bodies so close together and the bones largely decayed he had difficulty assigning objects to specific bodies; see 1934: 120–21), statistics for PG 1237 present a similar picture. A little more than half the attendants had cups or bowls, and none of the putative males in proximity to the entrance (or others, such as Bodies 7–9 near them). The majority of the attendants had just one, but a substantial number had multiple cups or bowls. Woolley noted that all the cups and bowls were smashed or hopelessly decayed, and he apparently did not save any of them for later testing for poisonous residues. Body 61, the most elaborately dressed female in the Great Death Pit, is the only female who had a cup that clearly seems intended for use as a drinking vessel. In his field records, Woolley notes that Body 61 had a "silver cup held to mouth—this was hopelessly decayed." Woolley never considered a more likely explanation for the cups or bowls found with bodies, including PG 1237 Body 61, that they were used as part of a staged act of drinking or feasting (see discussion below, pp. 149–153).

Neither the numbers and age/sex profiles of the human remains in the royal tombs nor the presence of cups near some (but not all) attendants in royal death pits convincingly corroborate Woolley's account of human sacrifice at Ur. The best potential evidence for determining whether human sacrifice was indeed practiced would be the bodies of the attendants themselves. Regrettably, Woolley kept the remains of only 21 individuals from the Early Dynastic phase of the cemetery. The bones he shipped back to London, most of which are today in the Natural History Museum, were first analyzed by Sir Arthur Keith (1934) and later restudied by Molleson and Hodgson (2003). These include the skeletons of two royal persons: the principal burial from PG 800's tomb chamber, a female just under 5 feet tall and about 40 years of age, and a "strongly built, powerful man about 5 ft., 5 in., or 5 ft., 6 in., in height" under age 30 from PG 755 (Keith 1934).

An inscribed cylinder seal found with two others near the right shoulder of the female from PG 800's tomb chamber provided her name and title: *pú-AD ereš* 'Puabi, the queen' (or, more probably, 'Pu-abum, the queen'; see Marchesi 2004: 186–89 and 193–94). Cohen (2005: 80–81) has argued that the inscribed seal cannot identify the skeleton as Puabi with certainty. He argues that individuals would not

5. One possible exception is Body 33, found in the east corner of the death pit, just outside the door to the burial chamber. He (?) had a copper axe (type A 3). Above the head was a copper bowl Woolley described as "too crushed to type" (1934: 67). Its location above the head may suggest that it was placed on the body after it had been put in the tomb.

have owned and used more than one seal simultaneously, so it is likely that the inscribed seal or the others found with it would have belonged to someone else. This argument, however, is essentially nihilistic. The fact that the three seals were found on her body, at the right upper arm, perhaps originally suspended from the gold garment pins that secured her cloak, as seen in contemporary shell inlays (Parrot 1962: pls. 11–12), associates them securely with her person and suggests that she used the three seals sequentially or in different contexts during her life. Few inscribed seals from the Early Dynastic period exist, but Lugalanda, penultimate ruler of the city-state of Lagash, had multiple seals (Amiet 1980: 1098–98 and 1100). By the following Akkadian and Ur III periods, when inscribed seals are more common, individuals often owned and used more than one seal simultaneously (for the Akkadian period, see Gibson and McMahon 1995: 13–14; for Ur III Nippur, see Zettler 1987; for Umma, see Mayr 1997: 155–63).

PG 755 contained an astonishing wealth of grave goods, but no attendants; therefore, Woolley did not count it among the cemetery's 16 royal burials. The powerfully built male found in the tomb wore a silver belt from which was suspended a gold dagger in a silver sheath. With the dagger were a lapis lazuli whetstone, a shell cylinder seal, and possibly a silver toilet reticule. In the corner of the coffin, behind his head, was an electrum helmet whose decoration replicated an elaborately plaited (royal) coiffure. The identity of PG 755's occupant is uncertain. His cylinder seal was completely decayed and preserved no trace of the scene engraved on it or an inscription that might have yielded his name and patronymic or title. But, PG 755's occupant has, nevertheless, been identified as Meskalamdug (compare to Mes-uge-idu[g] in Marchesi 2004: 190–93) because the name is inscribed on gold and copper-alloy vessels from the tomb. Some, although not Woolley, have gone even further, associating him with Meskalamdug, the king, whose cylinder seal was found in PG 1050, or with Meskalamdug the king, father of Mesannepada, king and founder of the First Dynasty of Ur, named on a lapis lazuli bead from the so-called Mari Treasure (Boese 1978). Inscribed bowls, however, do not carry the same weight as insignia as, for example, cylinder seals; so, the link between PG 755's occupant and Meskalamdug or Meskalamdug the king remains tenuous. Moorey (1996) suggested that the helmet found in PG 755 marked its occupant as a king, while Marchesi (2004), following Müller-Karpe (1993: 250), argued convincingly that he is more likely to have been a prince or crown prince. The inscribed artifacts in PG 755, then, would have been deposited in his grave by royal relatives at the time of his death.

In addition to these two royal skeletons, four attendants (two females and two males) were kept from PG 1648, a small royal tomb on the periphery of the Royal Cemetery (Molleson and Hodgson 2003: 100–105). The remains include a late adolescent or young adult female (PG 1648a); a mature female (PG 1648b), probably more than 50 years old; an adolescent male (PG 1648c), approximately 17 years old; and, a robust adult male (PG 1648d), with patterns of ligament and muscle development suggesting he carried loads on his back as a porter. Some of the bones had been heated. A few from PG 1648a were discolored, and the bones of the spine,

shoulder, and hip of PG 1648d were blackened from burning. None of the bones preserve evidence bearing on the mode of death.

Other than the attendants from PG 1648, the only skeletal remains from presumed sacrificed victims that remain for study today are the crushed skulls of 10 attendants Woolley consolidated and lifted *en bloc*. The skulls include soldiers or bodyguards found at the base of the ramp, near the entrance to PG 789's death pit, and elaborately dressed females from PG 1237. Woolley described what he did in excavating the "Great Death Pit" and his rationale for doing so in *Ur of the Chaldees: A Record of Seven Years of Excavation* (1929: 61–62):

> a few heads on which the original order of the beads and gold-work was best preserved were laboriously cleaned with small knives and brushes, the dirt being removed without disturbing any of the ornaments—a difficult matter as they are loose in the soil—and then boiling paraffin was poured over them, solidifying them in one mass. The lump of wax, earth, bone and gold was then strengthened by waxed cloth pressed carefully over it, so that it could be lifted from the ground by undercutting. Mounted in plaster, with the superfluous cleaned off, these heads form an exhibit which is not only of interest in itself but proves the accuracy of the restoration which we have made of others.

The Iraq Museum, the British Museum, and Penn Museum were each sent two of the skulls. Baghdad got two female skulls from PG 1237.[6] London and Philadelphia each received a male soldier from PG 789 and a female attendant from PG 1237. Additional packets of wax containing preserved bits of the remaining four soldiers of the PG 789 death pit have recently been located and examined in the British Museum (Fletcher et al. 2008).

Janet Ambers (Department of Conservation and Scientific Research) radiographed the two skulls on display in the British Museum, as well as those in storage (Molleson and Hodgson 2003). They include Body 46 (ME 121414), an adolescent or young adult male, from PG 789's death pit, and Body 53 (ME 122294), a young woman, 20–30 years old, from PG 1237.[7] These skulls could only be superficially examined. Much of the skulls are obscured, particularly the backsides, which would have rested on the floor of the death pit.

The Penn Museum's two skulls were radiographed and subjected to Computed Tomography (CT)-scans at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP) and detailed forensic analysis with the intent of looking for evidence substantiating or refuting Woolley's account of human sacrifice in the Royal Cemetery. The first, skull 30-12-551, appears to belong to PG 1237, Body 52, a female wearing an elaborate headdress typical of the other female attendants found around her (fig. 11).[8] It

6. The Iraq Museum's two skulls belong to Body 19 (U. 12395) and Body 48 (U. 12381). A photograph of Body 48 was published in the plates of the excavation report (Woolley 1934: pl. 148b).

7. The British Museum's two skulls are accessible on its Web site: http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/c/crushed_skull_and_head-dress.aspx and http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/me/c/crushed_skull_of_a_soldier.aspx.

8. The museum number (30-12-551) of this head corresponds to Body 61 in the published report. Based on its assemblage of ornaments, however, it belongs to Body 52, Field no. U12407,



Fig. 10. Photograph of male skull (B17312) from PG 789 in the Penn Museum.



Fig. 11. Photograph of female skull (30-12-551) from PG 1237 in the Penn Museum.

includes a silver comb with three inlaid flowers (only one preserved), gold ribbon, two gold stylized flowers in the shape of rosettes, a wreath of gold poplar leaves with lapis lazuli and carnelian beads, large, double-lunate gold earrings, and two necklaces of gold and lapis beads. The skull together with ornaments are smashed in a three quarter profile facing left, with the right mandible exposed complete with teeth, including a few from the left side. Also visible is the right clavicle (collar bone), the right and parts of the left zygomatic arch (cheek bone), and the shattered remnants of the skull (parietal and frontal bones). Her eye orbits and her nasal bones were smashed beyond recognition, and her third molars (wisdom teeth) are fully erupted, but not worn, suggesting she was in her late teens or early twenties at death (aging according to Moores et al. 1963; White 2000).

The skull numbered B17312 (no field number) consists of a skull of a male smashed in profile facing right and waxed together with the remains of a crushed copper helmet worn on top of it (fig. 10). This skull is from the death pit attached to the King's Grave (PG 789) and is presumed to be from one of six soldiers standing at the entrance of the death pit. The left side of the face is visible, although the eye orbits and the neurocranium are covered entirely by the helmet. Other bones were also waxed with the skull including the left humerus, scapula, and fragments of cervical vertebrae. The right humerus is also visible over the crown of the helmet, perhaps indicating the body was dumped, its arm flung over the head, at the time of its disposal in the death pit. The features of the skull indicate it belonged to a mature male with large brow ridges, a bilobate chin, and heavily muscled mastoid process. His dentition shows moderate wear on the lower first molars (M1s) and virtually no wear on the third molars (M3s), indicating that he died between 25–30 years of age (aging with reference to Moores et al. 1963; White 2000).

museum no. 30-12-435, 638 (Woolley 1934: 119).

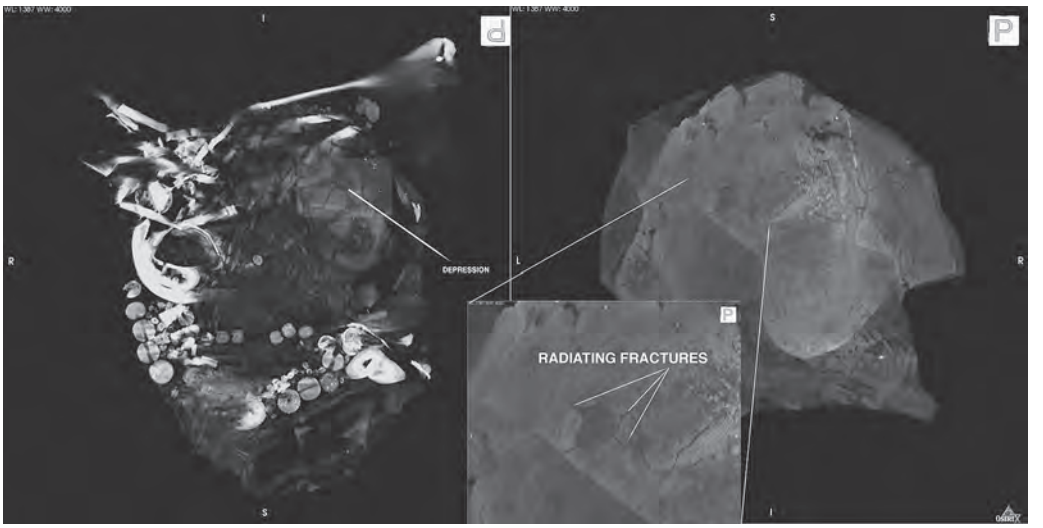


Fig. 12. CT images of both skulls in the Penn Museum showing circular holes caused by blunt trauma, with depressed area on the female skull and radiating fractures on male and female skull.

Results of the CT Scans

The resulting images of the CT scans of Penn Museum's two skulls provide three-dimensional images from front to back. The most obvious feature of both skulls is their high degree of fragmentation. The female's skull is in slightly worse condition, due to extensive breakage in the cranial vault and face. Her gold headdress and ornaments also resulted in some streaking of the CT images, obscuring the detailed imaging of some parts of the skull. The male's skull was largely encased in a copper helmet, which protected it from the effects of postmortem crushing, leaving it in somewhat better condition. Because the copper was completely mineralized, the helmet did not interfere with the CT scan.

Two types of fragmentation patterns are visible on the CT scans of both, one postmortem, the result of events that occurred posthumously, and the other perimortem or occurring prior to or at the time of death. The postmortem breaks exhibit damage that is typical to dry bone as a result of the crushing effects of the overburden of the soil; breaks have jagged edges in regular patterns with a high frequency of right-angle breaks. The perimortem breaks, by contrast, show bone beveling from the inner to outer table and endocranial displacement, smooth edges, and a preponderance of non-right-angle breaks (obtuse angles predominate). The perimortem breaks seem not to have been taphonomic in origin, but part of a late-phase perimortem change, which later precipitated a postmortem-like pattern of breakage. These perimortem breakage patterns include three separate cases of what appear to be blunt-force trauma to the skulls, producing circular holes in the flat neurocranial bones, including two on the male skull and one on the female skull. In one instance on the male skull (fig. 12), radiating fractures bind a depressed and de-

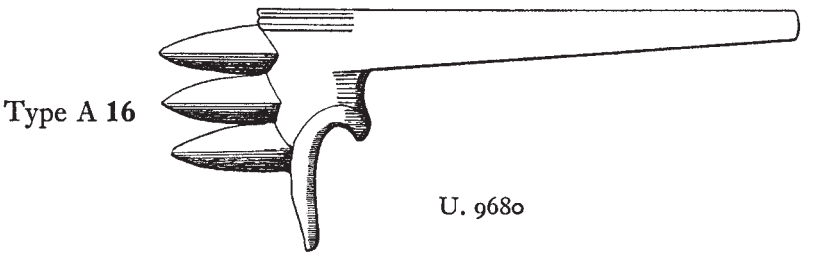


Fig. 13. Line drawing of a battle-axe (U. 9680) from PG 689. Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

tached bone area, while in the other two cases, involving both the male and female skulls, the cranial bone is depressed, but still attached with visible radiating fractures (see Arbour 2008; Berryman and Symes 1998 for identification techniques for injuries). The morphology of the depressed bone areas associated with these marks of blunt-force trauma are very distinct in their fracture morphology in comparison to the postmortem breaks, the result of postmortem crushing, and thus are readily apparent on visual observations in spite of the ubiquitous bone breakage characterizing both skulls (see Calce and Rogers 2007 and Wieberg and Wescott 2008 for studies that consider taphonomic changes related to blunt-force trauma).

The size and morphology of all three marks of trauma indicate that the instrument used to inflict the injury had a small pointed striking end with sufficient weight to have penetrated the skull at close range. Thrusting weapons, for example, daggers, swords, spears, or lances, would not have left such small, penetrating injuries on the skulls at close range, and a pear-shaped stone maces such as those known from Early Dynastic contexts at Khafajah in the Diyala, for example, Kh 8: 123 (Penn Museum 37-15-49), Kh 8: 128 (37-15-52) and Kh 8: 140 (37-15-57) would have inflicted a crushing blow.

None of the tools or weapons Woolley illustrated from contemporary Royal Cemetery graves appears to be a possible candidate for the type of weapon used to inflict injury to both skulls. A more likely possibility is a weapon similar to a pick-axe (U.9680) from a slightly later Akkadian-period grave (PG 689, fig. 13). Woolley described U.9680 as a "copper battle-axe having on one side of its ring socket a single long spike, on the other three short spikes." The pick-axe is approximately 21 cm long and 7.7 cm high. Woolley published a drawing of U.9680 (1934: pl. 224), and *A Guide to Iraq Museum Collections* has a photograph of the pick-axe (IM 8126) with other metal tools and weapons in Case 24 (Directorate-General of Antiquities 1942: pl. 12).

U.9680 is a unique find in the Royal Cemetery, but pick-axes like it are shown on Akkadian cylinder seals, in some cases, being used as weapons. For example, As. 33: 113 (Frankfort 1955: no. 670) shows a pick-axe identical to U.9680, with a long spike on one side of the socket and three short spikes on the other end. The seal VA 3605 (Moortgat 1988: Tafel 33, no. 243) shows a nude hero swinging a similar pick-axe, but without a toothed blunt end, at an attacking lion. U.9680 resembles contemporary pick-axes from nearby Syria and Iran. One example was found in the Hypogeum at Til Barsip (Syria), generally dated to the second half of the third millennium

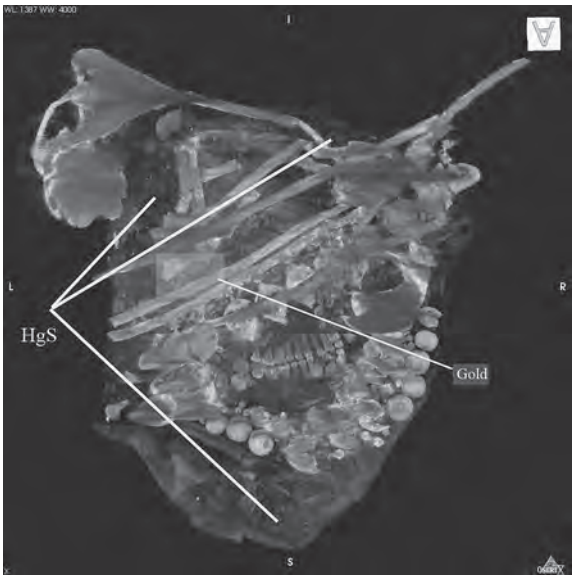


Fig. 14. CT image showing HgS crystals, clearly distinguishable from more irregularly shaped gold flakes surrounding female skull.

B.C.E., and others derive from Luristan (Muscarella 1988: 388). The spikes on these pick-axes vary, with some squared in section and blunted, but none are likely in their original shape, which could have been drawn to a sharp point when in use.

In summary, the discovery of apparent blunt-force fragmentation patterns on the Penn Museum skulls supports Woolley's contention that the retainers found in royal death pits were indeed the victims of human sacrifice. The mode of death, however, was not willing suicide by means of ingesting poison but rather a forceful blow to the skull by a sharp, weighted weapon. This evidence sheds important light into the practice of human sacrifice, particularly the means by which it was carried out, and also into its very nature. Rather than a "peaceful" process with willing participants, the evidence from Ur's Royal Cemetery points towards bloody homicidal sacrifice, the intentional and violent killing of human victims as part of sacrificial ritual. While this revised scenario is based on admittedly limited evidence, the fact that the two skulls subjected to testing come from different royal death pits suggests a similar method of death might be expected for other, possibly most of the court attendants, particularly those from the three largest death pits.

Treatment of the Sacrificial Victims

In addition to revealing a probable cause of death, the CT scans of the Penn Museum skulls reveal previously unknown details about the treatment of the presumed sacrificial victims in the royal tombs' death pits. The CT images, particularly of the young woman from PG 1237, showed ectocranial areas of the skull bone (outside) that appear delaminated (not present on the endocranial surface). This feature is reminiscent of heating or burning damage to fresh bone (Pope et al. 2004). The evidence of heating is difficult to detect from visual inspection of the bones alone

due to the layers of adhesives and preservatives added to the skull by Woolley at the time of their excavation and during subsequent conservation. The relative lack of standards for interpreting microscopic and chemical analysis of heated bone, or bone that has been subjected to elevated temperatures (to at least 150–200˚C) from archaeological contexts also complicates straightforward interpretations of heating with exclusive recourse to the bones themselves.

The results of the analysis of heat applied to the bone is inconclusive (Cabo-Perez et al. 2008), in part due to the lack of standards to interpret both microscopic and chemical analyses applied to archaeological specimens where the effect of diagenetic processes are difficult to control (Koon et al. 2003: 1393–99).

Evidence for the heating, but not direct exposure to flame, was previously noted on specimens from Ur kept in the Natural History Museum, London, including the probable royal male in PG 755 and the attendants in PG 1648 (Molleson and Hodgson 2003). The possible heating of a female attendant from PG 1237 lends further evidence for the heating (or perhaps smoking) of bodies after death, probably to delay putrefaction and to preserve them for a time after death and before burial.

The heating of corpses is known from both earlier and later periods in the ancient Near East. In the sixth-millennium B.C.E. Halaf culture of Syria, northern Iraq, and southeastern Turkey, cremated and partially burned bodies were found at Yarim Tepe II (Merpert and Munchaev 1993), and the bones of two adults found in a burned house were affected by fire, perhaps left on the roof while the structure burned (Verhoeven and Kranendonk 1996: 56; Verhoeven 2000). From later contexts, such as the Late Bronze Age palace in Qatna (Tell Mishrife), near Homs in central Syria, a limestone slab was found with imbedded human bones and soft tissue evidencing collagen changes to the bones suggestive of heating to 200–250° C as part of funerary ceremonies. The Qatna funerary ceremonies also included the feasting of kings and priests with dead ancestors (Pfälzner 2007; Witzel and Kreutz 2007). The body of an Assyrian queen, possibly Atalia, wife of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.E.), buried in a vault beneath the domestic quarter of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud, ancient Calah, also shows evidence of having been exposed to a temperature of 150–250° C (see Schultz and Kunter 1998).[9]

The heating or burning of sacrificial victims is also attested in a myriad of other ancient contexts, ranging from the Vikings to the ancient Romans. According to Oestigaard (2000: 41), at least three modes of corpse preparation are known: raw, cooked, or burned, each dependent on the mode of death and the expected manner of body disposal. Raw victims are often drowned in water, while cooking or burning of bodies may occur in cultural contexts where some type of heat-mediated change of the body is required for a technological, social, or ritual transformation of the corpse (Oestigaard 2000: 42). This transformation is usually related to the

9. Packing corpses in salt for preservation is attested in later periods. For example, Ashurbanipal's Annals record that an Elamite king packed the body of Nabu-bel-shumate, grandson of Marduk-apla-iddina, who had fled to Elam and committed suicide on the approach of the Assyrian king, in salt and sent it to Ashurbanipal (see Ashurbanipal Annals, col. vii, lines 16–50 as translated in R. Borger 1996: 242–43).

demands of the gods to whom the sacrifice is intended. Certain types of divine gifts may require different transformations, or certain types of people (slaves, males or females, war captives) may require special treatments, among them heating or burning. Burning can be ranked according to the degree and type of exposure to fire, ranging from Grade 0 with no evidence of heat alteration, to Grade 4, with a complete burning, resulting in a white appearance and chalky texture to bones (Holck 1987). The skulls of the Ur royal attendants analyzed here correspond with a Grade 1 to Grade 2, with bones showing evidence of heat alteration but not direct or full exposure to fire resulting in charring.

In addition to showing evidence of heat exposure to the bones, the CT scan of the female attendant also revealed small deposits of mercury with characteristic radio-opaque crystals (fig. 14). Using an EDXRF (energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence analyzer), the area surrounding the cranial vault of the female was tested for the presence of mercury vapor. This technique produced a marginally positive result dampened by the heavy layers of conservation materials applied to the specimen.[10]

Mercury sulfide (HgS) or cinnabar has been used in many ancient cultures to preserve dead bodies. The preservative mechanism of HgS, as well as other minerals such as arsenic, is through the delay of the putrefaction process. The oldest documented use of mercury for preserving corpses dates to about 2,000 years ago in China (Aufderheide 2003: 52–54, 264). The presence of mercury in the Ur specimen represents the earliest yet-known example of its use in the ancient Near East. Local sources would have been available for exploitation in volcanic exposures in Turkey and Iran (Borisenko et al. 2004), and cinnabar could have been transported to southern Mesopotamia along well-established trade routes from these areas.

The evidence for postmortem treatment of the two sacrificial victims from the Ur royal graves, apparently involving both heating the corpse and applying cinnabar, supplies hitherto unknown details about the processes and methods of human sacrifice at Ur and perhaps points to particular methods of intended corpse disposal. Because both heat and mercury treatments suggest an attempt to preserve the bodies of victims by retarding putrefaction and extending the time of soft-tissue preservation, in effect, embalming without arterial infusion, it seems that the deceased sacrificial victims were not quickly buried or disposed of but perhaps were kept around for public display during funerary rituals lasting for days (discussed further below). Textual information bearing on mortuary practices, and specifically on the question of when after death bodies were typically buried, is limited. However, Early Dynastic and Ur III texts recording distributions made in connection with the burials of high-ranking women, as well as Šu-Sin, penultimate king of the Third Dynasty of Ur, suggest that the dead were mourned for two days before burial (Jagersma 2007: 291–94; Katz 2007: 174–82). However, the time between death and burial for most nonelites was probably not so extended, as evident in a notice dating to the reign of Samsuditana (1625–1595 b.c.e.) recording that a woman named

10. Tests were performed by Environmental Health and Radiation Safety, University of Pennsylvania. Bacharach Instrument, MV-1 Mercury Sniffer, administered by Lynn Grant (Museum Conservator) and James Sillhart (Senior Industrial Hygienist/Safety Specialist).

Bettaja died on the 12th day of the month and was buried the next day (Dalley 1979: 21; see also Jagersma 2007: 294). Whatever the timing of burial, it seems that mourning for elites and nonelites continued for a period following interment.

The Sacrificial Process

The evidence from the CT scans and forensic analysis of the two attendants from death pits in Ur's Royal Cemetery supports Woolley's original account that the court attendants buried with or inside death pits associated with the tombs of Ur's ruling elite were indeed human sacrificial victims. The method of sacrifice, however, was not "peaceful" suicide by poisoning but rather homicide.[11] The discovery of signs of heating or burning and the use of preservatives on the remains of sacrificial victims has two major implications. First, as noted above, the attendants were likely "embalmed" because they were left unburied for some time. Second, because no evidence for burning or heating facilities was evident inside death pits, they were probably killed and treated outside and then brought down into the tomb for disposal. The location and timing of the dressing of the bodies remains an open question. It is possible court attendants were dressed before they were killed, or perhaps during or between other treatments to the corpse. Woolley's field notes, drawings, and photographs make it clear that the attendants were wearing their costumes in the death pits and were not just covered by or buried with them. The waxed, crushed skulls from PG 789 and PG 1237 clearly demonstrate this fact.[12]

After the killing, treatment and dressing of the bodies, the sacrificial victims were perhaps put on public display and then brought down into the tomb chamber or the associated death pits. The CT images of Penn Museum's skulls reveal that both were positioned so that the side bearing the mark of the blunt trauma injury was placed on ground, and, thus, not visible. The marks of trauma may not have been visible on the corpse in any case, because the heads of both were covered, the male by a copper helmet and the female with elaborate gold jewelry, but were doubtless known to those handling the bodies and overseeing their final deposition in the royal tombs. Whether or not this arrangement was typical for all attendants is obviously impossible to determine, but it may explain why Woolley, a careful observer, did not notice any signs of their violent death. Breakage of the skulls due to trauma might have been impossible to see in the field given the poor condition of the skulls at recovery.

Not all of the skeletal remains from the death pits are laid out in the same manner. Some are on their right side and others on their left, but all are intentionally arranged. The final deposition of attendants clearly involved more than the quick lining up of bodies; the scene was carefully planned and staged, as Woolley

11. It is possible that the attendants were first drugged and then killed, but no evidence for the use of drugs or poisons can be recovered from available evidence, so at present there is no way to substantiate such a scenario.

12. In some cases, additional burial goods may have been piled on top of corpses, such as lances put on a soldiers helmet and lyres put directly on presumably female bodies in PG 789 (Woolley 1934: 69).

recognized (1934: 41). It is likely that the bodies were laid out in a preplanned tableau as part of the mortuary ceremonies. Other funeral accoutrements, including ox-pulled carts and musical instruments, were also brought down into the pits and deposited with clear and purposeful associations with dead attendants dressed in distinctive ways.

Females wearing elaborate headdresses were found in association with musical instruments in PG 789, PG 800 and PG 1237. For example, in PG 789, a lyre was found on top the bodies of 12 women (Bodies 51–62) half leaning against the southwest wall of the tomb chamber. Woolley (1934: 65) described them as the "most richly adorned" of all in the tomb. A second, larger lyre was on top of the bodies of three women (Bodies 40–42) against the northwest side of the pit. In PG 800, the bodies of nine women and a child were found in the southwest end of the death pit. One of the women (presumably Body 1) was found leaning against the collapsed remains of a harp and lyre, according to Woolley (1934: 74), with her hands in the place of the strings. In PG 1237, four attendants lay alongside three lyres in the eastern part of PG 1237. Two attendants (Bodies 7–8), one apparently a very young person, were isolated in the west corner of the Great Death Pit, near the lyres (see p. 152 below). Neither body was associated with cups or bowls.

Males were laid in groups, some guarding the entrance to the death pits, some stationed in other areas, and others clearly associated with ox-drawn carts or sleds. In PG 789, six soldiers/bodyguards (Bodies 46–50), wearing helmets and carrying spears were intentionally positioned at the base of the ramp leading into the pit, while a soldier/bodyguard (Body 18), wearing a helmet, stood against the southeastern wall of the pit, with four males (Bodies 19–22) carrying daggers. They stood in close proximity to caches of weapons and what may have been a copper-sheathed shield (Woolley 1934: 68–69). One male (?) was found just in front of the teams of oxen yoked to carts. Woolley identified him (Body 44) as a groom. Two males (Bodies 36 and 43) were positioned near the carts and were probably drivers. In PG 800, five attendants guarded the ramp leading down into the death pit; four attendants with weapons stood near oxen pulling a sled; one was laid just west of what Woolley called a "wardrobe box." In PG 1237, for example, three individuals with weapons were found among a group of six bodies at the northeast part of the pit, near the entrance.

Associations such as those described suggest that part of the sacrificial process involved bringing deceased attendants into death pits and intentionally arranging them in specific locations with particular associations with grave goods as part of the staging and carrying out of funerary rituals. The staged arrangement of the attendants in the pits suggests that the corpses of sacrificed attendants served as active participants in mortuary rites, their roles and positions displayed in their dress and their association with other grave goods, enabling them to serve their royal masters or mistresses as musicians, cart drivers, and guards in the netherworld.[13]

13. It is possible that court attendants also participated in royal funerary rituals before their death, perhaps as mourners during the initial stage of the funeral.

The Sacrificial Occasion: Funerary Feasting?

The context and associated grave equipment found alongside sacrificed attendants laid out in Ur's royal death pits suggest that human sacrifice was closely associated with funerary feasting. These feasts, which may have taken place both in the royal palace and at the tomb, are a known component of funerary rites in ancient Mesopotamia. Susan Pollock (2003 and 2007), Andrew Cohen (2005) and others have recently argued the centrality of feasting in funerary rituals and the burial of Ur's elites in particular. Documentary sources as well as finds from the Royal Cemetery strongly support their contention.

Documentary Sources

Early Dynastic III texts from Lagash record expenditures, authorized by Shagshag, wife of UruKAgina, a city-state ruler, made for two successive wailing ceremonies for her predecessor Baranamtara, widow of Lugalanda (Cohen 2003: 56–58 and 157–62; Jagersma 2007: 293–94). The distributions comprise bread and beer for a large number of persons "who shed tears at the mourning place for Baranamtara." They include the chief lamentation priest and various other lamentation priests, "wives of elders," Baranamtara's male relatives (?), and hundreds of female slaves. A later text (BM 18352) records distributions made in connection with the death and burial of Geme-Lama, high priestess of Ba'u and wife of the governor of Lagash, in the first regnal year of Amar-Suen, third king of the Third Dynasty of Ur. The expenditures include ghee, honey, cheese and various fruits (dates, dried pears, apples, grapes, pomegranates, and strings of figs), provisions for morning and evening meals for Geme-Lama as part of mourning ceremonies held on two successive days following her death, prior to burial (Jagersma 2007: 291–93). The first ceremony is characterized as "wailing in the living room and sleeping room," and was presumably held in Geme-Lama's residence. The second ceremony was held in her mortuary chapel. The text also records food for a single meal put in the grave with Geme-Lama.[14]

Animal Bones and Food Remains

Although difficult to interpret with certainty, animal bones and other comestibles (see Ellison et al. 1978) found in the royal tombs may represent the remains of feasts involving both living and dead participants. Woolley recorded a "mass of bones that could be distinguished as animal and not human" in the middle of the narrow passage leading to the door of PG 789's burial chamber (1934: 68). He noted a sheep, a goat and the remains of some other (unidentified) animal in the forecourt in front of PG 1054's burial chamber, with three human bodies. Against the northeast jamb of the chamber's door was a row of pots and nine bowls which contained

14. Ancient Mesopotamians conceptualized humans as consisting of body and spirit or ghost (*gidim*), which departed the body at its death and continued its existence in the netherworld (Katz 2007: 172–74). Dina Katz suggests that food recorded in BM 18352 for morning and evening meals on the first two days following her death were for Geme-Lama's spirit; the single portion of food put in the grave with Geme-Lama indicates that she was interred before her spirit left her body. The spirit presumably left the body after the first meal in the grave (Katz 2007: 181).

small and broken bones, "the remains of cooked dishes" (Woolley 1934: 104). The pots, whose size suggests that they would have been used for serving, included a medium-sized (30 cm high; 10 cm rim diameter) elongated jar with pointed base and high neck (Type 62); three somewhat smaller (22.5 cm high; 10 cm rim diameter) spouted jars (Type 208); and, a "metallic-ware" oval bottle with high, narrow neck (Type 106), decorated with horizontal corrugations. These bottles, imported from the Upper Euphrates region in Syria, appear exclusively in royal tombs in the Royal Cemetery (Reade 2001: 24–26). An example (30-12-186) in Penn Museum is multitoned, the rounded base and body dark buff, the neck and rim black.

While animal bones and other comestibles might be taken as the remains of feast, they may equally represent provisions for the dead in the grave similar to the rations put in the tomb with Geme-Lama. Or, they may be taken as provisions for offerings to netherworld deities such as made by Ur-Namma on his arrival in the netherworld (from the tale of the Death of Ur-Namma), or as recorded in a Drehem account of disbursements for Šu-Sin's funerary rituals (Katz 2007: 180). Regrettably, Woolley's excavations, carried out long before the systematic recovery of faunal and botanical remains became routine, do not provide us with the detailed information necessary to reconstruct the purpose(s) of comestibles in the royal tombs.

Pottery, Copper-Alloy, and Stone Vessels

As part of broader study of death and mortuary practices in early Mesopotamia, Andrew Cohen (2005: 82–93) reexamined pottery, metal, and stone vessels from the Royal Cemetery to determine whether the food and drink they had contained were provided for traveling, everyday consumption, or feasts. He postulated that traveling kits would have been made of ceramic and lighter-weight materials and included specialized vessels for carrying water. Ensembles for everyday consumption would have included mostly ceramic vessels that could be used for multiple purposes, for example, preparing, transporting, consuming, and storing food and drink. Feasting encompassed many of the same steps as everyday consumption, but on a larger scale, and commonly necessitated specialized preparations. The sumptuousness of a feasting event also demanded vessels made of exotic materials such as gold, silver, and copper alloys as well as stone. To complete his study, Cohen determines the "instrumental function" of the different vessel types Woolley defined, while taking cognizance of their materials. While his functional typology was based on an extended sample of more than 300 Early Dynastic III graves, Cohen focused on complete assemblages from a limited sample of 24 "undisturbed and well-documented" nonroyal and royal graves in attempting to determine what kinds of vessels were represented.

Cohen's conclusions point to little evidence of vessels used for traveling, although PG 955 and PG 1315 had vessels that were probably used for everyday consumption. Rich nonroyal tombs such as PG 755, commonly attributed to Meskalamdug (see p. p. 138 above), were probably equipped for feasting. They contained vessels that appeared in multiples: medium and high-capacity vessels for

serving groups, and vessels for specialized preparation and eating. Metal (gold and silver) and stone vessels were common, suggesting lavish events. Royal tombs were also equipped for feasting, but differed from these nonroyal tombs in the number, quality, and degree of specialization represented in their vessels. Some corpses in the royal tombs had vessels near their hands or faces, perhaps gestures meant to imply engagement in feasting.

Cohen concluded that the nonroyal and royal tombs he examined were equipped for feasting only in the narrowest sense, that is, the consumption of food and drink. None had a full complement of vessels required to prepare, serve, and consume a feast. Few vessels were found sealed and food residues were rare. He speculated that the deceased in both Ur's non-royal and royal tombs equipped with vessels of feasting, including kings and queens, as well as their court attendants, were not just intended to be seen as feasting but were displayed with the remains of a feast in which they had actively participated, presumably with living mourners.[15]

Tomb Tableaux, Cylinder Seals, and Inlays

As hinted above, PG 1237 can be read as a *tableau mort* illustrating a (funerary) banquet with music. Body 61, in the west corner, the most richly adorned of the 68 women in the death pit, was found with a silver cup to her mouth and was presumably the central participant. Musical instruments were found against the southeast wall of the pit, with musicians presumably nearby.[16]

Cohen (2005: 90–92) postulated a close correspondence between feasting tableaux like PG 1237 and banquet scenes depicted on artifacts such as cylinder seals and lyres. Cylinder seals depicting banquet scenes, in one or two registers, are common in Ur's royal tombs and seemingly associated with women (Moorey 1977: 36). The scenes engraved on seals show seated banqueters drinking from cups or consuming beer (?) through straws from jars set on stands, attendants serving and fanning banqueters, tables laden with food, including what may be bread and meat shanks, and porters carrying jars suspended in wickerwork (?) from poles. They also show musicians, vocalists (?), and dancers. For example, a gold seal found with the main burial (a woman) in PG 1054 is divided into two registers (Woolley 1934: pl. 193:21). The upper register shows a male and female banqueter seated on each side of a table, with attendants; the lower register shows a seated figure playing a bull-headed lyre, two females playing clappers and a singer or dancer with hands clasped, perhaps clapping or snapping her fingers. Similarly, a cylinder seal (1934: pl. 194:22) found with Body 7 in PG 1237 (see p. 148 above) has an upper register with three seated banqueters, two males (?) drinking through straws from a jar and

15. Pollock (2007: 101 n. 7) has questioned Cohen's reconstruction pointing out that the absence of food preparation and high-capacity storage vessels may reflect a more general absence of tools used in productive enterprises in the graves.

16. PG 789's death pit and the death pit Woolley associated with PG 800 would presumably have been tableaux rendering a cortege like what would have brought the dead king or queen to the tomb. The tableau would have incorporated the remains of a feast shared elsewhere or at the burial site itself (Cohen 2005: 150).



Fig. 15. Modern impression of a lapis lazuli cylinder seal (U. 12374 = 30-12-2) found with Body 7 in PG 1237. The scene engraved on the seal, in two registers, shows feasting and music. The personal name inscribed in the top register is Dumu-kisal. Courtesy of Penn Museum Archives.

female (?) raising a cup to her mouth, before a female (?) attendant (fig. 15). The lower register shows a scene of music and dance: to the left, a male with a rod and two females, one perhaps playing a wind instrument, stand behind a female, playing a bull lyre, while two small figures dance beneath it; to the right, three females dance and clap their hands.

In reference to Cohen's observations, it is difficult to know how literally to interpret the scenes carved on cylinder seals. The multiple banqueters and large number of attendants depicted on some seals might explain why some bodies in the Great Death Pit had cups and/or bowls and some did not. Perhaps cups and bowls identify participants in the feast (as opposed to servants), and the arrangement of the bodies in death pits such as PG 1237 represent the seating chart at an Early Dynastic royal funerary banquet. It is also possible that the imagery on some cylinder seals corresponds directly with the people participating in the funerary ritual. More specifically, it is possible that the imagery of the cylinder seal with PG 1237 Body 7 (Zettler and Horne 1998:79, 19A) somehow relates directly to Body 7 and Body 8, which is that of a very young person, isolated in the west corner of the Great Death Pit, near the lyres. If so, could Bodies 7 and 8 perhaps represent the diminutive figures dancing on the seal? Could Body 9, found nearby without a cup or bowl, perhaps be one of the musicians who played a lyre? Could the two cuneiform signs in the field in front of the female banqueter in the upper register give the name (commonly read *dumu-kisal* or, perhaps, *dumu-gipar*$_x$; compare to Marchesi 2004: 174–75) of the principle participant in the banquet? Perhaps cylinder seals from Ur's royal tombs were not merely clues to identity, as commonly assumed by those who study glyptic, but deliberately placed there like placards to narrate what had transpired at the death of Ur's kings and queens for posterity.

If cylinder seals provide a description of what transpired in Ur's royal tombs, inlays from the sound boxes of lyres, presumably played during the funerary ceremonies, epitomize scenes of feasting. For example, inlays set in bitumen on the front of the sound box of the big lyre from PG 789 (Woolley 1934: 70, 280–82; Hansen 1998: 53–57) depict an animal parody of a banquet. The second of four registers shows a canine, perhaps a hyena, and a lion serving food and drink, the third register an animal orchestra, with a seated equid playing a bull-headed lyre, a bear dancing, and a small animal, perhaps a fox, playing a sistrum. The inlays on the sound box of a smaller lyre from PG 1332 show a seated male drinking from a cup, with an attendant in an upper register and two additional attendants below.

The well-known Royal Standard of Ur, an enigmatic trapezoidal box from PG 779, has inlaid compositions of battle on one side and a banquet and its provisioning on the other. The juxtaposition of these two scenes perhaps makes it more difficult to link to funerary activities and suggests that other events, particularly those involving death, such as victories in battle, were also celebrated or commemorated with feasts.

Sacrifice as Part of "Royal" Funerary Ritual

By looking anew at evidence recovered in the Early Dynastic Royal Cemetery of Ur, this research has begun to provide a fuller, more complete practice of human sacrifice in early Mesopotamia. Based on the findings reported here, it seems that elite funerary ceremonies were well-planned and elaborate events that lasted for days, beginning with the death of a king or queen followed by the homicidal sacrifice of court attendants. The victims were subsequently preserved, suggesting they remain unburied for a period of time before being moved to their final resting place in the royal tomb chamber or death pit. The elaborate dress of both royal personages and sacrificial victims suggests that both were on display for some time after death, perhaps for (public) mourning rituals and for elaborate funerary proceedings, involving music, wailing and feasting such as depicted on cylinder seals and inlays on lyres. The hundreds of drinking vessels, food remains, and musical instruments found in the death pits, suggests that such funeral ceremonies were a conspicuous social production, leaving a marked impact on survivors and participants.[17]

While substantial detail has been added to the account of human sacrifice at Ur, considerable work on the phenomenon remains. The identity of the court attendants sacrificed, other than their attachment to the city-state's ruling elite, remains an open question. It is also not clear whether sacrificed servants were intended as gifts to placate the gods of the netherworld, or part of a royal entourage who would resume their identities and duties in life in the world of the dead. The impetus and motives of human sacrifice, likely both political and ideological in nature, are likewise uncertain. While funerary rituals involving feasting and the mourning of the deceased are attested in written accounts, human sacrifice as part of elite funerals

17. Royal funerary ceremonies of the third millennium B.C.E. might profitably be compared to those of the first milllennium B.C.E. (see, for example, Postgate 2008; Kwasman 2009).

is apparently limited to Ur. Poorly excavated and recorded burials with carts in the Y-Cemetery at Kish in the north may also attest the practice, if on a much more restricted scale (Moorey 1978: 106–10). Ur's special significance, reflected in its wealth, was apparently due to its location at the head of the Persian Gulf, allowing the Ur elite to have ready access to the raw materials and finished products that arrived in resource-poor Mesopotamia almost exclusively by sea in the later third millennium B.C.E. (Potts 1994) in addition to the agricultural lands and herds of sheep and goats that other rulers of Early Dynastic city-states commanded (Reade 2001: 24). The elaborate spectacle of Ur's royal funerary rituals, including the practice of human sacrifice, were perhaps a show of power and wealth by a ruling elite intent on establishing and legitimizing a new social order. The ultimate social results of Ur elite's enigmatic royal funerary rites seem to have been short-lived. The phenomenon of human sacrifice is evident only in a handful of royal tombs in the Early Dynastic Royal Cemetery, with the latest royal tombs showing considerable decline in wealth and the number of victims buried with kings and queens. Perhaps such extravagant royal funerals involving the death of scores of court attendants were too costly in terms of wealth and human life to achieve long term social legitimacy or failed in their communicative efficacy. These and other questions remain for the future ensuring that Woolley's fabled discoveries have much left to tell, even three-quarters of a century after they first captured public attention.

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Restoring Order: Death, Display, and Authority

Jill A. Weber

The third millennium in Syro-Mesopotamia saw increasingly asymmetrical relationships of economy and power. In one type of sovereignty, people and lands were brought under the aegis of institutionally sustained rulers who were necessarily backed by the sanction of the gods. Some of the earliest attestations of "kings" and "queens" are from this time, and the later "king lists" suggest that their rule was at least loosely based on hereditary lineage (e.g., Archi 1986; Astour 1992: 19–26; Finkelstein 1966; Jacobsen 1939; Reade 2001). In practical terms, this institutionalized hierarchy led to the accumulation of a great deal of wealth for ruling households and transmission of power through those newly wealthy dynasties. Competition between rulers for primacy was great, and their resulting peer interaction and visibility as public heads of state granted their role validity and status. This status was further legitimized through the mortuary venue.

Burials are not merely structures for the dead, but they are also constructs of the relationships of—and between—people and places (Parker Pearson 1982: 110; McAnany 1995). These relationships are reckoned through rituals that structure ancestral continuity with a particular place or space (Kertzer 1983; Cannon 2002). They may mark territories, validate land and resource ownership and be a legitimizing source of inheritance (Goody 1962); as such, they structure lineage and succession. Burial rites differ from each other due to, among other things, the scale of the "authoritative" resources over which their control is claimed, which include those regulating people and polity (compare to Giddens 1979: 107). These may range from private, intramural burial of the deceased attendant to familial ownership of home and property, to burial within large-scale monuments laying claim to corporate grazing territory (such as Porter 2000), to nation building (such as Ben Amos 1991). Ritual almost always accompanies acquisition and transfer of power (Fortes 1962). It must express legitimate dominance in the social order, the basis for which constitutes the source of power in society (for example Shils 1975: 3). Such is contained in propaganda and ideology, which in turn contains all of the symbols, images, stories, and fictionalized renderings of the social and political order on which valid rule is negotiated (Fowler and Hekster 2005: 16; Geertz 1983; Heinz and Feldman 2007). The abstract notion of ideology and its component symbols, stories, and pedigrees can be made tangible through encoded (ritual) performance (Handelman 1990; DeMarrais et al. 1996: 16). Those fundamental values are transformed into "real" power through their performance in ritualized public space (Ben

Amos 1991: 29; Geertz 1983; Smith 2003). Consequently, the venue of that performance becomes a physical, sacred center of power (Geertz 1983). While a mortuary venue is not the sole complex in which these values can be represented (Ben Amos 1991; Ben Amos and Ben Ari 1995), it is a very effective locale to advance succession. Kinship and lineage, which are intrinsic to succession, are common aspects of the "royal" ideology (Fowler and Hekster 2005) and are readily displayed and recorded in the mortuary context.

Ritual, in general, is a stabilizing force in society (Lienard and Boyer 2006). Rituals that involve transfer of power do so by disengaging the personal from the political, allowing the office or institution to transcend the significance or personal capability of a given individual (Fortes 1962). Repetition and longevity in performance of the overlapping "royal" rites of burial, ancestors, and succession furthers the separation of person from office. This helps to systematize and thus make reliable succession and transfer of power, binding the rituals to the power of institutional authority. In so doing, burial rituals help quell the unrest and destabilization that can accompany the death of a ruler, particularly among new or troubled regimes.

Widespread examples of diversity and experimentation in mortuary rituals in mid-third-millennium Syro-Mesopotamia (Laneri 2002: 35; Porter 2002a, 2002b; Stone 1991: 186) can be read as marking shifting sociopolitical orders (Parker Pearson 1982: 112; Redman 1978: 29–98). These resulted in mortuary landscapes marked by monumentality, primacy, and centrality of location and large amounts of buried wealth—in sum, conspicuousness.

One well-known example of this conspicuousness in a mortuary venue comes from the "royal" tombs at Ur, in which exorbitant amounts of luxury goods in precious materials were deposited and in which hundreds of people and draft animals were killed and interred as "grave goods" for the putative kings and queens buried there (Woolley 1934: 38). These were likely part of a performance geared toward the display of power (Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler, pp. 125–158 in this volume; Cohen 2005; Dickson 2006; Pollock 1991; Redman 1978: 296– 98).

Another landscape of this sort is being excavated at Tell Umm el-Marra, Syria (Schwartz 2007; Schwartz et al. 2003, 2006, 2012). At the center of the settlement, nine monumental tombs have been uncovered that held numerous luxury and utilitarian goods, including the disarticulated skeletons of sheep, goat, cattle, dogs and birds. At the center of these tombs were separate structures holding the mostly articulated skeletons of more than 30 equids.[1] The greater proportion of these equids were killed at young and prime ages and buried in groups of four. Several others had died of old age and were then afforded burial accompanied by puppies and human infants. This complex probably also functioned as a locus for performance and ancestor veneration (Schwartz 2007: 45–7; Schwartz, et al. 2006: 632).

While probably part of a larger tradition of demonstration and experimentation in mortuary rituals, the animal finds in the mortuary complex at Umm el-Marra

1. An equid is any member of the taxonomic family *equidae*. These include horses, zebras, half-asses, and asses.

challenge our traditional understanding of the roles of animals for human communities and also of the objectives of animal slaughter and interment. The inhumation of *naturally dying* animals in a prominent, elite burial space is a deviation from the more typical occurrence there of slaughtered animals. The burial of slaughtered animals *separate* from dead humans is equally unexpected. Animals are not typically the focus of burial but rather are an accessory to human burial. The "deviation" in the burial of the Umm el-Marra equids may relate to their proposed identity as donkey × onager hybrids, which is indicated by their unique metrical and morphological characteristics (Weber 2008, forthcoming). Animals such as these have never before been positively identified from osteological remains. This identification of the hybrid, as well as the demography of the population of all-male draft animals, links the Umm el-Marra equids to the ancient *kunga*. The *kunga* was specifically associated with royalty in the second half of the third millennium (Maekawa 1991: 206) and proliferated as its symbol (see "Elite Equids," pp. 168–170 below). The presence of this symbol of "royalty" in an elite burial complex suggests that the people buried (and burying) there held—or had pretenses to—royal power.

The symbolic relationship of the *kunga* to royalty and also to the gods perhaps suggests that they may have been sacrificed to open a line of communication with the gods, possibly to ensure their goodwill in the ritual of succession. By contrast, I suggest that the burial of dead *kunga* was a means to capitalize on the "royal" burial, and its legitimizing power. The funeral rituals surrounding the royal dead help to establish ancestral bonds of kinship and present divine sanction as authority to the public by referencing the social distinctiveness of the individuals conspicuously buried there. As such, they have restorative and rejuvenative strength for the ruling regime (cf. Childe 1945). If a "state" funeral can reimpose order after the death of a ruler, why could it not also quell discord and dissent at other times? I suggest that this was the case at Umm el-Marra. Moreover, I suggest that the funeral rites and act of burial on the central acropolis had become ritualized to such a degree that high-status equids could be substituted for high-status humans and the proceedings could still retain their legitimizing force. The inclusion of puppies and human infants[2] in the *kunga* "tombs" mimics the sacrifice of some of the *kunga* and suggests a scaled analogy (Jackson 1996) between the death of a "royal" human and death of a "royal" equid. Sacrifice was thus an intrinsic aspect of the public display of the royal burial.

It is in referencing and legitimating sovereign power that we might view both the deliberate killing (sacrifice) of the *kunga* and also the burial of naturally dying *kunga*. In this sense, I follow Burkert (1983: 37) in identifying social differentiation as an outcome of sacrifice. The dominance displayed by such an act asserts a compelling basis for power (compare to Dickson 2006: 136–41). While it might be that this sort of differentiation and dominance is better expressed through *human* sacrifice than *animal* sacrifice, there may be little functional difference between

2. It is not clear whether the human infants were killed or died naturally (see Schwartz, pp. 1–32 in this volume).

them. Animals and humans are often interchangeable in sacrifice (Girard 1977: 10). The deliberate killing of a living object involves selection of a specific animal or person to achieve a specific goal. Sacrifice is an "elaboration" of that process (Smith 1987: 200), in which evaluations of the selection, association, and identification of the victims are contextually specific (McClymond 2004). While the context may change, it is arguably considered to fall within a ritual or religious sphere and, more specifically, one whose intent is to effect communication with the supernatural (Beattie 1980: 38–39; Bonte 1999: 83; Hubert and Mauss 1964; Smith 1894; Schwartz in this volume).

In the ancient Near East, sacrifice has a variety of apparent purposes; for instance, it may be an offering to the gods in return for sanctity, protection, purification, approval, or for communication (such as Collins 2004; Ellis 1968; Finet 1993; Pardee 1996). Sacrifice may also be given to the non-divine dead as "retainer sacrifice" (again, see Schwartz in this volume). For example, people and draft animals that comprised part of the estate of the deceased may be killed to accompany their "owner" to the netherworld in order to continue their servitude. In all of these cases, however, sacrifice is effected to permeate the borders between the worlds of human and divine, natural and supernatural. Regardless of its immediate purpose, sacrifice is ultimately transformational. Sacrifice may have been a necessary step of display in the ritual of the "royal" funeral to gain community legitimization for inherited power. The display was not only for the living audience, but also the audience of the gods whose sanction was a necessary part of community acceptance of the social order and succession.

Umm el-Marra

Umm el-Marra is a mounded settlement located in the Jabbul region of northern Syria that has been excavated since 1994 by a joint project of Johns Hopkins University and the University of Amsterdam, under the direction of Glenn Schwartz and Hans Curvers (Curvers and Schwartz 1997; Schwartz et al. 2000, 2003, 2006). Umm el-Marra—at the northern edge of the region—was strategically placed to benefit from its unique resources of salt from Lake Jabbul and wild game of the steppe and semi-steppe (Tefnin 1977–78; Curvers and Schwartz 1997; Weber 2006). It also benefitted from its location halfway between the Euphrates River to the east and the modern city of Aleppo, to the west (fig. 1). It was the largest settlement in its region during the whole of the Bronze Age, reaching approximately 25 ha. in the mid- to late- third millennium (Schwartz et al. 2000). As such, it may have functioned as a regional administrative and market center, much as does the modern settlement of Deir Hafer (approximately 3 km east of Umm el-Marra) today (Tefnin 1977–78: 92).

In the mid- to late third millennium, Umm el-Marra was situated squarely on a communication route between the river and one of northern Syria's most powerful polities—the city-state of Ebla (Tefnin 1977–79: 197–206). Ebla—along with Mari to the south and Nagar (Tell Brak) to the east—dominated the Syrian political landscape. The urban settlement at Umm el-Marra is possibly to be identified with Tuba, the capital of a small kingdom with which Ebla had administrative dealings

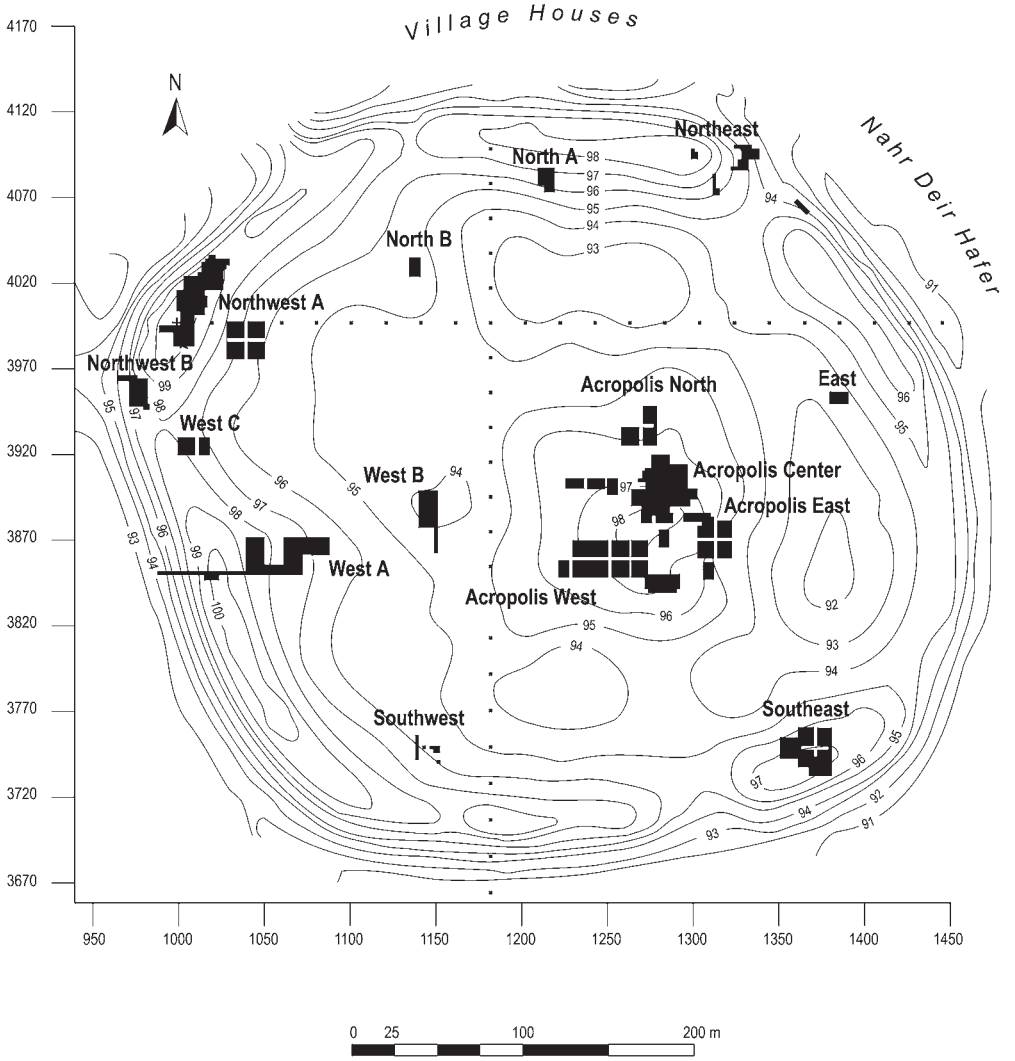


Fig. 1. Umm el-Marra, excavated areas.

(Catagnoti 1991; Matthiae 1979). Despite its local import and commercial interests, the city sited at Umm el-Marra was certainly secondary in size, power, and wealth to Ebla.

Ebla and Mari controlled much of Syria west of the Euphrates and some of its right bank as well (Astour 1992; Archi and Biga 2003). This territory was dotted with lesser, independent kingdoms (Archi 1988, 1990a, 1990b) that were ruled by local dynasties (Archi 1998: 15) and may have been gathered into loose regional states (McClellan 1999). Many of these kingdoms were ruled from urban capitals and numerous, sizeable urban settlements existed at that time (Akkermans and Schwartz 2003: 246). Ebla and Mari were in near-constant competition with each

other, and changes in the military or economic superiority of one over the other helped prompt shifting alliances among independent dynasts (Astour 1992; Archi and Biga 2003). Wealth and valuable materials were transferred to elites in these "loyal" kingdoms through interdynastic marriages, diplomatic gifting, and outright payments (Archi 1990a; 1998: 5; Biga 1998). Those recognized rulers were thus able to accumulate wealth and valuables.

It is elites such as these that are likely buried at the center of Umm el-Marra's mortuary landscape.

The Burial Complex

A complex of monumental tombs and auxiliary structures dating to the mid- to late third millennium was found on the highest and most visible point of Umm el-Marra's settlement in the center of its acropolis (fig.1 ; Schwartz et al. 2000). The majority of structures were used either for human or for equid burial. Complementary structures had unclear function, though finds including scattered and reburied human skeletons and complete puppies suggest they served mortuary or cultic purposes.

Human Tombs

To date, nine monumental tombs have been discovered that were used from approximately 2500 to 2200 B.C.E. (Schwartz 2007; Schwartz et al. 2003, 2006, 2012). The tombs were built of large-sized stonesunder a mudbrick spuerstructure and were perhaps roofed with wood beams or vaulted brick. All but the later (and unusual) Tomb 7 (Schwartz et al. 2006) had doorways in the east; no doorway was discovered to Tomb 4. The largest of the tombs measures approximately 46 m square in size. Excepting Tomb 7, the tombs were built in linear orientations adjacent to one another without disrupting or impinging on the earlier tombs. Many of the tombs had been looted and disturbed in antiquity, though two (Tombs 1 and 4) were found undisturbed. Inside the tombs—whether looted or pristine—large quantites of both mundane and luxury goods were found along with the human skeletons.

Each tomb contained between one and eight humans, including males, females, adults, children, and infants. Primary burials frequently were oriented with their heads to the west (Schwartz 2007: 51). Not all bodies were interred in individual tombs at the same time. Tomb 4, for instance, has two separate layers, each of which holds primary and secondary burials. There is no evidence for mass death, and the ages of the humans reflect a normal pattern for human mortality (Batey 2007). Overall, the evidence suggests that the humans died natural deaths, with the possible exception of Tomb 1 (Schwartz in this volume; Porter, pp. 191–215 in this volume).

Animal bones were commonly recovered; young sheep and goat, ducks, and geese were buried whole while older sheep and goats, juvenile and mature cattle, and adult dogs were butchered and only portions of them were placed in tombs. Large numbers of ceramic vessels for the consumption and storage of food and drink were recovered, while smaller numbers of these vessels were found that may

have had more specialized (cultic?) purposes. Miniature basalt tables found in Tomb 4 might also have had cultic function. An abundance of items made of luxury materials were also recovered. Many tombs contained pins and other jewelry made of silver and gold, while weapons and tools were made of copper alloys. Tomb 4 is notable for its collection of silver vessels and a solid gold pin that measures more than 26 cm in length. Carnelian and lapis were found in the form of beads and pendants. Certain classes of materials were recurrent across tombs, suggesting the existence of a set of goods meant for royal burials (Schwartz et al. 2006: 629).

Equid Installations

At the very center of the complex were found separate installations containing 25 complete and at least 15 partial equid skeletons (Schwartz et al. 2006; Weber 2008). The presence of well-developed canines in all (28) of the recovered skulls indicates that all are male. All individuals display evidence for comparable developmental and behavioral characteristics. Extra bone development and spurs, particularly of the cannon bones (metapodial bones), ankles (carpals and tarsals), and toes (phalanges), indicate that they entered into persistent and lifelong draft duty at an early age. Heavy muscular development, particularly of the *biceps brachii*, and a lack of spinal pathologies suggest that the animals' draft duty was in pulling, not carrying or loading. All of the individuals are of the same breed, likely a hybrid of the wild hemione, *Equus hemionus*, and the domestic donkey, *Equus asinus*. Analysis indicates that their mixed morphological traits, robust proportions and middling size fall outside of normal populations of horse, donkey and hemione (Weber 2009, forthcoming). Their height is roughly equivalent to that of the hemione, which was larger than contemporary donkeys but smaller than horse. However, they were more robust than the hemione and of stockiness more in keeping with donkey and horse. Overall, these were large-sized male, draft, hybrids.

In addition to equids, six puppies, an adult dog, and at least five human infants were also found associated with some of the installations. Stratigraphy and a small number of sherds indicate that the installations span much of the use of the complex, approximately 2500–2200 B.C.E. Ten installations have been identified to date, which can be divided into four types based on the number of primary interments, their ages, and the presence or absence of additional deposits (table 1). Between these installation types is a critical difference: some of the animals died naturally while others were deliberately killed. The young and prime-aged animals in installations of Types I, III, and IV were healthy (though burdened) animals that were fed and sheltered and generally cared for well. Their young age and seeming good health implies that these equids were deliberately killed for interment in the elite complex. The aged animals in Type II Installations enjoyed long lives, well beyond their productive primes, before being allowed to expire.

Type I (Figures 2, 3)

Type I installations contain groupings of four male equids in built structures of mud-brick or stone. *Installation A* contained four equids whose skeletons had been somewhat disturbed once decomposition of their corpses began, possibly caused by

an ancient collapse of the roof and some walls. Fragmented and partial remains of a human infant were found in the installation, which may have been introduced through this disturbance. *Installation E* was internally divided into eight chambers, Each of the four articulated equids was buried in standing position with its fore legs and ribcage in a western chamber and its pelvis and rear legs in the adjacent eastern chamber. Toe bones from an additional two equids were also found. Installation E is unique among those of Type 1 for the inclusion with the skeletons of a ceramic vessel and two copper-alloy objects. *Installation F* contained four skeletons on a stone platform abutting the exterior of the eastern wall of Tomb 8. They were completely disturbed and disarticulated by stone collapse from Tomb 8's eastern wall and blocked doorway.

All 12 of the complete animals were of young and/or prime age (about 3–13 years) when they died, suggesting that they were deliberately killed for interment.

Type II (Figure 4)

Type II consists of three installations made of two-chambered semi-subterranean mud-brick structures containing aged equids. Each chamber contained a primary interment of a single equid placed in standing position, facing west. The depth of these installations was about 1 m. The equids were roughly 1.2 m high at the shoulder. As a result, the head, neck, and rump of each individual would have stuck out above the brick chamber. All of the Type II installations also contain additional deposits of animals and human infants. *Installation B* had a spouted vessel placed on the upper surface of the western wall next to the two, detached skulls of its primary interments. These skulls likely became disarticulated after decomposition of the corpses, with the skulls resting on the ledge and the remainder of the body slumping into the chamber. A skull of a very young equid (< 1 year) and a neonatal human infant were deposited after the primary equids, along with six puppies—three in each chamber. *Installation C* had two standing equids, each of which was missing its skull and pelvis. This probably happened when Tomb 1 was built directly atop the installation, disturbing the exposed skull and rump. Two equid skulls and a spouted vessel containing the skeletons of three neonatal human infants were found in the stones of the southern wall of Tomb 1 that likely belong with Installation C. The bones of an adult dog were placed between the two chambers. *Installation D* contained two primary interments and the skulls and extremities (metapodial bones and toes) of four additional individuals. The femur, tibia and metatarsal of a fetal equid were also recovered, which could not have come from a pregnant, interred animal, because all are male. A spouted vessel and fragmentary remains of a human neonate were found near the skull of the equid in the installation's southern chamber.

In total, Type II installations yielded largely complete skeletons of six equids and the skulls or extremities of an additional five animals. These showed little variation. They were primarily very aged, most reaching approximately 20 years of age. Their bones were scarred from arthritic conditions caused by a lifetime of work. Their teeth were heavily worn; several individuals had teeth worn down to the roots. Only two individuals did not fit this pattern: a young equid under a year of age and

Table 1. Equid Installations at Umm el-Marra

	Type	*Primary, Complete Individuals*	*Secondary and Partial Individuals*	*Human Infants*	*Other Animals*	*Spouted Vessels*
Installation A	I	4	1	1+	none	0
Installation B	II	2	1	2	6 puppies	1
Installation C	II	2	0	3	1 young dog	1
Installation D	II	2	4	1	≥ 1 fetal equid	1
Installation E	I	4	2	0	none	0
Installation F	I	4(?)	unclear	0	none	0
Installation G	III	6	≥ 5	0	none	0
Single Skeletons	IV	1	2*	0	none	0

* possibly disturbed individuals from Installation F
\+ a single fragment of skull

an equid about 10 years of age at death. Excluding those two, the remainder had outlived their prime. Their physical condition suggests that they were fed and kept alive well beyond their utility for work. By the time of their deaths, many of these animals would have had difficulty eating and may have been unsuitable for heavy draft activity for several years. Given the age and condition of the equids, I suggest that these animals were buried following their natural deaths.

Complementary to the physical condition of the complete skeletons, the inclusion of additional skulls and extremities from several aged individuals is a second clue that the Type II equids died naturally. The skull, podials, metapodials and phalanges (or the bones from "ankle" to hoof) are common parts remaining with an animal's hide after skinning (Binford 1981: 107), and are commonly recognized waste generated from the leather and tanning industries (Serjeantson 1989: 5). A common use of such skins—and one with great relevance here—is in accounting for dead animals. In the ancient Near East, private and institutional owners frequently contracted out the care and use of their herd and draft animals. A normative form of that contract—in use as early as the 4th millennium—stipulated the return to the owner of the skins (and sinew) of dead animals (van Driel 1993: 239; van Lerberghe 1996a; Postgate and Payne 1975: 6; Stepien 1996: 62). "Heads and hoofs" feature in burials across a wide swath of Europe and Asia, and may be considered ritual offerings in and of themselves (Piggott 1962). While the skins may well have significance and value, I suggest that the skins of aged equids found in the Type II installations belonged to animals that died away from the settlement that were then brought back for burial.

Type III (Figure 5)

Type III is only attested by a single installation. *Installation G* consists of a large pit lined with thick grey mud that was dug into an earlier room that had likely

served cultic functions. Inside the larger pit were two separate pits also lined with thick grey mud. The earlier of these contained four completely articulated equids, with the exception of one missing skull.[3] Immediately on top of this deposit was a second pit that contained two articulated skeletons as well as the mostly complete but disarticulated, stacked remains of two more equids. This later pit also contained a few bones from an additional two equids. Within the larger pit, but outside both inner pits were bones from the skull and toes of at least three additional individuals.

With the exception of an aged individual in the upper, later pit, the complete equids were of young and prime ages (about 3–13 years) and were likely deliberately killed.

Type IV (Figure 6)

Type IV consists of individual skeletons placed adjacent to—but that were not part of—other installations. Included in this type is a single individual buried against the exterior face of the eastern wall of Tomb 8, distinct from the equids of Installation F. Another, partial, skeleton may have been associated with Installation F but was disturbed in the construction of Installation E. A single equid was found in a pit similar to those of Installation G, partially beneath its lowest level.

The two individuals near Tomb 8 were both approximately 5–8 years of age, and that near Installation G was approximately 10–13 years at death. These were likely deliberately killed.

Elite Equids, "Royal" Symbols

Despite variations in the interments of the equids, they share fundamental demographic similarities; all are large male draft hybrids; they most likely originate from donkey × onager parentage (Weber 2008, forthcoming). These characteristics strongly correlate with an elite equid known from texts found in Syro-Mesopotamia and dating to the period of the burial complex: ca. 2600–2000 B.C.E. (Zarins 1976: 447; Maekawa 1979: 35–38; Postgate 1986: 197).

This animal, the *kunga*,[4] is largely believed to have been the hybrid offspring of the domestic donkey, *Equus asinus*, and the wild half-ass, or hemione, *Equus hemionus* sp. (Archi 1998: 9 n. 48; Heimpel 1994, 1995: 89–91; Lafont 2000: 221; Postgate 1986; Zarins 1986; contra Maekawa 1979, 2006). This claim is partially based on textual evidence suggesting that the ancient animal could not reproduce—the normal condition for all known equid hybrids (Allen and Short 1997; Short 1975). Sterility is indicated because *kunga* adults were never mentioned with stud or nursery animals, nor did they appear in herds with foals (Maekawa 1979: 114). *Kunga* foals were always found in nursery herds with donkey foals, and with adult donkeys and hemiones. That reproduction among them was not possible is reinforced

3. Despite the fact that this skeleton's skull and mandible were missing, its hyoid bone (which secures the tongue) remained in situ.

4. The suggested pronunciation of the Sumerian word written with the cuneiform signs BAR.AN is kunga.

by the fact that *kunga* of any type needed to be constantly purchased from only a few sources.

The *kunga* was a draft animal within the institutional domain that was used to pull plows, or wagons and chariots associated with messengers, soldiers, and officials (Heimpel 1994: 25; van Lerberghe 1996a; Maekawa 1979: 111–13; Zarins 1976: 450–61). Its specific use depended on its sex and size. Female *kunga* and smaller males were typically put to the plow (Maekawa 1979: 130, n. 35), while "superior," larger males were used especially to pull cultic and war vehicles that conveyed kings and gods (Archi 1998: 5; Heimpel 1994: 11; van Lerberghe 1996a; Maekawa 1979: 113; Zarins 1976). They also held a funerary function, pulling deceased elites to their tombs (Archi 2002). It was likely this role in pulling ceremonial vehicles that elevated the animals to their high status; the *kunga* was just the first equid of many whose use in ceremonial-vehicle conveyance offered enduring value and status (Amiet 1969, 1992; Buchanan 1971: 15; Jans and Bretschneider 1998; Littauer and Crouwel 1979; Pardee 2000: 233; Postgate 1994: 248).

At the same time that texts document the status and use of the *kunga,* specifically, for pulling these vehicles, imagery of equid-pulled vehicles became standard features of "royal" glyptic found on items of administrative description such as cylinder seals, votive plaques, and stelae (Jans and Bretschneider 1998; Littauer and Crouwel 1979). One of the earliest and best-known images involving equid-drawn vehicles is the so-called Standard of Ur, which dates to ca. 2600 B.C.E.—roughly the same time that *kunga* were introduced into the written lexicon. Its mosaic depictions of warfare and ceremony are in keeping with the emphasis on military, prestige, and cultic functions of the ruling authority that characterized other uses of equid/vehicle imagery (Jans and Bretschneider 1998). These compositions are part of a larger program that paints a picture of a sovereign as a pious servant favored by the gods, civic protector, provider, and patriarch (Jacobsen 1976: 78–81; Kramer 1974; Postgate 1994: 150, 262–66). This sort of imagery draws on the traditional, ceremonial functions held by rulers in society; prior to this time, however, these roles had been portrayed without the use of equid imagery (for example, Collon 1999). Identification of animals depicted in imagery is not easy or reliable. However, it is unlikely that the donkey, rather than the *kunga,* is the animal found in these images. Donkeys are occasionally attested in use with wheeled vehicles, but not ceremonial vehicles (Maekawa 1979: 111, 113; Zarins 1976: 412), and it is the *kunga* that was specifically linked to royalty in the second half of the third millennium (Maekawa 1991: 206). It is unlikely that "official" imagery would reflect a reality outside its own idealized propaganda.

That the *kunga* was part of *royal*—and not simply elite—propaganda is suggested by the nearly synchronous appearance of that animal in administrative texts, the proliferation of equid/vehicle imagery in institutional artifacts, and the solidification of kingship as the dominant ruling institution among the major constituencies of the day. These powerful rulers are also specifically associated with the animals. High-quality hybrids were bred in Nagar, whose king used them personally and controlled their distribution (Archi 1998: 5; van Lerberghe 1996b). The king of

Ebla was a continual customer for the animals, and he also gifted them to other elites (Archi 1987: 122; 1998: 9). Distribution and use of the *kunga* was relatively restricted to the royal domain, implying that Umm el-Marra's burial complex—where they were specifically interred—was a royal venue.

From this description, the hybrid, draft equids from Umm el-Marra can be firmly linked with the *kunga*. Moreover, the large-male population is to be identified with the most elite of the *kunga*—those used to pull ceremonial and cultic vehicles of kings and gods.

Death and Ritual in Umm el-Marra's "Royal" Burial Complex

The *kunga* were symbols of royalty, but what were they doing in Umm el-Marra's burial complex? As described above, the complex is comprised of structures and pits filled with humans, animals, and material goods. The luxuriously appointed monumental tombs placed on the most visible and central location of the settlement offer ample reason to suspect that the burial complex was constructed by and for local elites (Schwartz 2007: 42–4). The complex functioned as a burial place for the elite dead, but probably also as a locus for ancestor veneration (Schwartz 2007: 45–7; Schwartz et al. 2006: 632). The occurrence of specifically "royal" *kunga* in this burial complex suggests that the elite humans buried here had pretensions to real or imagined royalty, and so the "ancestors" were part of the dynastic lineage from whom sovereign authority was legitimized. The *kunga* interments should thus be viewed as part of the entirety of cultic and mortuary traditions surrounding rites and rituals of succession.

In the ancient Near East, the royal mortuary landscape was an ideal sacred center of power from which authority could be generated, granted, and displayed in ways that were both palpable and palatable to society. It was structurally intertwined with the sociopolitical order and succession, and in Bronze Age Syria rituals surrounding burial, ancestors, and succession overlapped (Fronzaroli 1992; Tsumura 1999: 227; Porter 2002b: 6). This was based not only on ancestry but also on traditional rights of inheritance. Sovereign authority was reckoned through dynastic lineage, as contemporary and later "king lists" suggest (e.g., Archi 1986; Astour 1992: 19–26; Finkelstein 1966; Jacobsen 1939; Reade 2001). Burial monuments created in the complex might be viewed as the physical and visible correlates to the textually documented king lists kept by institutions. They structured dynastic lineage while at the same time recording it for public view. These large-scale genealogies could thus be "read" as powerful "documents" in a largely illiterate society. Whether this lineage was actually blood-based is immaterial, because there was an interchangeable vocabulary for relationships of both kinship and power (e.g., Sasson 1998: 462–64). Instead, the successful negotiation of status and identity through which burial in the sacred center might be granted could result in effective descent to others buried there. It might also generate a very public and traditional appeal to inheritance, whose social—if not legal—basis was satisfied through the completion of appropriate burial rituals (van der Toorn 1994). If part of that patrimony is the proverbial

throne, then the public display of burial rites within a sacred landmark creates an almost irrefutable claim to legitimate succession.

While the function of the mortuary complex was as a burial ground for society's most elite, its purpose was to validate authority and legitimize succession through the embodiment of the royal ideology. Repeated reference to those claims—as made visible and tangible in the burial complex—would serve to reinforce the apparent hereditary basis for the transfer of power. To make ideology "visible," however, requires suspension of literal meaning to individual acts in favor of the assignment of a symbolic meaning to a series of acts. The desired, symbolic meaning(s) may take effect when the series of behaviors is repeatedly performed in strict conformity; in essence, the acts are stereotyped and are effective means to communicate and signal information to a group. The consistency and repetition of elements in the burial complex at Umm el-Marra suggests that the mortuary rites of elite burial were ritualized.

A basic mortuary template consisted of a rectangular, monumental tomb of stone and brick with a door usually in the east, a flexed body with head typically to the west, repeated and standardized classes of objects and animals. This template was repeated—without notable revision—at least eight times over approximately 200 years.[5] A customary set of tomb offerings, provisions and gifts were presented to at least 20 adults.[6] To this template we might add the sacrifice of equids in groups of four (Type I and III installations). Although only five (counting the two layers of Installation G) such installations have been found, individual equid bones possibly indicate later disturbance of additional installations.

These tombs—with their stereotyped forms, assemblages and additions—were carefully constructed with spatial reference to one another. The contiguous arrangement of individual tombs amplified the size of the complex while retaining visible reminders of previous tombs. The repetitive elements reinforced the standardized meaning of the royal burial and the complex, as a whole. Control over the public space and the high degree of elaboration put into the size of the tombs and the wealth of their contents created power through its physical expression (for example, Trigger 1990: 122; Geertz 1983). The use of the visible, central space for the purpose of burial served to link the dead and successors with the site as a whole. Routinization of mortuary activities suggests that the same precepts of power and societal order were called upon to legitimize succession and authority during much of the use of the burial complex. The character of that power was branded through the specific symbols enlisted in the mortuary goods and in the non-mortuary rituals that occurred in the complex. The similarity of objects found at Umm el-Marra to those from contemporaneous elite tombs elsewhere suggests a common language of elite display (Schwartz et al. 2006: 629*)*. Specifically at Umm el-Marra,

5. Tomb 7, the last known tomb, is very different and may have been a deliberate deviation from the earlier pattern (Schwartz et al. 2006: 633).

6. It is not clear whether the infants, juveniles, or teens in the tombs would have received the same largesse.

the interment of sacrificed *kunga* adjacent to some of the tombs referenced the deceased and linked them to royalty.

Equids and Royal Power

In the more specific functions of ancestor veneration and ritual, how did *kunga* function, and why were they interred independently of adult humans? The use of the *kunga,* a royal symbol, further adheres the context and the proceedings to the royal institution. It suggests that those in power at Umm el-Marra were promoting their claims to royalty within a broader "royal ideology." I suggest that the younger equids were killed as offerings to the ancestors and/or gods, which may have been imperative in generating their sanction for succession. Of course, this was also a key display of social distance; in essence, they were sacrificed in demonstration of the legitimate social dominance of the ruling elites (e.g., Burkert 1983: 37). On the other hand, the naturally dead equids reinforced the legitimacy of the local dynasty by capitalizing on the rejuvenating effects of the ritualized royal burial; they substituted for dead humans in burial ritual.

Sacrifice and Transformation

Umm el-Marra's *kunga* burials are part of a much broader pattern of equid interment in the mid- to late 3rd millennium (see summaries in Vila 2005; Wapnish 1997; Way 2010; Zarins 1986),[7] but they are not specifically identified as sacrificial in the terms outlined above. The majority of these appear within the limits of human burials, for instance Tell Bi'a (Boessneck and von den Driesch 1986), Tell Halawa (Boessneck and Kokabi 1981), Tell Madhhur (Killick and Roaf 1979), Tell Razuk (Boessneck 1987: 132–34), and Kish (Moorey 1978). Excluding the equids from Umm el-Marra, these interred equids have been mainly identified as donkeys.[8] As a result, von den Driesch and Amberger (1981: 70) have argued that donkeys were an element of a "grave cult." As "grave goods," equids are subject to the same arguments regarding their function as are other items commonly placed with the dead, such as ceramics, food, weapons, and jewelry. They probably had a purpose or function related to burial, death, or the afterlife, but there is no clear consensus on what that may have been. They might represent actual possessions and utilitarian or ritual goods deemed necessary in the netherworld. Gifting between dignitaries may have been expected in the netherworld (Jacobsen 1991: 185), and there is literary evidence to indicate that whole animals were intended as gifts and sacrifices for the gods there (Kramer 1967; Tinney 1998). Katz (2003: 41; contra Kramer 1967: 104) argues that the asses buried with the king Ur-Namma were meant as gifts for gods. Regardless of their function, if these animals were intended to accompany the deceased to the netherworld then their killing may be viewed as enabling transformation from the world of the living to that of the dead; these can be termed sacrifice.

7. These differ markedly from the large number of interments of partial skeletons from Egypt and the Levant dating to the second millennium.

8. Clutton-Brock (1989) suggests that the younger animal from Tell Madhur may be a hybrid, and the identification of the animals from Kish is also questionable (Zarins 1986).

The same may be true of other whole animals found in tombs, including the ducks, geese, and young sheep found whole in tombs at Umm el-Marra. Perhaps significantly, equids, sheep, and birds are all mentioned at one place or time as sacrificial offerings related to death and the netherworld (e.g., Collins 2002: 228; Gurney 1977: 56; Katz 2003: 41; Kramer 1967: 111; Pardee 1996).

Despite their similarity to donkeys interred in funereal contexts at other settlements, the *kunga* at Umm el-Marra are fundamentally different from those animals by virtue of their installation separate from the remains of adult humans. This deliberate act was not for lack of space; the human tombs were large, certainly large enough to have contained whole equids. Nor was their separation due to notions of human and animal segregation; the human tombs contained whole and partial skeletons of many other types of animals. Instead, this independence might stem from the timing of their killing, perhaps in rituals that occurred *after* the interment of the dead individual(s). However, at least some of Umm el-Marra's tombs were re-opened, reused, and supplemented; there was apparently no taboo against revisiting or disturbing the tombs. Another possibility is that the rituals associated with the killing and interment of the *kunga* occurred in conjunction with the funeral/burial of individual humans but served a different purpose. The commingling of rituals surrounding burial, ancestors, and succession (Fronzaroli 1992; Tsumura 1999: 227; Porter 2002b: 6) suggest that this purpose may have been entwined in the display and performance of the royal ideology. It is performance such as this that might have been intended in rituals accompanying the royal dead at Ur.

The 16 tombs that comprise the "royal" tombs of the cemetery at Ur (Woolley 1934) were occupied by putative kings and queens who claimed kinship through filiation and marriage (Reade 2001: 18, table 1). They were buried with exorbitant riches in gold, silver, and semiprecious stones. Many of these items, especially tools, weapons, and armor made of gold, could only have had symbolic function (Moorey 1994: 223; Woolley 1934; Weber and Zettler 1998), idealizing the roles of the ruling authority and possibly serving as gifts to the gods of the netherworld.

Accompanying the royal dead were hundreds of people and draft animals in so-called death pits adjacent to the tomb chambers that Woolley (1934: 37–42) suggested were retainers meant to accompany and serve the royal dead in the afterlife. This large-scale "retainer sacrifice" (see Schwartz, this volume) was apparently quite singular, and the ceremonies and rites surrounding the burials of the principal individuals would have presented a major spectacle to the inhabitants of—and visitors to—Ur at that time (compare Cohen 2005; Dickson 2006).

But was the killing of these individuals a form of retainer sacrifice for the dead ruler? The bodies and goods in these rituals were found adjacent to the primary tomb-chambers but not inside them. This allows the possibility that the rituals occurred *after* burial of the royal dead. It is probable that the succeeding rulers of Ur engaged in ritual and ceremony to cement their power, and the killings may have been part of performances geared toward that display (Pollock 1991; Redman 1978: 296–98; Dickson 2006; Cohen 2005; Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler in this volume). The sanctioned killing of other humans expresses power in a way that

mobilization of labor and wealth for the construction of monumental tombs, or the consumption of large amounts of luxury goods, does not; it represents power over life and death. Like the symbolic weapons of gold, the acts may have idealized the ruling authority in the social order (see also Dickson 2006). Of course, the display of power is not the only aspect of mortuary rituals of succession. They also needed to address the ancestors. The physical segregation of primary burials with their attendant goods from the people and goods associated with the ritual activities in the death pits makes possible that the latter were geared more fully toward veneration and succession to benefit the living. These instances of segregation between the primary dead and sacrificed humans and animals are few.[9] The very limited sample from Ur and Umm el-Marra[10] seems to show that they are associated with death and royalty in the mid- to late third millennium B.C.E.

I suggest that, at both sites, sacrifice was a fundamental act involved in rituals of ancestor veneration and succession that occurred *following* death of a ruler. Its *purpose* may have been to engage members of the netherworld, whether ancestor, god, or both. In this sense, it is immaterial whether the sacrificed people or animals were intended as retainers and gifts, or "blood" sacrifice; sacrifice opened the channel of communication between worlds. But, sacrifice also had a *function* in succession rituals: to express legitimate dominance in the social order, which was necessary to constitute power (e.g., Shils 1975: 3).

The killing of an animal may not instill the same sense of awe as the killing of a human within many modern sensibilities, but that may not have been true in antiquity. Equid sacrifice may have demonstrated the same precepts of social distance and power as were conveyed by human sacrifice. This power was enhanced in the ritualized context of the sacrificial act.

Equid for Human? Ritual Substitution

How can an equid stand in for a human in sacrificial rituals in Umm el-Marra's burial complex? Burial and succession were grounded in ritual. Essentially all ritual involves variations and substitutions (Bowen 1992: 659; Smith and Doniger 1989: 191). In fact, animals and humans are often interchangeable in sacrifice (Girard 1977: 10). The substitutions are not arbitrary but are governed by conceptions of appropriateness and worthiness that validate and recommend particular choices (e.g., Evans-Pritchard 1956: 146, 197; McClymond 2004; Puhvel 1978; Smith and Doniger 1989: 195). One of these concepts is analogy: that is, correspondence between victim and substitute (Bonte 1999: 87). Human perceptions of animals are, almost inevitably, based on a hierarchy of status in which humans are at the apex (Ritvo 1995: 482). Further characterization is based on observation of their intrinsic behaviors, culturally filtered through interactive experience (Hallowell 1926: 3; Glickman 1995). It is this characterization that makes some animals more like others, or that lends to comparison of human and animal traits.

9. Undoubtedly due to problems of preservation at ancient sites but also large-scale looting of burials.

10. I exclude the human/animal deposits in Tell Banat's enigmatic White Monument (for example Porter 2002b) because it is not clear to whom the human bones would have belonged.



Fig. 2. The author excavating equid bones in Installation A, Type I.

Comparison between humans and animals is found in the ancient Near East in the tendency to anthropomorphize animals and to emphasize humans' zoomorphic traits in literature and art. Sumerian proverbs are full of birds and fowl with singing voices (e.g., Alster 1975), and noble traits are expressed in similes such as "the king inspires terror like a lion" (Kramer 1969:5). In a single praise hymn, king Šulgi of Ur compares himself to a hawk, a falcon, a lion, and a wild ass (Klein 1981: 17). In art, a common hybrid figure is the "bull man," with the head and torso of a man but the lower body and horns of a bull. The hybrid bull-man engaged in a contest scene with a "hero" was frequently depicted in the glyptic of the mid- to late third millennium; it was often found on "royal" cylinder seals, including examples from the Royal Cemetery (Hansen 1998: 50). Less common is the depiction of animals behaving as humans. But this theme appears together with that of the hybrid bull-man in Ur's mortuary venue; both feature on the bull-headed lyre that was found in tomb PG 789, perhaps holding a king, Meskalamdug. Hansen (1998: 53–7) suggested that these scenes represent the funerary ritual. Not only could animals and humans be interchanged conceptually, but this may have been particularly apt in the burial context.

The above examples ground the concept of interchangeability between animals and humans in ritual sacrifice, but the substitution of the *kunga* for humans in Umm el-Marra's burial complex is particularly fitting due to its association with royalty. This is due to the *kunga's* role as royal draft animal, but also because it was

emblematic of royalty. Perhaps analogously, the donkey was used sacrificially in the second millennium at a time when it was considered to be a royal animal (B. Lafont 2000: 216; S. Lafont 1995). It was sacrificed to solemnify treaties between kings (Finet 1993; Lafont 2000: 215),[11] and a ritual text from Ugarit documents the killing of a donkey in a ritual to establish peace in the community through appeal to the gods (Pardee 2000: 229). However, in the second half of the third millennium it was the *kunga* that was specifically linked to royalty (Maekawa 1991: 206). Relative to the donkey, the more limited numbers and restricted circulation of the *kunga* may have made them more valuable as sacrificial victims (compare to van Baaren 1964: 3). For all of these reasons, the *kunga* would have been appropriate sacrificial substitute for humans. Of course, the "use" of the *kunga* by gods makes it pertinent in sacrifice meant to engage the supernatural.

The Royal Burial: Not Just for Humans?

The same characteristics and considerations that make the *kunga* an appropriate substitute for a human sacrificial victim apply to its substitution for a human dead in a royal burial. The assignation of "tomb" to structures whose primary occupants were human corpses is largely unproblematic, but it is less so to suggest that equids were buried in like fashion. While there are contemporary parallels to the burial of sacrificed equids in elite tombs, I know of no instances comparable to independent interment in tombs of draft equids that died of old age. Nonetheless, I suggest that this was the case for the aged *kunga* buried in the installations of Type II. These installations repeat the consistent patterning of the human tombs in fundamental ways, but on a smaller scale. This "scaled analogy" of ritual burial utilizes common elements having the same relationship to each other, thus imparting the same meaning (see Jackson 1996). That reduced scale was suitable for the substitution of the *kunga* into the ritualized behaviors of "the royal burial," while still generating the same relationship between burial and society: it was designed to inject stability into the ruling regime by capitalizing on the positive effects of the ritualized funerary rites of succession.

Burial in Miniature

The installations of Type II mimic the human tombs in fundamental ways. Foremost among the similarities is the (presumed) natural death of the primary occupants of human tombs and of Type II equid installations. The equids were aged and well past their draft primes; it is unclear if the equids could have worked in the last years of their lives. After these natural deaths, both equine and human were interred into rectangular constructions. These were placed adjacent to one another, along the same linear transects through the burial complex (Schwartz et al. 2012: fig. 2). At least some of the human-tomb constructions were likely semi-subterranean (Schwartz et al. 2006: 628–29 nn. 99–100), as were all of the Type II installations. The bricks of their tombs were sunk into the ground, but the stand-

11. This is certainly the case in Installation B, where the vessel and infant bones lay on top of the equid bones.



Fig. 3. Installation A, Type I.



Fig. 4. Installation D, Type II.



Fig. 5. Installation G, Upper Layer, Type III.



Fig. 6. Single equid against Type IV.

ing animals' heads, necks, and rumps would have been visibly above the ground surface. Both types of tombs were oriented east-west, and equine and human dead were placed inside with heads to the west. Human tombs and Type II installations were reused; most human tombs and each *kunga* tomb contained the bodies of multiple dead. The state of the skeletons indicates that not all of the burials were made at the same time, but the tombs were reopened for later interments. Finally, the tombs of humans had additional offerings or gifts inside of them. So, too, did the Type II installations; puppies, pots, and human infants were buried with the *kunga*.

The Type II installations *differ* from installations of Types I, III, and IV in many of the same ways in which they are *similar* to human burials. Equids in Type II installations died naturally, while those in the other types were young, healthy, and killed for interment. The sacrificed equids were interred in various types of constructions and pits, or simply against other structures. Their skulls were often toward the west, but this was not always true. The multiple sacrificial victims were probably killed and interred at the same time. Installations of Types I, III, and IV do not generally have additional offerings, though Installation E contained a single pot and a metal object. Finally, the Type II installations have bones of puppies and human infants, while the other installations do not.

In all ways, except the identity of the primary interment, the Type II installations are more similar to the human tombs than they are to the other equid installations. They repeat elements of structure, orientation and object. These similarities suggest that their relationship to the burial complex is the same as that of the human tombs: tombs of "royal" dead. But who are the royal dead? Human neonates and/or fetuses also occur in the Type II installations. However, human infants are the only material, "object" category that occurs in both types of tombs. That dual appearance makes it much less likely that the Type II installations were tombs for the human infants, and that *kunga* offerings were made for them. Moreover, it is probable that the infants were deposited following the interment of the equids.[12] It thus seems most reasonable that *kunga* were the primary interments being offered burial similar to that of apparently elite humans.

If the *kunga* were analogous to dead humans, what were the puppies and the human infants doing in their tombs? The puppies might be understood as analogues to the whole skeletons of young sheep and fowl that had been sacrificed and buried in the human tombs, probably to effect their transformation to the netherworld. The use of the puppy—instead of another animal—need not affect the significance or the strength of the sacrificial act, as was discussed above. The puppy might substitute quite meaningfully into mortuary rites; they were certainly common later in rituals of purification and sanctification (Collins 1996). Probable ritual burial of puppies is attested at Umm el-Marra in contemporary "foundation deposits" on the acropolis. However, the puppies may be more suitably compared to the *kunga*

12. This is certainly the case in Installation B, where the vessel and infant bones lay on top of the equid bones.

sacrifices of Type I, III, and IV installations. They were interred into the Type II installations following the burial of the equids, and this may reflect a post-mortuary ritual as suggested for the *kunga* sacrifice. That a substitute such as this is reasonable is indicated by a text admonishing against the substitute of a puppy for a donkey as inappropriate in a treaty sacrifice for a king (Charpin 1993: 182–86). Perhaps the scaled-down burial also required a scaled-down sacrifice.

The appearance of human infants in both human and equid tombs remains problematic (see also Schwartz in this volume). Their occurrence in both may be reason to understand them as sacrifices. How that act would relate to other instances of sacrifice and ritual in the burial complex is unclear. Perhaps the practice of human sacrifice was more significant for royal ritual than I have assumed, and complete substitution for it could not be made.

Overall, the Type II installations are much smaller than the large-scale human tombs. The constructions, themselves, are smaller and the offerings and/or goods inside of the tombs are reduced in number and quality; there is no gold buried with the *kunga*! Similarly, the sacrifices found within the installations were scaled down to retain the consistent relationship between individual elements of the burials.

New Life from Death

The mortuary template described above was repeated numerous times. Many of those times—possibly 20[13]—the dead was a human, perhaps a "royal" human. However, at least another six times, the dead was a *kunga*. Mortuary ritual of the royal dead was comingled with rituals of ancestor veneration and succession. I do not suggest that the *kunga* were made into ancestors or functioned to grant succession. Rather, I suggest the *kunga* performed a role in the drama of the mortuary ritual as used to stabilize society and the ruling authority. Instability from the death of a ruler was mitigated through the stereotyped behaviors of the royal funeral and burial. These cemented the physical links that the ruling elite held to ancestral dynasts and also to the settlement, as a whole. However, hereditary rule among a dynastic household was a relatively new political structure, and certainly not the sole means of power (cf. Porter 2002a). Challenges to that form of rule (or even to pretended succession from such rule) may have been common. Challenges to particular rulers may also have been common, both from within and from outside the community. Into this sort of scenario, a royal burial may have been a welcome event. However, death cannot always be planned. At such times, a substitute death and burial might prove quite useful.

Ritualization of the mortuary ceremony made possible substitution of individual parts without affecting its entrenched meaning. Consistent repetition and reproduction of component elements simplified the ritual by making it readily understandable through visible display. Rituals for succession tend to subvert individual identity. The actual identity of the individuals in the elite cemetery may have paled in relation to the meaning of the acts that occurred there. However, ritual action

13. The number of adult humans recovered.

always involves a tension between what is prescribed, what is possible, and what is practical. Effective substitution involves negotiating the essential aspects of ritual and those that can be changed based on local resources, conditions, and ideas of propriety.

The *kunga* would have been an ideal substitute in death for a member of the ruling elite; it was already associated with royalty and had already been interred in the complex as a sacrificial offering. The *kunga* was a tangible, physical symbol of authority, making the use and control of the animal tantamount to power. Installing *kunga* as high-status members of the household—instead of other, substitute humans—also spared the ruling family any challenges to power that might be claimed through a descendant of any individual buried in the complex. As a result, the substitute burial of a *kunga* in the central mortuary complex prevented others from benefitting from that location's high status. The mortuary complex represented a controlled environment in which authoritative resources could be safely contained for use by those in command of that ritualized public space.

The burial of the *kunga* would also have functioned as a potent display of the social order. By being buried in the sacred center, the animal was given a high status within the community—one that was only offered to the highest-status humans. This displayed their social distance from the remainder of the population who were not afforded burial in such sacred public space. By the same token, the social distance between these very elite equids and human members of the royal family was made evident. To be sure, the tombs of the *kunga* were not the equals of the tombs of the humans. The structures were smaller and the goods were fewer and less luxurious, as befits their lesser status. Above all, the mortuary rites were still a display of power and social distance. The amount of wealth and labor that went into the individual tombs was a reflection of the status of the deceased. Even the sacrifice accompanying the mortuary ceremony consisted of lesser substitutes. While the *kunga* was socially distinctive, it was not equal to the putative kings and queens that ruled the settlement.

Conclusion: Creating and Restoring Order

The burial complex at Umm el-Marra is unlike any other found to date. The sheer number of equids found, the scale of their burial, their physical independence from the tombs of adult humans, and their identification as the elite *kunga* are without parallel. However, this was part of a broader trend of experimentation in burial and display in the mid- to late third millennium. It was also an innovative use of the prevalent imagery and ideology of the state, for which the *kunga* was symbolic. The use of *kunga* would have helped gain recognition from peers who also thrived under those symbols.

Tombs were constructed sequentially and with repetitive components of structure, inclusion, and display. Through demonstrations of wealth and control, a mortuary tradition was established that legitimized social exclusivity. Within this central space were people, goods, and symbols that signified authority. Its role as

a mortuary complex created the social and legal rights for the inheritance of these authoritative resources. Each additional tomb expanded the complex horizontally, creating an ever-larger, ancestral monument that equated to a written genealogy. The genealogy that marks the elite complex serves as a document for the most dominating power in the community—the local rulers. As such, it becomes a microcosm for the social order at large; it is a "public space" that confers power over the community by a select few.

Once the mortuary rites of legitimization and succession were generalized through repetition, each burial within the complex served to reconstitute and relegitimize the ruling regime. The death of a member of the ruling authority—but especially one at its apex—could be chaotic for the normal operation of society as questions of succession and rule come to the forefront. The enaction of burial rites served to reduce that chaos and restore order. The benefits of these rituals might be needed during chaos wrought by other internal or external causes. Without a deceased "royal" to turn to, the *kunga* could be tapped as the next best thing. Its burial conferred the same stability to the public through performance of the ritualized mortuary acts that made tangible the royal ideology and that anchored the authoritative resources to reign.

The stereotyped and repeated performance together conveyed a uniform message of legitimate authority and succession to the local population, external peers, and—through sacrifice—the gods. Sacrifice accompanied death in order to engage the gods (and ancestors) and transform the entire space into a channel for communication to the netherworld and the ancestors. The sacrificial system in operation in Umm el-Marra's royal mortuary landscape may have been an integral display of the social order and legitimate rite to rule. As a transformative act, sacrifice altered the space from a series of individual, profane behaviors and actions into a unified monument of sovereign ancestry.

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Mortal Mirrors: Creating Kin through Human Sacrifice in Third Millennium Syro-Mesopotamia

Anne M. Porter

In the first half of the third millennium B.C.E., a host of new political entities, commonly called states, spread across the ancient Near East. Viewed through a lens that derives from an amalgam of Marx, Weber, and 20th-century social evolutionists such as Service, these polities have long been seen as dominated by a small authoritarian elite who restricted access to material wealth, controlled the means of violence, exploited the productive capacities of a peasant population, and broke down kinship as the defining frame of substate social interaction, replacing it with group affiliations based on class. These new political elites are also argued to have resorted to diverse strategies in order to bolster their newly gained control over their subordinate population. Human sacrifice is thought to be one such strategy, and its deployment is integral to discourses of power, status, wealth, and increasingly, violence, in archaeological analyses of this period, especially where elites jostle for international status in competitive emulation (Peltenburg 1999). The idea is simple enough—in order to be perceived as powerful, you adopt the attributes of those whom *you* perceive as powerful. One category that is often accepted as evidence of interactions between political elites, because it is understood as the physical manifestation of power and super-ordinate status, is the so-called luxury goods most frequently recovered from burials, such as jewelry styles, nonceramic vessels, wooden coffins, and so on that are found in certain tombs from Ur in southern Mesopotamia to Tell Banat on the Euphrates River, Syria, to Troy in Asia Minor. Retainer sacrifice, where a person dies who is of such status that he or she can have an entire retinue, or at least a few servants, killed to accompany her/him to the afterlife, should surely be the most impressive of luxury goods, the most dramatic signifier of power and position. We therefore might expect that this practice would be widely adopted by those participating in such elite networks, either through direct emulation, shared cultural constructs such as belief systems and associated ritual practices, or through common understandings of how to rule. But the evidence for human sacrifice is actually very rare in the period when cross-cultural comparisons suggest it is most likely to occur—the formative stages of complex society—and when it does occur, it is very individual in practice. This would imply that the assemblage of ideas associated with the term *retainer sacrifice* may not be in play. They are certainly not the *only* factors in play.

I must emphasize that the evidence is rare, for, of course, determining situations of sacrifice is a very difficult archaeological problem. For this time and place,

sacrifice is only visible as it is mediated by burial practices. Unlike other societies such as the Shang of China (Campbell, pp. 305–323 in this volume) or the Aztecs (Carrasco 1999), killing, the essence of discourses in which human sacrifice is power, seems not to be the main event in third millennium Syro-Mesopotamian practice. It never occurs in iconography or text,[1] in marked contrast to parts of the Americas, for example, where grotesque representations of killing far exceed its archaeological reality (Hill 2008). In Syro-Mesopotamia, evidence for sacrifice only comes from the last part of the event—the final deposition of the bodies. There is also no evidence to suggest that human sacrifice is public spectacle; indeed, it is not clear that even animal sacrifices (evident primarily in texts and images rather than in material remains) were conducted outside sequestered religious situations. It is impossible to tell in a grave, for instance, whether an animal was sacrificed or simply provided for food. Or is there in fact any difference between the two states? (see Pongratz-Leisten, pp. 291–304 in this volume). And the role of blood that is sometimes accessible through analysis of cut-marks on the bone, where the particular kill method leads to spurting fountains of it, is not as yet discerned in the Syro-Mesopotamian record.

Because our sources consist almost exclusively of burials, the evidence for sacrifice must therefore be contextualized within other burial practices. This is actually not a bad thing because it gives us access not only to the practices of sacrifice but to its cognitive context. If we understand the way people are buried to convey information about their social, political, intellectual and ideological worlds, then the burials of those who were sacrificed surely also carry the same kind of information. Although archaeologists tend to focus on social and political aspects, burials simply cannot be taken away from their ideological context, because understandings of life and death utterly underpin associated practices and rituals. This is a difficult matter. As is often noted, what we have in the archaeological record is the remains of ritual that may or may not relate directly to religious belief (Cohen 2005; Fogelin 2007). But the archaeological record does not always stand alone. There is considerable documentation as to how the ancient world thought about life, death, divinity, and the relations between them (Pongratz-Leisten in this volume) that needs to be brought to bear on the identification of sacrifice, let alone its explanation or interpretation. Because if the evidence for sacrifice lies in burials, then burials provide the context through which sacrifice is distinguished from other ways of dying. I am not suggesting we reconstruct details of a system of faith or that there is a one-to-one relationship between mortuary deposit and belief, although the suggestion that the remains of ritual found in the record may be understood as "enactments of symbolic meaning rather than as simple statements of ritual power" (Fogelin 2007: 63 on Brown 2003) is a profitable avenue to explore. I am suggesting that basic con-

1. One possible, and controversial, exception is the neo-Sumerian text *The Death of Gilgamesh*. However, this story was, I would argue (Porter 2012), created in a later period than that under discussion here, and with a particular agenda that has little to do with societal beliefs. Moreover, the verb that would indicate the relationship of the list of retainers mentioned to the action of the text is missing (and see Marchesi 2004 for further discussion).

ceptions of human existence are approachable through the proper incorporation of textual material and that these conceptions illuminate burial remains generally and sacrifice in particular.

To date, however, it is the earthly aspect of mortuary practice, and of sacrifice, that has predominated in Near Eastern archaeology, vested in particular in considerations of grave goods as representing the status or identity of the interred. Until very recently indeed, Near Eastern archaeologists, including myself, have paid far more attention to the number and type of grave goods placed in a burial, including even the costumes and adornments in which the body was clothed, than they have to the human constituents. The significance of primary versus secondary burial, for example, the way bones are placed, or not placed, in relation to each other, and the relationship to associated animal bones and objects are aspects often left unconsidered. Grave goods have been argued to be provisions for the dead (Katz 2007: 171–72; Barrett 2007), feasts for the living (Bachelot 1992; Peltenburg 1999: 432), and gifts for the gods (Nebelsick 2000), and in my view are all of the above; they are remains of ritual (Winter 1999). Yet none of these functions, whether or not they are valid, is, in itself, meaning. Meaning inheres in *why* provisions, feasts, and gifts are considered appropriate, in what they are thought to accomplish, in what relationships they establish. Similarly with sacrifice, itself both function and meaning. Sacrifice cements alliances, creates passageways between this world and the next, and is a political tool, but its meaning ultimately lies elsewhere. It is why sacrifice is understood to be the proper way to do these things that is the ultimate object of inquiry. In Syro/Mesopotamia in the third millennium, the answer lies in the significance of blood. This may seem contradictory to my earlier statement that it is not killing that is at stake but burial, and yet it is not, for it is what blood means, and not the substance itself, that lies at the heart of the matter.

But how do we identify the socially sanctioned killing of one person by another, as opposed to catastrophe or murder, and what distinguishes sacrifice from other forms of socially sanctioned killing such as execution? In regards to the first problem, the only mortuary context where we are likely to have much luck in detecting socially sanctioned killing is group burial, the sort of situation so susceptible to reading as retainer sacrifice, because while individuals may be sacrificed, it is much more difficult to distinguish such acts from execution or murder in the absence of any very specific indication. But where multiple, primary burials are deposited as a single episode, implying that the interred died at approximately the same time, and in distinction to situations in which primary inhumations are placed in the burial consecutively, the deliberate killing of at least some members of the burial group must be examined as a possible explanation along with other causes of mass death such as fire, disease, execution, or battle, even if there is no evidence of an intentional cause of death. In this case, we rely on our ability to distinguish patterns in mortuary practices, and those associated with episodes of sacrifice should be markedly different from those associated with episodes of catastrophe. Epidemic, warfare or fire might be thought to warrant random burial patterns, especially mass undifferentiated burials, if there is any sort of widespread social collapse. Or, if

there is no social collapse, and it is a small-scale incident such as the death of a family through accident, we might expect regular burial patterns undetectable from that which was practiced on a daily basis, with the exception perhaps of numbers of bodies. Death and burial in the ancient Near East are of such social consequence and religious significance, accompanied by such highly ritualized behavior, that deviation from the established mortuary practices in these cases might be thought to continue the violence of these events and to further cut off the dead from their regular social context. This, of course, depends on how catastrophe was thought of—as a punishment from the gods, where burial practices might serve to separate the afflicted from the norm, in which case it is hard to imagine lavish treatment, or as a constant part of everyday life, wherein nothing distinguishes its victims from the ordinary. Both attitudes are certainly evident in the stories that survive from Mesopotamia, but we do not always know if those stories reflect generally held understandings or are instead specific to the purpose of the writer (Porter 2012). Sacrifice, on the other hand, confers a distinctive condition to the victim, whatever the intent or context of the act or the social situation of the one sacrificed, if in no other way than because his or her death has something to accomplish.

This is not to say that there is any one accomplishment at stake in sacrifice or any one way of manifesting that accomplishment: it might be conveyed in mortuary practices ranging from those displaying the utmost pomp and circumstance to those indicating hasty, even contemptuous, disposal. It may well be that those sacrificed are only of consequence at the moment of being killed, becoming worthless once life is extinguished, in which case the disposal of the body may in no way relate to the significance of the sacrifice. This might be the case, for example, if the shedding of blood was the central concern of the rite. But this seems to me unlikely in this third millennium context for a number of reasons, not least of which is the fact, clear in all the materials relating to death and the afterlife here, that the dead have continued roles to play long after their demise. The dead establish the position of the living in time and space and their consequent interactions with others, human and otherwise. The dead have otherworldly status, even if they are not quite divine. Certain of them, often ancestors, act as intermediaries between all forms of being. In this framework, it may be the body, therefore, that is of central concern, and so how the body is treated and then disposed of after death is as important as, if not more so than, the moment of death itself.

In regards to the second problem, then, how to distinguish sacrifice from other forms of socially sanctioned killing, the answer lies in intent. If sacrifice may be understood as a way of producing and reproducing relationships between human and supernatural worlds, already implicit in the role of at least some of the dead (who presumably died naturally), then the use of sacrifice invokes more specialized or urgent ways of establishing those relationships, whether communication, beneficence, or authority is desired. At the same time, those who are sacrificed stand in some way beyond the common dead. It is not only the act of killing that constitutes the production of relationships with other worlds; it is the burial that acts as the passageway to them, so that the nature of the burial, the method and attributes of disposal of the sacrificed, manifests the way of translation to otherworldly status.

It is because of this that we may see sacrifice in multiple burials where it generally remains invisible in individual ones, because it is through multiple burials that certain pictures may be constructed, ideas and ideals reproduced, in the deposition and manipulation of bodies.

There are only four situations in the time and region under consideration that are readily susceptible to reading as sacrifice because of depositional history and patterning, and they are all quite different on the face of it, although it is possible to elicit common aspects from them. Moving from north to south and in approximate chronological order, the first case is found at Arslantepe in the upper Euphrates region of southeastern Turkey, and dates to the very beginning of the third millennium. Here, a relatively simple stone-built chamber tomb contained a primary, articulated, male, 35–45 years of age, wrapped in a shroud and placed on a wooden board, traces of which still remained. The body was adorned with silver spiral pins and two necklaces, one silver, one mixed stone and metal, and was also wearing a beaded garment over the head and torso. Placed at the back of the body was a collection of 64 metal objects, including items in copper, silver, and copper-silver alloy. One of the latter was a decorated belt or diadem. Because the roof of the tomb had collapsed, crushing the bones, detailed skeletal information is lacking, and the cause of death was not ascertainable. It was evident, however, that the body had been placed in a fairly standard flexed position on its right side (Frangipane et al. 2001). Recovered from on top of the collapsed stone lid and the surface around it were four individuals, represented by two full and two half skeletons, in pairs at each end of the tomb. On top of the tomb lid itself was a complete female and the skull and torso of a male. On the ledge around the lid was a parallel pair, although both bodies here were female. The male/female pair was wearing copper-silver alloy objects, including headbands decorated in the same manner as the belt of the single male inhumation inside the structure. The headbands carried veils, traces of which still remained, and cloth was also found on the two pins that each of them was wearing. The female pair was unadorned.

This burial group has been interpreted as a case of retainer sacrifice, as have all the instances read as human sacrifice in greater Syro-Mesopotamia in the third millennium. The inhumation within the tomb is a chief, or king, who was accompanied to the afterlife by two high-status attendants, those with metal grave goods—possibly even family members because of the similarity in costume according to the excavators (Frangipane et al. 2001: 111)—and their servants, those who lacked grave goods. But the very patterned nature of the skeletal remains suggest other interpretations. Although Frangipane et al. (2001: 121) state that the lower half of the male skeleton had fallen into the tomb when the roof collapsed, no trace of his pelvis, legs or feet were reported as recovered from within the tomb or associated collapse, and the absence of the lower portion of one body, from pelvis to toes, in both pairs can hardly be a mere coincidence. The presentation of the four bodies is far too patterned for that. Table 1 indicates some of these patterns.

One aspect of this group that stands out is that these individuals are all young, but within this age bracket there is a very clear opposition set up in the positioning of the bodies: each pair contains an individual 16–18 years old and one 12–14/15

Table 1. Patterns in Human Deposition on Top of Tomb 1, Arslantepe

Skel. no.	*Sex*	*Age*	*Diadem*	*Clothing*	*Trauma*	*Pre- and Perimortem Injury*	*Disease*	*Childhood Illness at Age*
221 full	F	16/17			left face blunt- force broken foot	weeks 2 years	meningeal	2, 3, 4, 6
222 part	F	12–15			back of head broken ribs	weeks weeks		4
223 part	M	16–18	yes					none
224 full	F	12–14	yes		right face blunt-force? lesion on arm	weeks 1 year		3, 4, 5

years old, and each body of similar age is (fig. 1) diagonally opposite the other. Another aspect worthy of note is that none of the violence evident in the remains of these adolescents was the direct cause of death, or occurred at the time of death; rather it occurred sufficiently before death for healing to have commenced, and indeed some of the hemorrhaging might have been caused by disease rather than blunt force (Schultz and Schmidt-Schultz in Frangipane et al. 2001). The third thing to observe is that, although the male skeleton (fig. 1; table 1) contributes to some patterns, he does not contribute to all of them, for he lacks any evidence of disease or trauma, unlike the other three female constituents of the deposit.

Furthermore, the sequence of events giving rise to this picture may have been more complicated and certainly more prolonged than a single funereal episode, and here my reading of the archaeological remains diverges considerably from that of the excavators (compare to Frangipane et al. 2001). The soil layers in, and covering, the tomb indicate that its closure and the subsequent deposition of bodies on its top were not a single event. They were instead a series of events, perhaps two, perhaps three. The interior of the tomb contained light, clean material (Nocera in Frangipane et al. 2001: fig. 28), which, typically, is silt blown or, more rarely, (and quite detectably) washed into the empty space inside the tomb. This suggests that the tomb, while closed by the limestone slabs, was left uncovered by the dirt backfill. The backfill, being derived from the occupation layers into which the tomb was inserted, contained the usual kind of occupation detritus of pottery and bone fragments, and at least some of this material would have filtered down into the tomb if the backfill had covered it. Although the fact that the tomb was uncovered might seem counterintuitive to us because of narratives that disturbance of the dead is sacrilegious and the product of tomb robbers, in the later third millennium some tombs are clearly reused, and often, with some things taken out and new things added. The amount of dirt filling the Arslantepe tomb would suggest to

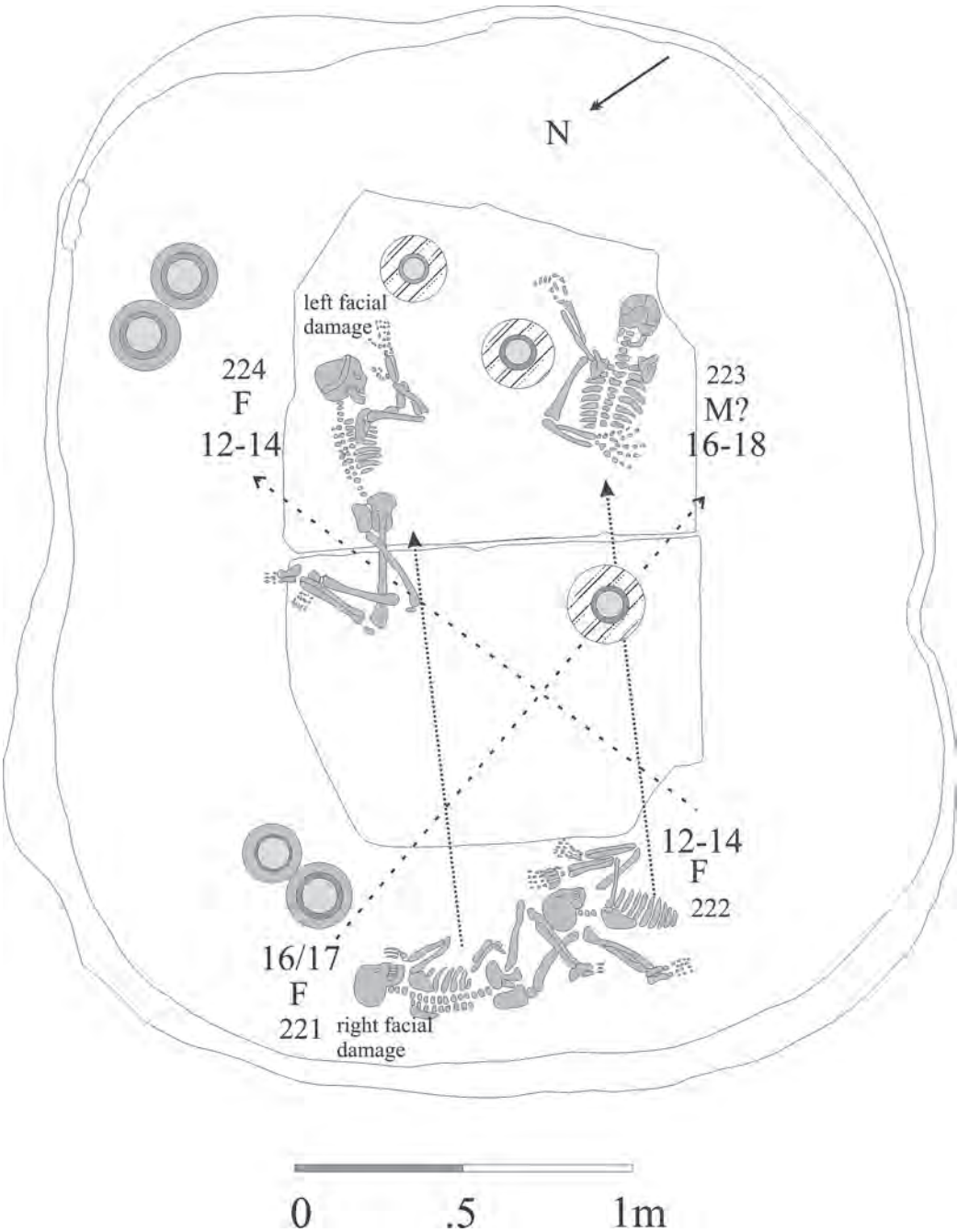


Fig. 1. Human deposition on top of Tomb 1, Arslantepe.

me that it was exposed for more than a few weeks but less than a decade. I would hazard, and this is nothing more than a guess, that it was left uncovered for about a year.

In my reconstruction then, the tomb was built, the body and goods placed in it, the lid closed and then it was left. Sometime later, another event took place on the tomb, and here various scenarios are possible. In one scenario, three ill or injured women and one healthy man were brought to the outside of the tomb. They were costumed appropriately for the performance of a ritual that they enacted or for a concept that they were to depict, and then they were bound (Nocera in Frangipane et al. 2001: 121), placed on and around the tomb, and left to die of starvation, which in their debilitated state would have been rapid. Because I do not accept that the two partial skeletons are the product of accident but were in some way deliberately produced, I suggest a number of possibilities to explain this situation. Perhaps the people who placed these individuals on top of the tomb returned at a later date when they extracted the lower halves of two of the victims and filled in the pit on top of them. Alternatively, these two victims may have been cut in half and their lower portions removed, while the two complete individuals were pushed into the pit, perhaps while still living because there is no other obvious cause of death (Schultz and Schmidt-Schultz in Frangipane et al. 2001: 129). However, it must be remembered that most violent death is caused through damage to soft tissue and therefore undetectable archaeologically. The collapse of the tomb's roof, without significant wash through into the chamber below, as well as the undisturbed nature of the two complete skeletons, which while broken up by the weight of soil do not seem to have been disturbed by carrion-eating animals, suggests to me that the deposition on top of the tomb was indeed backfilled and not left exposed to fill in through wash and wind over a lengthy period of time. This may not have taken place immediately however; the tableau presented by the bodies may have been on public view until decomposition set in or shortly thereafter.

Another, although ultimately somewhat less likely, scenario is that the four bodies were deposited in two separate events, the second event replicating, although perhaps poorly, the first. This interpretation is suggested by the location of the female pair, not on the lid itself, but on the ledge slightly above the lid. It is also suggested by the apparent chronological difference[2] in the pots associated with the various stages of inhumation (Frangipane in Frangipane et al. 2001: 113), itself a complex matter. This sort of reconstruction would explain both the duplication and the disparity between the two pairs of bodies, because ritual is rarely enacted exactly from one time to the next for a number of reasons, some of which have to do with changing circumstances, some of which have to do with the passage of time. So if, for example, the lower half of the male skeleton did indeed fall into the crack between the two stones when the lid broke (for which no evidence is presented), replication of this situation might explain the partial body in the second pair, but it would also suggest that the broken lid was visible at the time of the

2. Although, see Porter 2012 for a challenge to this chronological differentiation.

second ritual. There are several problems with this. One is the fact that the tomb might be susceptible to plundering or vandalism, although it is possible that the power of the burial was so strong that no one would dare to disturb it. Additionally, one might well wonder why the broken lid was not repaired if it was visible.

But the very exact mirroring of the bodies themselves, so that the two pairs, if facing each other, would be nearly identical, matching torso with torso, facial damage with facial damage,[3] does imply, to me at least, that the first scenario is the most likely and all four bodies were players in the same scene. There is nothing lost through memory here, or through varying contingent circumstances. The differences in costuming, and grave goods, between the bodies located on the lid of the tomb and the pair located on the ledge around the tomb, then would have interpretations other than the chronological. Perhaps, as the excavators assume, those differences are a function of status. But perhaps they are a function of role. That the bodies are arranged in so careful a manner certainly suggests they have a story to tell. Just what this story may be emerges in an examination of the other examples of human sacrifice in Syro-Mesopotamia currently known to us.

Approximately 150 km south of Arslantepe is the small site of Shioukh Tahtani, where one recently excavated mid-third millennium burial group is of particular interest.[4] In this burial, at least three bodies, two adults and one child, line the sides of a large round pit in a flexed pose with their backs touching the sides of the pit. They appear to frame two other burials, one an infant approximately two years old lying on a broken jar as is the usual practice at Shioukh Tahtani, the other an adult located toward the northern end of the burial. There are several features of interest here. The first is the positioning of the bones and the stratigraphy of the pit, which indicates that these bodies were deposited as a single event and not after consecutive lapses of time, for the legs and arms of the various bodies were interleaved with each other. Two, the excavator, Paola Sconzo, indicates that three of the adults were clothed in a very distinctive way (fig. 2), a way certainly not seen before in the 60 or so burials at Shioukh Tahtani, for they were adorned with a series of criss-crossed pins—as many as seven pairs—still in place on the front of the body just beneath the jaw and extending to mid-torso. While pins are common in burials, and two crossed pins are standard closures, so many, lacing the front of a garment in this way, is certainly rare elsewhere as well, and suggestive of an unusually elaborate funerary costume. In one way of reckoning, their number might be thought indicative of a wealthy burial, a reading further substantiated by the 117 pottery vessels included in the grave (fig. 3). This would divide into 23 pots per body, however—not an inappropriate quantity for an adult in the Shioukh Tahtani cemetery. At the same time, the constituents of the ceramic assemblage are exactly what is always

3. In addition, given that there is little enough evidence on which to attribute gender to the two partial skeletons (Schultz and Schmidt-Schultz in Frangipane et al. 2001), especially the one identified as possibly male, I am inclined to think that they were probably of the same sex.

4. I am indebted to the excavators, Paola Sconzo and Gioacchino Falsone, for their very great generosity in allowing me to use and interpret as I will this unpublished material, and for providing illustrations of it.



Fig. 2. Crossed pins on burials at Shioukh Tahtani. Photo by Paola Sconzo.

found in other burials at the site. There are no special goods, just greater quantities of them.

But what is significant here is not the number of grave goods so much as the placement—in groups immediately on top of each of the bodies, including the infant in the jar but with the exception of the central adult of the three bodies. Infants at Shioukh do not normally receive grave goods in this manner and thus the infant is distinguished from other such burials in this cemetery. Yet the adult individual in the center is equally distinguished by the absence of grave goods. That the group consists of multiple proximate or even simultaneous deaths is unusual in the context of the Shioukh Tahtani cemetery. Additional distinctions in the placement, adornment, and enhancement of the members of this deposit provide further indication of the abnormal nature of the burial and also point to the possible actions that gave rise to it and its potential social significance. Although one way of interpreting this burial group is that it was an elite family that suffered some sort of mishap, the evidence for this status is in fact very slight. Other than the number of individuals and the number and arrangement of the pins, nothing distinguishes this from the other pit burials at Shioukh Tahtani. The remains are therefore susceptible to another reading: some or all were killed for the interment.



Fig. 3. Pots from Shioukh Tahtani burial. Photo by Paola Sconzo.

In that case, the elaborate garment closure might indicate a particular dress for a ritual performance. The placement of the grave goods and the disposition of the bodies raise the possibility that either the central adult or the infant was the focus of the burial, the one for whom the sacrifice was initiated. Yet if this was sacrifice as an elite prerogative, retainer sacrifice, then it does seem odd that the natural death would be marked by the absence of grave goods, in contrast to the sacrificed. Alternatively, the infant may be the focus of this burial, socially extraordinary in some way, or even the prime sacrifice itself.

At Umm el-Marra, inhumation patterns raise the specter of sacrifice in a powerful manner—in more ways than one. Among the many human and animal burials at the approximate center of the site, including spectacular entombments of upright equids (Weber, pp. 159–190 in this volume) accompanied by babies and puppies, was the simultaneous interment of two richly adorned females with two infants, laid over two males. An additional infant was found off to the side in the layer containing the males. Deposited as one group, this burial was placed over an earlier inhumation consisting of a single individual, sex undetermined (Schwartz et al. 2003). There is no paleopathological evidence for epidemic on these bodies or any physical trace of violence as Schwartz (pp. 1–32 in this volume) notes. The women are far more richly adorned than the men. Because it is usually thought that quantity and quality of grave goods typically correlates with social status, this might imply that the women were the paramount burials, while the men, lacking enhancement through grave goods, were of low status. The possibility of retainer sacrifice is thus raised here too (Schwartz et al. 2003), although the excavators have interpreted the objects associated with the women as more likely a product of the fact that women in general are well-adorned in contrast to men. But even if the goods in the tomb are to be explained this way, it does not indicate whom the



Fig. 4. Pots from Shioukh Tahtani burial according to find spot. Photo by Paola Sconzo.

burial is for. Nor, of course, does it explain the fact that there were seven roughly simultaneous deaths—or perhaps only four, because the chances that preweaned children will die shortly after their mothers is very high unless provided with wet nurses, as attested at Ebla (Biga 1997) and elsewhere (Stol and Wiggerman 2000: 188–90). Nevertheless, the fact that both women are accompanied by infants is itself noteworthy given the presence of infants in the context of the animal sacrifice. It is also noteworthy that the female body on the south side of the tomb had a gold headband with frontal disc, with holes in the band indicating the possibility of attachments—a veil perhaps—(cf. Schwartz et al. 2003: 331), while the male body immediately beneath her had a silver headband, also with frontal decoration, this time a rosette (Schwartz et al. 2003: 334). Like the sacrificial victims at Arslantepe, the women were in their teens.

The "royal cemetery" of Ur with its several "death pits" comprises the final example of human sacrifice in the third millennium of Syro-Mesopotamia, and it is the example par excellence. Several features warrant our long fascination with these inhumations—the number of people interred in primary burials, seemingly peacefully disposed, and the extraordinary wealth of grave goods being but two. Although it has long been assumed that the richness of these graves is clear evidence

that these were the burials of kings and queens accompanied by their retainers (loyal or otherwise), this is because of specific views of the relationship between wealth, status and power rather than because of any unambiguous evidence. There are a lot of "facts" that may be questioned, not least of which is the gender and rank of those interred in each of the 16 tombs, or indeed whether there are 16 "royal" tombs at all (e.g., Moorey 1977; Pollock 1991).

As at Arslantepe, each "royal tomb" started with the excavation of a large rectangular pit, some as large as 13 m × 9 m, in which a tomb was then built. At Ur, a large space was left around the tomb, to be filled subsequent to the burial inside it, with people and things. The excavator, Leonard Woolley, imagined a procession of royal courtiers calmly proceeding down the ramp into the pit, where they settled in, drank poison, and died. But there was far more overt violence than initially realized, as it is increasingly clear that the human sacrifices in these tombs were forcefully dispatched with blows to the head by a pickaxe (Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler, pp. 125–158 in this volume). What is more, they may have then been subject to postmortem preservation, for examination of a female body from the Great Death Pit suggests that at least some individuals were heated and/or dressed with cinnabar (Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler in this volume). Then the bodies were clothed with their finery and carefully set up in place along with all the objects of a major feast: musical instruments, eating utensils, and food. Indeed it has been argued from an examination of the vessels included in certain graves that many of those buried in the tombs, not just the "death attendants," were equipped with the remains of a feast they had just attended (Cohen 2005, but compare to Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler in this volume).

But I do not think it necessary that the sacrificial victims *performed* some ritual *before* death; rather, they were to *depict* ritual *at* death. Given the preservation techniques with which at least some of the bodies had been treated, the death pits, open directly to the sky before infilling, may have been exposed for a short period of time, suggesting they were intended as tableaux set for display as Baadsgaard Monge, and Zettler have noted (this volume; compare to Pittman 1998). But such display may not ultimately have been meant for *human* eyes at all, for, contrary to the rhetoric of retainer sacrifice, the evidence suggests the intended viewers of these displays were located in other worlds, as I will argue below. In either case, the subsequent infill of the death pits by means of successive plastered floors on which were remains of food and bodies (Woolley 1934) also indicates extended engagement with each instance of these installations. This indeed is how the death pits should be perceived: as installations, not unlike the kind found in museums today—part art, part communication, and part the conquest of time, in this case, forward and backward time.

The significance of these installations will become clear through consideration of the three attributes, although not equally represented in each case, which emerge from these four examples of sacrifice. One is a hitherto unexamined feature of mortuary practice in Syro/Mesopotamia, mirroring, the second the more commonly recognized costuming, while the third is feasting. In conjunction, these attributes

tell us much of the meaning, rather than only function, of what is in any way of viewing, an abnormal practice in Syro-Mesopotamian mortuary traditions.

The dominant representational attribute of the four bodies on top of the grave at Arslantepe is that of mirroring. The two groups of two bodies duplicate each other in almost every respect—indeed, if all four are female, as I suspect, in *all* respects (fig. 1). Mirroring may be seen in the arrangement of bodies in Puabi's burial chamber (see Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler, fig. 5, p. 131), and it is present, although it is less clear, in the Great Death Pit and, I would suggest, in Umm el-Marra Tomb 1 (Schwartz in this volume, figs. 3–4, pp. 20–21); for while there are multiple ways of thinking about the disposition of bodies in this group, one side of the burial is certainly mirrored by the other. It is manifest in Tomb 1 at Tell Banat (Porter 1995: fig. 1), where the mirrored lay-out of the chambers and the tunnels to nowhere are echoed by duplicate depositions of pots and grave goods (Porter 1995). This tomb contained multiple secondary and disarticulated burials, and there is no way of determining whether sacrifice was an issue here, although equally there is no way of determining it was not. Mirroring is found in other forms of representation such as cylinder seals, and the survey that I have conducted to date indicates that it is associated with particular motifs, especially the naked, bearded hero—a figure I argue elsewhere (Porter 2009a) is guardian of the liminal space between this world and the other world—and his twin, the bull-man. This pair may themselves be considered mirrors of each other in some essential ways. I also note the "*tete beche*" seal from Arslantepe in the level that precedes the tomb (Pittman 2007: 206–33).

Mirroring is, I would argue, a very explicit expression of views of cosmological organization, and especially of the relationship between the world of the dead and the world of the living where they are the same, but opposite. It is reproduced in few burials, and it might be suggested that its deployment therefore, in bringing those worlds closer and rendering the connection between them visually explicit, is warranted only by extraordinary circumstances. Its association with various situations in which the single deposition of multiple individuals is a result of concurrent death—depositions all of which show one extraordinary feature or another—indicates an intent that transposes these situations from the products of either accident or generic socially sanctioned killing to, specifically, sacrifice.

Perhaps one side, or one layer, of the Umm el-Marra group constitutes the "natural" burial, the other a sacrificed mirror image to act as cosmic intermediary for the newly dead, or as the vehicle for a message that must accompany the deceased. If, as Schwartz suggests, "another human being is the closest one can achieve to a similarity with the sacrifier" (p. 5 in this volume), how much more powerful is that similarity when it is the very mirror image of the one in need of sacrifice?

Perhaps the paramount individual/s, the natural death, at both Arslantepe and Umm el-Marra did not fulfill expected behavior in life, requiring explanation or special pleading before the gods. But we might go even further. The fact that grave goods and positioning of the bodies at Umm el-Marra could be taken to imply that the paramount/s are the female members of the group has proved puzzling

to many, and the employment of sacrifice as a display of power in this case would prove even more so. At Ur, Pu-abi's putative death pit has suggested explanations based on a special function for the person assumed to be the paramount burial that abnegate the problems of these manifestations of status and power attached to a female—that she is a priestess or special devotee of Nanna (Moorey 1977). It would appear, on superficial criteria at least (ornamentation and grave goods to which gender appropriateness is attributed), that the majority of both supposed victims and supposed paramounts were women (Marchesi 2004). But the long-held conviction that what is put in a grave is intended to recreate the living world of the deceased for the afterlife has conditioned us to accept that human sacrifices are to accompany the dead in the next world. Perhaps we are reading some fundamentals here all wrong. What if, in these cases, there is *no* natural death, and every member of the group is sacrificed, a situation just as likely as the other in the absence of physical evidence as to cause of death? This might explain the enigmatic patterns in the burial at Shioukh Tahtani, where it is difficult to choose between the infant and the central burial as the paramount inhumation of this grouping. By the same token, the assumption that the figure on the bier at Ur in "Pu-abi's tomb" is the natural death is just that: an assumption. The individual on the bier may be distinguished for reasons that have nothing to do with social status or position in life. As Holly Pittman points out (1998), there is little obvious distinction between costume of putative paramount and attendant, and the jewelry itself lends harmony and unity to the tableaux presented by the death pits. If this is so, if there is no natural death, then the issue of retainer sacrifice is moot, and the possibility of another interpretation altogether becomes stronger. What that interpretation might be is made clearer by consideration of the clothing evidenced in all four contexts.

Costuming is perhaps not as much discussed as it should be (although see Baadsgaard 2011), but the example from Shioukh Tahtani raises some important questions, questions equally applicable to Umm el-Marra, Ur and Arslantepe. The distinctive multiple pairs of pins on three of the Shioukh Tahtani burials may be garb assumed not because of who the body *is* but because of who the body *becomes* in the ritual itself. Some figures have lead roles, some are only supporting players. I am not suggesting the practice of substitution here, where the king is ritually killed in the person of a surrogate, but rather that the playing out of myth (Brown 2003; Laneri 2002), or the recreation/representation of certain groupings of people mean that the *role*, not the original person, is uppermost. The elaborate clothing and mortuary paraphernalia in evidence in the tombs at Ur have in the past been interpreted as "normal" elite/courtly regalia, but here too adornment may have nothing to do with who these bodies were in life but, rather, who they were in ritual. Because it seems that the bodies at Ur were dressed *after death* (Baadsgaard, Monge, and Zettler in this volume), I venture to suggest that, without osteological analyses, we know now even less about the social status, function, or even necessarily gender, of these bodies than we did before. Identification of gender on the basis of accompanying objects, the idea that something is feminine and therefore should belong to a female, or masculine and should belong to a male,

is problematic for any number of reasons. One, burials often have "male" objects such as knives and daggers and "female" objects such as jewelry side by side, on, or in equally close proximity to, the body, and this cannot be explained away by the supposition that one kind of object represents the general wealth of the family and the other the personal adornments of the dead individual; two, gender ambiguity is a key aspect of Inana/Ishtar, goddess of war and sex, and her cult, which includes a class of transvestite functionary. Moreover, ritual is often deliberately transgressive, reversing or inverting usual roles and situations. The suggestion that some of these victims may have been cross-dressed is worthy of consideration. For if the boundaries between life and death are violated in the act of killing the bodies that constitute this deposition, then perhaps boundaries between genders may be traversed in the heating and clothing of them. Since we do not know what deities are involved in these mortuary—funerary and postfunerary—rituals, the question remains open, although Nicola Laneri (2002) has made a provocative argument that Inana's descent to the underworld is duplicated in the materials contained within third millennium burials at Titriş Höyük. The discovery in the tombs of Ur of fruits such as apples and dates (Zettler 2003: 33–34), identified on the headdresses found in Puabi's burial, all of which are connected to Inana/Ishtar (Miller 2000; Cohen 2005), raises the distinct possibility that such objects at Ur are very consciously related to ritual events and acts and are therefore predominantly signified as such.

Items such as the fruits are usually seen as part of a feast. Funerary feasting is an increasingly popular explanation for the deposition of grave goods in tombs and no doubt was an essential part of mortuary ritual. Although in the past the pots found in burials were assumed to represent the wealth of the deceased, or deceased's family, either in and of themselves or as containers for prestige goods, the traditional division of these materials into "mundane" and "luxury" wares has obscured other considerations. One such consideration is that of function. First, at Shioukh Tahtani and Umm el-Marra,[5] a category of so-called luxury ware comprises a ritual assemblage, and primarily a ritual mortuary assemblage at that. This is Euphrates Banded Ware and its variants (Porter 1995, 2007), found predominantly in tombs and, rarely, specialized buildings.[6] Second, many of the pottery forms found in burials are those used in the presentation and consumption of food and, especially, drink. Drinking sets have been isolated at Shioukh Tahtani (Sconzo 2007) and other sites in this region (Coqueugniot et al. 1998; Porter 2002).[7] Other vessels,

5. Although Schwartz et al. (2003) do not classify the grooved rim jars in Tomb 1 as Euphrates Banded Ware, the form and ware description of fig 23:13 there fits entirely within my definition of this ceramic category as known from Tell Banat. See Porter 1999, 2007 for the relationship of the other wares illustrated in this figure and Euphrates Banded Ware.

6. One of the few sites at which this material has been found outside tombs is Shioukh Tahtani itself. One building and corridor was densely packed with Euphrates Banded Ware. However, I would propose that, rather than obviating the purely mortuary function of this material, the material itself argues for a specialized, and probably mortuary, function for the building. Possibilities include a temple to the ancestors or place for preparation of the body prior to burial.

7. Occasionally vessels used in the preparation of food are also present. I include in this category the deep, open-mouth pots from Tomb 1 at Umm el-Marra (Schwartz et al. 2003: 340).

such as the "Syrian bottle," are assumed to have contained prestige items such as oil or perfume (Schwartz et al. 2003: 337, n. 42). If so, these were more likely present as containers for aromatics and unguents, or possibly libation fluids, that were used in the preparation of the body (compare to Winter 1999) rather than as indicators of wealth and status.

In all four of our examples of human sacrifice, the vessels accompanying the human constituents are the vessels of feasting. There are no storage jars for the long-term accommodation of provisions for the after-life at Shioukh Tahtani. Instead, there are bowls and cups for consumption and various small jars for presentation and serving. Judging from photographs (analysis of this burial is not yet complete), each group of pottery accompanying each body had roughly the same constituents (fig. 4) with the exception of the individual accompanied by the champagne goblet. The same is largely true of the much smaller group of pots from Umm el-Marra Tomb 1, although one sizeable jar comprises part of this assemblage in addition to three open-mouthed, deep bowls that may have cooked/contained part of the food consumed. The disposition of vessels in this grave is informative, however. The large jar and two of the open-mouthed vessels are placed between the two sides of the burial (see Schwartz, fig. 1, p. 16 in this volume), with their bases set on the layer of the two male inhumations, and their rims on the level of the two women (Schwartz et al. 2003: 335 n. 37), linking thereby the two layers of the burial as well. They are a pivot between all the elements of this deposition, and they are positioned as though their contents could be disbursed to the women of the uppermost layer. It is not, I would argue, a coincidence that arranged on or directly adjacent to the bodies are bowls and cups with one or two small serving jars; nor is it a coincidence that the Syrian bottles are found only on the bodies. Although the bodies are laid out in traditional burial poses, the image that remains is nevertheless much like that of a group of people participating in a feast. The pile of pots stacked in the corner of the grave, separate from the bodies, perhaps represents the vessels used by the burial party in their own feast. As the deposition was completed, special substances were probably poured over the dead and the empty containers placed on top.

I have argued that libations were also a primary act in the Arslantepe sacrifice (Porter 2012). Because Arslantepe is far removed in time and space from the other examples, it manifests a different ceramic repertoire both in and on top of its tomb, but these vessels too represent a specialized function for this context. Inside the tomb are the objects of feasting (small jars and bowls) and libation (two small red-black burnished ware jars with long cylindrical necks). The four bodies outside the tomb were not provided with cups and bowls, but arranged around them are wheel-made jars and cylindrical-necked jars in red-black burnished ware.[8] These larger

Although many jar forms are called "storage jars," few indeed are the real storage jars. A notable exception is to be found in Chamber F, Tomb 7 at Tell Banat.

8. See Porter 2012 for a detailed treatment of the pottery of this tomb and its significance at Arslantepe. Although red-black burnished ware has occasioned a considerable literature in explanation of its origins and distribution, the question of why this material has the particular qualities

cylindrical-necked jars are particularly suitable for pouring out liquids. In this instance, it seems that the feast accompanies the single inhumation in the tomb and not the sacrificial victims on top of it, whose disposition, and consequently meaning, seem rather different from those of Ur, Shioukh Tahtani, and Umm al Mara. Nevertheless, the sacrifices at Arslantepe share some specific details with those of Umm el-Marra—the diadems, the age of the females, the mirroring, and perhaps even libations, raising the possibility of a broad continuance of a tradition from the beginning of the third millennium to its third quarter.

The evidence of mirroring, costuming, and feasting in each of these burials suggests that there is something more than a funeral going on here, and something more than a straightforward display of wealth. Killing people to set up a funerary feast is an extraordinary event, and one has to wonder at the peculiarity of this act if its underlying rationale is only about status, control, and power, which as ubiquitous concerns of ruling parties, might be ubiquitously represented in this way. And yet they are not. The question is, in fact, better posed differently—why is the sacrifice of, in the case of Ur, dozens of people in order to pose a funerary feast the means to address issues of status, control, and power? Why are four adolescents killed at Arslantepe to portray a ritual scene? The answer lies in the difference between a living feast, which almost everyone presumably receives, and the production of a dead one, for in sacrificing people to create such a tableau, one is creating a moment frozen forever in time, but a moment that may also be understood as playing out in perpetuity.

Perpetuity is the core concept behind mortuary feasting, a concept that is attested in so many different sources, archaeological and textual, in so many places over the entire third millennium—with, of course, local specificities—that it is one of those few things we might understand as a cultural characteristic of Syro-Mesopotamia. This is not a case of associating a specific text with a specific archaeological situation, a dubious undertaking at the best of times, both because one text a societal-wide situation does not make and because the most cited materials are stories that often have multiple agendas to which the details of the story are in service. From administrative texts at Ebla listing gifts for dead royal women (Archi 2002; cf. Porter 2007–8: 206 n. 34), to apportioning resources to Ur III royal mortuary cults, to the Old Babylonian lists of stuffs consumed at such feasts, the dead might be gone, but they are certainly not forgotten: they are regularly brought back into the realm of the living by postfunerary commemorative rituals, usually involving feasting, feasting at which the living and the dead comingle. There is a Sumerian ritual that involves libations in some way at the *ki-a-nag* (Lynch 2010), and in the Old Babylonian period, where it occurs monthly, we have the *kispu*. We also have in this period royal genealogies that culminate in invitations to both the living and the dead to attend the *kispu* of the genealogical subject (Charpin and Durand 1986). *Kispu*

it does, that is, distinctive forms with highly polished surfaces of dramatic coloration, has been afforded little attention beyond technical issues. I argue that these characteristics have less to do with the ethnic identity of those who make and use this pottery than they do the function and meaning of the vessels.

then in invoking the dead is essentially genealogical in intent. Killing people to set up a funerary feast is to reproduce that feast continually, to perform the responsibility of kin in perpetuating kinship. *Kispu* is indeed the very enactment of descent, bringing descent relationships into being by bringing the dead into the presence of the living. So here is what I mean by forward and backward time: invoking descent is about social perpetuation—forward time—but it does so by invoking the past, by counting previous generations—backwards time.

Mesopotamian texts give us a variety of emic views of the nature of the relationships between the living and the dead. Incantations suggest that the dead are potentially dangerous and need to be kept in the Netherworld. Stories tell us there is no journeying back from that dark and dismal place. Yet postfunerary commemorative rituals would seem to bring the dead back to be literally, not just metaphorically, present at these rites. I do not think it is a case of one view being what Mesopotamians actually think and others being somehow wrong or misguided, as has from time to time been suggested, for it is safe to say that ideas of the dead are a product of the situation under consideration. The situation under consideration with the commemorative feast is descent as the essence of continuity between past and future. *Kispu* certainly gives an ordered and controlled means of interaction between the living and the dead, but that this interaction is necessary or even just desirable is varyingly explained according to one's theoretical persuasion—taken from Ur III stories is the idea that without commemoration, in the absence of offspring, there is no afterlife; from the Ebla texts that legitimacy of rule is created by the invocation of ancestors; from in-house burials (Honça and Algaze 1998), that land ownership and relationship to place are also so established; and all of the above are in some way, at some time, in evidence. But there is yet something more at stake, a meaning rather than only function which the dead embody.

This meaning, I would suggest, lies in the fundamental principle of social existence in Syro-Mesopotamia, whether cosmic or mundane, which is kinship. And even though kinship is frequently socially constructed in the ancient Near East, the vehicle of that construction is very often blood, in order to recreate the blood that underpins biological relations. Despite the emphasis in Near Eastern archaeology on class as the basis for social organization under the state, kinship frames all relationships, between all kinds of beings, between state and state, between state and subject, between gods and humans; and it is manifest sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, and often in a number of ways at the same time: language, ritual and responsibility. The precise relationship between states is evident in whether two kings address each other as brothers or as father and son, and this is not just empty salutation but an envisioning of the relationship in terms of the duties and commitments that brothers and fathers and sons have to each other. Rituals establishing treaties require animal sacrifice in the shedding of blood (Porter 2009b: 208), that while sometimes expressed as evidence of the violence that will be brought down upon he who transgresses the treaty (Schwartz in this volume), are more often about drawing forth blood as the substance of kinship. This is especially clear where the ritual of animal sacrifice accompanies the exchange

of responsibilities for the maintenance of the other's ancestor practices (Charpin 1993: 182–88; Durand 1992: 117; Durand and Guichard 1997: 40).

Indeed, the responsibility for funerary and postfunerary commemorative ritual is a fundamental means of establishing kin relationships in multiple contexts—when land is inalienable, would-be purchasers are adopted into the family and in exchange must provide for their new parents' continued existence in the afterlife (Foxvog 1980; Stone and Owen 1991); when a couple is childless, they find means by which to bring someone into the family who will perform appropriate commemoration. This is not just about having someone to keep providing food so one continues to exist in the Netherworld, a too-literal reading of these same Ur III stories that provide the foundation of most discussions of life after death in the ancient Near East and that are fundamentally misinterpreted (Porter 2012). It is about fixing one's place in the cosmic scheme of things, it is about the creation and extension of social relationships across time and space, and both are accomplished through the creation of kinship. In the mutual endeavor that is conceived of as existence in Syro-Mesopotamia, gods rule, kings mediate between them and people, and people owe various rights and obligations to others according to their position in kin relations figured through both vertical and horizontal ties. This is why the relationship between state and subject is often represented in kin terms, and descent terms at that (Gelb 1979), for the obligations work in both directions—not just from subject to state, but from state to subject.

This is the ontological framework in which burial practices in general, and sacrifice in particular, must be situated. The meaning the dead embody is cosmological—they are the linkages that situate both individuals and communities in their proper place in time and space. But if the reproduction of social relations between people in this world is usually accomplished by animal sacrifice, then the use of human sacrifice instead suggests the construction of social relations between this world and other worlds. For whether in mirroring a cosmological understanding or in freezing a ritual performance, each of these depositions is ultimately transcending time in a way that the performance of ritual by living beings simply cannot. And those who live in timelessness are the denizens of other worlds, especially the world of the gods.

In sum, while the ritual itself may vary from one example to the other, the act of sacrifice creates, and captures, a ritual moment for perpetuity. Key roles in the ritual seem to be female. That these rituals are directed not to people but to the gods seems to suggest that specific kinds of relationships with them are thereby established, depending on the ritual involved, so that the nature of the ritual may point to the nature of the problem that its performers sought to address. At Ur, sacrifice seems to reproduce the rituals of kinship; therefore in some way the situation is one where kinship is in question. Rituals of kinship such as *kispu* ensure continuity of both the individual and the social group by reference to the past; the creation of *kispu* through sacrifice is perhaps because the people concerned did not have a past, or at least, the right kind of past. Because kinship with humans could be accomplished in the traditional ways, it would seem that the right kind of past is a prior relationship with the gods.

There are, no doubt, several situations where a divine connection is desirable. But one situation where it is essential is in the right to rule. Rulers have particular relationships with particular gods, indeed, they are divinely chosen; catastrophe, such as the fall of an empire, is cast as the product of the god turning away from the ruler (Cooper 1983). At either the beginning or the end of a reign then, there is potential for divine disapprobation, especially in the case of usurpers, who both challenge the power of the gods in overturning the ruler of their choice and who have no established kinship with the god under whose auspices they now rule. In these cases, that kinship may be immediately constructed through the sacrifice of multiple individuals to form the appropriate kin group and would not involve the death of the ruler himself. At the other end of the spectrum, cases where the death of the ruler was seen as the result of the alienation of the god might warrant the recreation of the original relationship with the divinity through ritual reenactment in order to restore cosmological balance.

In this interpretation, therefore, the practice of human sacrifice is specific and contingent. Several scholars have pointed to generalized situations of social stress as the cause of human sacrifice, seeing urbanization and state formation as the sources of that stress in a variety of cultural contexts (Schwartz in this volume). But if sacrifice were a response to this in the ancient Near East, if the causes were so general and widespread, then the same objections stand as to retainer sacrifice: why is human sacrifice not equally widespread? We would expect to see much more regularized textual and archaeological evidence of sacrifice than we do. These are not sacrificial economies whose "cultural logics are determined by rituals of waste" (Buchli 2004: 183). Nor does it seem that the performance of violence is the essential element here (Dickson 2006). One thing is clear. It is being dead, rather than being killed, that seems to be uppermost in the disposition and meaning of these particular burials. Not only is there no evidence of public display, or even knowledge, of the *enactment* of sacrifice, but it seems possible that it was indeed carefully hidden, at least at Ur, where the wounds to the head were masked by helmet and headdress and turned to the floor of the tomb. Power may or may not be a consideration, and those sacrificed may or may not be retainers. But that sacrifice is a route to, or expression of, power is a question of function, not meaning. Systems of power can only be constructed on understandings of how the world works, and understandings of how the world works are based in notions of cosmology: where humans fit in a larger scheme that involves a host of supernatural beings, including the dead. Meaning inheres, as noted at the outset of this paper, in why sacrifice is the way to invoke power, and it is because these are societies the cultural logics of which, in this arena, are based in kinship and determined by rituals of its reproduction. Death, rather than the end of kin ties, is simply the beginning of a whole new set.

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Scripts of Animal Sacrifice in Levantine Culture-History

Brian Hesse, Paula Wapnish, and Jonathan Greer

> Food . . . is not *food*. It is terror, dignity, gratitude, vengeance, joyfulness, humiliation, religion, history, and, of course, love. . . . Perhaps there is no "meat." Instead, there is *this* animal, raised on *this* farm, slaughtered at *this* plant, sold in *this* way, and eaten by *this* person—but each distinct in a way that prevents them from being pieced together as a mosaic.
> —Foer 2009: 5,11

We offer this quotation from Jonathan Safran Foer's book as an introduction to our comments about animal sacrifice in the ancient Levant because we believe they frame our core conclusion, that animals were powerful constituents in the cultural landscape of the region, never simply "resources" manipulated as packages of fur, hide, protein, and fat. Their deaths did not go unremarked. Complex ideologies emerged to "naturalize" or even "expiate" the deaths of animals even when these events were part of a necessary process of converting sheep, goats, cattle, and other species to ingestible or otherwise consumable products. In the archaeological project of interpretation, sacrifice, in our view, does not stand in opposition to some purely utilitarian and symbolically untouched process of provisioning. That sort of detachment from meaning is a part of our modern world of hidden slaughterhouses and packaging that disguises the living and breathing origin of food we consume. To reduce our zooarchaeological inquiry simply to a consideration of ecological and macroeconomic modeling deculturizes the endeavor. As the late Claude Levi-Strauss argued in regard to food, animals *are* good to think (1966). Sacrifice is one part of the effort by human groups to make sense of their animal killing activities. By sacrificing, in either the sense of "giving to" or "giving up" animals and their products, humans create complex systems of exploitation, but ones they can live with. Our task is to enrich our examination of the remarkable finds of bones and teeth in ways that contemplate this complexity.

Authors' note: The publication of this essay follows the tragic, sudden loss of its first author, Brian, husband and colleague of Paula, "bone mentor" of Jonathan, and the architect of the theoretical framework for this work buttressed by our respective research. In many ways, this essay, as one of his last, encapsulates one of Brian's greatest contributions: the presentation of solid, testable anthropological theory formulated by his commanding grasp of a very large body of zooarchaeological data. It is, however, only a pale reflection of his insights, of which we have been deprived all too soon, and still these perceptions will inform our future research.

Thinking about "Sacrifice"

In 1974, two of us, Paula and Brian, were excavating in western Iran at the early Neolithic site of Tepe Ganj Dareh. One afternoon, a local man passed the site headed along the road to a nearby village. Our attention was drawn by the frantic efforts the man was making as he struggled to keep his sheep headed down the path. Time and again the animal would collapse and the man would respond by tugging at the beast's head or propping up the hindquarters. Nothing worked. Each time the animal regained its footing, it stumbled a few steps and toppled over again. In desperation, the man finally picked the sheep up in his arms and began the long walk to the village. We inquired of our workmen why the man was so determined to get the sheep to walk. They told us that he needed to get his ewe to the village alive so that it could be "correctly" slaughtered. If the beast just died on the road, it would not be proper to consume the meat.

This small episode has some implications for the theme of our discussion. It is apparent that this mundane act of private, individual slaughter was conditioned by powerful cultural rules that not only outlined the meaning of animal death but prescribed a detailed script for carrying it out. Whatever purely economic meaning the culling of this individual ewe might have to the long-term pastoral management strategy of this particular herdsman or his community—the usual target of zooarchaeological research—his actions in carrying out the slaughter of his sheep were done in the context of the cultural and religious traditions of the region; the taking of *this* beast's life was a "sacrifice" in the sense that it was performed in adherence to a culturally conditioned script (compare to Iqbal Siddiqi 2000). The assumed boundary that is enshrined in Western culture and lies between "rational" secular behavior and meaning-laden religious activity appears in this small instance to be at least blurred.[1] We learn that animal death does not have to be either dramatic or public to be sacrifice.

Similarly, even in ancient texts that might appear *a priori* to distinguish between sacred and profane slaughter, we see a comparable blurring. Literary-critical issues aside, we may consider the much-cited centralization mandate of Deuteronomy 12:13–16 (and its parallel in vv. 20–25): the offering up of burnt offerings is restricted to the central location, but the slaughter/sacrifice, *zābaḥ*, and consumption of other domestic animals is permitted in the villages.[2] But even in the villages, the blood must be ceremonially poured out, and the very use of the term *zābaḥ* implies some degree of "sacred" import.[3] While the text draws an explicit contrast between

1. Compare to chapter 5, "Primitive Worlds," in Douglas 2002: 91–116.

2. A possibly parallel example of graded distinction may be found in comparing Ugaritic texts RS 13.006 and RS 15072; but, even here, Pardee (2002: 119–21; 2000: 428–38) advises caution.

3. Of the 134 times the verb is used in the Hebrew Bible, only a few of the references may suggest "nonsacral" slaughter: Gen 31:54a; Num 22:40; Deut 12:15, 21; 1 Sam 28:24; 1 Kgs 19:21; Ezk 34:3. But see Milgrom (1976: 2–3) on the potentially sacred backdrop for most of these. The Ugaritic cognate *dbḥ* also exhibits some ambiguity; even though it too is usually associated with cultic activity, it is also used for less-sacred slaughter and feasting (see Del Olmo Lete 1995: 38). Cf., Huraya's *dbḥ* in *KTU* 1.15 IV, as a possible example.

symbolic state slaughter and functional community slaughter,[4] the contrast is apparently only a matter of degree. Killing an animal for consumption in a rural town, as one would do with wild game, is still "sacred," though it is marked by a different degree of expression.

There are implications that challenge the zooarchaeological community to these ethnographic and textual observations as well. The Iranian sheep that passed Ganj Dareh, ironically the site where the earliest evidence of goat domestication has been reported, was destined to be slaughtered, skinned, and butchered; so too a sheep or goat from any ancient Levantine village. The meat would be eaten, horns used as raw material for small crafts, and perhaps the skin tanned. The residues of bone and teeth from all this processing would end up in the village midden or be otherwise disposed. No obvious contextual signal would alert a future excavator that the remains being excavated came from a "sacrifice" of any sort.

What kind of interpretive model would be invoked to deal with the evidence? Back in the 1970s this was an easy choice. Then, investigation of V. Gordon Childe's "Neolithic Revolution" privileged economic and ecologic arguments—the process seen as a systemic adjustment to such forces as population pressure (Cohen 1977) or climatic variability (Hesse 1982)—over cultural meanings.[5] Further, the modern cultural world of the investigator affects the investigative stance. Now, when the realities of killing are masked by such concealments as the location of slaughterhouses and the packaging of animal products (Fiddes 1991: 94–118; Mason 2007), animals are anonymized into nutritional packages labeled meat. These reduced analytic units are especially suitable for manipulation by the "utility indices" employed by zooarchaeologists and the "animal exploitation strategies" drawn from modern animal management studies and synthesized by ethnoarchaeologists for use in interpretation.

A split between "meaning-laden" bones and those thought less burdened with symbols is thus created by dueling emphases: one on productive yield; the other on salience in the cultural world of ancient actors, a division that calls for different interpretive methods of address. Seen from an external perspective, the key variable is caloric production. In contrast, the experience of the ancient husbander was likely quite different. The slaughter of each animal, every one a beast of close familiarity, was an event that required thought and careful consideration. Husbandry means more than "keeping"; it means "managing." Failure to make correct decisions about which animals to cull is a recipe for the failure of a pastoral system. The systemic results may have been ecologically sound and economically sustainable, but the paths to those decisions did not go through those concepts.[6]

4. See, for example, Tigay 1996: 123–26; von Rad 1966: 93; Weinfeld 1992: 213–14.

5. Even then, alternate "cultural meaning" models of the process were available; see Simoons and Simoons (1968), a thread of understanding now elaborately developed for southwest Asia by Cauvin (2000).

6. This interpretive divide is of long standing in anthropology. However recast, the choice between what Harris (1968) called "emic" and "etic" perspectives (or "manifest" and "latent" functions by Merton [1968]) still roils the waters.

Notions such as these are troubling because the vast majority of reports of "animal sacrifice" in the archaeological literature describe animal bone finds that shout their significance by being different from those usually found in middens. They include partial skeletons found in deposits mostly containing smashed up bone fragments or animal bone finds recovered in tombs containing human remains. By limiting the field of evidence to this kind of discovery, sacrifice comes to mean only that a human "gave up" the opportunity to consume all or part of the resources an animal might provide.

It is well known, however, that most examples of sacrifices, both ancient and modern, involve the consumption of the sacrificial victims. Any exploration of evidence for "sacrifice" must then consider other indicators and the broader ritual context in which these acts are carried out. Here, the well-known work of Roy Rappaport (1967), who dissected the connective tissues linking ritual requirements and the management of pigs in New Guinea, serves as an icon of, if not a model for, research. More specific counsel comes from the suggestions of Ian Hodder (1991: 121–55), who encourages the contextual exploration of our materials in ways that generate narratives of human engagement with material culture.

Sacrifice and Ritual Behavior

Ritual is essential to creating the social experience of religious ideas. We may agree with Mary Douglas's conclusion to her discussion of the dichotomy between internal and external religion: "it is a mistake to suppose that there can be religion which is all interior, with no rules, no liturgy, no external signs of inward states. . . . as with society, so with religion, external form is the condition of its existence" (Douglas 2002: 76; compare to Levine 1971: x). Animal sacrifices *can* be the basis of some of those rituals. However, we must be cautious. Ritual is an arena of human experience that is not isomorphic with the religious idea of sacrifice; it only intersects with it.

Still, reshaping our zooarchaeological task as the recovery of information about past *rituals* involving animals is a considerable help. It focuses attention on evidence that can be recovered with pick and trowel. Rappaport (1999: 24) offers a spare definition of ritual that is useful for archaeologists: "I take the term 'ritual' to denote *the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers*" (emphasis original). His formulation leads us to focus our attention on (1) the repetitive nature of ritual, (2) the notion of ritual as performance, (3) the accompanying implication of the participation of both actors and observers in rituals, (4) the long maintained formal traditions that are included in rituals, and (5) the limits on individual expression that are set by the ritual form.

Recast as archaeological questions, Rappaport's attributes of ritual require us to attempt to understand several things. Most fundamental is the unraveling of the sequence of repetitive actions that make up an animal "sacrifice," whatever its deeper meaning.[7] What animals were selected, where were they taken, and how were they

7. As Schwartz (pp. 1–32 in this volume) reminds us, following similar sentiments expressed by Catherine Bell in regard to ritual, work on the topic sacrifice can move forward without

dispatched, butchered, and finally disposed? Second, if animal sacrifice is, as Douglas insists, a social construction that has meaning to both actors and observers, how was sacrificial ritual experienced? For example, one might imagine what it would have been like to have been present at the Jerusalem temple and to experience, rather than merely observe, the regular slaughter that occurred—the sight of dark blood and thick smoke, the urgent cries of terrified bulls and bleating sheep, the buzzing flies and din of feasting worshipers, the hiss of burning fat, the stench of animal refuse, wafting smells of blood and viscera turned to smoke mingled with clouds of incense.

These invariant sequences that make up a sacrificial ritual must be socially certified, if only informally. That goal may be accomplished in several ways. One would be to create a "theater" for the public observation of various parts of the sacrificial process. In the situation just mentioned, observers were more than audience; their presence was more as congregation, one subtly responsible for certifying the ritual event. Alternatively, acts of sacrifice made in private or, at least, hidden circumstances, may be certified to the larger community through individuals acting on the public's behalf. In our example of the Jerusalem temple, the officiating priests would have fulfilled this role formally. In this vein, we may note the role of the kitchen manager or *mashgiach* of traditional Jewish practice, insuring that everything done or used in a kitchen is according to the rules of what is fit to eat and what is not. So, too, the *schochet*, or ritual slaughterer, who examines animals for disease or physical anomalies that would make them unfit for consumption. Yet the sensory stimuli of sights, sounds, and smells would have certified sacrifices to a public shut out of the altar space itself.

Finally, since the behavioral sequences that make up a ritual tradition are enacted rather than created, the question arises of how ritual is remembered. One avenue is to create permanent evidence of sacrificial rituals, a kind of mnemonic device that calls up memory of the traditions that underlie or even require them. Consider contemporary examples of the private dispatch of an animal made public and permanent through commemoration; thus, the mounted trophy fish, elk head, bear skin rug, stuffed pet, or animal cemetery. In ancient times, practitioners built reminders of ritual into their art and architecture, such as in cave paintings (Mithen 1996) or the shape of temples, and in less-ambiguous forms as well: written texts.

Scripts in the Written Word

Since the dawn of writing, humans have recorded those rituals associated with their beliefs. For the Bronze and Iron Age Levant—the chronological and geographic setting of the archaeological finds discussed below—both prescriptive "manuals" and descriptive accounts have survived.[8] Most of the examples are associated with

an agreed-on definition, fully cognizant of various meanings that lie behind it in diverse cultural contexts.

8. On "prescriptive" and "descriptive" rituals in biblical and Ugaritic texts, see the works of Levine (1963; 1965; 1974; 1983). Also, see Rainey 1970, with comments by Milgrom (1991: 488–89).

central shrines and royally sanctioned cults. Here, great care is given to setting down the "right" way to carry out any ritual, whether in a Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, Egyptian, Hittite, or ancient Israelite setting.[9]

A perusal of the "burnt offering" (*'ôlâ*) instructions in the first chapter of Leviticus will appropriately illustrate the extent of such detail. Here the specifics encompass the selection of the animal (Lev 1:3, 10, 14), ritual actions and slaughter (1:4–5, 11, 15), blood manipulation (1:5, 11, 15), dismemberment of the carcass (1:6, 12, 16–17), preparation of the fire (1:7), arrangement of the animal elements on the altar (1:8, 12), the washing of certain parts (1:9, 13), and the consumption by fire (1:9, 13, 17). The highly specific vocabulary of this text and other texts from the Priestly materials in the Pentateuch contrasts sharply with other sections of the Hebrew Bible, a contrast that is also evident between Ugaritic ritual and narrative texts.[10] Such elaborate "scripts" serve us well when they can be correlated with the osteological record.

Scripts of Animal Ritual

Returning to Rappaport's definition of ritual and Douglas's insistence that ritual creates social meaning encourages us to consider the behavioral "script"—whether implicit (for example, recreated rituals) or explicit (for example, written texts)—that underlies the faunal remains we report. Several instances that we have examined provide us with a sense of what zooarchaeology might contribute in this framework where the killing and processing of animals is viewed as always meaning-charged whether involving large samples of bone fragments that derive from a variety of species or others that concern specific taxa. Key considerations are the visibility of the actions that comprise a script to the actors who performed or viewed them, the persistence in the visible landscape of the record of the script having taken place, and the transformation of the animal carcass by the operation of the script and whether the ritual script represents the "give to" or "give up" aspects of sacrifice.

These scripts have varying connections to well-understood religious or other ideological traditions. They are offered as starting points in rethinking the project of reconstructing systems of animal sacrifice. We have not attempted to analyze the scripts associated with the remains found in midden deposits (as they are labeled by the archaeologists who excavated them). These probably are interpretable as scripts but will require a level of detailed analysis of the spatial distribution of bone fragments and butchering marks that has not yet been achieved by current investigators in the excavation of Levantine sites from historic periods. Thus, we examine the scripts we can uncover when the context of a sample or its condition of preservation draws attention. This less-than-satisfactory exploration still produces some useful insights.

9. See the examples of Weinfeld, who notes that, "*All* cult was based on ceremonial precision" (1983: 96, emphasis original).

10. See Anderson (1992: 873–74; 1987).

Scripts of Sacrifice and Temple Complexes

A prominent site of animal slaughter in the ancient Levant was the temple. Textual evidence indicates that slaughter was conditioned by an ideology of sacrifice. Further, in many historical contexts, temple functionaries operated a system that included preferences for various kinds of animals.

But what actually happened as animals and carcasses moved through these sacred spaces, what were the scripts of sacrifice? In the faunal remains recovered from excavations at the Early Bronze complex at Megiddo, near the western margin of the Jezreel Valley, we noticed several themes (Wapnish and Hesse 2000). One was the selection of small cattle (sheep and goats) for processing, an abundance contrasting with our expectations for larger numbers of cattle in the subsistence base supporting this major urban center. Second, we found strong patterning when the remains from different architectural elements of the EB temple complex were compared. Copious bone remains recovered from different spaces, each located between sets of parallel monumental walls, areas best described as slots rather than areas where human activities could be carried out, were sharply divergent.

Two patterns were particularly apparent. One type of deposit included bone fragments associated with the initial dismemberment of a carcass—numerous foot bones, evidence of the skinning stage—and many articulated anatomical units of these carcass parts, suites of bones that came from the terminal part of a limb of a single animal. Each of these finds is a characteristic sign of a basic step in carcass dismemberment: skinning, disarticulation, defleshing, and so on. The other set of remains could be linked reasonably to the final stages of carcass reduction, one reached after the exposure of animal parts to fire, samples containing tiny, often severely burned, pieces of bone.

The thickness of these between-wall deposits and the large number of bones involved indicates that this practice persisted for some time. It also suggests that the script for processing animals in this major EB complex included storing the debris created by different steps in the process and creating a permanent, if hidden from public view, record of at least two of the stages of the ritual script. It is important to remember that the bone fragments were not recovered from the areas in which the animal processing activities took place. They were removed from those floors and shifted to these substantial "storage" spaces as a planned final step in the process. So we can envision a script of animal processing involving initial stages carried out "in public"—at least within the view of temple workers—and the evidence of these sequential activities maintained in permanent, albeit secreted, repositories within the sacred complex, perhaps because the bones' participation in temple activities charged them with a meaning that required storage rather than discard.

Area T at Tel Dan, a major urban center of ancient Israel located at the northern limits of the Galilee, offers a second example of faunal remains in close association with a temple complex, though a record some 2,000 years more recent. While most of the "animal players" are the same as at Megiddo—predominantly sheep, goats, and cattle—the scripts are substantially different. Large numbers of bone fragments

were found that were unremarkable as bone finds—few articulated anatomical units or other unusual preservations—but of special interest because of their spatial context of recovery (Wapnish and Hesse 1991; Wapnish 1993; Greer 2011). The presence of temple-like architecture, remnants of a monumental four-horned altar, portable stone altars, ceramic cult stands and vessels (Biran 1994: 159–233), and even bronze "altar kit" paraphernalia (Greer 2010), clearly differentiate this area from others at the site. A rich textual tradition in the Hebrew Bible also remembers the site as an early traditional shrine (Judges 17–18) and later royal shrine for sacrifice and pilgrimage (1 Kings 12:26–33). But what would this process of sacrifice, its ritual script, have looked like?

Enacted at a relatively large shrine that was used for several hundred years, the scripts varied in detail and expression. During the area's peak of activity during the Iron II period, two main phases may be demarcated based on their location either above or below a 10–20 cm thick yellow floor that was apparently laid down in the mid-9th century B.C.E.[11] The preliminary results of an analysis of the faunal remains from these two phases lay the groundwork for scripting the activities taking place.[12]

In both phases, we have found evidence of processing, indicated, for example, by lateral cut marks made by thin blades on the underside of axis vertebrae, presumably as a result of slitting the throat, and by lateral lesions evident on the distal ends of numerous humeri (at the elbow joint), presumably made during the disarticulation process. The remains recovered from rooms adjacent to the center of the complex indicated that animal skins may have been shunted to one side at some early stage in the dismemberment process and stored ready for specific use (Wapnish and Hesse 1991; Greer 2011). Evidence of preparation for consumption is also apparent in both phases, indicated by the overwhelmingly fragmentary state of meat-bearing long bones when compared to the state of other bones, and by broad, ragged depressions on fragments of bone presumably made by the smashing of these bones with axes or machete-type instruments. This pattern is consistent with ancient Near Eastern sources and ethnographic examples of food production in which meaty long bones are chopped at the extremities prior to the deposit of whole joints in cooking pots for stewing (cf. Klenck 1995: 63–64).

Three patterns of nonrandom distribution were also observed among the remains with respect to (1) taxa proportions, (2) right-sided to left-sided portions, and (3) phalanges to meaty long bone fragments, suggesting that the feasting activities took place in two distinct spheres: the western chambers as one sphere and the courtyard as the other (Greer 2011).[13]

11. Debate is ongoing as to the precise dating of Biran's Stratum IVA and his Strata III and II. A recent challenge to Biran's traditional scheme assigning IVA to the late 10th–early 9th century (e.g., Biran 1994: 165–209) may be found in Arie 2008, though, by his own admission, conclusions are "tentative" (p. 7), and significant doubts remain. Further, the stratigraphy of Area T is notoriously difficult to sort out, and efforts are currently underway to isolate the more secure loci and extrapolate from the data they yield. See further Greer 2011:37-40.

12. These results were presented in Greer, Hesse, Wapnish 2009.

13. These same two spheres have been differentiated independently on architectural grounds in the recent study of A. Davis (2010).

So what would sacrifice have looked like at Iron Age II Tel Dan? The initial stages were reflected in the selection of specific sorts of animals for ritual treatment at the complex: sheep, goats, and cattle, as well as some wild game and exotic animals though with a noticeable, almost complete absence of pig.[14] The relative ages at death indicated in earlier studies also suggest a preference for younger animals, though we are in the process of determining if these trends will be maintained in the larger sample.

These sheep, goats, and cattle were then apparently killed within the precinct and consumed in separate spaces by two groups of feasters. Those of the western chambers—priests, in our reconstruction—enjoyed more sheep and goats than cattle and exercised a certain preference for right-sided portions in the earliest phase of activity compared to their counterparts in the courtyard. The high percentage of phalanges in each phase of the western chambers would seem to suggest further that they participated in the processing of animal skins.[15]

Thus, our examples from Megiddo and Dan present us with two similar data sets—large concentrations of faunal remains associated with temple architecture—but the behavioral scripts of experience are markedly different and emphasized different aspects of the acts involved. At Megiddo, we imagine it was not only the (semi-) "public" sacrifice that was meaning-laden, but that this meaning extended to the private disposal of the charged remains of the victims and necessitated their storage. At Dan, sacrifice was, perhaps, even more likely to have been a public spectacle but there does not seem to be evidence of special treatment of the remains, private or otherwise. Rather, the remains we do have suggest wide-scale consumption of the sacrificial animals within the precinct.

Scripts and Dog Remains

The major port city of Ashkelon, located just north of Gaza on the southern Levantine coast, has produced large samples of animal remains associated with a remarkable collection of ethno-political groups—variable mixes of Canaanites, Philistines, Phoenicians, Greeks, Persians, Egyptians, Romans, and Muslims numbered among them—over a several-thousand-year occupation. The range of well-framed contexts excavated by the archaeological team exposed a number of animal finds that suggest scripts of varying types.

The most sizable data set contains the well-known Persian/Early Hellenistic–period dog interments found in three excavation grids at the site (38, 50, and 57). Over about 15 years of excavation, hundreds of examples of these burial events were recovered from these areas in the west center of the site near the modern coast (Wapnish and Hesse 1993). The pattern of dog interment that emerges, one that we now know extended along the eastern Mediterranean coast as far north as Beirut,

14. The salience of pig bones as an archaeological marker of religious and cultural identity is deeply problematic (e.g., Hesse and Wapnish 1998) because the textual warrants for this sort of association are hard to connect to specific historical contexts. Tel Dan is located in an area of the Levant where wild pigs were likely always abundant. Thus, the extremely low recovery rate for pig remains is worth remarking. Whether this has cultural-historical salience is a separate question.

15. See further Greer 2011.

is astonishingly sharp.[16] The interred canids all can be identified as members of local populations of unmanaged urban dogs, what are usually called pariah dogs. Dog deaths were random events shaped by the usual mortality factors associated with "pariah" dogs. No evidence of deliberate dog slaughter was found. On the other hand, the dogs apparently received no kindly care. Each dead dog was given individual and unmarked burial; thus there was no symbolic reminder at the burial site left to cue future buriers of the ritual expected for each deceased dog. For every dog, puppy and adult alike, a shallow pit was excavated, and then soft and ashy dirt was used to cover the carcass, which was laid out on one side or the other with limbs and tail carefully arranged. If a new burial pit cut an old one, no care was taken to preserve the integrity of the earlier interment. There was no obvious visible "cemetery"—a space marked by some mnemonic feature or exhibiting evidence of enduring veneration—at Ashkelon or other sites where these interments have been found, just a set of places that traditionally received the bodies of dead dogs.

So we seem to have a script that begins with the discovery of a dog dead from "natural causes"—mostly puppies—then transport to a special interment area in an open area in the industrial sector of Ashkelon, followed by the excavation and preparation of a grave pit to receive the careful positioning of the carcass, then no further consideration as later burials are created. The acts of interment seem to have been individual and potentially public, but no continuing significance to the burials seems to have persisted. The script ends bluntly with the burial. There is a lot of behavior represented here. Still, what has been frustrating so far is that this behavioral script, one likely to be laden with meaning, has not been successfully connected, by us or anyone else, to the many larger theories drawn from text and artifact that have been offered to explain the phenomenon.[17] While all the proposals and reconstructions now on the table do involve dogs, none of them retrodicts any of the specific elements of our reconstructed script.

The Persian/Hellenistic interments were preceded in Philistia by a strikingly different "dog script." In 1988, a dog skeleton dated to the early phases of the Philistine occupation was recovered from Field I at Tel Miqne-Ekron (Hesse n.d.). The head of this sub-adult animal was separated from the body and a knife was found in close proximity. After careful cleaning, a deep chop mark was found on one of the cervical vertebrae, confirming the expectation of deliberate slaughter suggested by the arrangement of the finds. Roughly contemporary with this find was a vessel that contained the limb bones of a puppy.[18] Several years later, excavations in an

16. In fact the sharpness of the evidence has led some investigators to use the presence of a buried dog as an "index fossil" to draw chronological conclusions. This seems to us, particularly when the site is far from the coast, to stretch the parallel beyond reasonable limits.

17. While there may be some precedent for the burial of dead dogs in Near Eastern literature and motifs (see, for example, Halpern 2000), the fact remains that none fully explains the sheer size of this unparalleled concentration.

18. One of us (BH) missed the significance of this find at the moment of discovery. The abundance of pig remains being recovered from Miqne-Ekron at the time led him to think these very juvenile remains were those of a piglet. Subsequent work indicated that what he thought was a "piglet in a pot" was actually a "puppy in a pot."

early Philistine building at Ashkelon recovered two additional "puppies in pots." All of these finds were buried in floors. At both sites these interments were associated with adult canid remains bearing evidence of butchering. So there is now an additional Philistine dog script, one that included the "routine" butchering of adult dogs coupled with the careful interment of puppies in cooking pots in household floors. Does the puppy-adult contrast in the finds suggest some differential attitude to various sorts of dogs in Philistine culture?

But the picture is even more complex. Excavations by Sam Wolff on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority at Tel Dover, a site located adjacent to the channel of the Yarmouk as it descends toward the Kinneret, produced an "ossuary" of early Iron Age dog skeletons. These complete and mostly adult animals are morphologically indistinguishable from the Ashkelon finds. The condition of their recovery, however, suggests a quite different script. Here, numerous complete carcasses were found in a pit within the architecture of the site, suggesting a collective deposition in the recesses of ancient houses.

Thus, dog finds in the Levant suggest a wide range of attitudes toward these animals in the first centuries of the Iron Age, each associated with a different script. How these patterns relate to the complex picture of political transformation in the same period is not yet clear.

Scripts with Carcass Parts

A third pattern found at Ashkelon also has an external point of initial discovery. Simon Davis (1987) examined the remains from Iron Age Tell Qiri. In his study of the finds from what was characterized as a special, perhaps sacred, area, he noted that there was an unexpected abundance of right forelimbs of sheep and goats. While the excavation protocol at Tell Qiri did not record the specific conditions of discovery, for example, no point-plotting of bone finds was attempted, the evidence from contemporary deposits in Philistine Ashkelon and Miqne-Ekron provide a model. At both of these southern Levantine sites, right forelimbs of sheep and goats (just the portion from shoulder to wrist—no metacarpals or phalanges!) were found interred in small pits cut into house floors. The tight compression of the bones as they were found in the pits suggests that the limbs, carcass parts usually assigned very high "utility values," were defleshed before being deposited. In one case at Ashkelon, two forelimbs, both rights, so two animals, were pressed into a single pit. So, again, we have a partial script. Forelimbs of sheep and goats were stripped of their meat but then bent into position for interment in a shallow pit within either households or public areas. No evidence suggests that a record of these interments was preserved—the depositional act itself, not its remembrance, seems to have been the key factor.

Finally, the excavations at Ashkelon uncovered a series of Bronze Age rock-cut tombs in Grid 50. A substantial number of non-human bones were found in these burials, mostly sheep and goats and many placed in shallow bowls or on modest plates.[19] Here again, the bones suggest that the best meat had been removed

19. David Lipovitch is studying these finds.

from the animal parts prior to inclusion in the tomb—the usual find included toes (phalanges)—though the potentially significant head was often found as well.[20] The script suggests that animals were dispatched and their resource-rich parts abstracted before interment in the tomb. Whether this means that funerary deposits represent meals with the dead or some kind of conservation of resources is not apparent. Still the script is a sequence of mostly hidden activities, all of which result in an association of groups of the dead with plates of food that could sustain them in the afterlife.

So, once again, we note the general similarity of the finds—articulated remains that have been stripped of meat—but, apparently, great diversity among the scripts, even in the few details we are able to reconstruct.

Scripts with Equid Remains

Equid remains from a wide variety of contexts are found at Levantine sites. Principally, these are remains of donkeys (*Equus asinus*) recovered with numerous other bones of domestic animals (mostly sheep, goat, cattle, only sometimes pig). Much less common are bones of true horses (*Equus caballus*) or any of the hybrids from horse/donkey crosses (mules, hinnies, jennies). Donkey remains are often found intermingled with the remains of other common domesticates. But unlike the sheep, goat, and cattle, donkey bones do not represent routine food remains in this part of the world, though there may be exceptions (which we discuss below; see also, Schwartz et al. 2000: 431–39). Still, for the most part, we may posit that the animals such bones represent met unremarkable deaths during everyday work use reflected in their inclusion with mundane trash.

Casual interments of donkeys contrast sharply with those recovered from more charged contexts, specifically burials. Here, we restrict our consideration to burials of the Middle Bronze Age in the southern Levant and Egyptian Delta because there are more than enough variations in donkey burials to illustrate our point of a similar suite of human behaviors, each with a divergent script. The animals in these burials have, for the most part, been identified as donkeys. For only a few burials has true horse been suggested, but the remains in question have not been positively identified as horse, and the animals are usually referred to as "equid."

The various contexts of the donkey burials underscore that, even though the animals were certainly killed for the ritual, the performances of these burials were attended by different "scripts" with regard to motivation, the act of burying, visibility, commemoration, and the significance of the act for the individuals involved in its performance and the society (familial or larger corporate group) for whose behalf it was carried out. All intentional burial of equids, but especially horses, must be thought of as status-markers because the animals, even the donkey, were more than barnyard stock.

20. In the Syro-Palestinian region, ethnographic evidence compiled by Bill Grantham showed that the head is often presented atop a platter of food as, at least, a statement of respect to the guest (Grantham 1995).

A popular type of donkey interment was to include them with human burials. In the Egyptian Delta at Tell el-Dabʿa and Tell el-Maskhuta, donkeys were buried at the entrance of human tombs. At Tell el-Dabʿa, whole sheep and goats often accompanied the donkeys, and pottery served as an additional offering as well (Bietak 1981). The donkey skeletons at Tell el-Dabʿa were intact. The excavator, Manfred Bietak, at first ascribed their presence to their being part of the draft teams used in the interment ceremony but more recently has suggested that they were grave furnishings for caravan leaders laid to rest in the respective tombs (Bietak 1996). Way (2006; cf. 2011) rejects these interpretations and sees them as status-markers of the deceased or furnishings to be used by the deceased in the afterlife. Perhaps they conveyed the departed to their place of eternal rest? We draw no such fine distinctions between motive (which is presently unknowable), for none is mutually exclusive, nor do they differ markedly in intent.

Donkey burials in pits not directly associated with human tombs are also known at Tell el-Dabʿa near two distinctive features, a cemetery and a temple. These animals were for the most part intact, occurred in pairs, and were associated with sheep and goat bones and pottery. The animals deposited in cemetery pits were recovered at some remove from five tombs and have been interpreted as a "collective funerary pit" (Schiestl 2002). The temple pits are similar to those near to the cemetery. The most likely suggestion for the temple donkey pit burials is to see them as evidence of ceremonial treaties. It is well known from the Mari texts (for the most famous, ARM 2.37, see Jean 1941: 82–83; 1950: pl. 47) that Western Semites, the cultural group resident at MBA Tell el-Dabʿa, sealed treaties or contracts by the dispatch of an animal, especially donkeys (see Way 2006 for ritual slaying of donkeys to seal a treaty) and at Tell Brak there appear to be ritual building closures associated with donkey burials (Clutton-Brock 2001; Oates, Molleson, and Sołtysiak 2008).

At Tell el-ʿAjjul (Tomb 1417) in southern Canaan, Petrie (1932) notes intact donkey burials outside human tombs. He calls these "favorite animals" of the deceased but does not specify what made them so.

At Tell el-ʿAjjul donkeys were also buried with humans, but the skeletons were not intact; other donkey burials with humans at that site (Tomb 411) bear cutmarks (Petrie 1931). Both the incomplete skeletons and evidence of cut marks have been interpreted by a number of scholars either as evidence of a funerary feast in homage to the deceased (see, for example, Mackay and Murray 1952; Stiebing 1971; Wapnish 1997) or of a meal for consumption by the deceased in the afterlife (van den Brink 1982).

Three possible examples of donkey burials not associated with human graves are also known from Tell el-ʿAjjul. All three of these examples are problematic, two (Pit 1504 and Deposit 590) because the donkey remains appear to be more trash or secondary deposits (see Wapnish 1997) but one, Burial 2009 (Mackay and Murray 1952), may be evidence of ritual activity because it is an incomplete animal rather than a confusion of bone like the two noted above.

Donkey burials in walls representing foundation deposits are known from a number of Middle Bronze contexts in the Levant. At Umm el-Marra in Syria (later

MB II) bones identified as equid were deposited in stone house foundations (see, for example, Schwartz et al. 2006). At Tell Jemmeh, on Israel's southern coastal plain, a burial of a not totally complete neonatal skeleton was recovered from an MB IIB wall deposit. The extreme youth of the animal at dispatch made it impossible to identify it other than *Equus sp.* (Wapnish 1997). At Tel ʿAkko, an incomplete donkey is reported from the MB IIB ramparts (Dothan 1993). Incomplete donkey skeletons as foundation deposits are known from Levantine sites in the Late Bronze and Iron Age as well. All these burials feature incomplete donkeys perhaps indicating that foundation deposits were accompanied by token meals in which parts of the animal sacrificed were also eaten.

A very singular example of donkey burials was found at Tel Haror in southern Israel. A large tomb in the courtyard of a temple dated to the MB II contained two complete donkey skeletons. Fill deposits above the tomb included many animal bones including those of no-longer-intact donkeys. Two lower jaws of donkey were included in this bone mix, one under an upside-down storage jar (Klenck 2002). In the temple courtyard contemporary with the tomb, a pit held the skeletons of puppies with broken necks (Klenck 2002). Puppies are also explicitly mentioned in MBA Mari texts as animals sacrificed at the conclusion of a treaty ritual (goats fit the bill as well). The Tel Haror interments almost certainly represent treaty (or alternatively covenantal) rituals actualized by the sacrifice of these animals.

It is evident from the examples above that the "charged" value of donkeys existed alongside that of a mere beast of burden and that this specialness was expressed in very different rituals serving very different purposes. Relegating a (partial or complete) donkey skeleton or burial to a singular category within "sacrifice" based on the shared taxonomic category obscures the various "scripts" the ancients were following and impoverishes our appreciation of the highly nuanced ways they viewed their draft animals.

Conclusions

In our view ritual and sacrifice are concepts that intersect rather than interbed. Ritual implies repetition, the routinized sequence of actions, patterns that may or may not intersect with concepts of the sacred. The daily setting out of pens and pencils on your desk may be a "ritual"; whether that sequence is determined by ideas about the ineffable is a separate question. The point is that the actions are done again and again, so they may leave certain types of archaeological traces. Structuralists would suggest that these routines/rituals are expressions of core cultural values/issues (usually of a dualistic nature: male/female, us/them, and so on); thus, comparing the organization of these rituals may expose these deeper cultural skeletons. Here we enter the realm of sacrifice and its dual aspects of giving up and giving to, events that may be ritualized by repetitive sequence or events that may happen only once but, in either case, events that are infused with a deeper meaning in relationship to the sacred.

The archaeological problem is to reconstruct sequences of action from static finds to get at these larger ideas—here we emphasize the concept of script, the logi-

cally likely behavioral inferences drawn from static evidence. Connecting scripts to cultural values is the task of a responsible historical archaeology. However, there are no universal criteria to be applied to archaeological evidence that differentiate motivations that specify ritual or unambiguously mark the acts of sacrifice. In the end, examination of all animal finds will require tacking back and forth between all sorts of evidence—osteology, artifact, architecture, and text—to generate satisfying interpretations.

Central to our archaeological project, then, will be the creation of scripts—detailed recreations of the sequence of actions that made up animal related events/rituals. This will include further specification of those involved, both animal and human, actors and audience/congregation, and the visceral experiences that gave meaning (or not) to the event. Because these narrative behaviors cued the creation of social meaning, their specification is necessary to the exploration of the symbolic structures that create and explain experience.

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Human and Animal Sacrifice at Galatian Gordion: The Uses of Ritual in a Multiethnic Community

Mary M. Voigt

Early in the first millennium B.C.E., a place called Gordion became the capital of the Phrygians, who by the late 8th century had come to rule much of central Anatolia. The archaeological site that best matches what we know about the location of Gordion from ancient Greek and Roman texts is a mounded archaeological site called Yassıhöyük, which lies next to the Sakarya river (ancient Sangarios), approximately equidistant from the Black and Mediterranean Seas. Archaeological research carried out since 1900 supports arguments based on historical geography, and the identification of Yassıhöyük as ancient Gordion is generally accepted, despite an absence of confirming texts from the site (Rose and Darbyshire 2011).

During the Later Hellenistic period, the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C.E., Gordion was dominated by a group of European Celts, referred to by ancient historians as Galatians. Their settlement is exceptionally well-preserved and provides evidence for daily life; evidence for ritual comes from an open area adjacent to the settlement where human and animal remains were recovered. The nature of these bone deposits varies, and they clearly resulted from different kinds of behavior, including killing, dismemberment, and formal arrangement of both newly dead and long dead individuals. In this chapter, I will argue that the killing of humans and animals and their treatment after death provides evidence for ritual murder, and specifically for sacrifice, or acts directed at or performed for supernatural beings.

Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

A historical narrative for Gordion during the first millennium B.C.E. can be pieced together using a combination of documentary and archaeological evidence. Texts for Anatolia during most of this period are rare and are focused on diplomacy, military actions and migrations. Only a few of these texts refer to Gordion and/or the Phrygians, so that the narrative relies heavily on the very large sample of excavated materials collected since 1950.[1] In order to understand factors that constrain

1. All excavation at Gordion since 1950 has been sponsored by the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania; the College of William and Mary has been a co-sponsor since 1991, and the Royal Ontario Museum co-sponsored work carried out between 1994 and 2002. Excavation and survey at Gordion since 1988 has been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH, a US federal agency), the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the National Geographic Society, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Kress Foundation, the IBM Foundation, the Tanberg Trust, and by generous gifts



Fig. 1. Air view of Citadel Mound and Lower Town in 1989. Photo courtesy of Will and Eleanor Myers.

our use of these materials, the next section provides a brief account of changing excavation goals, and assumptions that structured both excavation methods and interpretations of the archaeological record.

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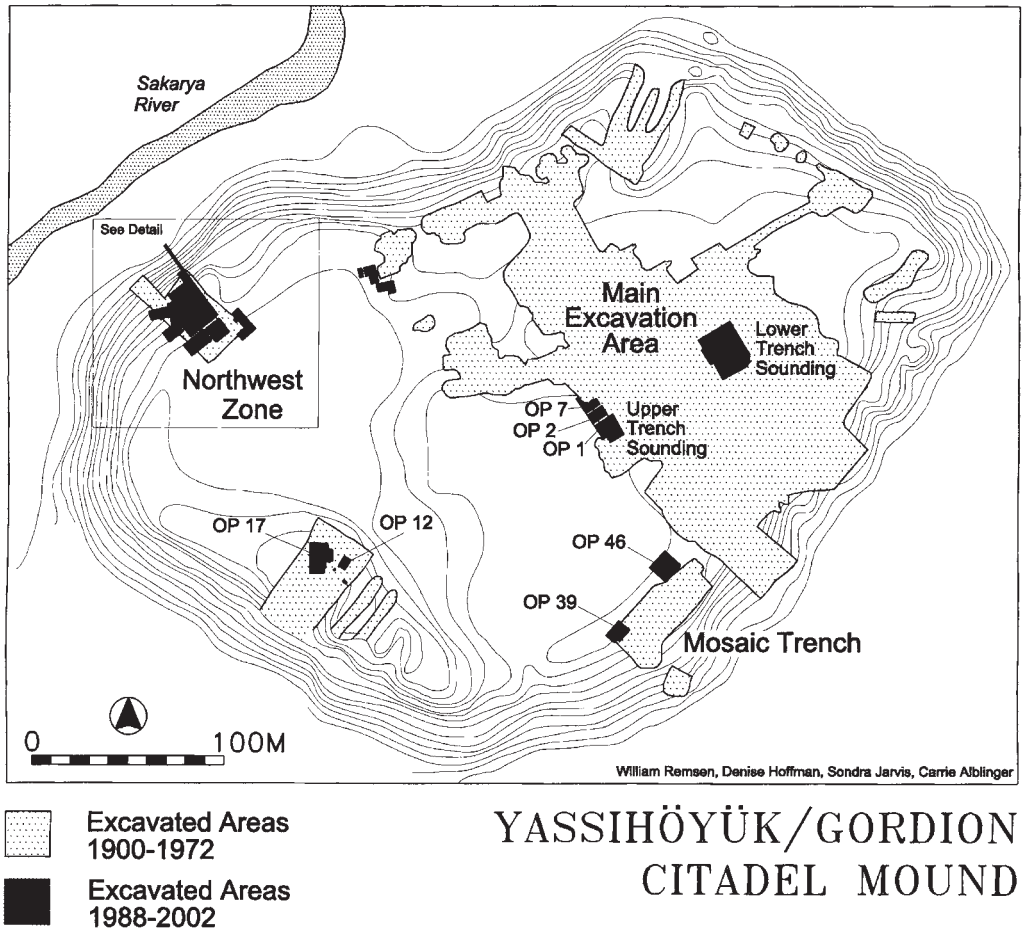


Fig. 2. Plan of Yassıhöyük or the Citadel Mound, showing excavated areas.

Iron Age Gordion: A Brief History of Excavation

In 1950, Rodney Stuart Young began excavation on the Citadel Mound (figs. 1–2). Trained as a classical archaeologist, he worked within a historical framework, and his goals were "to throw some light on the obscure period when the Phrygian kingdom was at its height" and to understand better the Phrygians' relationships to contemporary Greek culture as well as the earlier Hittites (Young 1951: 4). In the first season, Young put down a series of large soundings around the edges of the Citadel Mound and a smaller sounding near the center in order to locate suitable areas for long-term exploration. He found deep Medieval and Roman deposits in his trenches located on the western half of the Citadel, but on the eastern half, the uppermost strata seemed to be Hellenistic; far below the modern surface of the mound lay strata with evidence of burning, which he optimistically linked to an invasion by Kimmerian nomads and the period of Gordion's greatest king, Midas



Fig. 3. The stratigraphic trenches dug within Rodney Young's Main Excavation Area. The Lower Trench Soundings is in the foreground while the Upper Trench Sounding is in the background.

(Voigt 2009). Young abandoned the western half of the Citadel to focus on the hoped-for burned level, and by his last excavation season in 1973 he had cleared approximately 2.5 ha. of the eastern Citadel (the Main Excavation Area) down to what came to be known as the Early Phrygian Destruction Level (figs. 1–2; see Sams 1995, 2005 with references). The palace quarter of the Phrygian kings provided a rich architectural and artifactual record and was carefully documented. The sample for periods stratified above the burned level is also unusually large, but with one exception, these occupation levels were badly disturbed by ancient pits. The exception—well-preserved houses with artifacts strewn across floors—was dated to later Hellenistic times and linked to the Galatians. Young had little interest in the people who ruled Gordion after the Phrygians, and for the most part excavation and recording methods for later periods depend to a great extent on decisions made by each excavator. As a result, the quality of field records is highly variable, even for the well-preserved Later Hellenistic levels (Stewart 2010; see also Wells 2012).

In 1988 I began a new cycle of excavation with a different set of goals, methods and assumptions (Voigt 1994, 2005, 2007; Voigt et al. 1997; Voigt and Henrickson 2000b; Voigt and Young 1999). The initial goal for this research was to construct a detailed stratigraphic sequence for the eastern part of the Citadel that would provide better chronological control for the Young sample (fig. 3). In developing this sequence (the YHSS, table 1), we used significant breaks in stratigraphy (that

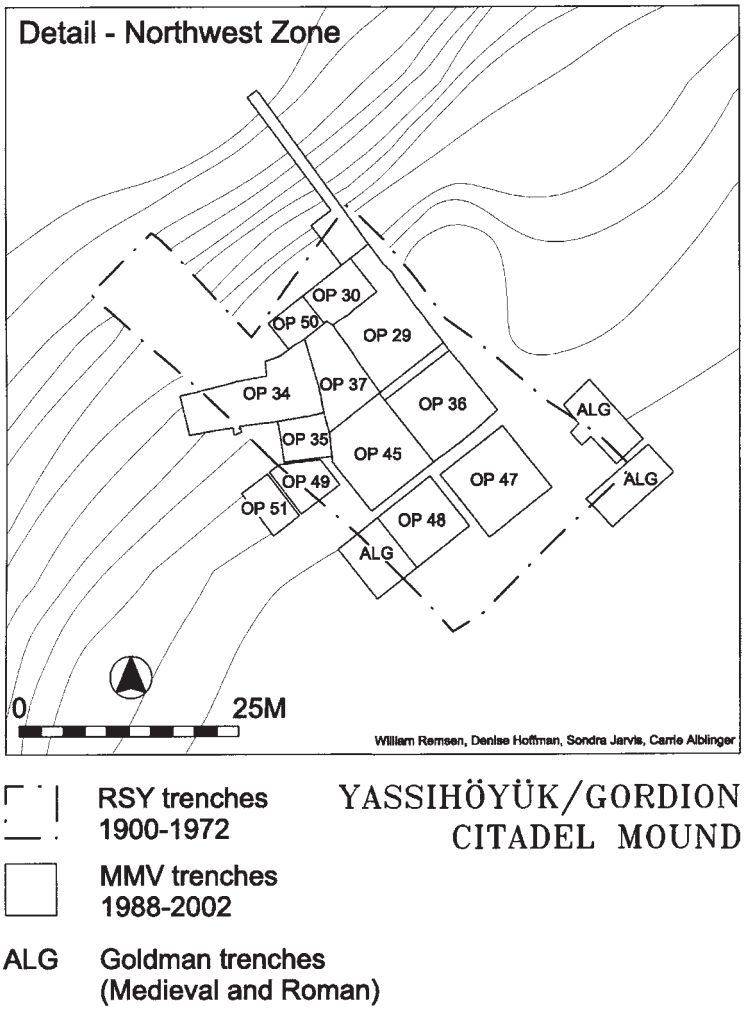


Fig. 4. Plan of excavations units on the Northwest Quadrant of the Citadel Mound.

is, changes in human activities and depositional processes) to define occupation phases; the dates for each phase were based on a suite of methods that included estimates of the time required for different kinds of strata to accumulate, radiocarbon determinations, dendrochronology, and artifact parallels with other sites. A second goal was to explore the settlement as a whole, including the western part of the Citadel, a Lower Town to the south of the Citadel and an Outer Town to the northwest (fig. 4; see also Rose and Darbyshire 2011: fig. 2.13). This was done through limited soundings from 1993 to 1995, recently supplemented by geophysical prospection that revealed a second Lower Town area to the north (Sams 2010; 2011).

The new archaeological sample provides a record of events and processes that was dated by archaeological methods, independent of the historical record. In some cases, the match between occupation phases and events attested by texts proved to be quite different from the match suggested by Young. For example, a new set

Table 1. YHSS Phases

YHSS Phase	*Period Name*	*Approximate Dates*	*Cultural Affiliation*
0	Modern	1920s	Turkish
1	Medieval	10–15th century C.E.	Unknown/Seljuk
2	Roman	1st century B.C.E.–4th century C.E.	Roman
3A	Later Hellenistic	260?–100 B.C.E.	Galatian
3B	Early Hellenistic	330–?260 B.C.E.	Phrygian/Greek
4	Late Phrygian	540–330 B.C.E.	Phrygian/Persian
5	Middle Phrygian	after 800–540 B.C.E.	Phrygian
6A–B	Early Phrygian	900–800 B.C.E.	Phrygian
7	Early Iron Age	1100–900 B.C.E.	Phrygian
9–8	Late Bronze Age	1400–1200 B.C.E.	Hittite
10	Middle Bronze Age	1600–1400 B.C.E.	Hittite

of archaeological dates for the burned Early Phrygian level (now YHSS 6A) securely dated it to ca. 800 B.C.E., rather than 700 B.C.E. as Young had thought, and it is the massive though poorly preserved building level above this Destruction Level that represents the height of Phrygian political power in the 8th century B.C.E. (YHSS 5; Rose and Darbyshire 2011; Voigt 2007). Less dramatic, but directly relevant to this essay, is a revision of the archaeological sequence for the Hellenistic period or YHSS 3, primarily as a result of soundings carried out on the western half of the Citadel Mound and in the southern Lower Town. There is significant disagreement about the interpretation of this sequence, revolving around the concepts of migration and ethnicity.

Ethnicity and Migration in the Archaeological Record

Critical for an understanding of the Later Hellenistic/Galatian settlement at Gordion and the ritual practices of its inhabitants is an understanding of historical context. To provide this context, we need answers for three key questions. First, using material culture as well as texts, can we link specific occupation levels with a Galatian presence at Gordion? Second, who were the people already living at Gordion in the early 3rd century B.C.E., and to what extent did this indigenous community represent a unified group with shared values, history, and language? Third, how did the newly arrived Galatians interact with the people they encountered when they came to Gordion, and to what extent can we relate this interaction to rituals and acts of sacrifice? In this section, I will briefly define *ethnicity* and describe possible relationships between cultural identities and the archaeological record. Also considered are the ways in which the appearance of a new ethnic group—a migration—can be documented using material culture.

Documentary sources for Iron Age Anatolia reveal a turbulent history for Gordion during the first millennium, with recurring episodes of migration, domina-

tion, and conquest. The sources also tell of named groups (Phrygians, Urartians, Lydians, Assyrians, Medes, Persians, Macedonians, Galatians) that can be broadly defined as residents of territorial states (for example, Mellink 1991). Each of these ethnonyms presumably applied at some time to a core group of people who shared a common language, behaviors, and values and saw themselves as distinct from other similarly constituted groups.[2] This common identity or ethnicity may or may not have been shared by other members of the territorial states or armies that bore the same name; by their very nature, states acquire land and incorporate the people who live on that land into political and economic units that are inevitably ethnically diverse.

The ways in which ethnic identities were constructed during the Iron Age at Gordion have not been systematically considered. Looking at the problem more broadly, within the archaeology of contemporary, protohistoric Europe, the concept of ethnicity has been widely discussed. For some scholars, the use of archaeological data to identify ethnic groups is a futile and potentially pernicious enterprise (for example, Collis 1997; James 1998, 1999). Those who reject inferences about ethnicity based on the archaeological record point out that, in modern societies, identity and especially ethnicity are fluid and that people can choose and manipulate their membership in socially bounded groups (Jones 1997). The degree to which this kind of choice was possible in ancient Middle Eastern societies is unknown, and in the absence of direct observation or testimony of individuals, is unknowable. Nevertheless, my own reading of the Gordion evidence suggests that, in some periods, conquest or takeovers by foreigners caused shifts in identity on the part of at least some of the people living at Gordion (see below, p. 247; and Voigt and Henrickson 2000a, 2000b).[3]

Choosing to focus on what the archaeological record *might* be able to tell us, other scholars have argued that identities encompassing socially bounded or ethnic groups not only exist but can be discerned if these groups use distinctive styles of material culture to express and signal shared ideas and values (Jones 1997; Wells 1998, 2001); artifacts that can be displayed and easily seen by others (for example, costume and ornaments) are often used to signal ethnic identity (Wells 1998).[4] Experience and optimism lead me to accept that stylistic variation can be used to express aspects of identity, including ethnicity. This does not mean, however, that we will always be able to recognize ethnic groups archaeologically: the absence of stylistic differences in the material remains left by a group of people may mean that

2. In a previous discussion of ethnicity, Robert Henrickson and I used the very broad definition of ethnic groups supplied by Kottak (1997: 50): a group whose members "share certain beliefs, values, habits, customs and norms . . . [including] language, religion, historical experience, geographic isolation, kinship, or race." Note that Kottak is using the term *race* to refer to a culturally constructed category (1997: 70–87). Note also that biological relationship (kinship) is not primary or even necessary for the definition of an ethnic group—another culturally constructed entity.

3. Gordion scholars who have discussed ethnicity—usually within the context of a persistence of "Phrygians" at the site—are not explicit in their definitions, but seem to place primary importance on biological descent and a secondary emphasis on language.

4. The use of costume as a signal of identity is amply documented in the traditional cultures of Europe as well as in the Middle East.

ethnic differences did not exist within this group, but it might also simply mean that style was not used to express these differences.

Looking beyond material culture, Gordion offers a form of evidence potentially useful for any study of ethnicity. Beginning in the Late Bronze Age, we have inscriptions, most of them very short and usually personal names. Language is often used as a means of expressing identity and ethnicity,[5] but this link depends on context. In multiethnic states, members of all ethnic groups will most likely use the same language in public or official contexts, but within the home or in smaller communities use of another language may have strong significance as a means of retaining or even acquiring an affiliation with an ethnic group (Parman 2005). Given these contextual language switches and the fact that individuals may use language to change their identity and ethnicity for short or long periods, the use of inscriptions is problematic. On the other hand, the language (and script) used to write personal names may well reflect an individual's choice of identity.

A concept entangled with ethnicity is "migration," defined here as the movement of a group of people over a significant distance in order to settle in an area that may or may not have a resident population. Given this definition, if one can document a migration archaeologically, then one could assume that a new ethnic group is present. For Gordion, two major episodes of migration have been accepted based on ancient texts: Phrygian-speakers moved into Anatolia from Thrace in the late second or early first millennium B.C.E. and eventually settled at Gordion; and groups of European Celts settled in central Anatolia and specifically at Gordion in the 3rd century B.C.E. The archaeological evidence cited in support of these migrations was not strong when we began excavation in 1988, and one of our research goals was to look for discontinuities in material culture that could be linked to the arrival of new populations. More explicitly, we looked for changes in all aspects of the archaeological record: settlement pattern, construction methods and building plans, the way domestic features such as hearths and pits were constructed, the technology used to make common artifact industries such as ground stone and pottery, artifact style, the plant and animal species exploited, and foodways including butchery (Voigt and Henrickson 2000a, b).

This perspective—a search for variation and discontinuities—is markedly different from that of earlier research at Gordion, which stressed continuity and a persistence of "Phrygian" traditions during the first millennium B.C.E. In the following section, I present a brief history of the settlement, emphasizing evidence for the arrival and impact of new ethnic groups. I also document changes in the form of the settlement as a means of understanding Gordion's topography in the 3rd century B.C.E. and the significance of occupied and unoccupied spaces.

A Historical Narrative for First-Millennium Gordion

At the start of the Iron Age (YHSS Phase 7; table 1), the settlement was small with a relatively simple agricultural economy (Miller et al. 2009). Almost every aspect

5. For a discussion of the problems encountered when attempting to relate language to ethnicity within the context of "Celtic" Ireland, see Mallory 1984; Rafferty 2006.

of material culture shows a break from the Late Bronze Age (YHSS 8), and Robert Henrickson and I have argued that this break represents a migration of Phrygian speakers into central Anatolia, an event suggested by texts, by the close relationship between the Phrygian and Greek languages and by limited artifact parallels (Sams 1988, 1995; Voigt and Henrickson 2000a, 2000b). By the mid-9th century, Gordion had an elaborate palace quarter surrounded by heavy fortifications, and it is this Early Phrygian/YHSS 6A citadel that burned ca. 800 B.C.E. (Rose and Darbyshire 2011: fig. 0.7). At the start of the Middle Phrygian/YHSS 5 period, the eastern palace quarter was rebuilt, heavy ashlar structures with rubble foundations replicating the plan of the burned level (Rose and Darbyshire 2011). We can also show that a second high mound was constructed to the west, separated from the palace quarter (now the Eastern Mound) by a street; to the north and south of these twin mounds, fortified Lower Towns were constructed, each anchored by a fortress (Kuş Tepe to the north and the Küçük Höyük to the south); and an Outer Town that may have been protected by small-scale walls was built to the northwest (Voigt 2007, 2009; Voigt and Young 1999). The total settled area at this time has been estimated at approximately 1 to 1.5 km square. Set on high ground surrounding the city were large earthen mounds or tumuli constructed above wooden burial chambers containing the bodies of the Phrygian elite; tumulus burial had begun in the mid-9th century and continued till the end of the first millennium (Liebhart et al. forthcoming; Rose and Darbyshire 2011). The presence of Phrygian speakers during the 8th century is amply attested by inscriptions and graffiti found both within the city and in the largest Phrygian tomb (Tumulus MM) dated ca. 740 B.C.E. (Liebhart and Brixhe 2009, with references).

The florescence of the Phrygian kingdom is recorded by texts. In the last quarter of the 8th century B.C.E., the Phrygian ruler Midas was in contact with Greeks to the west and Assyrians to the east (Sams 1995). After the death of Midas, Phrygian political power apparently eroded, while the Lydian kingdom spread its influence eastward from its capital at Sardis. The timing and speed of Phrygian decline is difficult to see archaeologically, but many of the great stone Middle Phrygian/YHSS 5 buildings went out of use by the end of the seventh or early 6th century B.C.E., and Lydian ceramic styles and imports became more common at Gordion. It has been suggested that there was a Lydian military presence in Gordion's southern Lower Town, based on the presence of distinctive Lydian-style ceramics in the Lower Town fortress or Küçükhöyük (for example, Young 1953: 29; Sams 2005: 19–20). On the other hand, no Lydian inscriptions have been found at Gordion (G. Kenneth Sams, personal communication), and the personal names written on imported Attic pottery in the Küçük Höyük fortress are Phrygian (Kathleen Lynch, personal communication). Acknowledging Lydian dominance over Gordion based on texts, Brian Rose has suggested that the Lydians may have ruled indirectly, using indigenous Phrygians as military leaders (personal communication). In this scenario, there would have been few if any ethnic Lydians at Gordion. A more accurate assessment of Lydian influence and perhaps presence within the city can only be made when we have an analysis of late Middle Phrygian/6th-century contexts with a study of a broader range of artifact types. The conquest of Anatolia by the Persians is documented by ancient

texts (Mellink 1988),[6] but at Gordion our primary evidence is archaeological. At some point between 550 and 540 B.C.E., siege mounds were constructed against both Lower Town fortresses, and the fort now buried within the Küçükhöyük was burned by the Persian army (Sams 2005: 19–20). On the Eastern Mound, within the former elite quarter, we have not been able to see the Persian conquest through a clear break in stratigraphic processes, but elsewhere both stratigraphy and changes in material culture are unambiguous (Voigt and Young 1999). Under Achaemenid rule, the city maintained its size (estimated at 1–1.5 km square) and prosperity, but loss of political power is reflected in the abandonment and robbing of most of the stone buildings in the eastern palace quarter. Set into their ruins were workshops and a variety of architectural fragments that were probably once houses (Fields 2010; Voigt 1994).[7] There is also evidence of both large-scale industrial activity and housing on the Western Mound, while in the southern Lower Town and in the Outer Town only houses have been found (Voigt and Young 1999).

Reflections of Achaemenid rule over Late Phrygian/YHSS 4 Gordion are seen in seals (Dusinberre 2005, 2008), coins (a hoard of 110 sigloi; Young 1958: 141), vessel forms (for example Young 1962: fig. 1), and iconography (Voigt and Young 1999: fig. 1). The presence of ethnic Persians at Gordion has not yet been established, but several lines of evidence suggest that Late Phrygian/YHSS 4 Gordion may have been more diverse than previous periods. Evidence for continuity within the ceramic industry has been used to argue that Gordion continued to be "Phrygian" during Late Phrygian times (Toteva 2007), but Robert Henrickson, who has made a comprehensive study of the entire local pottery sequence at Gordion over the past two decades, presents a different picture. Henrickson sees basic continuities in the technology and forms used for domestic purposes but a "substantial alien impact" on fine wares: in addition to an increase in the number of imported Greek vessels in Achaemenid times, there is a new preference for light-colored wares that were locally produced but in new ways, and stylistic borrowings from both Lydia and western Iran can be seen (Voigt et al. 1997; Robert Henrickson, personal communication).

More positively, support for the presence of new (ethnic?) groups during Achaemenid times may be found in spatial patterning in material culture. For example, well-preserved houses that vary in construction methods and plans have been excavated on the Western Mound and in the Lower and Outer Towns (Voigt and Young 1999); however, the samples are small, and the large area of settlement on the Eastern Mound recovered by Young remains unanalyzed. Less ambiguous are the presence of imported Iranian pottery from the Outer Town (Voigt et al. 1997: fig. 24) and a suggestion that foodways differed based on the documentation of statistically significant differences in the animal bone recovered within major topo-

6. Mellink's account of archaeological remains from Gordion under the Persians relied on the old chronology for the site and now needs drastic revision (1988: 228–31)

7. Beginning in the 6th century, the Eastern Mound was disturbed by processes that included wall robbing (down into the rubble foundations) and pit-digging. Deposits are literally churned, and there are so many residual sherds that the construction of a local ceramic sequence was difficult using the Young sample. Excavation since 1988 has led to a revision of the Middle/Late Phrygian sequence as originally defined by DeVries (1990).

graphic zones of the city (Jeremiah Dandoy and Melinda Zeder, personal communication). Nevertheless, pending more complete analyses of both the Young and Voigt samples for the Late Phrygian/Achaemenid period, it seems likely that most of the people living at Gordion were ethnic Phrygians (whether indigenous or assimilated), as documented by graffiti (Brixhe and Lejeune 1984; Brixhe 2002, 2004).

Documentary sources increase in number toward the end of the 4th century. Texts tell us that Alexander the Great and his armies arrived at Gordion in 333 B.C.E. (Stewart 2010: 56–59 with references) and that in 278 B.C.E., large numbers of Celts who referred to themselves as "Galatai" entered Anatolia as mercenaries and allies of small kingdoms seeking to maintain power in a time of political instability (Mitchell 1993: 13–19, Map 2; Darbyshire et al. 2000; Strobel 1996; but see also Campbell 2009). Documentary evidence places the Galatians in central Anatolia by 240 B.C.E., and, based on his reading of the sources, Steven Mitchell considers their movement into this area to have occurred somewhat earlier, by "the end of the 260s" (1993: 19, Map 4b). The first historical references to Galatian Gordion date to the start of the 2nd century when Livy tells us that a Roman army led by Consul Manlius Vulso found the settlement abandoned in 189 B.C.E. (Livy 1–38.27.9; for a general account of Vulso's campaign, see Grainger 1995). Vulso pursued the refugees from Gordion and the surrounding region to hilltop fortresses, where he slaughtered them (Stewart 2010: 61–62 with references).

Archaeological material assigned to the Hellenistic period at Gordion has been recovered from the roughly 2.5 ha. within Young's Main Excavation Area on the eastern half of the Citadel Mound, and from areas across the settlement by recent excavations. The latter include the 1988–89 Upper Trench Sounding adjacent to Young's Main Excavation Area; limited areas along the southern and western edges of the Citadel; a large area on the northwestern part of the Citadel (the Northwest Zone); and two areas in the southern Lower Town (figs. 1–2; Rose and Darbyshire 2001: fig. 2.13; Dandoy et al. 2002; Sams, Goldman and Burke 2007; Sams and Voigt 1990, 1999; Voigt 2003, 2010; Voigt et al. 1997). Very little has been published on the archaeological sequence for the Hellenistic period from either excavation cycle, and no other excavated site in central Anatolia has produced such an abundance of Hellenistic remains (Darbyshire et al. 2000: 81). Since chronology and the human activities represented by archaeological deposits are critical for our arguments about ritual and human sacrifice at Gordion, the following sections of this essay summarize the excavated data and layout problems caused by excavation methods, as well as assumptions about human behavior. This summary emphasizes the results of my own excavation, supplemented by information from preliminary reports on the Young years and from my reading of some of the Young excavation notebooks.

The Gordion Hellenistic Sequence

The longest sequence for Hellenistic/YHSS phase 3 apparently comes from the Voigt excavations,[8] specifically from the Northwest Zone, where deposits assigned

8. The sequence and architecture from the Young excavations are being studied as part of a Ph.D. dissertation by Martin Wells at the University of Minnesota. The absolute depth of

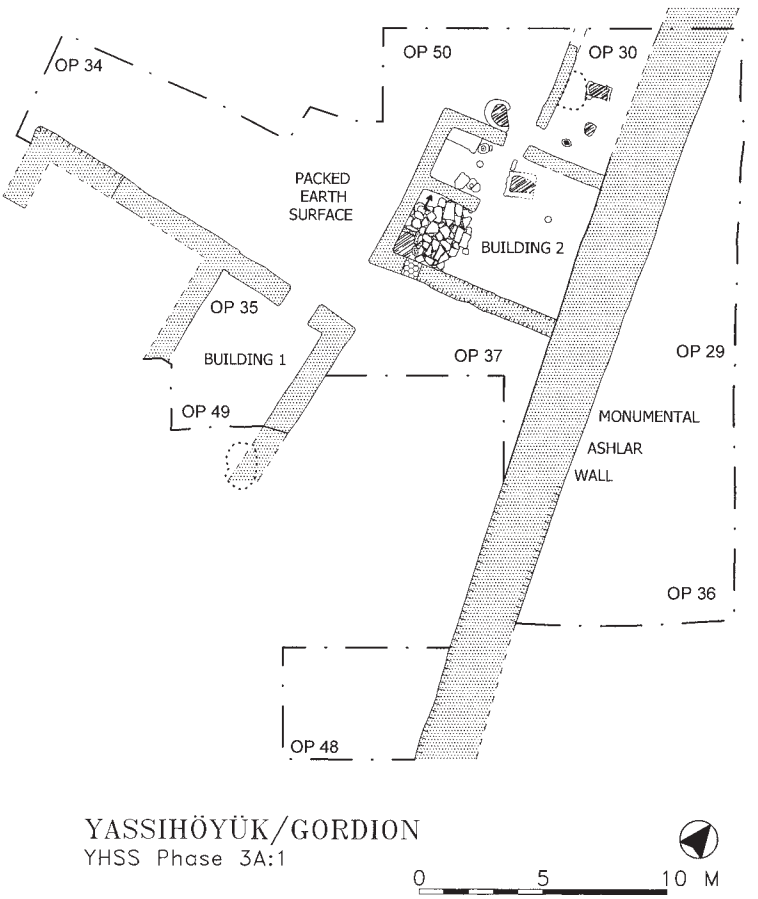


Fig. 5. Plan of Later Hellenistic YHSS 3A:1.

to this phase generally extend to a depth of about 2 meters (fig. 2). These strata have been divided into two phases—Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3B and Later Hellenistic/3A—based on differences in most aspects of material culture (see below, pp. 260–262). The initial Early Hellenistic or YHSS 3B deposits are thin and not well-understood. Better preserved is the following 3B occupation phase, which has deep ash and trash deposits that slope down from a highpoint in the east (in Operation 36) toward the northwest. The top of these deposits (at the southeast) was truncated by a Roman leveling operation, so the source of this lensed deposit is (and will remain) unknown, but it contained a great deal of metallurgical debris. To the northwest, the lensed trash accumulated against the base of a house built of mud brick set on stone foundations. This building and another contemporary structure to the southwest do not show the pattern of deterioration and collapse that is typical of mud-built structures but instead seem to have been abandoned while the walls were still sound; later (YHSS 3A: 1) wall foundations cut away much of the interior collapse

Hellenistic deposits in the Main Excavation Area is about 2 m, but the Early Hellenistic period does not seem to be as well represented as it is in the areas to the west.

that lay within the excavated area, but it appears as if bricks from the top of the walls were pushed into the building's interior, perhaps representing a deliberate leveling. The terminal Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3B occupation consists of poorly built structures, preserved only as architectural fragments.[9]

The Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A occupation in the Northwest Zone has three distinct "construction phases." The nature and definition of these chronological units is critical, given that my goal is to delineate a sequence of events (rather than a sequence of artifacts and architecture). During excavation, we placed a high priority on the definition of hard packed earth surfaces that connected buildings.[10] These surfaces form whenever earth or "mud" is used in construction. In the Northwest Zone, both mud brick and wattle and daub superstructures set on top of stone foundations were used during Early and Later Hellenistic times. Several processes contribute to the deposition of earth strata in exterior/unroofed areas: layers of mud are formed by eroding walls, episodes of wall repair, and finally wall decay. When these mud deposits are relatively stable (for example, during periods when the house is in good repair), they form a hard-packed surface as a result of weathering and traffic. By tracing the surfaces that run between buildings, it is possible to show contemporaneity, and sometimes the condition of contemporary buildings. Because buildings tend to have different life spans depending on construction and maintenance, mud-built settlements inevitably include structures at different points in their cycle of use, as can be observed today in villages surrounding Gordion.[11] Because of such differences, it is very rare to have a cluster of nearby buildings that are both constructed and abandoned at the same time, but this is exactly what happens in the Northwest Zone during the three construction phases of YHSS 3A.

The beginning of YHSS 3A is marked by the construction of three architectural units (fig. 5). A massive stone wall with foundations that cut deeply into Early Hellenistic deposits runs northwest-southeast. To the southwest of this wall is an equally massive building with ashlar foundations and a mudbrick superstructure (YHSS 3A:1 Building 1; figs. 5–6).[12] Because Building 1 was subsequently renovated and a new floor laid at a higher level, only one tiny fragment of carved ivory can be associated with its early use, recovered from the fill between floors. To the north is a smaller structure with cobble foundations and a wattle and daub superstructure;

9. Many of the excavators at Gordion in recent years are skilled in the excavation of mud walls. One of these archaeologists, Kim Codella, commented that the brick used in the terminal Early Hellenistic phase could only have been made by people who didn't know *how* to make and properly temper mud bricks.

10. At Gordion, deposition of earth and hard-packed earth surfaces may be associated with mud walls (for example, YHSS 9–7, 4 and 3 on the Citadel Mound), but surfaces can also form on deliberate fills (as in YHSS 6 and 5 on the Citadel).

11. This phenomenon is often referred to as "spiral stratigraphy." The archaeologists that I have worked with in Iran and Turkey since 1966 have contributed to these observations through constant discussion and informal ethnoarchaeological study of the villages that we inhabited. I learned from many, but especially Robert H. Dyson.

12. The stone blocks used for these structures came from Middle Phrygian/YHSS 5 buildings. The process of wall robbing in Hellenistic times is well-documented in the Upper Trench Sounding and in excavations conducted by Brendan Burke (Sams et al. 2007: 367).



Fig. 6. YHSS 3A:1 Buildings 1 and 2.

interior fittings include a hearth, stone platform, and a storage jar set between rocks (YHSS 3A:1 Building 2). While no large kilns have been found,[13] the area immediately to the northeast of Building 2 contained a series of small pyrotechnic features that could have fired small pots and/or figurines. Building 2 was suddenly abandoned, as evidenced by pottery (including a broken base full of pigment) and clay loom weights scattered on its floor (fig. 7); more pots lay on the outside surfaces adjacent to it (Voigt 2003: 17 top). These finds identify Building 2 as both a house and the workshop of a potter. Because of the scale of Building 1, I have interpreted this complex as an elite residence with attached craft production, separated from the rest of the settlement by a massive wall.[14] That people travelled along the wall in the open area adjacent to it on the northeast is indicated by a path paved with minute potsherds.

There is a chronological gap between YHSS 3A:1 and the next phase of construction for the Northwest Zone, a period of time that can be estimated at a decade or more—long enough for the mud superstructure of Building 2 to collapse along with portions of its rubble foundations. At the start of YHSS 3A:2 (fig. 8), much of

13. Well-preserved Later Hellenistic kilns were found by Young and Edwards in the Main Excavation Area (Edwards 1959: 267–68, figs. 14–21).

14. One of the oddities of the workshop is that it is built up against the monumental wall, something that I have never seen in the Near East and that I initially questioned as possible excavation error. I later found that this construction technique occurs at European La Tène *oppida* such as Entremont (James 1993: 44) and (more clearly) Martigues (Büchsenschütz 1995: fig. 29.10).



Fig. 7. Objects in situ within Building 2, YHSS 3A:1.

the monumental stone wall is torn down and robbed to the bottom course of its foundations and the robber trench filled with ash and trash. Building 1 is renovated with a new floor and a tile roof (Henrickson and Blackman 1999). The area inside the remnant walls of Building 2, above a layer of wall collapse, became an exterior court with a furnace (Building 3). To the north of the court, a new house (Building 4) was built over a preserved section of the monumental stone wall. A single pyrotechnic feature lay in an outside area to the northwest of Building 4, but the adjacent deposit has been eroded by the Sakarya. This phase ends with the burning of Building 1, which had been looted of most of its contents, the exception being broken pottery and 2 scraps of metal. This contrasts with Building 4, where the floor was covered with smashed pottery, fragments of figurines and figurine molds, and a few stone, bone, and metal artifacts including tools that could be used in finishing figurines (fig. 9).[15] The destruction of Building 4 is securely dated by a Rhodian amphora made in the latest third or earliest 2nd century B.C.E. (Mark Lawall, personal communication),[16] and the burning of Building 1 must have occurred at the same time.

There is also a time gap between the abandonment of the YHSS 3A:2 buildings and the final Hellenistic occupation level or YHSS 3A:3 (fig. 10). Eventually some

15. See Henrickson and Blackman 1999: 321–23 for a discussion of craft production in Hellenistic Gordion.

16. The neck of the amphora had broken off, but the broken edge had been carefully finished, and the body was intact, set in a depression in the floor of Building 4.

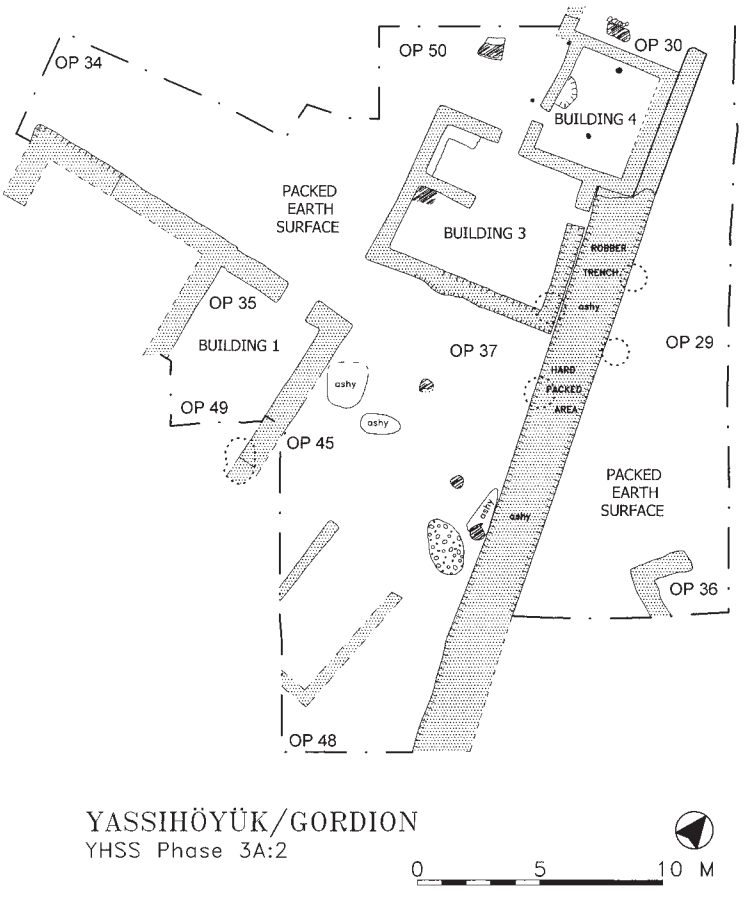


Fig. 8. Plan of Later Hellenistic YHSS 3A:2.

of the stone walls from Building 2 that still remained standing after a period of collapse were reused. A new earth floor was laid inside Building 1, above a thick layer of mudbrick collapse. The old doorway was blocked, and a new door was cut into the east wall (fig. 11). Thick layers of mud collapse had accumulated to the east, and in this outside area craft activities continued as documented by a large pyrotechnic feature with flue and associated debris from metalworking. The pottery found on the distinctive and undisturbed floors of YHSS 3A:3 included a large number of Hellenistic molded bowls, and pits cut into earlier (Hellenistic) exterior deposits contained plain vessels fired to light colors; the forms are clearly Hellenistic and related to some in YHSS 3A:2 but are not identical. In the 1st century C.E., new Roman immigrants leveled most of the Northwest Zone, destroying evidence for the final stages of this construction level.

The sequence in the Northwest Zone—an area that can be interpreted as the residence of the Later Hellenistic rulers and attached craftsmen—is remarkable, and can only be explained by a sequence of building events that affected the entire excavated area. Later in this essay, I will argue that YHSS 3A: Construction Phase 1



Fig. 9. YHSS 3A:2, artifacts scattered on the floor of Building 4.

marks the arrival of immigrant Celts at Gordion, that YHSS 3A:2 ends with the Vulso incursion of 189 B.C.E., and that YHSS 3A:3 marks a reoccupation sometime after 189. The key question is, to what extent is this sequence present in other parts of the settlement? Results from recent excavation show that different parts of the site had different histories during Hellenistic times. A trench along the western edge of the Citadel (Operation 17; fig. 2) has well-stratified Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3B deposits including mud brick structures and trash heaps rich in ceramics, but whatever once remained of YHSS 3A was almost entirely scraped away by Roman leveling.[17] Along the southern edge of the Citadel, one trench (Operation 39; fig. 2) shows a change in the use of space and new construction techniques at the Start of YHSS 3A, but does not have any evidence for an episode of abandonment. Nearby, in Operation 46, Brendan Burke found a continuous occupation sequence for the Hellenistic, with buildings being remodeled, rebuilt, and left to decay—an excellent example of spiral stratigraphy (Sams and Burke 2008: fig. 3).

The Upper Trench Sounding, important because it lies adjacent to Rodney Young's Main Excavation Area, provides more complete information (fig. 2). In this area, the Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3B was difficult to recognize. Based on stratigraphic discontinuities, we have tentatively given this date to a series of outside surfaces

17. Although the evidence is meager, the break between YHSS 3B and 3A is based on changes in construction and orientation of the architecture.



Fig. 10. Section between Operations 29 and 37, the Northwest Quadrant. The floor and walls exposed date to YHSS 3A:3; stratified below are YHSS 3A:2 and 1 and the latest Early Hellenistic/ YHSS 3B houses.

with hearths and pits, but there was little pottery associated with these surfaces, and Henrickson could not date them with any certainty.[18] Stratified above this industrial area was a new building with an associated court bordered by outside surfaces to the southeast; this phase is presumably equivalent to YHSS 3A:1 in the Northwest Zone. In the Upper Trench outside area were a set of features that included a shallow hearth filled with burnt horse bone; a pit filled with green deposits interpreted as a latrine; and a paved area. In the center of the paving was an upside down block that had lions carved on either side of a central hole (Draycott and Summers 2009: Pl. 78a; Voigt 2003: 16 top right).

In the next stratigraphic phase within the Upper Trench Sounding (YHSS 3A:2), the initial building (in Operation 7) was refurbished and a new structure was built to the southeast in Operation 2 (figs. 12–13). The best preserved room of the new structures had stone foundations topped with wattle and daub walls; to the northeast was a wall built of vertical slabs that bordered the Young trenches and had partially collapsed as balks eroded. The floor of this room was covered with intact pottery and other small objects (Sams and Voigt 1990: figs 5–10; Voigt 2003: 15 top), and stratified above this floor deposit was a layer of charcoal and burned reeds, the

18. Hopefully, Shannan Stewart, who has studied the Hellenistic ceramics excavated by Young and will undertake a similar study of my material, will be able to date these strata with more certainty.

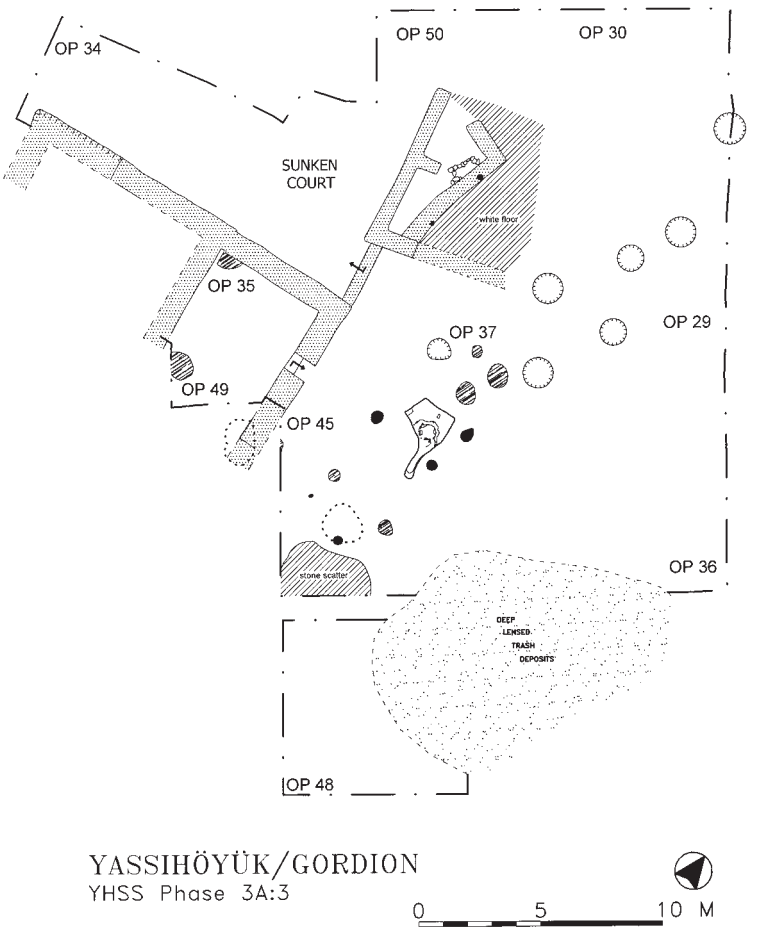


Fig. 11. Plan of YHSS 3A:3.

remains of the roof. This second YHSS 3A stratigraphic phase in the Upper Trench Sounding can be securely linked to YHSS 3A: Construction Phase 2 in the Northwest Zone based on the floor deposits in each area. In the Operation 2 building, gray pottery predominates, but there were also light-colored vessels, sometimes decorated with red painted bands; some of these forms are diagnostic for Stewart's "Middle Hellenistic" ceramic assemblage which she dates ca. 235–189 B.C.E. (2010: 107). Independent links to YHSS 3A in the Northwest Zone are provided by architectural details. Vertical wall slabs are found in the Operation 2 building and YHSS 3A:2 Building 4; and a rectangular platform with a hearth on top and a low stone bench found in the Operation 2 room are both duplicated in YHSS 3A:1 Building 2 (compare figs. 5, 8, and 12). Thus, we can place the second building phase in the Upper Trench Sounding firmly within the tradition of material culture introduced in YHSS 3A:1 in the Northwest Zone, and we can place the abandonment that marks the end of the second building phase in the Upper Trench Sounding contemporary with the end of YHSS 3A:2 in the Northwest Zone.

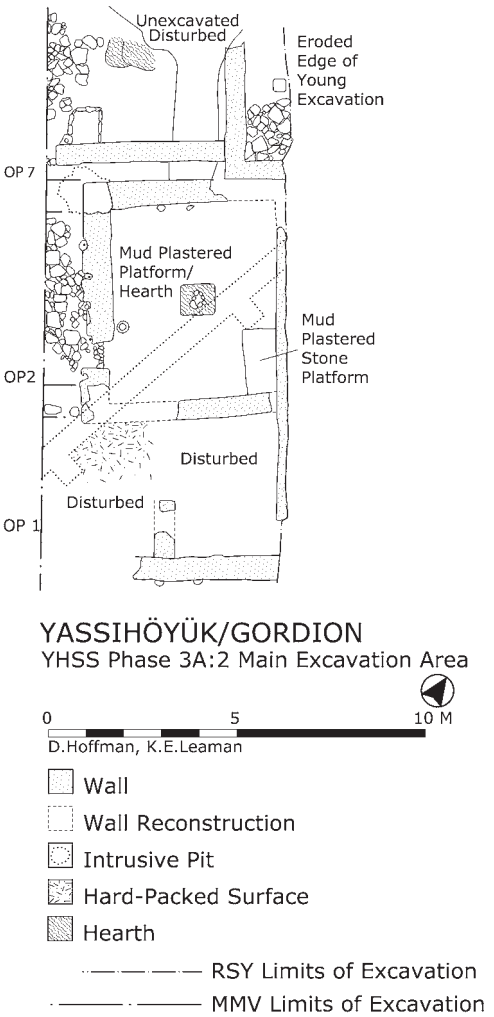


Fig. 12. Upper Trench Sounding, plan of YHSS 3A:2 houses.

The Upper Trench Sounding also produced a third Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A stratigraphic unit.[19] The architectural remains are ephemeral, consisting of lines of stone that are the remains of walls rebuilt above the walls of the YHSS 3A:2 building in Operation 2 (fig. 14). Fortunately, we recovered a small pit full of pottery contemporary with this structure that includes diagnostic pieces that are clearly Later Hellenistic and that can be duplicated only in YHSS 3A construction phase 3 in the Northwest Zone. Thus, there is good evidence that there is a Hellenistic reoccupation of Gordion after 189 B.C.E. in the Main Excavation Area.

To summarize, although the Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A remains from the Upper Trench Sounding are not as well-preserved as those from the Northwest Zone, the sequence is similar, with three distinct phases of construction and use, and evidence that the second and third phases of YHSS 3A in the Upper Trench Sounding are contemporary with the second and third YHSS 3A construction phases in the Northwest Zone. The archaeological record for earliest YHSS 3A differs, with the construction of monumental architecture in the Northwest Zone and domestic structures in the Upper Trench Sounding, but this can be attributed to differences between an elite

19. The end of the Galatian occupation at Gordion is a contentious issue. Scholars working on the Young material have not recognized any evidence of a return to the site after 189 B.C.E. Given the poor stratigraphic control for the Young sample, and especially for the top meter of the deposit, it is not surprising that the lightly built remains of YHSS 3A:3 in the Main Excavation Area were not recognized. Stewart (2010: 125), relying on the ceramics in the Young sample, has not found ceramics that "need to be later than 189 B.C.E.," but this dating relies on parallels with other sites and not on the Gordion stratigraphy. The molded Hellenistic bowls that Stewart (2010: 163) assigns to her Middle Hellenistic phase ending in 189 B.C.E. are virtually identical to a series of vessels recovered from sealed floor deposits in the Northwest Zone. These floors are sandwiched between the collapse of a house dated by ceramics to 189 B.C.E. (YHSS 3A:2) and intact Roman floors dated to the later 1st century C.E.



Fig. 13. YHSS 3A:2 house in Operation 2; most of the artifacts recovered from the floor of this building have already been removed, but a few are visible in the upper righthand corner of the image.



Fig. 14. Edge of Rodney Young's Main Excavation Area at the start of excavation in 1988. The large slabs are a wall within the house in Operation 2. Flat stones above these slabs represent the YHSS 3A:3 rebuilding.

zone and an area with ordinary housing.[20] The fact that the Upper Trench Sounding documents three Later Hellenistic occupation phases in the Main Excavation Area is particularly significant. The Young sample is large and important as a means of examining variation in status, wealth, occupation and ethnicity and possible change through time. The difficulty is that these efforts are hampered by the ways in which data were collected in the early years of excavation. Young's goal was to expose the palace quarter of the Early Phrygians, and he had minimal interest in the deposits that had to be removed to reach this goal (Voigt 2009). In preliminary reports, Hellenistic "levels" (presumably "building levels") are reported and key finds are documented, but the published information masked basic problems. In the field, the recording of the latest deposits was left at the discretion of the site supervisors and ranged from meticulous to casual (Stewart 2010: 63–72). As a result, even well-preserved architecture was not always planned, floor deposits were rarely mapped, and recording of building contents was haphazard. Excavation focused on architecture rather than stratigraphy, and even a cursory reading of the excavation notebooks shows Hellenistic phase plans with wall fragments that run in different directions and are clearly not contemporary, accompanied in some cases by Medieval green-glazed ceramics.[21] Given the lack of stratigraphic precision and chronological control, and the casual collection and curation practices that characterize the Young sample, our understanding of occupation levels, depositional processes, sequence, and chronology for most Hellenistic phases and for all areas of the site must come from recent excavation.

Returning to my outline of historical and archaeological context, we can with some confidence trace changes in the form of Hellenistic Gordion. Shortly after the arrival of Alexander, two dramatic changes took place. First, the two high mounds

20. I have argued that evidence for a significant break in values is supplied by the way in which a stone statue base was treated in the initial Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3A occupation in the Upper Trench Sounding, where it was turned upside down and used as paving (Voigt 2003: 16; for recent thinking on deposition of artifacts (and even trash) as the result of deliberate human actions, see Bradley (2005: 14–15). This argument is rejected by Stewart (2010: 103–4).

21. Some idea of the chronological problems inherent in the Young sample for the latest periods at Gordion can be gained from a single example. While digging in the upper meter of deposit in the Main Excavation area, excavators frequently encountered coiled ovens, sometimes in pairs. These were interpreted as free-standing structures and dated to the Hellenistic period (Young 1960: fig. 12), inferences accepted in a recent work (Stewart 2010: 110–11, fig. 73). When I began planning new research at Gordion in 1987, Project Director Keith DeVries pointed out examples of this kind of coiled structure in the eroding balks of the Young excavation and told me that this feature (always found near the top of the archaeological deposit) was diagnostic of the Galatian levels. In 1988, we found one of these ovens in the Upper Trench Sounding, cut from a surface that had some wall fragments; contemporary with oven and walls was a nearly complete green-glazed bottle, diagnostic of the Medieval period. This oven was not freestanding but built into a pit cut from a hard-packed surface, a type common in Medieval settlements across Anatolia. Recent excavation in the Northwest Zone at Gordion found more of these sub-surface ovens with flues, sometimes paired, and always securely dated by Medieval glazed wares (Sams and Voigt 1999; Sams and Goldman 2006). The problem for Young's excavators was that they were not looking for exterior surfaces but for buildings and floors. The surfaces from which the Medieval ovens were cut went unrecognized, and whatever deposit was found at the base of the ovens was presumably considered an associated floor.

that lay at the city's center during Middle and Late Phrygian times were united when the street between them was filled in and houses were built above the fill; houses were also built above the old city walls, increasing the area on the Citadel Mound available for construction (DeVries 1990: 400–401). Second, low-lying areas of the settlement (the southern Lower Town, most or all of the Outer Town and presumably the northern Lower Town) were abandoned. Thus, during Early Hellenistic times (YHSS Phase 3B), what had been a sprawling city covering about a square kilometer in Late Phrygian/Achaemenid times became a relatively small (ca. 10 ha.), compact settlement restricted to the top of the Citadel Mound; put in cultural terms, the Late Phrygian city, which had a typical Near Eastern plan with clearly defined topographic zones, took on the appearance of an acropolis. The drastic reduction in settlement size surely reflects a sharp drop in population. The reason for this depopulation and the destination of those who left the city are unknown, but the Gordion Regional Survey found an expansion in the number of smaller sites during the Hellenistic period (Kealhofer 2005).

When the Galatians arrived, they found a landscape that was in some respects reminiscent of their European homeland in the 4th and 3rd centuries. There was a high flat mound very similar in topography to places chosen for the construction of La Tène oppida (Cunliffe 1997). To the south of this mound was an enclosed area corresponding to spaces used for rituals in La Tène Europe (Webster 1995; see also Bradley 2003). Even the turmuli that surrounded Gordion would have been familiar, replicating burial mounds constructed for Hallstatt and early La Tène elites and promising similar treasures for the taking![22]

Ethnic Groups within Hellenistic Gordion

For the Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3B period there is general agreement about who lived at Gordion. Using language as an initial index of ethnic affiliation, graffiti scratched on pottery indicate that Phrygian remained in use, as shown by letters in the Phrygian alphabet inscribed on an Early Hellenistic potsherd (Brixhe 2002: 94–95, YHSF 89–276). More common, however, was the use of Greek (Roller 1987; Stewart 2010: 79–80), a common result of the 'Hellenization' process across Anatolia. The use of Greek letters to write Phrygian names, and mistakes in the use of Greek, provides clear evidence of an acculturated Phrygian population. On the other hand, Lynn Roller used graffiti recovered from the Young excavations to conclude that "a sudden appearance . . . of many common Greek names immediately after Greek military penetration into this area in 333 B.C. suggests that at least some of the people who bore these characteristically Greek names were actually Greek, that is, Greek people who had settled at Gordion" (1987: 107). The question is, how many? Based on their study of ceramics, Frederick Winter (1988: 63–64) and Shannan Stewart (2010: 79–90) argue that ethnic Phrygians still predominated in Early

22. Dating the robber tunnels found in so many of the Gordion tumuli is difficult or impossible, but based on the appearance of what she considered to be Early and Middle Phrygian artifacts in Hellenistic contexts on the Citadel Mound, Ellen Kohler (personal communication) suggested that the Galatians were responsible for some (or much) of the looting.

Hellenistic times. DeVries, looking at a wider range of evidence and emphasizing the "complete rebuilding" of houses in the area excavated by Young,[23] suspects a "Graeco-Macedonian colonization" but then rejects this idea (1990: 401). My own excavations documented significant changes in daily life between Late Phrygian/YHSS 4 and Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3B times as evidenced by the appearance of new kinds of building plans and construction techniques, and domestic equipment including pottery (vessel forms), grinding stones (adoption of Greek-style hopper mills),[24] and loom weights (hard-fired pyramidal). Overall, there is good reason to suspect a migration and to infer that the immigrants are Greco-Macedonians. The adoption of new types of houses and household furnishings suggests to me that at least some of these were women.[25]

A second period of rapid and significant change marks the transition to the Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A period, and again, we can link change to events reported in documentary sources: the arrival of immigrant Galatians. In parts of the site excavated since 1988, the changes in material culture between phases 3B and 3A are more dramatic than those between YHSS 4 and 3B and again correspond to the criteria set out as characteristic of immigration of a new group.[26] That some ethnic Celts lived at Gordion in the late 3rd century B.C.E. is certain, based not only on ancient texts but also on the presence of Celtic names written with the Greek alphabet (DeVries 1990: 402 with references; Roller 1987: 106). As with possible Greek immigrants in the late 3rd century, there has been considerable debate over the number of Celts living at Gordion in Later Hellenistic times (DeVries 1990: 401–5; Stewart 2010: 93ff.; Winter 1988).

Those scholars who see only a minor Celtic element in the population at Gordion emphasize the small number of contemporary European or La Tène style artifacts that have been recognized from Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A deposits: an iron fibula, iron sheep shears, and a button.[27] Those espousing this point of view argue that the number of Celts was similarly small or had been assimilated into a Hellenized but ethnically Phrygian population (Winter 1988: 64–68; see also Roller 1987). Continuities in ceramics again play a major role in the argument for Phry-

23. A comprehensive study of the Hellenistic architecture from Young's excavations has been undertaken by Martin Wells, University of Minnesota.

24. Stewart reports that only one hopper mill is recorded in the Young sample. This reflects collection and curation policies, because in the comparatively small Voigt sample, 6 fragments have been recognized, the earliest from a YHSS 3B context.

25. A discussion of gender and gendered links to material culture cannot be undertaken in this essay, but the assumption here is that equipment used in cooking and textile manufacture was used by, and often made by, women.

26. Stewart (2010: 129–34) does not see a break in the ceramic tradition between 275 and 235 B.C.E., equivalent to her Early Hellenistic B ceramic phase. If, however, one looks at vessel forms represented in her Early Hellenistic A (equivalent to YHSS 3B) and in Early Hellenistic B (in my view, equivalent to YHSS 3A:1), there is a clear break. Moreover, there is continuity in the vessel forms delineated for Early Hellenistic B and Middle Hellenistic (that is, YHSS 3A:2) (Stewart 2010: table 7).

27. An iron object that is identical to La Tène shield handles was pointed out to me by Simon James. At Gordion, this artifact was being used by a figurine maker and was associated with shaping tools.

gian persistence. On the other hand, Keith DeVries, working with the entire corpus of materials excavated by Rodney Young, used numismatic, epigraphic and iconographic evidence to argue for a significant presence of strongly Hellenized Celts, many of them members of a literate elite (1990: 403–5).

In this essay, I would like to take a different approach to the problem, one directly relevant to an interpretation of the human and animal remains dated to YHSS 3A. Using stratigraphic data from recent excavations, it is possible to outline a sequence of events that documents a fluctuating Galatian control over Gordion.[28] In the Voigt sample, the break between Early/YHSS3B and Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A is dramatic. Observed differences include a change in settlement plan (the construction of monumental architecture in what had been an industrial and ordinary residential area in the Northwest Zone); changes in plan, orientation and construction materials for houses (from mud brick to wattle and daub in at least three parts of the Citadel; changes in the form of built-in features such as hearths and platforms, and in household equipment (for example, hopper mills were replaced by stone mortars); and in some aspects of the ceramic assemblage (for example, imported spur-handled *kantharoi* are replaced as drinking vessels, perhaps by locally made bowls). I have also argued that there is direct evidence of a change in values in the way that stone sculptures were used in YHSS 3A:1 and 2 contexts (which I discussed above; also see Voigt 2003: 16)

Turning this sequence into actions performed by people, I suggest that the final YHSS 3B phases represent a time of political instability, perhaps a period when Galatians had arrived in central Anatolia and were conducting raids but had not yet settled. Frederick Winter (1988: 64), using evidence provided by imported ceramics and coin hoards, suggested that there was a gap in the Gordion sequence beginning around 275 B.C.E. and ending with the arrival of Galatian settlers around 240 B.C.E. Stewart sees no gap in the sequence but rather a cessation of imported pots (2010: 90–93).[29] The stratigraphy documented by recent excavations does not show the

28. I would like to thank Shannan Stewart for the spur that clarified my thinking about the timing and nature of Galatian political power at Gordion. In earlier publications I used the phrase "Galatian occupation" in a simple way, referring only to the fact that Galatians were living at Gordion. Stewart explicitly raised the issue of the possible "subjugation" and "oppression" of the indigenous population of Gordion by a Celtic elite (2010: 106), a question that I had not satisfactorily addressed.

29. Stewart infers continuity in her Early Hellenistic A–B ceramic sequence, which she supports with an interpretation of coin hoards (2010: 90). She sees individual hoards as collections made by individuals who add coins at a time near their minting, so that the hoards gradually accumulate between 275 and 235 B.C.E., eliminating a gap in occupation at Gordion. DeVries (1990: 403–4) sees the hoards cited by Stewart as loot and mercenary pay collected by Galatian settlers, perhaps kept as heirlooms, and eventually deposited. In my view, the process of coin collection is unknown, and the only things we can say about such hoards are the absolute date that they were closed and the relative date for their deposition provided by stratigraphy. Perhaps more chronologically significant than the rare hoards are single coins that were lost or purposefully deposited in architectural contexts (for example, in floors, just under newly laid floors). In excavations carried out since 1988, the mint date of coins is very different from absolute dates provided for their stratigraphic context by other kinds of evidence. Single coins and coins in small hoards dated to the late 4th and early 3rd centuries are found in YHSS 3A:1 and 3A:2 contexts, including the

kind of building decay and erosion that would be expected if Gordion was abandoned. Instead, the northwest zone fits well with a scenario based on texts in which the second quarter of the 3rd century B.C.E. was a period of fluctuating political power and a gradual takeover of central Anatolia by immigrant Galatians (Mitchell 1993: 15–22, Map 4a–b). It is possible that some or all of the people who lived at Gordion during the latter part of YHSS 3B (around 275 B.C.E.?) simply packed up and left, perhaps returning later and establishing a ephemeral presence for a brief period. Alternatively the Early Hellenistic population remained, but their independence ended at some point near the middle of the 3rd century (ca. 260–240 B.C.E.?) when new (YHSS 3A:1) structures were built in the Northwest Zone by people with significant political and economic power. The material culture of this new group, which differs in almost every aspect from that of YHSS 3B, begins a tradition that continues into the 2nd century, a period when no one disputes a Galatian presence.[30] I would therefore argue that the elite complex of YHSS 3A:1 represents an initial settlement of Gordion by Galatians.

Based on documentary evidence, the Galatians of the 3rd century B.C.E. made their living by raiding and serving as mercenary troops for the Seleucids (Mitchell 1993: 19–20). What we know of them from Greek and Roman texts as well as from the material culture and iconography of La Tène Europe indicates a focus on success in personal combat by the warriors that formed the Celtic elite (Freeman 2002: 1–21; Mitchell 1995: 12ff.; see also below, p. 277). The Galatians, seasoned by years of fighting in western Anatolia, presumably used force or a threat of force to take over Gordion and its territory—part of the search for new agricultural land suggested by historians (Darbyshire et al. 2000: 75–77; Strobel 1996, 2002). That they were not secure in their control over most of the resident population is evidenced by the monumental wall that separated them from the rest of the settlement during YHSS 3A:1. On the other hand, robbing and transporting the huge stones incorporated in the monumental wall and Building 1 required a good-sized labor force; it may be that a large number of immigrant Galatians worked on this project, but it is also possible that the labor was supplied by an indigenous population.[31] Just how tenuous the Galatian hold on Gordion and/or the surrounding territory was is demonstrated by the fact that in the Northwest elite zone YHSS 3A:1 ends with an abandonment, with easily replaced items such as clay loom weights and pottery left in situ, but all valuables removed. Given what we know of Celtic societies in Europe, we can postulate that the threat came either from competing

floor deposits that both Stewart and I date to 189 B.C.E. A detailed discussion of the numismatic evidence must await the final publication of the Gordion coins by Kenneth Harl.

30. Ironically, the one aspect of the ceramic assemblage that does not greatly change is the utilitarian vessels (Robert Henrickson, personal communication). Henrickson sees a basic continuity in the technology of cooking pots and gray domestic wares from Late Phrygian/YHSS 4 into Hellenistic/YHSS 3 times; at the same time, he sees technological and stylistic changes in the fine wares of these periods. The utilitarian vessels are wheel-made, so not the product of households, but they do represent choices made by their users.

31. We might speculate that the choice of building material was an attempt to link Galatian rulers with those of Gordion's glory days in the 7th century.

Galatian warriors or from a subject population that presumably included indigenous Hellenized Phrygians and Greeks as well as some Galatians. In my view, the very presence of a walled elite compound suggests that there was still a substantial Greco-Macedonian/Phrygian population and that it posed a threat to the Galatian rulers.[32]

The return of Galatian rulers and settlers is documented by new construction at the start of YHSS 3A:2. The length of the gap in occupation in the Northwest Zone is not certain, but the total collapse of Building 2 suggests at least 10 and perhaps 20 years. This time, the Galatian elite was sufficiently in control of the settlement to destroy the wall around their compound in the Northwest Zone. Most of the remainder of the population of Gordion was made up of returning Galatians or of people who had adopted forms of material culture used by the ruling elite and perhaps their ethnicity as well (see DeVries 1990: 404–5). This statement is supported by the similarities in architecture and household equipment documented for the Northwest Zone and the Upper Trench Sounding, by the presence of Celtic names and of course by Livy's description of Gordion, which describes it explicitly as Galatian (Livy 1–38.27.9).[33]

Unfortunately, the Galatians of the early 2nd century did not foresee invasion by a Roman army. The settlement was not fortified, and the flight of its inhabitants is documented by the abandonment at the end of YHSS 3A:2. We now know that at least some Galatians survived Vulso's attempt at genocide (see Mitchell 1993: 23 ff.), but at Gordion those survivors were relatively few in number and their attempt to reestablish themselves (YHSS 3A:3) was short-lived. What evidence we have indicates the presence of metal workers and perhaps an elite who lived in the remodeled Building 1. Whoever they were, they soon left the Citadel Mound, and it lay unoccupied until the 1st century C.E., when Roman settlers arrived.

The Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A Human Remains

Up to this point, we have limited our discussion to the evidence for Hellenistic settlement and the people living within it at Gordion. From an area outside, but adjacent to, the settlement, we have discovered evidence for practices related to

32. Stewart (2010: 106) claims that "the stratigraphy of the Main Excavation Area . . . contains no indication that the site was ever sacked, burned, or abandoned during the entire Hellenistic period," and she concludes that "the arrival of the Gauls most likely caused suspicion and confusion, and there must have been a period of adjustment and adaptation." There are several problems with this statement. First, there *is* an abandonment in 189 B.C.E., which she describes in great detail. Second, battles do not necessarily leave their mark on residential areas: there is virtually no evidence of the Persian conquest on the Citadel Mound, with the possible exception of the area around the main gate, and no evidence of Alexander's takeover anywhere on the site. Third, I find it hard to see the militaristic and war-loving Galatians described in historical texts from Europe and Anatolia executing the kind of peaceful takeover envisioned by Stewart.

33. As stated above, determining the ethnicity of any human group based on archaeological evidence is difficult at best, and distinguishing Hellenized Celts from Celticized Hellenized Phrygians and Macedonians is no simple matter. Gordion is, however, one of the few sites where it may in fact be possible. Household ceramics in the abandonment level dated to 189 B.C.E. show a great diversity in preferences for specific forms and ornament (see Stewart 2010) that can potentially be used to identify indigenous and immigrant households.

death, practices that I would characterize as "ritual" in that they are formal and repeated. I define rituals as acts that have a social meaning and are designed to communicate with an audience. Such acts are not necessarily related to the supernatural and thus are not necessarily part of religion (for example, Kyriakidis 2007); however, based on accounts provided by the ethnographic record, formal and repeated actions that result in the death of humans and modification of their remains are almost always tied in some way to beliefs in a supernatural world (Ucko 1969: 264ff.). In the case of the Gordion Hellenistic bone deposits, the people whose actions resulted in these deposits were certainly concerned with power over individuals and political domination. Working from this assumption, we can isolate four moments in time when the Galatian rulers of Gordion might have performed rituals designed to insure political or military success: (1) their arrival at the site; (2) the flight of the rulers at the end of the initial Galatian occupation; (3) the resettlement of the site in the late 3rd century; and (4) the time when Vulso and his troops were approaching the site in 189 B.C.E. In the first three moments, the purpose of rituals would have been to subdue, humiliate, or terrorize the indigenous population. In the fourth case, the goal would presumably be an engagement of supernatural forces that might prevent disaster; this goal might also have applied at any point during the initial occupation with its attendant political insecurity. In order to provide the background needed to decide among these scenarios, the next section of this essay describes the archaeological evidence for the disposal of human remains at Later Hellenistic Gordion. This is followed by a section that outlines the evidence for killing and sacrifice by Celtic groups in late Iron Age Europe, providing a context for the Gordion evidence and a better understanding of the actions and intentions that produced it.

Context and Dating

Gordion's southern Lower Town is a relatively flat area encircled by heavy fortification walls; in the center of the walls is a high mound which represents a Middle Phrygian/YHSS 5 fortress that was taken by the Persian army along with a triangular siege mound built up against this fortress by the Persians (figs. 1, 15). We set out to investigate the Lower Town in 1993, hoping to find domestic architecture for the Middle Phrygian/YHSS 5 period, which was poorly represented in the Young sample on the Citadel Mound. Trenches were set out in two areas, labeled Areas A and B (fig. 15; Rose and Darbyshire 2011: fig. 2.13). In both areas, we eventually found both YHSS 5 and YHSS 4/Achaemenid architecture, the latter abandoned after Alexander took the city, but stratified above this architecture were layers of clean clay that represents decay from the Lower Town fortification walls. Within these secondary deposits were a large Roman/YHSS 2 (1st to 3rd centuries C.E.) cemetery, and the remains of at least 20 humans and a large number of animals that had been strewn across an outside surface.[34]

34. Human and animal bone deposits recovered from the Lower Town from 1993 to 1995 were excavated and recorded by Sondra Jarvis and Jeremiah Dandoy. An analysis of the human bone from these seasons was completed by Page Selinsky (2004), while an ongoing study of the animal



Fig. 15. The Southern Lower Town with Areas A (left) and B (right) viewed from the Citadel Mound.

When we came on the first of these bone assemblages, we thought that they lay in shallow depressions, or perhaps in pits that had not been defined during excavation (Sams and Voigt 1995: 376), but continued excavation and stratigraphic analysis showed conclusively that in each excavation area the bone lay on an ancient surface that can be traced from one trench to the next. Dating was difficult, but in each area we were eventually able to show that the bone-bearing surface is sandwiched between the remains of Late Phrygian/YHSS 4 houses, and outside surfaces from which the Roman graves had been cut. Having deposits that can be confidently placed between ca. 330 B.C.E. and the 1st century C.E. is not very satisfying, but Area B provided material for an absolute chronology. Within the small sample of artifacts from the bone-bearing surface in B were a diagnostic sherd (a local imitation of Attic black glazed pottery) that was dated to the mid-3rd century by Keith DeVries, and three Hellenistic coins, two of them identified as late 4th century issues of Alexander III (Kenneth Harl, pers. comm.). At Gordion, the mint date of Hellenistic coins is quite different from the date of deposition within the archaeological record. A total of 34 Alexander III coins have been recovered since 1988,

remains is being conducted by Jeremiah Dandoy. The Roman/YHSS 2 period at Gordion is being published by Andrew Goldman.

31 of these from YHSS 3A contexts and one from a Roman context.[35] Based on the diagnostic sherd and the find spots of coins in the settlement, the Area B surface with bone deposits dates to YHSS 3A. The dating of the bodies in Area A is more difficult. Strata derived from the decay of the Lower Town walls were very thin in the excavated area, and there was considerable disturbance by the Roman cemetery; nevertheless, where it is possible to see the top of the cuts made for Roman graves, they lie above the surface with bodies. Based on ceramics as well as stratigraphic sequence, the bodies can be assigned with confidence to the Hellenistic period. Obtaining a more precise date is not possible based on artifactual evidence: we did not find coins or pottery that could be used to distinguish between the Early and Later Hellenistic periods (a matter of decades). In the end, the assignment of a Later Hellenistic/YHSS 3A date for the Area A surface remains is based on the assumption that the unusual forms of bone deposition in Areas A and B are related and roughly contemporary. Support for this assumption comes from the fact that there is nothing in the archaeological or historical record that can account for the bodies found in Area A during the Early Hellenistic/YHSS 3B period, but as we shall see, there is textual evidence from Anatolia and Europe that can place them within the Galatian occupation/YHSS 3A.

A study of the stratigraphy also provides information on the topographic context for the bone deposits. The Lower Town fortification walls were substantial, constructed of mudbrick on stone foundations, and rebuilt several times (Mellink 1958). When the Lower Town was abandoned after Alexander took the city, maintenance of its walls presumably ceased, but there is no evidence that they were deteriorating at rapid rate. As stated above, there were only very thin deposits of decayed mud brick between the 4th century (Late Phrygian/YHSS 4) houses inside the walls and the surfaces on which the bone deposits were found. Thus, in the 3rd century B.C.E. the Lower Town "burial ground" was a large open space surrounded by high walls running around to the east, south, and west. These walls did not, however, hide human activities and the material remains that resulted from these activities: both were easily visible to people living on the adjacent Citadel Mound.

The Bone Deposits

In this section, I will present a brief description of each deposit, summarizing the results of archaeological, physical anthropological, and zooarchaeological studies. All information on age, sex, and trauma in the descriptions that follow comes from the work of Page Selinsky (2004, 2005) of the University of Pennsylvania. Information on the faunal remains was provided by Jeremiah Dandoy. An interpretation of each deposit will be offered after a consideration of information on similar deposits provided by texts and archaeological evidence from Iron Age Europe.

35. The remaining two Alexander III coins were found in a Hellenistic deposit that cannot be more precisely dated. See n. 29 above for a discussion of the problems presented when the Hellenistic coins are used to establish absolute dates at Gordion.

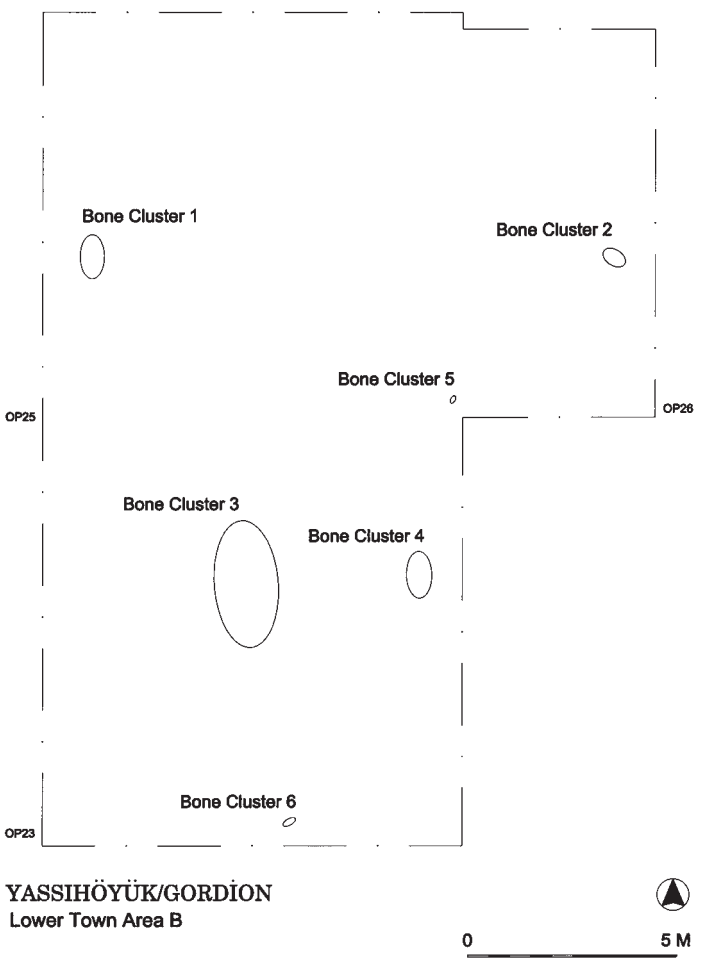


Fig. 16. Plan of bone deposits in Area B.

Area B

Beginning with the securely dated Later Hellenistic/Galatian contexts from Area B, three distinct types of bone deposits can be defined, each representing a different behavioral sequence: (1) human heads with small quantities of animal bone; (2) a cluster of humans with heads displaced and rearranged and some animal bone; and (3) a large pile of animal bone with a few human bones intermixed. We referred to the deposits in Area B as "bone clusters," but they correspond well to what European archaeologists refer to as "structured deposits" or contexts that reflect behavior that is patterned and formal, representing some kind of "ritual" or "ritualized" action (Bradley 2003: 8; Richards and Thomas 1984; see also Bell 1992).

Easiest to understand are two examples of isolated human heads. Bone Cluster 4 (figs. 16–17) consists of the cranium and jaw of a young adult (15 ± 36 months), its sex undetermined. The upper two vertebrae of this individual were found in anatomical position, providing strong evidence of decapitation rather than a

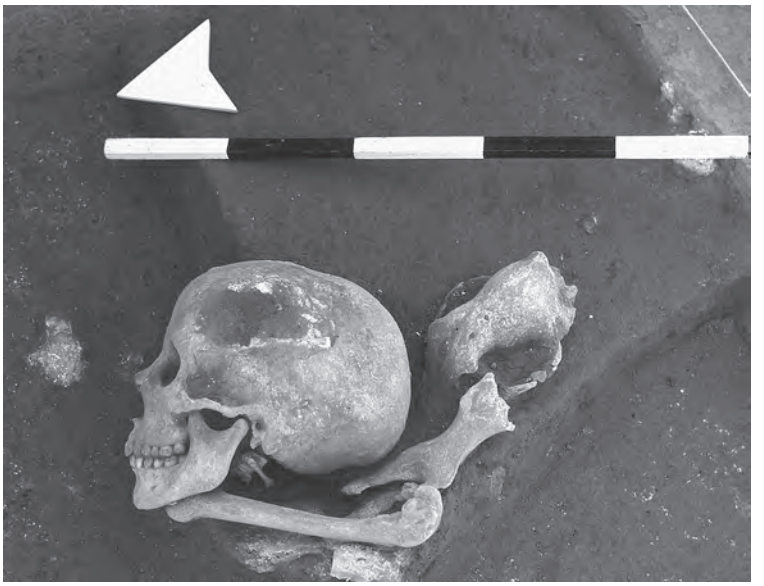


Fig. 17. Bone Cluster 4 with human and dog heads.

re-arrangement of dry bone. This interpretation is strengthened by damage to the vertebrae that is consistent with cases of animal butchery in which "the neck is weakened by cutting to the point where it can be forcibly snapped to crack through the bone and remove the head" (Selinsky 2004: 36–37). The human head was carefully arranged with the cranium of a dog, a dog pelvis and a dog long bone, all of which rested on the pelvic bone of a 20–35 year old male. Weathering was present on the upper surface of the teenager's head, testifying to its exposure on an outside surface. The older man's pelvis was even more heavily weathered, despite the fact that it was partially protected by the rest of the bone. This suggests that it had been lying exposed for some time and was gathered up and included with the dog parts (presumably also gathered as dry bone) and the newly decapitated teenager.

A second isolated head was deposited in Bone Cluster 2 (fig. 16). In this case, the cranium of a 20–35 year old male lay in a scatter of animal bone, but the depositional sequence differs from that of Bone Cluster 4. When the cranium was cleaned by Ellen Salzman, a Gordion conservator, she found that the *foramen magnum*, or hole at the base of the skull, was filled with wood. It therefore seems likely that the adult male skull was placed on a stake for display. The animal bones found in this cluster, presumably arranged around the stake, were identified as the lower jaw of an ass, the lower jaw of a pig, the upper jaw and two pelvic bones of a cow and the foreleg of a dog.

More chilling to the modern scholar was Bone Cluster 1, which is several layers deep and includes three humans and disarticulated animal bone. In the top layer of this deposit we found the articulated but decapitated body of a 16–21 year old female; her head was missing, but carefully placed at the top of her spinal column was the lower jaw of a man who was at least 50 years old (figs. 16, 18). When the these two individuals had been removed, we found the body of a 35–45 year old



YASSIHÖYÜK/GORDİON
Lower Town Area B
Bone Cluster 1
OP 25 Locus 3 lot 25
YH 40860

0 0.5 M

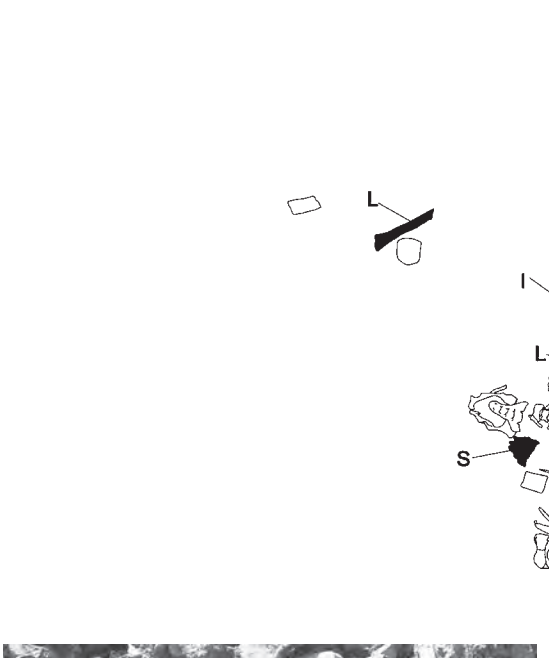
Individual 1
Individual 2
Individual 3
Human - association unknown
Non-human or unidentifiable

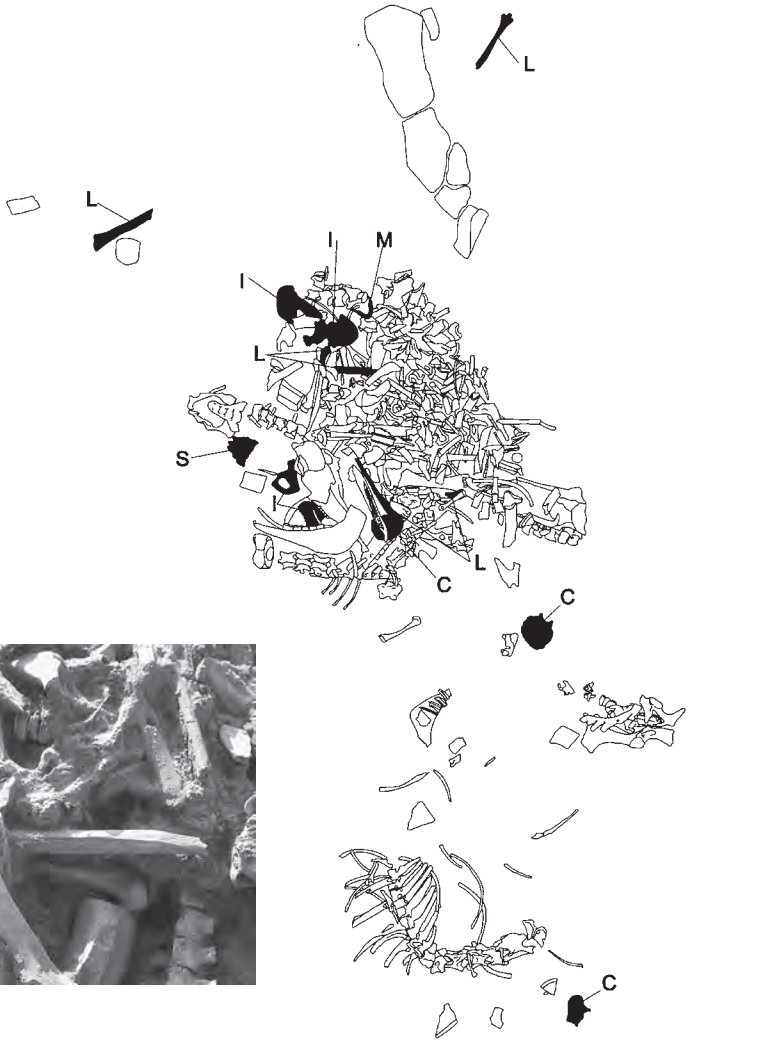
Figs. 18a–c. Bone Cluster 1 with the remains of three decapitated people.





female whose spinal column was truncated, and whose legs had been bent up or rearranged so that they lay to either side of her torso. A complete head lay above the spinal column of this older woman, but the associated neck vertebrae were aligned at a right angle to the more complete spinal column. Decapitation was clear, but it was not until the bones were examined by Jarvis and Selinsky that we saw the complete pattern. The head placed above the neck of the older female belonged to the





Figs. 19a–b. Bone Cluster 3. In the plan, human bones are colored black.

YASSIHÖYÜK/GORDİON
Lower Town Area B
Bone Cluster 3
OP 23 Locus 21 lot 134
YH 42653, 36046-49, 41964

0 1 M

Human
Other bone
C Human cranial bone
M Human mandible
S Human sacrum
I Human inominate
L Human long bone

young (upper) female, and the head of the older female was missing. Disarticulated human bone was mixed with animal bone at the southern end of this deposit. The animal bone bore cut marks; no signs of butchery were found on the human bone,

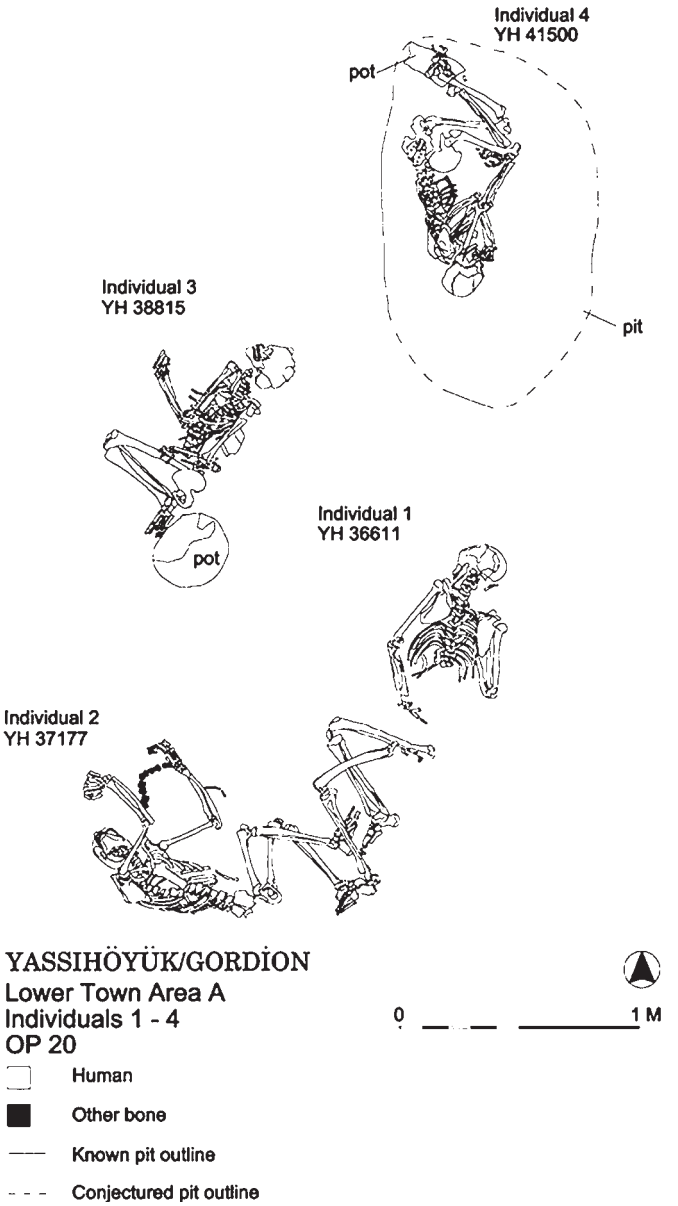


Fig. 20. Plan of Area A.

but the pelvic bones of the younger woman bore the distinctive tooth marks of a carnivore.

Also unique is Bone Cluster 3, the largest of the structured deposits and also the most controversial. Bone Cluster 3 (fig. 19) is made up of more than 2,100 animal bones and fragments, and bits of three humans (table 2). A child of around six is represented by a mandible or lower jaw. Two adults, a male of 40–44 and a female who was 35–39, are represented by three pelvic bones, a sacrum, and several long bones. The human bone was weathered, and the pelvic bones have the conical tooth



Fig. 21. Male with broken neck, Individual 2.



Fig. 22. Female with broken neck, Individual 3.

marks that document carnivore gnawing, so the remains of these three people may have lain on the surface for some time.[36] On the other hand, a human femur or upper leg bone that was found about a meter away from the main bone mass shows a spiral fracture (Selinsky 2004: 34–35). Spiral fractures can only occur when bone is fresh, and it would require great force to break open a femur, one of the strongest bones in the human body. The possibility of an accidental break seems to be nil, so that this bone was deliberately smashed to expose its marrow. The distribution of body parts within Cluster 3 is striking. Humans, horses and pigs are represented primarily by cranial and pelvic bones, while cows, sheep, goats, and asses show a high proportion of torsos and limbs (Jeremiah Dandoy, personal communication). Much of the animal bone was still articulated when it was excavated, indicating the deposition of sizeable body parts rather than the collection of scattered bone typical of the other bone clusters in Area B.

Area A

Area A lies in the eastern part of the Lower Town and again produced three distinct kinds of Later Hellenistic bone deposits: (1) bodies lying on an outside surface; (2) bodies deposited in pits; and (3) a formal grave. The people represented include adult males and females whose skeletons were articulated and more or less intact, and two children who were disarticulated and thus more like the bodies in Area B. At the western end of Area A, the bodies of four adults were clustered, each sprawled on the same uneven surface that was covered with small amounts of trash (fig. 20). Two of these people showed a dislocation of the spinal column between head and torso. Individual 2, a 30–45 year old male, had his head thrown back in a position that seems impossible unless the neck was broken before death; the body rests on an uneven surface, with the head in a shallow pit (fig. 21). Individual 3, a 15–20 year old female, looks relatively intact at first glance, but the uppermost cervical or neck vertebrae lie in a line at a right angle to the rest of the neck (fig. 22). Individual 1, a 20–35 year old male, lies sprawled face down but does not bear

36. Isolated fragments of human bone were found near Bone Cluster 3, but they could not be associated with the individuals in the cluster with any degree of confidence.



Fig. 23. Pit with multiple bodies (loc 502): woman with skull fractures.



Fig. 24. Pit with multiple bodies (loc 502): Lower woman pinned by grinding stones.

any sign of injury; his pelvic area is missing, but this is apparently the result of the construction activities of the later hearth builders. A fourth body (Individual 9, a 30–45 year old male) was found on what seems to be the same outside surface but only his head and shoulders lay inside the excavated area and no sign of trauma was found on these body parts.

Having watched and photographed the excavation of all of these bodies, I have concluded that the most likely explanation for the distorted position of the cervical vertebrae of Individuals 2 and 3 is a broken neck, presumably as a result of hanging or garroting. Selinsky is a little more cautious:

> the bodies were found in atypical burial postures and had angles in their spinal columns that would suggest some form of a neck injury, possibly from strangulation. Other evidence for manual strangulation, such as broken hyoid bones . . . or strangulation with a cord or wire such as fractured laminae of cervical vertebrae . . . was not observed. However, there is little to explain the positioning of the bodies except perhaps postmortem settling, which must always be considered (Selinsky 2004: 33).

Also found in Area A and roughly contemporary with the bodies sprawled on the surface were two pits that contained humans. Individual 4, a female more than 50 years old, was placed in a pit and shows no sign of violence (fig. 20). She is linked to the other bodies by proximity and by the fact that the position of her body is the same as that of two individuals in a nearby pit whose remains were subject to unusual treatment. This second pit, much larger and deeper than that used for Individual 4, was discovered in a balk that eroded between seasons.[37] Although the top of the second pit was truncated by later activities and we cannot with absolute certainty say that it was contemporary with the rest of the Area A bodies, its contents strongly suggest an association with the Later Hellenistic remains. First, the uppermost body in the pit fill (Individual 5) was a woman aged 30–45 whose neck was bent at an unnatural angle (fig. 23). Settling after death seems more possible in this

37. We cleared away the erosion and exposed the bodies that lay inside the excavation area; however, extending the curvature of the pit in plan, at least a third of this feature lay within the balk, so the possibility of additional bodies has to remain open.



Fig. 25. Pit with multiple bodies (loc 602): Children.

case than in the western bodies with displaced necks, and the displacement of the mandible does suggest some disturbance, presumably by rodents. But whether or not she was strangled does not really matter, because the skull bears clear testimony to violent trauma. This woman had at least two, and perhaps three, depressed cranial fractures that were caused by blows to the right side of the skull (Selinsky 2004: fig. 6). The skull is also strangely discolored, with brown to black areas on the face. In 40 years of excavation, including more than my fair share of time spent digging burials, I have seen this kind of coloring on bone only when it has been exposed to fire. Discolored animal bone is usually seen as the result of roasting or burning, and the discolored human remains that I have excavated came from a child that was caught when a burning building collapsed on top of it (Hasanlu IVB; see Dyson and Voigt 1989). The possibility that the old woman in the Gordion pit was also put into a fire before or after death should not, therefore, be discounted. Leaving aside the number of traumatic injuries, we can certainly agree with Selinsky, who concludes that this woman was the victim of "interpersonal violence" (2004: 34).

Lying below the old woman was a second, younger woman, aged 18–23. In this case there is no evidence of physical trauma, but the body was pinned down securely beneath two heavy grinding stones (fig. 24).[38] Along the western edge of the pit, next to the two women, was found the semiarticulated body of a child with an estimated age of 3 ± 12 months (fig. 25). The head is roughly in place at the top of the trunk of the body, but the leg has been twisted up in a position that would be impossible in a living body. It seems likely that the child's bones had been exposed on an exterior surface and were later gathered up and placed with the bodies of the two women. This theory was confirmed when Selinsky found that the skull and the lower jaw or mandible came from two different children. When looking at photographs, it is clear that the hinge of the child's jaw does not articulate well: the

38. The grinding stones are "boat-shaped" and are typical of the Early Phrygian/YHSS 6A destruction level and Middle Phrygian/YHSS 5 periods. They were presumably retrieved from these early levels at the site during stone-robbing operations, another link to YHSS 3A when large-scale excavations were undertaken in order to retrieve building blocks for the elite quarter.

lower jaw or mandible projects well beyond the upper jaw or maxilla. The reason for this difference in size became clear when the mandible was aged and found to belong to an older and larger child aged 6 ± 24 months. Taking the error factor in age assessment into account, it is theoretically possible that the two jaws belonged to one person, but the gross difference in size is conclusive. The cause of death for the two children is unknown.

The rearrangement of human body parts in this pit burial is unique within the Area A sample but consistent with the bone clusters in Area B, and it is possible that human and animal remains were left exposed across much of the southern Lower Town. This suggestion is based on human and animal bone deposits that were excavated in the 1950s by Machteld Mellink. Mellink's notebooks have not been studied in any detail, and the exact location of her excavation units is not certain, but what we do know about Mellink's finds suggest that the area with bone deposits was large and that the number of humans deposited in the Lower Town is significantly greater than 20. Note that if there are similarities between Mellink's bone deposits and those described above for Area B, the cluster of complete bodies in Area A becomes a striking anomaly in the overall depositional and thus behavioral pattern.

One issue that is raised by all of the bodies lying on the Later Hellenistic surface in the Lower Town is the seeming anomaly of well-preserved and usually articulated bone lying undisturbed for long periods in an outside area away from the settlement. That carnivores were present is clear from their tell-tale tooth marks on pelvic bones, areas of the human body with large muscle mass or meat. The most likely predators are wolves or dogs,[39] but these animals caused minimal damage to the human remains, and the only evidence for their presence comes from Area B. A specialist in animal behavior could perhaps explain this, but I can only cite two observations drawn from my own experience. The first comes from Gordion, where Jeremiah Dandoy spotted a dead dog near the excavation house. Thinking about the problem of the Lower Town bodies, he decided to leave the body rather than to collect it for his skeletal collection of known-species animals. The dog remained undisturbed for weeks, until it was nearly dry bone.[40] The second example comes from the Iron Age fortress of Hasanlu (Period IVB; Dyson and Voigt 1989). Around 800 B.C.E., the settlement was attacked and much of it was burned. As a student, I excavated an area in which bodies of men, women, and children were found strewn on a surface that lay above the remains of a burned courtyard. Some of the victims exhibited head wounds that can be interpreted as damage inflicted by heavy stone and metal maceheads. What happened seems relatively straightforward: after the battle, the victors cleaned up, gathered together a group of people who had survived the fire and proceeded to dispatch them violently. What always puzzled me about this deposit was the fact that, with the exception of one individual who lost

39. Wolves still roam the area around Gordion and have been sighted near the excavation house even in summer.

40. Anne Porter tells me that in Syria the primary scavengers in modern villages are dogs, and while they may not eat other dogs, they generally will eat any other dead animals.

his or her legs, the bodies remained intact. The remains of a battle that left victims scattered on outside surfaces should have provided an ample food supply for local carnivores, but in this case predation simply did not take place.[41]

Thus far, we have described bodies that cannot be considered to have had a "normal" burial. There is, however, a single body from the Lower Town that may represent ordinary mortuary practices at Hellenistic Gordion. In 1995, we expanded Area A to the west and found the grave of a woman 17–22 years old. She was buried in a wooden coffin and wore lion-headed gold earrings, duplicates of a single earring found in a domestic context on the Citadel Mound. This context has been dated to YHSS 3A:2 or the early 2nd century B.C.E. (DeVries 1990: 401–2, fig. 40). The chronological evidence is admittedly thin, but what we do have suggests that this grave is roughly contemporary with the other bodies recovered from Area A. If so, the practices that resulted in the rest of the bone deposits from the Lower Town are truly aberrant.

The Gordion Later Hellenistic Bone Deposits in Historical Context

The bodies deposited in Gordion's Lower Town date to the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C.E., a period when the site was occupied by Celtic-speaking Europeans or Galatians. The Galatians did not leave written texts (aside from graffiti), so documentary sources that would allow us to reconstruct their way of life are sparse and are written by Greek and Roman authors. Instead, we must look at these people within the context of documentary (and archaeological) evidence from their homeland, a strategy adopted by Steven Mitchell in his comprehensive study of the Anatolian Celts (1993: 42–58). Given that the migration from Europe into Anatolia seems to have been rapid, the method is justifiable, provided that we use European materials from the late 4th to 2nd centuries B.C.E. The difficulty here is that the European sources are also rare and geographically scattered; they date from long after the events reported, repeating information from earlier sources that are no longer preserved. The dangers of assuming the existence of a uniform Iron Age culture in Europe lasting over many centuries are obvious, but I have tried to focus on texts and sites that are approximately contemporary with the Gordion Later Hellenistic period.

The ritual treatment of human and animal remains is discussed in texts relevant to Iron Age Europe and, in one case, the Anatolian Galatians. According to the ancient historians, the Celts were a warlike people who placed great value on individual acts of bravery (see texts cited by Freeman 2002). Associated with warfare was the practice of taking the heads of defeated enemies; a ritual act, but not necessarily a ritual killing. The most detailed account of Celtic headhunting was provided by Posidonius (ca. 135– 50 B.C.E.), whose work does not survive but was widely cited by later historians. For example, Strabo tells us:

> there is also among [the Celts] the barbaric and highly unusual custom (practised most of all by the northern tribes) of hanging the heads of their enemies from the necks of

41. The Hasanlu human skeletal remains were studied by Page Selinsky as part of her Ph.D. research at the University of Pennsylvania.

> their horses when departing from battle and nailing the spectacle to the doorways of their homes upon returning. Indeed Posidonius says that he saw this himself in many places and that while he was unaccustomed to it at first, he could later endure it calmly due to his frequent contact with it. The heads of those enemies that were held in high esteem they would embalm in cedar oil and display them to their guests, and they would not think of having them ransomed even for an equal weight of gold. (4.4.5, translated by Benjamin Fortson; see Koch 2003: 18)

Rituals that involved killing and specifically human and animal sacrifice are also attested. The earliest text comes from the 3rd century B.C.E. but provides no details: "Among them is the custom, whenever they win victory in battle, to sacrifice their prisoners to the gods" (Sopater, quoted by Athenaeus; Koch 2003: 7). More informative is the work of Diodorus Siculus, a historian who was decidedly unsympathetic to the Celts, again working within the Posidonian tradition:

> It is fitting to their savage nature that they practice a particular impiety in their sacrifices: they keep criminals in custody for five years and then impale them in honour of their gods. They also construct enormous pyres and burn prisoners on them along with many first fruits. They use war criminals as sacrificial victims to honour their gods. Some even sacrifice the animals captured in war in addition to the human beings, or burn them in a pyre or kill them through other means of torture. (Diodorus Siculus 32, translated by Philip Freeman; see Koch 2003: 14)

Caesar, perhaps following Posidonius, adds to the list of victims: "it is judged that the punishment of those who participated in theft or brigandage or other crimes are more pleasing to the immortal gods; but when the supplies of this kind fail, they even go so low as to inflict punishment on the innocent" (Caesar 16, translated by Anne Lea see Koch 2003: 22).

One passage from Diodorus (31.13) has been interpreted by Steven Mitchell as evidence for the sacrifice of war captives by Anatolian Celts:

> In about 166 BC the Galatian chieftain responsible for a victory over Eumenes II [ruler of the kingdom of Pergamon] gathered together his prisoners from the battle, and had the most handsome among them garlanded and sacrificed. The religious implications of this act are shown up by the fact that the rest of the captives were simply put to the sword without ceremony. (Mitchell 1993: 48)

A special kind of human sacrifice was intended to foretell the future:

> They have highly-honoured philosophers and theologians [those who speak to the gods] called Druids. They also make use of seers, who are greatly respected. These seers, having great authority, use auguries and sacrifices to foresee the future. When seeking knowledge of great importance, they use a strange and unbelievable method: they choose a person for death and stab him or her in the chest above the diaphragm. By the convulsion of the victim's limbs and spurting blood, they foretell the future. . . . They do not sacrifice or ask for favors from the gods without a Druid present, as they believe sacrifice should be made only by those supposedly skilled in divine communication. (Diodorus 31, translated by Philip Freeman; Koch 2003: 13–14)

The problem posed by these texts is that they are accounts by Greeks and Romans, who were often in conflict with the Celts. Discussions of ancient historical sources stress that these authors were trying to depict Celts as "the other," and that this

desire led to exaggeration or even fabrications within their accounts; rejection is especially common for passages that strike the modern reader as particularly bloody and repellent. Negative reporting and stereotyping of the enemy and the alien is a well-known phenomenon and cannot be ruled out in the case of Greek and Roman accounts of the Celts. On the other hand, I would argue that the documentary sources recounting head-taking and sacrifice are plausible, if not entirely accurate, given Greek and Roman ideology and practices.

We begin with the Greeks, who certainly hated and vilified the Celts who invaded Delphi in 279 B.C.E. (Mitchell 1993: 13–14; see also Campbell 2009). Accepting their desire to distance themselves from the "barbarians," we cannot ignore the fact that in their myths and literature the Greeks describe human sacrifice performed by Greeks, on Greeks. In his careful and comprehensive review of all references to human sacrifice in Greek sources of the classical and earlier periods, Dennis Hughes (1991) concludes that all such accounts of ritual killing and sacrifice are fiction rather than historical reality. The following quotation illustrates assumptions often used in rejecting evidence for ancient sacrifice:

> It should . . . be clear that the modern conception of human sacrifice as a primitive practice gradually replaced by more humane customs (such as animal sacrifice) is not really modern at all, but was modeled on views held by the ancients themselves. But few people if any would believe that Greek writings on cannibalism reflect actual conditions of prehistory, or the actual practices of non-Greek peoples. Rather these passages demonstrate that a custom may indeed exist, removed to a distant past or the spatially distant present, in the world of the imagination alone. Myths of human sacrifice and cannibalism served to answer the needs of the culture that invented them, differentiating the Greeks and their sacrificial alimentary customs both from the peoples around them and from an imagined past, and having conceptual value quite independent of the existence of the customs in reality. (Hughes 1991: 188–89)

Granting the merits of Hughes's very cautious approach and acquitting the Greeks of actual human sacrifice, the evidence for Roman bloodletting is unambiguous. Leaving aside practices such as the beheading of political enemies and their display in public places, the ritual murder of people at important funerals, and the possible sacrifice of wayward vestals, there are three well-documented examples of human sacrifice in Rome in the 3rd and 2nd centuries. In 228, 216 and 114/113 B.C.E., pairs of male and female Gauls and Greeks were buried alive in public ceremonies in the Forum Boarium (Varhelyi 2007). That these were not isolated or unique events is indicated by the fact that the Romans passed a law explicitly prohibiting human sacrifice (*immolatio*) in 97 B.C.E. (Varhelyi 2007: 284 with references).

The Archaeological Context from Iron Age Europe

One way to assess the veracity of documentary sources is to compare them with the archaeological record. If the archaeological record from late Iron Age (4th to 2nd centuries B.C.E.) Europe is compatible with the texts, it seems just plain silly to reject the ancient sources out of hand. We must also deal with the geographical and sometimes chronological differences between Europe and central Anatolia. The long migration undertaken by the Galatians could have resulted in very different

practices by the time they had settled in Anatolia, but as we shall see, ancient texts that do refer to the Anatolian Celts support the hypothesis of broad continuity (Mitchell 1993: 42–58). Given the immense literature on the archaeology of Iron Age Europe, this discussion will be brief and will focus on evidence that is directly relevant to the Gordion Later Hellenistic bone deposits.

Surprisingly, parallels for most of the patterns observed at Gordion come from Danebury, a roughly contemporaneous site in England, where human and animal bone was found in large grain storage pits (Cunliffe 1984, 1988: 40; Walker 1984). Many of the Danebury humans are complete and fully articulated (for example Green 2001: figs. 33, 35,), but there were also "special deposits": carefully arranged skeletons and partial skeletons of humans and domesticated animals, sometimes comingled and often deposited after the bodies had partially decayed (Cunliffe 1988: 40–41; Green 2001: figs. 18, 19; Walker 1984). Considering the Danebury bone assemblage as a whole, excavation director Cunliffe suggests that even the articulated bodies are the product of ritual (Cunliffe 1988: 40–41), as does Walker (1984: 461) in her detailed report on the bone assemblages, echoing conclusions that I have drawn from the Gordion material. Although the Danebury special deposits were made in pits rather than left on the surface, those that consisted of multiple bodies were left exposed until they were sealed by natural erosion processes (Walker 1984: 448).

Additional evidence for the taking of human heads comes from sites dating to the La Tène period which are generally identified with ethnic Celts (Cunliffe 1997). Isolated skulls have been found at Danebury (Walker 1984: 452, Table 44). The value of such trophies is demonstrated by the presence of both real human skulls and sculpted representations of skulls in stone as furnishings in buildings identified as shrines at Entremont and Roquepertuse (Green 2001: 97–110). Some of the Entremont sculpture fragments show a human hand grasping the hair of the victim (Green 2001: 100 with references), an explicit reference to victory and dominance. There is also plentiful evidence for the dismemberment and mutilation of humans from Gournay and Ribemont in France (Brunaux 1988, 2001).

The textual evidence for cannibalism by Celts is not at all convincing, but archaeological evidence for this practice may come from Danebury, where the deposition of at least one butchered human (Walker 1984: 453–54) led Cunliffe to speculate about cannibalism (1988: 41; see also Green 2001: 56–61). Also paralleled at Danebury as well as at other sites in Britain, is the fracturing of human long bones while still fresh, and again the suggestion of marrow extraction has been raised (Walker 1984: 455). Finally, two "charnel pits" at Danebury contained multiple human bones (men, women and children) along with both carefully arranged/articulated and disarticulated animal bone (Walker 1984: 451–52). The charnel pits do not exhibit butchery, and variation in the degree of articulation led the excavators to suggest that at least some of the bodies had been exposed elsewhere (presumably on an outside surface) before they were thrown into the pits.

Relevant to a consideration of cannibalism is a large sculpture called the "Tarasque of Noves," found near Avignon and dated to the 4th or 3rd century B.C.E.

(fig. 26; Green 2001: 42). The Tarasque is an animal with sharp teeth, claws, a ruff, a fat tail, deeply incised ribs, and an erect penis. The beast is anthropomorphized in that it sits with torso upright, extending each of his front paws over a human head (Megaw 1970: Cat no. 76 with plates). A human limb extends below his mouth, apparently part of an entire body that has broken away and is documented only by scars on both sides of the jaw. With minimal interpretation this image can be seen as some kind of supernatural being associated with male dominance, head-taking and the consumption of humans. As we have seen, head-taking was practiced by the Celtics, and it is entirely reasonable to suppose that this animal's consumption of flesh may also represent a Celtic concept, if not activity. Leaving open the question of Celtic practices, the beast portrayed in the Noves Tarasque can be linked directly to Gordion, where a small sculpture of a similar animal was found on the floor of a house destroyed in 189 B.C.E. (DeVries 1984: 267–68). The Gordion beast stands on all four legs but shares key attributes with the Tarasque: a long snout with rows of pointed teeth, deeply incised ribs, well-articulated feet with claws, and a rather bushy tail (fig. 27). The surface of the Gordion beast has traces of red ochre, an unambiguous reference to ferocity and blood, so again, there is a link to the Tarasque.[42]

Turning to methods for dispatching sacrificial victims mentioned by texts, there is clear evidence for garroting in the sample of European Iron Age bog bodies (Asingh and Lynnerup 2007; Brothwell 1987; Glob 1969). Other people died when their throat was cut, which should leave no trace on the skeleton. Scholars differ in their interpretation of the bog bodies: that these people were the victims of ritual murder is clear, but some have argued that they represent criminals or wrong-doers and thus are not the victims of human sacrifice. This argument has little merit, since documentary sources recounting Galatian practices tell us that criminals were the most appropriate sacrificial victims.

Interpretation of the Gordion Evidence for Sacrifice

The bone deposits from Later Hellenistic Gordion resulted from killing and a systematic arrangement of human bodies or dismembered bodies, the latter commingled with the bones and/or the body parts of animals. This behavior—formal, repeated, and outside the range of acts normally used to dispose of human remains—has been defined here as "ritual." Two aspects of ritual acts—the repeated use of a special place for their performance, and an intent to convey some kind of message to an audience—are also documented. As stated above, my premise is that rituals that use and dispose of human remains are in some way related to the supernatural world. This premise is supported by the documentary evidence on European Celts in which Greek and Roman writers refer explicitly to Celtic ritual killings as "sacrifice," a term reserved for ritual killings dedicated to the gods in their own languages. A final element in the argument for ritual treatment of the Lower

42. Frederick Winter (1986: 4) disagreed with DeVries and suggested that the similarities between the Tarasque and Gordion sculpture were "simply . . . a reflection of the fact that both are primitively styled, derived from Mediterranean prototypes, and rather crudely modeled."

Town human remains is the recovery of single "normal" inhumation which seems to be contemporary with the rest of the Later Hellenistic bone deposits.

Textual evidence links Celtic rituals dedicated to the gods to secular concerns: sacrificial victims are by preference criminals or war captives.[43] In either case, they were enemies of society and especially of society's leaders—the warrior elite. Whatever their status, the people killed and deposited in the southern Lower Town were used as threat and deterrent, but who was the intended audience? The southern Lower Town was a large open space enclosed by walls that were high enough to block the view of anyone standing outside them; on the other hand, anyone standing on the Citadel Mound could easily view actions carried out in this space as well as the remains left by these actions.[44] It is apparent that the intended viewers lived within the settlement at Gordion, and that the bodies and bone deposits ensured that the consequences of acts against the Galatian rulers remained as a physical presence as well as a memory.

Area B

Excavation in this area documented several kinds of deposition linked not only by spatial proximity but by a rearrangement of body parts, a comingling of human individuals and a comingling of humans with animals. The patterning in the archaeological record, combined with textual evidence, suggests not only ritual but a dedication of ritual acts to the supernatural world.[45] As in most premodern societies, the supernatural is linked closely to the secular world, and the bodies in Area B served a political as well as a religious purpose.

Proceeding from the most straightforward cases to the most complex, we will start with the two isolated human heads, Bone Clusters 2 and 4. Both of these individuals are young adults, one identified as male and the other of indeterminate sex. Decapitation may be the cause of death, or (more likely?) simply a postmortem treatment. The fact that each skull was placed so that it was elevated and could be seen from some distance indicates an intent to display; trophy heads must have been regarded with a combination of respect, triumph, and an intent to humiliate the enemy. Given the wealth of both documentary and archaeological evidence for Celtic head-taking and the display of these heads, it seems virtually certain that the Gordion deposits represent trophy heads taken from dead enemy warriors, with the possibility that one warrior was female. These warriors could have been competing Galatians or members of the local community. Mirroring the European iconographic focus on human heads are representations of isolated heads from the YHSS 3A settlement at Gordion. These include a 'Janus' head in stone—a motif also

43. Given that criminals and war captives were equivalent for sacrificial purposes, the issue of "punishment" is not relevant.

44. It is probably significant that one of the largest and wealthiest houses occupied during YHSS 3A is located near the southern edge of the Citadel Mound (Winter 1988: fig. 4).

45. The term "supernatural" is preferred here because there is little evidence for anthropomorphized supernatural beings in Iron Age Europe until the period of intense interaction with Greeks and Romans, beginning in the 3rd century B.C.E. (see Green 1986).

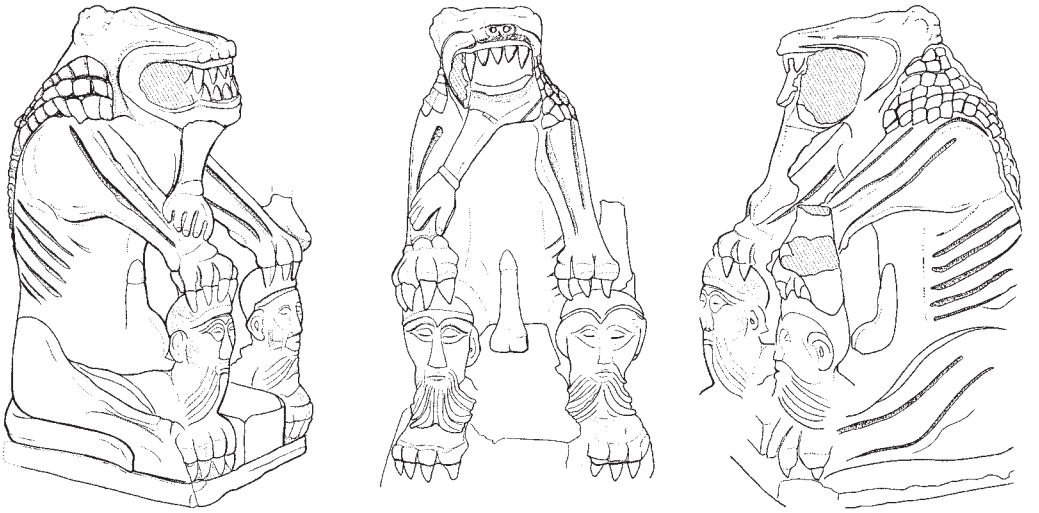


Fig. 26. Tarasque de Noves (height 1.12 m).

found in Europe, for example, at Roqueperteuse (Green 2001: fig. 36)—and molded heads that were carefully chipped from pottery vessels.

Bone Cluster 1 is unique within the Gordion sample. Although we cannot determine the cause of death for any of the humans in Bone Cluster 1, we can be quite definite about what happened to them after death. The decapitation and rearrangement of these bodies constitutes body mutilation—a way of demeaning the victims—and the primary victims in Bone Cluster 1 were female. In attempting to identify reasons for the treatment of these individuals, the proximity of Bone Cluster 1 to the isolated "warrior" heads and the fact that their own heads were manipulated might suggest that these women were also associated with warfare. Again, we cannot now say whether they were captives acquired during internecine warfare between Galatian groups or between the Galatians at Gordion and a local population. As war captives, these individuals would have been preferred objects of sacrifice based on the testimony of Diodorus. The reason for their capture and subsequent treatment may have been their relationship to enemy warriors or leaders. On the other hand, the form of mutilation imposed on these women suggests to me that they had significant social or religious roles in life or inspired sufficient fear in their captors to merit ritual decapitation. Women did have important roles in Celtic societies, including (perhaps) those of shaman and seer (Cunliffe 1997; Arnold 1995; Knüsel 2002), and this can be considered for the women found at Gordion, especially if they too were members of a competing Galatian group. Alternatively, they may have been local, but we know so little of Early Hellenistic social and political organization at Gordion that we cannot say what roles women might have played in politics or religion.

The large pile of human and animal bone in Bone Cluster 3, as well as scattered human bone found nearby, remains enigmatic. Dandoy, Selinsky, and I have inter-

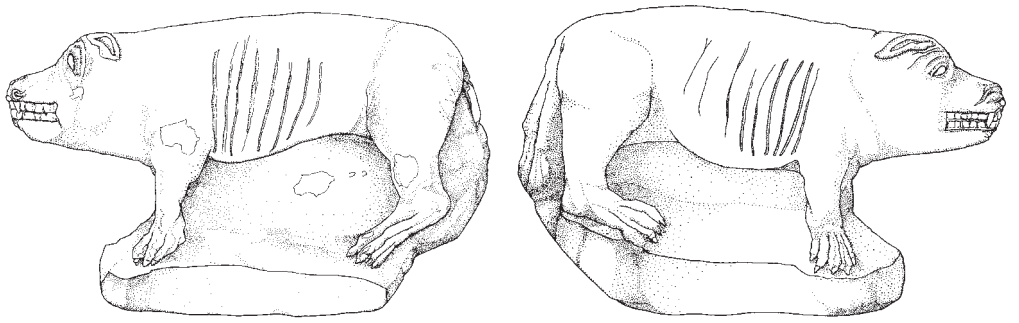


Fig. 27. Gordion sculpture of a predatory animal (Gordion S-23, height 17 cm).

preted this context as food debris that involved the consumption of animals and humans as part of sacrificial rites (Dandoy et al. 2002). Consumption is suggested by the fact that the animals represented are all found as food debris within the Later Hellenistic settlement. The animal parts in Bone Cluster 3 were sometimes still articulated, indicating that large body parts were thrown onto the heap while other portions of the same beasts were taken away. We might suggest a scenario in which the bones recovered represent the portion of a sacrificial victim reserved for the gods while the rest of the animal was taken away and eaten.

If the animal bone in Cluster 3 represents food reserved for the gods, is this also true for the associated human bone? The depositional pattern is somewhat different from that of the animals in that all of the human parts are disarticulated. On the other hand, most of the human bones would have carried a lot of muscle mass (innominates and a femur), and marrow could have been obtained from the single human femur, deliberately cracked open using great force. Like it or not, the possibility that the human body parts in Bone Cluster 3 represent the gods' share of a meal has to be considered. Some support for this interpretation comes from the Gordion sculpture found in a YHSS 3A:2 context that seems to represent the same being as the man-eating Tarasque (figs. 26–27).

Area A

The behavior represented by the bodies on the surface in Area A is quite different from that in Area B. The only evidence of mutilation comes in the form of displaced neck vertebrae exhibited by two or three individuals and a comingling of bones from two children. Little animal bone is present, and this seems to be trash that is accidentally associated with a human body. Nevertheless, most of the bodies deposited in this zone can be interpreted as ritual victims. Again, war captives would have been the preferred subjects for sacrifice.

The four bodies lying on the Area A surface were strangled or garroted. They may have been killed as gifts to the supernatural, and if so they were left intact, presumably immune from the disrespect paid to the victims in Area B. An alternative interpretation has been suggested by Keith DeVries (personal communication). Texts tell us that people were sometimes used by diviners to tell the future. In Europe,

divination was conducted by stabbing, but it is possible that the struggles of a person being strangled would produce the kind of spasms required for divination.

The final group of bodies is that found in the two Area A pits. Pit deposition is not mentioned in documentary sources on the Celts, but there is archaeological evidence for similar practices in the British Iron Age. Little can be said about the isolated female (Individual 4), but the group of four people in the second larger pit has striking parallels at Danebury. The Gordion group includes two adult females who were clearly victims of ritual killing and who apparently died at the same time. The upper female in this pit was both strangled and bashed in the head, a phenomenon that has been called "overkill" when observed in Europe (Green 2001: 51–53). The lower female was weighted down with heavy grinding stones, behavior that is found at Danebury, where people were sometimes crushed by a layer of stones (Cunliffe 1988: 41; Green 2001: fig. 26 and p. 53 with references). The two children were placed in the pit when the bodies had partially decayed, a common phenomenon at Danebury, so we can say nothing about the cause of death, and time of death dissociates them from the women. For me, the methods of killing and the placement of this group of bodies in the Lower Town links with other individuals that can be identified as victims of human sacrifice, but with a sample of one this conclusion must be regarded as highly tentative.

Conclusion

A central theme of this paper is the recognition of ethnicity in the archaeological record and the potential impact of ethnic differences within a settlement on human behavior. Applying the criteria that were set out for an identification of migration, I considered the archaeological record for Hellenistic Gordion and found evidence that can be used to infer a migration and the arrival of a new ethnic group in the middle of the 3rd century B.C.E. The documentary record tells us that European Celts or Galatians lived at Gordion in the early 2nd century B.C.E., and I have argued that the mid-3rd century migration (at the beginning of YHSS 3A or the Later Hellenstic period) represents the arrival of Galatians at Gordion. The primary objection raised against this argument is that we have very few artifacts from Later Hellenistic Gordion that can be linked to contemporary La Tène Europe. Given that the Galatians had been in Anatolia since 278 B.C.E. and were mobile until they settled at Gordion and similar sites two to three decades later, I think it is remarkable that we find any La Tène material culture; the rare items recovered include ornaments (a button and an iron fibula) that would have served as powerful reminders of identity and history. In any case, previous arguments against a substantial Celtic/Galatian presence at Gordion in the second half of the 3rd century B.C.E. have fallen away with the recovery of deposits of human and animal bone. With this evidence in hand, the question shifts and we must ask about the circumstances surrounding these practices.

The European texts clearly link Celtic human and animal sacrifice to periods of stress, usually warfare. There are three specific periods of stress that can be identified in the archaeological sequence for the Later Hellenistic period at Gordion:

(1) the time of the Galatian takeover or conquest of the settlement, probably near the middle of the 3rd century B.C.E.; (2) a time when the elite quarter of the Galatian settlement was briefly abandoned, probably in the third quarter of the 3rd century B.C.E., perhaps as the result of raiding, warfare or internal revolt; and (3) 189 B.C.E., when the entire site was abandoned as the Galatians fled before a Roman army led by Manlius Vulso.

Although some kind of combat may have accompanied each of these periods of stress, it seems most likely to me that the bodies in Area B were dispatched during local conflicts in the 3rd century B.C.E. Raids on other Galatian groups or a resistant local population could have produced trophy heads that illustrate dominance in battle but are not the result of ritual murder. The kinds of violence exhibited by the dismembered and commingled bodies in Area B and the presence of women and children among the victims are better explained as sacrifice and attempts at the subjugation of a local population. Whether these victims were technically captives, ordinary criminals or innocent substitutes cannot be determined, but the effectiveness of both performance and display should have been pronounced and certainly discouraging to any other would-be dissidents. The victims in Area A were treated differently, killed but not mutilated. If the act of killing was primary, we can again suggest war captives, but another possibility is raised by events in 189 B.C.E. The people who were strangled, and perhaps those without evidence of cause of death, could have been killed in attempts to foretell the future as the Roman army moved across Anatolia.

Closer dating of the bodies from Gordion's Lower Town and information on their place of birth potentially recoverable through scientific analysis might strengthen our interpretation. The Galatian killing field at Gordion is large and available for excavation. In the meantime, we can only propose interpretations that best fit the textual and archaeological evidence. The latter provides ample evidence of actions that were not unique or even unusual in either the ancient or the modern world. Such practices are still a part of what we do as humans, especially in times of war.

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Sacrifice in the Ancient Near East: Offering and Ritual Killing

Beate Pongratz-Leisten

Joining this volume at the very end of the process of producing a most valuable contribution to our understanding of sacrifice and ritual killing from the perspectives of anthropology, archaeology, and religious studies, I have been asked to add information from the textual sources of the ancient Near East. The archaeological material presented by the various contributors includes evidence for sacrifice as a communicative act with the supernatural world, as well as for ritual killing, a rubric that can have many meanings. For the argument as detailed below, I would like to stress that I consider the term *sacrifice* to be an unfortunate term to designate the offering because, in our modern understanding, it always implies the act of killing an animal or even a human being, while in ancient Mesopotamia most regular offerings included primarily vegetal products and libations.

While I agree with Rod Campbell's reasoning that religion in antiquity cannot be considered an isolated compartment of social life (Campbell, pp. 305–323 in this volume), I still assert that sacrifice as an *offering* to spirits, ancestors, and gods can be categorized as an entity distinct from other constituents of a complex ritual and distinct from other forms of ritual killing. In the ancient Near East in general, the sacrifice as an *offering* to otherworldly beings is always part of a complex ritual as a communicative action that also includes greeting, kissing, and clothing the deity, exorcistic rites, and liturgical and performative procedures. It is usually performed in a sacralized space that serves cultic practice dedicated either to the gods or to the ancestors. Rituals such as these must be distinguished from other forms of ritual killing, which pertain to eliminatory rituals designed to dispel evil and generally occur outside the temple. These two forms—*offering* with a *communicative function* and *ritual killing* with a *distancing function*—should further be distinguished from self-sacrifice as represented by the expiatory death of Christ.[1] What is more, the redefinition of suicide as sacrifice or martyrdom for the common good has turned religion into a challenge for modern societies in their war against terrorism (Juergensmeyer 2000; Reich 1990).

1. In the case of Christ's expiatory death (human for animal), sacrifice gains a soteriological aspect, although the Greek preposition ὑπέρ used in biblical soteriological contexts has a broad range of meaning including 'in place', 'for the benefit of', and 'because of', that is, representation, which is not cultic, and ransom. See Lampe 2007: 199.

Offering, with its communicative function, and ritual killing, with a distancing function, (and here I follow Glenn Schwartz in his very broad definition of *sacrifice* as a religious activity) involve "the recognition of and interaction with supernatural entities" (Schwartz, p. 1 in this volume, citing Renfrew), although not necessarily as its recipients. In what follows, I will take the opportunity to continue my attempt to distinguish between sacrifice as offering and as ritual killing that I started some years ago (Pongratz-Leisten 2007). In that article, I focused primarily on ritual killing, whereas my current goal is to elaborate on the notion of offering.

Before I do so, I would like to remind the reader of the various forms of ritual killing as they present themselves in the ancient Near Eastern sources to be able to exclude them from further discussion. Myth, ritual texts, and historiographic narrative primarily provide evidence for various forms of ritual killing as a cultural means of reestablishing the cosmic order as originally set by the gods. As diverse as the various local or regional settings of ritual killing might have been, the intricate relationship between killing and order is a particular feature of the world view in ancient Near Eastern communities. Killing, rather than being considered a complete annihilation, served either transformative, reordering, or reintegrative purposes when occurring in a ritually controlled environment, a concept alien to Western thought.

In eliminatory rites, this killing was performed on animals and other forms of substitutes that were fabricated for this particular purpose. The substitute ritual for the king, known as the ritual of the *šar pūḫi*, represents a particular variation of such eliminatory rites (Parpola 1983; Bottéro 1995). The ritual was destined to reestablish the harmonic relationship between the king and the gods that had been disturbed by a solar or lunar eclipse. As in other eliminatory rites, the need for such a ritual was established by the exorcist. The term *šar pūḫi* refers to the substitute king serving as a surrogate for the king as long as the actual king is threatened by the portent of an eclipse and has to hide in a hut outside the palace, the *qirsu*, while leaving the throne to the substitute. As soon as the substitute king was installed on the throne, the real king no longer was to be addressed as "king" but as "peasant" or "farmer" (*ikkaru*) to cover his real identity. The ritual of putting the substitute king to death resembles, in its various acts, eliminatory rites designed to dispose of any defiling or infected material. This intent is enforced by attaching a tablet to the garment of the substitute king in which it is explicitly said that with his death he is taking all evil down to the Netherworld (Lambert 1957–58 and 1959–60). Anything he has touched, the attire of the king included, has to be burnt, and the palace has to be purified. As far as the display, *taklimtu*, of the attire of the king is concerned, the ritual recalls the funerary rites referred to in the correspondence between the Sargonid king Esarhaddon and his scholars.[2] Thus, the substitute king serves as a carrier of impurity, as do animals or puppets in other elimination rituals. The ritual of the substitute king is also attested in the Hittite context (Kümmel 1967).

2. For references to the substitute ritual in the Sargonid letters, see Parpola 1993: nos. 1–4, 12, 90, 189, 219–21, 350–52, 377.

My former study aimed at dissecting possible cultural practices and strategies that might have contributed to the extremely complex concept of Christ's sacrificial death and its vicarious nature as attested in the New Testament. Although very distinct in their local, regional, linguistic, and ethnic formations, the cultures of the ancient Near East display features of cultural connectivity, a situation that was nurtured by the fact that the cuneiform writing system was adopted throughout.[3] A high degree of mobility in scribal and scholarly circles not only promoted the circulation of ideas and practices synchronically but explains to some degree the longevity of specific traditions on the diachronic axis, as professional experts in cultic, theological, divinatory, and medical matters continued to transmit their knowledge within their confined circles and at the same time acted as advisors to the king in political matters. Within this framework of approaching ancient Near Eastern religions as the product of intense cultural interaction, my intention was to demonstrate that this sort of concept of Christ's self-sacrifice drew on an entire set of ritual practices and beliefs extant to various degrees and in various local forms in the communities of the ancient Near East. These included the cosmically transformative aspects of killing to provide the material for creation; the ritualized killing of the enemy after the model of hunting rituals; establishing the harmonic relationship between king and the gods by means of the substitute ritual; eliminatory rites (Wright 1987) and their particular form of the scapegoat ritual as attested in Northwestern Syrian and Anatolian context (Bremmer 2001); the concepts of redemption and replacement in purification rituals and legal contracts; as well as the idea of ransom given for the life of a deity in the mythic narratives. To the general reader, such forms may remain hidden and unrecognizable in the discourse of the various Gospel narratives and epistles as well as in Acts and Revelation, which completely transformed this former body of tradition to create the concept of self-sacrifice.

While discussing the particular contexts and meanings of these diverse forms of killing, my intention was to stress that, although ritualized, they were not part of the daily interaction with the gods performed during cultic practice. The rituals with a distancing function, owing to their intention to eliminate illness and other harmful afflictions, should not be discussed under the rubric of sacrifice either as a universal issue in a cross-cultural comparison or within the context of ancient Near Eastern cultures themselves.

Killing for a creative and transformative purpose, by contrast, because of the intention to gain material for creation as described in the myths of *Atrahasis*, in which the blood and the flesh of a god provide the material for creating humankind, and *Enuma eliš*, in which the corpse of Tiamat serves as material for creating

3. For the spread of the cuneiform system, see Beckman 1983; Black 2008; and Cooper 2004. For the connectivity characterizing the Mediterranean and Eastern Mediterranean, see Gladigow 2004 and Bonnet and Rüpke 2006: 7–10; for further attempts to show the interconnectedness of the various cultures of the ancient world, see Bonnet and Motte 1999; Bonnet, Pirenne-Delforge, and Praet 2008; Smith 2001, with a focus on Ugarit and Israel; Smith 2008, with a focus on the larger ancient Near East; and Pongratz-Leisten 2011, with a focus on Hurrian-Hittite-Assyrian tradition. On cultural networks, see Malkin, Constantakopoulou, and Panagopolou 2009.

the cosmos, are exceptional in their character. In the case of *Enuma eliš*, the killing definitely takes on the character of an execution, as it is linked with the notion of guilt. Qingu, the rebel god leading the army of Tiamat, is put to death as a substitute for the rest of the rebellious gods. With his death, the force threatening the cosmic order has been at least partially eliminated, and with his blood, Marduk will create humankind. Tiamat is killed for having instigated an entire army to create an alternative line of succession in the pantheon as represented by Marduk, promoting Qingu instead. In her case, too, her body is submitted to a transformation to become the universe (Lawrence 1998), and killing thus acquires a foundational aspect.

This idea of killing with a creative purpose was adopted by Ashurbanipal, king of Assyria in the 7th century B.C.E., in his discourse about the battle at the Ulai River in Elam. Teumman, the Elamite king and adversary of Ashurbanipal, is depicted as guilty of rebellion, and only through his death can the political order and, consequently, cosmic order be restored. In his report, Ashurbanipal compares the "deposit" of Teumman's head at the city gate with an offering, *maḫḫuru*, evoking the ritual practice of foundation deposits which include offering to the gods: "I displayed the severed head of Teumman opposite the inner gate of Nineveh like an offering."[4] Should one assume, then, that Ashurbanipal redefined the killing of Teumman as sacrifice? The scene is also depicted in a relief in Ashurbanipal's Northern Palace at Nineveh that formerly depicted the king with a bow to the left of the head of Teumman at the city gate (Kaelin 1999: 55 and pl. 3); now only the lower part of the bow is preserved. One may postulate that, in its compositional iconography, this scene evokes the typical libation scene as performed after the hunting of wild animals. Such scenes depict the king with his bow placed in front of him libating over the head of the lion or wild bull after the successful hunt (Pongratz-Leisten 2007: 20). In our particular case, however, we do not know if Ashurbanipal is performing a libation. We can only see the head of the enemy buried in the foundation of the city gate, which is reminiscent of the reuse of Tiamat's corpse to create the universe and thus certainly provides a foundational meaning for Ashurbanipal's performance as well. Image and text taken together thus create a deliberate ambiguity that makes room for interpreting the scene as either sacrifice or a foundational act.

A reintegrative aspect without killing is found in the *Anzû Myth* when Enlil, after his son Ninurta has defeated the Anzû bird, turns Anzû into the guardian of his temple. The same idea governs Tiglath-pileser's statement that he installed 25 gods of conquered lands to be doorkeepers of various temples in the city of Assur (Pongratz-Leisten 2001). Order as the ultimate goal thus allows for forms of violence embracing transformation, suppression, or even killing. Under the auspices of maintaining or reestablishing order, violence legitimates itself as counter-violence to ward off a threatening danger.

4. Borger 1996: 107 Prism B vi 66–67 *nikis qaqqad* ^{l}*Teumman ina irat abulli qabal āli ša Nina*^{ki} *umaḫḫira maḫḫuriš*.

Offerings, in contrast to ritual killing with eliminatory or transformative purposes, are modeled on the human action of gift-giving (Hubert and Mauss 1964) and display of commitment (Atran 2002: 114). Assyro-Babylonian culture displays a whole range of terms denoting vegetal offerings and animal offerings (Pongratz-Leisten 2007: 9)[5] such as *ginû* for small livestock and cattle, wine and dates; *ginû* appears very often together with *sattukku* 'dates, cereals, sheep'; terms such as *niqû*, 'sheep offering or offering in general', *guqqû* 'small cattle, dates, wine', and *nindabû* 'cereal offering', are also used as complementary to *sattukku*. Other terms such as *sirqu* and *surqinnu* derived from *sarāqu* 'to sprinkle' denote the sprinkling of flour. The *surqinnu*-offering is mentioned together with the regular offering and the incense offering, and the *maqlītu* denote burnt offerings (Lambert 1993; Limet 1993). All these terms are used to describe the regular offerings given to the gods in the context either of the daily cult or on specific occasions in the cultic calendar such as the *eššeššu* festival and the *akītu* festival. Such offerings should not be discussed under the umbrella of a universal theory of sacrifice (Gladigow 1984). Rather, they must be reanchored into the grammar of a complex ritual while considering the historical context, place, and time of the ritual, the material of the offering, the transfer of the offering, the ritual acts preceding and following the act of offering such as exorcistic rites, processions, verbal acts including prayers and recitations, divination, and the division of the offering among the participants. Instead of being understood as a dramatic event, the offering presents itself as a routine for the maintenance of the cult involving economic, political, and social considerations (Gladigow 2000: 104).

The predominantly economic aspect of the regular offerings in the cult is highlighted by Middle Assyrian tabular lists found in the forecourt of the Assur temple, which provide in condensed form information for one year about the total amount of the four different kinds of regular offerings, *ginā'u*, from the provinces of the Assyrian Empire including cereals, honey, sesame, and fruit (Weidner 1935–36: 13 n. 87 and 21 n. 148; Postgate 1985; Pedersén 1985: 43–53; Freydank 1991, 1997, 2006). The provinces had to perform these deliveries to the Assur temple on a monthly basis in a fixed rota. In the Neo-Assyrian period, such provisions for the Assur temple seem to have been established by royal decrees, like those attested for Adad-nirari III (Kataja and Whiting 1995: nos. 71–74). "The locales from which the Assyrian deliveries were sent include Barhalzi, Raṣappa, Kilizi, Tillê, Kullania, Arpad, Diquqina, Isana, Halzi-Atbar, Birtu, Arzuhina, Arbela, Guzana, Šahuppa, Tamnuna, and Talmušu."[6] The lapse of such deliveries is reported in letters by members of the temple personnel to the Assyrian king indicating his direct involvement in the supplies of the Aššur Temple.[7]

5. With reference to Lambert 1993 and Limet 1993.

6. Cole and Machinist (1998: xvi) with reference to SAA 10 96 listing the governors of these cities who failed to provide the regular deliveries for the sheep offering and for the offering of barley and emmer.

7. See the letters of a certain Dadî (Cole and Machinist 1998: nos. 18–24).

A further essential feature of the economic aspect of the offering is the redistribution of the various parts of the meat offering among the temple personnel, which was also decreed by the king (Kataja and Whiting 1995: nos. 68–70).

Schedule of Distribution of Meat from Offerings (Kataja and Whiting 1995: 81)

(beginning destroyed)
I.1 [. . . , . . .], . . . , the inner cuts, left (thigh), bladebone, 2 joints of the backbone, 4 ribs; all for the "House of Many Kings."
8 A haunch: the mausoleum of Esharra-hamat.
10 The right thigh: the high priest.
12 4 ribs: the second priest.
13 4 . . . coverings of the thighs, 4 joints of the backbone: the priest of Ea-sharri.
16 The neck: the lamentation chanter.
17 A shoulder: the temple scribe.
(Break)
ii.2 2 [. . . . .],
3 the stomach, [. . .],
4 the hide, sinews, [. . .]: the hig[h] priest
6 the front part of the neck, the heart, a lower leg: the temple steward.
8 Total of beef and veal.
r.i.1 2 sheep of . . . , distributed (as follows):

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3 2 thighs, a shoulder, ribs a haunch: the "House of Many Kings."
5 Ribs: the mausoleum of Esharra-hamat.
7 2 thighs, a shoulder: the high priest.
9 Ribs: [the second] p[riest].
10 2 [. . .]
(Rest destroyed)

Such precise information regarding the distribution of the offering is also attested in the ritual texts themselves. This is the case in a prescription for a ceremony performed at a particular site in the Adad Temple at Assur called *bīt ḫamri* and in various parts of the Assur temple and gates. Here, as much stress is laid on the correct movement between the various sites involved as on the grammar of the ritual, that is, the performance of the various acts involving the performance of songs and purification rites. The section on the offering and distribution of the meat between the gods and ritual performers follows at the end.

KAR 154 (Menzel 1981, vol. 2, T 2ff.)

1 On the day when they . . . Adad, they let come out the *qadištu*-women,
2 they prepare x-1/2 Qa bread, 7 bowls, 1 Qa aromatic plants, 2 Sutu beer in the *bīt šalīme*,

3 from there three silas of bread (and) three bowls (with beer) before the temple of Adad, and 1 sila of bread and one bowl (with beer) (corrupt)
4 The *qadištu*-women recite the *inḫu*-song before (the statue of) Adad, they finish the *inḫu*-song.
5 The *šangû*-priest performs the purification. The *qadištu*-women praise the god.
6 The *šangû*-priest and the *qadištu*-women leave the Temple of Adad.
7 They go to the gate of the storehouse[8] of Ninurta at the Aššur Temple, the *šangû*-priest takes a seat and the *qadištu*-women
8 recite the *inḫu*-song. The *qadištu*-women finish the *inḫu*-song, the *šangû*-priest performs the purification,
9 the *qadištu*-women praise the god. He leaves through the Aššur gate and goes to the Sammuḫ-gate. The *qadištu*-women recite the *inḫu*-song,
10 they finish the *inḫu*-song, the *šangû*-priest performs the purification. The *qadištu*-women praise the god. He offers 1 Qa bread,
11 1 bowl, 1 Qa beer by spilling six times from the bowl,
12 and he pours from the libation bowl. He evokes the name of Ea-šarru (and) of Digla, ditto Šamaš.
13 The *qadištu*-women go to the *bīt ḫamri*, the *šangû*-priest takes a seat. The *qadištu*-women
14 recite the *inḫu*-song. The *šangû*-priest performs the purification. 1 Qa bread 1 Qa beer . . .
15 . . . *bīt ḫamri* . . .
rest of obverse is broken
beginning of reverse is broken.
1′ the *šangû*-priest . . .
2′ . . .
3′ . . . 1 1/2 Qa bread 5 Qa beer, 1 thigh for the *šangû*-priest, he provides [the temple]
4′ of Assur, ditto of Adad. The length of the thigh . . .
5′ they destroy. The rest of the bread and the beer at the quay gate the *šangû*-priest and the *qadištu*-women . . .

6′ The *šangû*-priest and the *qadištu*-women return to the Adad Temple, they remove the jewelry of the *qadištu*-women.
7′ 3 Qa bread, 1 sutu beer, 1 sheep, 1 Qa aromatic plants they prepare before Adad.
8′ From this sheep the breast, the shoulder, the neck, the hocks, 1 thigh, 9 ribs;
9′ 3 ribs, 3 vertebrae before Šala, 3 ribs, 3 vertebrae before Taramua,
10′ 3 ribs, 3 vertebrae before Kubu of the Adad Temple, the left shoulder before Anu,

8. A part of the temple complex of the Aššur Temple in Assur.

11′ the *buqurru*-piece before Kubu of the Anu Temple; the intestines (are the share of) the chief musician,
12′ the front legs (are the share of) the *alaḫinnu*-official, the *qadištu*-women keep the rest of the meat.
13′ The *šangû*-priest of Adad takes the skin, the sinews and the back meat.
14′ After the chief musician, the *qadištu*-women and the pupils? have finished their songs, . . .
15′ . . . , the bowls, . . . , the pot, the wood, the water, the *ḫaṣbu*-pot, . . .
16′ . . .

By no means should the elaborateness of the distribution of the various parts of the meat be interpreted as attributing more symbolic significance to the offering than to other gestures performed during the ritual. This interpretation is corroborated by the genre of the cultic commentaries, which comment on all kinds of symbolic actions performed during the ritual in the temple. Rather, it was the concern of the scribe to record and clarify for the performers involved in the ritual what they could expect as remuneration. In the case of annual festivals, this distribution recorded in ritual texts could change from year to year. An obvious case is provided by the various text copies of the *entu*-ritual at Emar (Fleming 1992), which in their detailed information about the various allocations demonstrate their concern with provisioning to the temple personnel and the participants.

On the symbolic level, the primary function of offerings is communicative. They are meant to establish a relationship with an otherworldly agent as shown by the following passage of the banquet ritual (*tākultu*) for all Assyria: "When you are to strew salt on cooked meat [before Belat]-dunani, you say: 'May [the gods of heaven and the go]ds of earth accept and listen!'"[9] Whether moderately costly or of nonrecuperable cost, as in the case of blood sacrifice—generally an animal sacrifice—they are meant to establish responsiveness and even reciprocity from the otherworldly side, as is obvious from a version of the banquet-ritual written under Assur-etel-ilani: "He who performed this banquet and gave bread and water to the gods—give (them) back to him long, copious and wide! May he live and be well!"[10] Further, central to ancient Near Eastern civilizations, offerings are part of a complex ritual including the evocation by naming and illuminating the face with a torch, greeting, dressing, and kissing of the deity (Berlejung 1998). By no means should the "feeding" of the deity be isolated from these other forms and gestures of human interaction with the divine world. What is more, the gestures per se are not religious. It is only in interacting with the gods in a sacralized space that they acquire religious meaning.[11]

9. Original edition by Ebeling (1952: 129–35); see also Menzel 1981: vol. 2, T110–13. A new edition will be published by Simo Parpola in the SAA series in a volume on the Assyrian rituals.

10. Takultu for Assur-etel-ilani, Frankena 1954: 23–29; Menzel 1981: T138–142, translation after Parpola.

11. A feature established by Mary Douglas (1966) for the notion of purity and impurity.

Beyond the daily cult, votive offerings found in temples, also mentioned in mythic narratives, demonstrate that there is a category that can be classified as offerings of gratitude prepared by someone who survived illness or any kind of affliction. An example is illustrated by Lugalbanda in the Sumerian composition *Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave*:

> He took hold of the . . . stones. Repeatedly he struck them together. He laid the glowing (?) coals on the open ground. The fine flintstone caused a spark. Its fire shone out for him over the waste land like the sun. Not knowing how to bake cakes, not knowing an oven, with just seven coals he baked *giziešta* dough. While the bread was baking by itself, he pulled up *šulḫi* reeds of the mountains, roots and all, and stripped their branches. He packed up all the cakes as a day's ration. Not knowing how to bake cakes, not knowing an oven, with just seven coals he had baked *giziešta* dough. He garnished it with sweet date syrup. (Black et al. 1998–2006: t.1.8.2.1, lines 276–99)[12]

With the progress of the narrative, Lugalbanda sees wild bulls and goats and, after having received a dream message that he should hunt them down, readies his weapons for hunting. What follows reads like a ritual prescription of how to prepare a proper meat offering for a banquet with the gods:

> Lugalbanda awoke—it was a dream. He shivered—it was sleep. He rubbed his eyes, he was overawed. He took his axe whose metal was tin, he wielded his dagger which was of iron. Like an athlete he brought away the brown wild bull, the wild bull of the mountains, like a wrestler he made it submit. Its strength left it. He offered it before the rising sun. He heaped up like barleycorns the heads of the brown goat and the buck-goat, both of the goats. He poured out their blood in the pit so that their smell wafted out in the desert. The alert snakes of the mountains sniffed it. (Black et al. 1998–2006: t.1.8.2.1, lines 351–60)[13]

> As the sun was rising . . . . . , Lugalbanda, invoking the name of Enlil, made An, Enlil, Enki and Ninḫursaĝa sit down to a banquet at the pit, at the place in the mountains which he had prepared. The banquet was set, the libations were poured—dark beer, alcoholic drink, light emmer beer, wine for drinking which is pleasant to the taste. Over the plain he poured cool water as a libation. He put the knife to the flesh of the brown goats, and he roasted the dark livers there. He let their smoke rise there, like incense put on the fire. As if Dumuzid had brought in the good savours of the cattle pen, so An, Enlil, Enki and Ninḫursaĝa consumed the best part of the food prepared by Lugalbanda. Like the shining place of pure strength, the holy altar of Suen, ... On top of the altar of Utu and the altar of Suen . . . . . , he decorated the two altars with the lapis lazuli . . . . . of Inana. Suen . . . . . He bathed the *a-an-kar*. When he had bathed the . . . . . , he set out all the cakes properly. (Black et al. 1998–2006: t.1.8.2.1, lines 371–93)[14]

The passage further provides most valuable information regarding the time, space and performance of the offering to the gods. At dawn, Lugalbanda, while invoking the names of the four great gods of the Sumerian pantheon, summons them to the place of the offering, a pit. The offering is called *gizbun*, a Sumerian term later

12. "ETCSL Translation: t.1.8.2.1." On-line: http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.1.8.2.1&charenc=j# [accessed May 25, 2012].
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.

equated with Akkadian *tākultu* 'banquet'. Lugalbanda pours libations of beer and wine and cuts the meat of the goats to roast it and let the savor rise to the gods like incense. The gods then consume the best part of the meal.

The notion of the offering as a gift of gratitude lives on in the *Atrahasis Myth*, which tells the story of how Atrahasis survived the flood sent by the gods to destroy humankind. While one could consider the particular passage that describes the gods smelling the scent of the offering and gathering around it as an etiology for the existence of offering, the Atrahasis Myth is not primarily concerned with the offering per se. Rather, the narrative revolves around the creation of humankind to perform the labor needed to guarantee agricultural production for the daily offerings to the gods.

Similarly, chronographic literature such as the chronicles tends to emphasize rites of a complex ritual other than the offering, as is demonstrated by the way they refer to the *akītu*-festival. Although this festival included lavish offerings to the gods and a sumptuous banquet, the chronicles refer to it by saying "Bel did not come out"; in other words, they stress the point that the public event of the procession (Pongratz-Leisten 2006) did not take place rather than referring to the offerings performed before and after. To make my point, even the references quoted from mythic literature do not necessarily support the notion of isolating the sacrifice from the rest of the complex ritual of which it is supposed to be an integral part.

The texts with their detailed information about the context of offering and ritual killing, as well as their economic, social and political aspects, reveal that both practices were part of a larger setting—either the cult with its communicative function in the interaction with the gods or the eliminatory rites with their distancing function in which the killed surrogate is supposed to carry away the infected material. Offering or ritual killing are the only ritual acts likely to be preserved in the archaeological material, as all the other dromena and legomena performed during a complex ritual lack the aspect of materiality. Thus, the evidence further bespeaks the necessity of a cooperation between the archaeologists and philologists to bring to life the cultural discourse of the past.

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On Sacrifice: An Archaeology of Shang Sacrifice

Roderick Campbell

The contributors to this volume have presented diverse and fascinating case studies raising many insights concerning the archaeology of sacrifice in the ancient Near East and in general. Moreover, despite their diversity, common issues run through the contributions to this volume: the archaeology of ritual/religion, the nature of sacrifice, the problem of studying sacrifice archaeologically and its ancient sociopolitical ramifications. All of these topics hold significance beyond the bounds of the ancient Near East or even the discipline of archaeology. As someone studying ostensibly similar issues in Bronze Age China, I take it as my role to join the conversation on common issues while providing an alternative perspective on certain others. In what follows, I will offer a thesis on the concept of "sacrifice," proposals for studying it archaeologically, and a brief account of Late Shang sacrificial practices, all the while making explicit and sometimes critical links to the other essays in this volume, the scholarly literature on sacrifice, and the archaeology of ritual/religion.

On Sacrifice and Its Archaeological Study:

An obvious point of departure for a critical and comparative reflection on ancient Near Eastern and Chinese "sacrifice" is to begin with the term itself. Schwartz (pp. 1–32 in this volume) has catalogued a variety of phenomena that can be classified as sacrifice, but are there ancient Chinese concepts or practices that could be so translated? If so, how similar are these things to each other and to analogous phenomena elsewhere?

For scholars of ancient China, 'sacrifice' or *jisi* 祭祀, usually subsumed under the broader category of *li* 禮 'ritual, propriety', has long been a central topic.[1] The political-religious importance of *jisi* is strongly asserted in classic statements such as the *Zuozhuan*'s (Cheng 13), "the great affairs of the state reside in the temple sacrifices (祀) and the war sacrifices (戎)" (Shaughnessy 1996: 159). Sacrifice itself was seen as a service to the spirits and ancestors, such as when the Han dynasty ritual anthology, *Liji* (Jitong), states, "as for sacrifice (祭), it is the means by which the dead are nourished and filial piety perpetuated." Whether at the central altars of

1. Indeed, the graphs for *li* 禮 'ritual' are composed of an altar and an offering of jade on a stemmed *dou*-platter, whereas the binome *jisi* 祭祀 is composed of *ji* 祭, an altar with a hand grasping a piece of flesh, and *si* 祀, an altar and the phonetic for *si*.

the soil and lineage temples of the rulers or the everyday shrines and graves of ordinary people, sacrificial offerings have been a central component of mainland East Asian religious practices since the Neolithic. But if the idea of nourishing or giving gifts to the gods and ancestors seems to be one of great antiquity, the ways in which this has been conceived of and practiced changed greatly even as the nature of the spirits and human-spirit interactions transformed over the centuries (Puett 2002). Though sharing the term *sacrifice* (*ji* 祭), rote tradition and nostalgia-inflected modern offerings of paper ghost-money to feed dead relatives are worlds away from the Shang kings' expenditure of thousands of human lives in performance of civilization's order against the terrible wrath of the gods and ancestors.

If *jisi* is not a stable, unitary thing then but has undergone transformation in content and form over millennia in the many-stranded traditions of China, what are we to make of the putatively universal category of "sacrifice"? Definitions of sacrifice, as noted by Schwartz (in this volume), often refer to its connotations in modern European languages of "giving up something precious" or its Latin etymology and original meaning of "to make sacred." Definitions such as these serve to ground Western conceptual starting points, but it is equally important to remember that these are historically positioned constructions that may carry unwanted baggage into translocal comparison. Indeed, a categorical distinction between sacred and profane social and ontological spheres has been a staple of Western discourse on religion since at least Durkheim (1976),[2] even motivating some theories of sacrifice (Hubert and Mauss 1964), but as some authors have noted (Bell 2007; Hesse et al., pp. 217–235 in this volume) have noted, this distinction is variably drawn, if at all, in different cultures. Given this, as many of the essays in this volume have noted, attempting to demarcate sacrificial practices on the basis of a distinction between religious and secular actions or motivations is difficult, and I would argue that this approach is fundamentally, historically flawed.

While my objection to embedding discussions of sacrifice in "the sacred" or "religion" may seem like a case of the perennial anthropological conundrum of finding an appropriate etic term to fit emic realities, the problem, in fact, runs much deeper. The issue lies in the pernicious intellectualist reification of "religion" as a unique and independent sphere of practice and (especially) belief (W. C. Smith 1962). Though scholars of ancient societies frequently note that, in the societies they study, religion was inseparable from politics, daily life, and so on, it is nonetheless difficult for post-Enlightenment Western academics to take home the point powerfully made in Asad (1993) that "religion" has come to denote little more than a perspective in the modern West. That Christianity went from "the faith" to "a faith" and then to "a religion" does not merely reflect the historical development of a concept but rather marks seismic shifts in relations of truth, power, being, and

2. The positing of an ontological distinction of sacred and secular spheres (with the former framed and defined in terms of opposition to the latter) runs through post-Durkheimian thinking on religion from authors as diverse as Eliade (1987) and Berger (1990), reaching its most attenuated and abstract forms in Bell's (1992) ritualization predicated on distinction or Csordas's (2004) recent attempt to ground religion in alterity.

world. Though the contributions to this volume have largely steered clear of direct discussion of "religion," it nonetheless accompanies the concept of "sacrifice" like a shadow and has problematically entangled writing on the archaeology of religion in general with its conceptual framework.[3] Practices of ritual killing and offering were (as are all practices) embedded in intertwined ways of knowing and being in the world. In other words, "religion" (to the extent that this is even a locally meaningful category) is neither thought of nor practiced as a separate compartment of social life in most times and places. It is not just (or even mainly) about beliefs, and the same is true for putatively "religious" practices such as "sacrifice."

Returning to the issue of the cross-cultural applicability and unity of "sacrifice," it must be said that, though classic works in the anthropological and religious studies literature have attempted to reduce it to original, universal underlying motivations such as gift-giving, communication, communion, magical substitution or scapegoating, the bewildering variety of phenomena attested over a century of empirical studies has eroded confidence in universal explanations. Indeed, if sacrifice involves killing, offering, and gods or spirits, then surely these things can be conceived of and articulated in a myriad of ways in different cultural settings. The focus of comparative studies of sacrifice then ought to ask not only "are there practices or concepts in a given society that share common ground with Western academic notions of sacrifice?" but also "how are they integrated with other local practices, beliefs, social structures or political orders?" In other words, as both Weber and Porter (pp. 191–215 in this volume) ask, in addition to the content of sacrifice, what is its wider context? A corollary of this position is that there is no shortcut from a universal category of sacrifice to understandings of ancient practices in either their "religious" or political ramifications. Local, holistic, contextual understanding is a precondition for comparison.

This brings me to the issue of ritual and why sacrificial practices should be understood as ritualized behavior. If sacrifice is not so much a universal human phenomenon as a variety of practices involving, to lesser or greater degree, killing/destruction, offering, and superhuman entities found in different times and places, then a perspective such as Bell's (1992) recasting of ritual as "ritualized practices" is highly pertinent. In this formulation, ritualized practices differ from those of a more mundane sort by their intentional marking through various means. Indeed, ritualization speaks to a central issue of most of the essays in this volume: that the patterns being identified as possibly relating to "sacrifice" are in some way anomalous or differentiated from ordinary actions in the context in question. As I have argued above, it is counterproductive to understand this distinction in Enlightenment, religious-secular terms or to employ "overdetermined" categories (Bell 2007) to assist with the interpretive heavy lifting as is all too common in archaeology. Instead, reconceptualizing sacrifice as ritualized action involving offering and destruction allows sacrificial practices to be distinguished from mundane killing and

3. Thus, though in other ways advocating positions similar to those argued in this essay, in a recent article, Fogelin (2007) unfortunately bases his discussion on an assumed distinction between ritual and religion with the former concerning practices and the latter beliefs.

ordinary gift-exchange, while at the same time letting their specific meaning and significance be determined in relation to broader patterns and institutions.

If "sacrifice" can be conceptualized as ritualized practices combining in some way offering and destruction, the issue of how it can be studied archaeologically remains. This, in fact, is a central problem struggled with in the papers of this volume and overtly raised in both Schwartz's and Porter's articles. While I share many common points with these authors, I differ in that I would argue against beginning with an attempt to distinguish the "religious" nature of sacrificial practices as Schwartz wishes to, or the exclusively mortuary focus and privileging of sacrificial intent seen in Porter. Mostly, however, I would like to build on the underlying consensus seen in Porter and Schwartz and throughout this volume that works to understand sacrificial practices from spatial and temporal contexts.

Traditionally, anthropologists and scholars of religion have conceived of sacrifice in terms of the nature of the giver/sacrificer, the offering/victim, the recipient/deity, and the transformation of the relationships between them before, during, and after the sacrifice. Studies have focused on the intent of the ritual, the symbolic role of the victim/offering, and its transformation through destruction and possible consumption (Carter 2003: 4–6). It could be argued, however, that this focus on meaning, roles, and abstract symbolism is an artifact of the usual media of religious study: text and ethnography (see also Fogelin 2007). As many of the essays have effectively demonstrated, the material-spatial aspects of sacrificial practices are crucial to understanding them. In addition to a sacrificer, victim, and recipient, there is a setting: built or unbuilt, public or private, spectacular or mundane. Whole networks of things are also brought into play, not only people, animals, and abstract ideas. In a sense, these "pseudo-objects" (Latour 1993) are also actors in the sacrificial drama. Instruments of death, vessels for blood and flesh, special costumes, musical instruments, wine, drugs or incense, sacred images, and altars might all play a part, each with a "biography" (Appadurai 1986) potentially intertwined and mutually constitutive of the significance and legitimacy of the rite.

Two points logically follow from these observations. The first is that text-based and ethnographic semiotic analyses of sacrifice are often missing vital material components of analysis. The second is that archaeology, as a discipline that deals with the material-spatial facets of human life as a matter of course, is uniquely situated to fill this lacuna. This is not to say that archaeological approaches are superior to text-based approaches; rather, they are complementary.

It has long been asserted that archaeology is poorly suited to investigate "religion" and other phenomena at the higher end of "the ladder of inference" (Hawkes 1954). This misunderstanding is, on the one hand, the product of the Protestant-inflected notion of Modern intellectualist scholars of religion that religion is about belief rather than practice[4] and, on the other, is based on the naive materialism of processual archaeologists and their behavioralist brethren in anthropology. This

4. This tendency can be seen in the evolutionary teleologies of 19th-century writers such as Herbert Spencer and James Frazer, which begin with practical magic ritual and eventually develop into abstract religion. In this century, W. C. Smith famously deconstructed the word *religion* and

Longshan	ca. 3000–1800 B.C.E.
Erlitou	ca. 1800–1600 B.C.E.
Early Shang	ca. 1600–1400 B.C.E.
Middle Shang	ca. 1400–1250 B.C.E.
Late Shang	ca. 1250–1050 B.C.E.
Western Zhou	ca. 1050–771 B.C.E.
Eastern Zhou	771–252 B.C.E.
Qin	221–207 B.C.E.
Western Han	206 B.C.E.–A.D. 9
Eastern Han	A.D. 24–A.D. 220

Fig. 1. Early Chinese chronology.

latter view posits a spectrum between "rational action" and culturally determined "irrational" behavior (see Hesse et al. in this volume). Archaeology was thought to be most suitable for investigating technology, "subsistence" and economy, while social systems were less accessible and "ideology" even more difficult. However, since at least Malinowsky's (1984 [1922]) famous study of Trobriand Islanders, it has been shown time and again that *homo economicus* is a modern, Western invention.[5] There are no culturally or socially unmediated actions in the world and no economic transaction takes place without reference to an abstract web of values and relations.[6] The "economic" practice of raising cattle in Shang China, for instance, cannot be understood without reference to the royal and local courts where they were likely to be consumed, the networks of tribute and war through which they circulated, the ancestral sacrifices and feasts where they were slaughtered and eaten, or the workshops where their scapula were prepared for elite divination or where their metacarpals and metatarsals were ground into hairpins. Sacrifice, then, no more or less than the "rational" economic practices considered the traditional purview of archaeology, has mutually entangled abstract discursive aspects and material traces. As such, it leaves traces in the material record that can be studied.

In ideal situations, archaeology's spatial-material investigations of ritualized killing and their larger contexts can be complemented with iconographic (Carter, pp. 97–124 in this volume), textual (Porter in this volume; and Voigt,

instead argued for a form-and-content-type distinction between personal relationships to transcendence and "cumulative traditions," privileging the former.

5. It was, in fact, the created object of the new purified science of economics once it had been separated out of the older discipline of political-economy.

6. Sherratt (1999: 16) makes a similar point in his powerful critique of archaeological studies of "subsistence":

> There is thus a measure of parallelism in the human uses not only of animals and plants but also of inanimate materials: wool, olive-oil, and copper are coeval. All require technological knowledge, skill and investment both in productive facilities and in distributive networks. Whilst specialist study of their remains requires differing backgrounds . . . their archaeological significance lies in their common social and cultural contexts and uses. This common field is the domain of value and exchange.

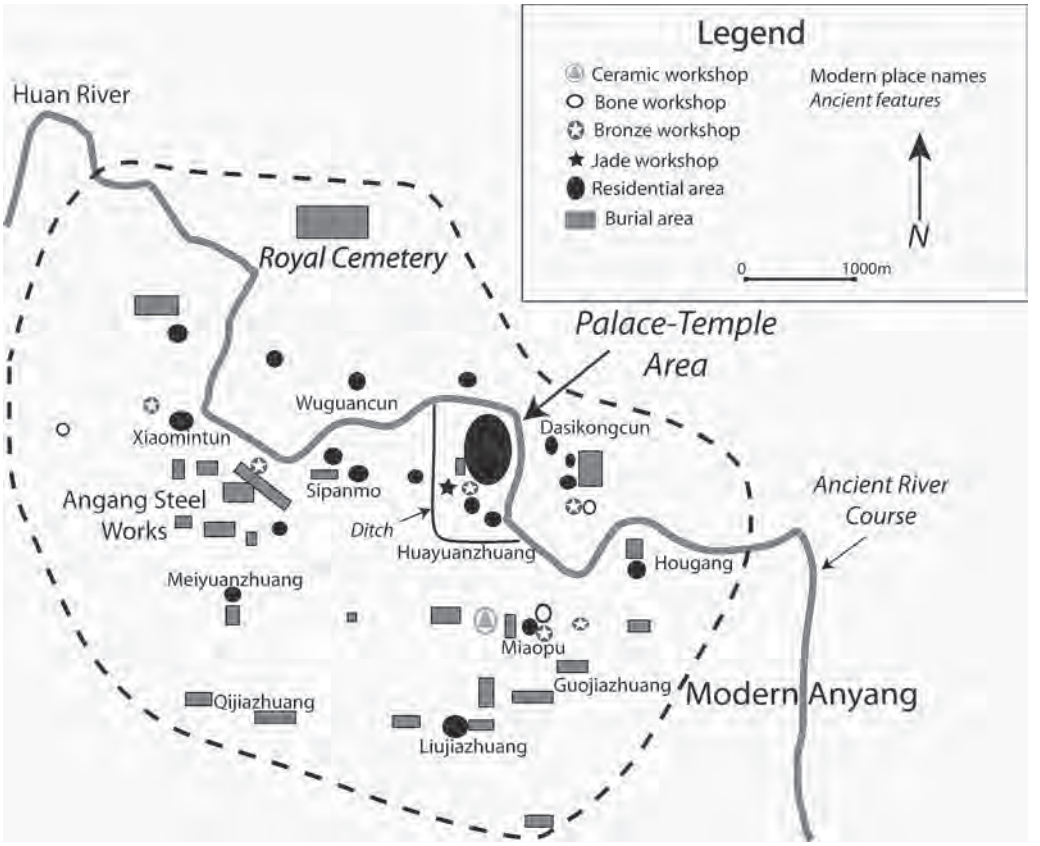


Fig. 2. Late Shang Anyang.

pp. 237–290 in this volume) or even ethnographic information. Something approaching a holistic understanding of sacrifice-like practices and their relationships to power, social order and world view could then perhaps be achieved. In many cases, however, archaeologists may have to be satisfied with mapping the material and spatial patterns of marked practices of killing and deposition without access to intentions or abstract beliefs.

Although Shang China (fig. 1) or, more specifically, the Late Shang site of Anyang (fig. 2), is a time and place with a relative wealth of contemporaneous inscriptions and later textual accounts, there is much that can be learned about sacrificial practices from the archaeological record alone. Synthesizing and systematizing the approaches used by the authors in this volume, material and spatial analysis can proceed from several axes: the spatial context of killing and deposition, the treatment before and after death of those killed, the nature of the thing offered/destroyed/consumed, the assemblage of artifact-participants, the relationships between the above facets and broader social practices, continuities or changes in these practices over time.

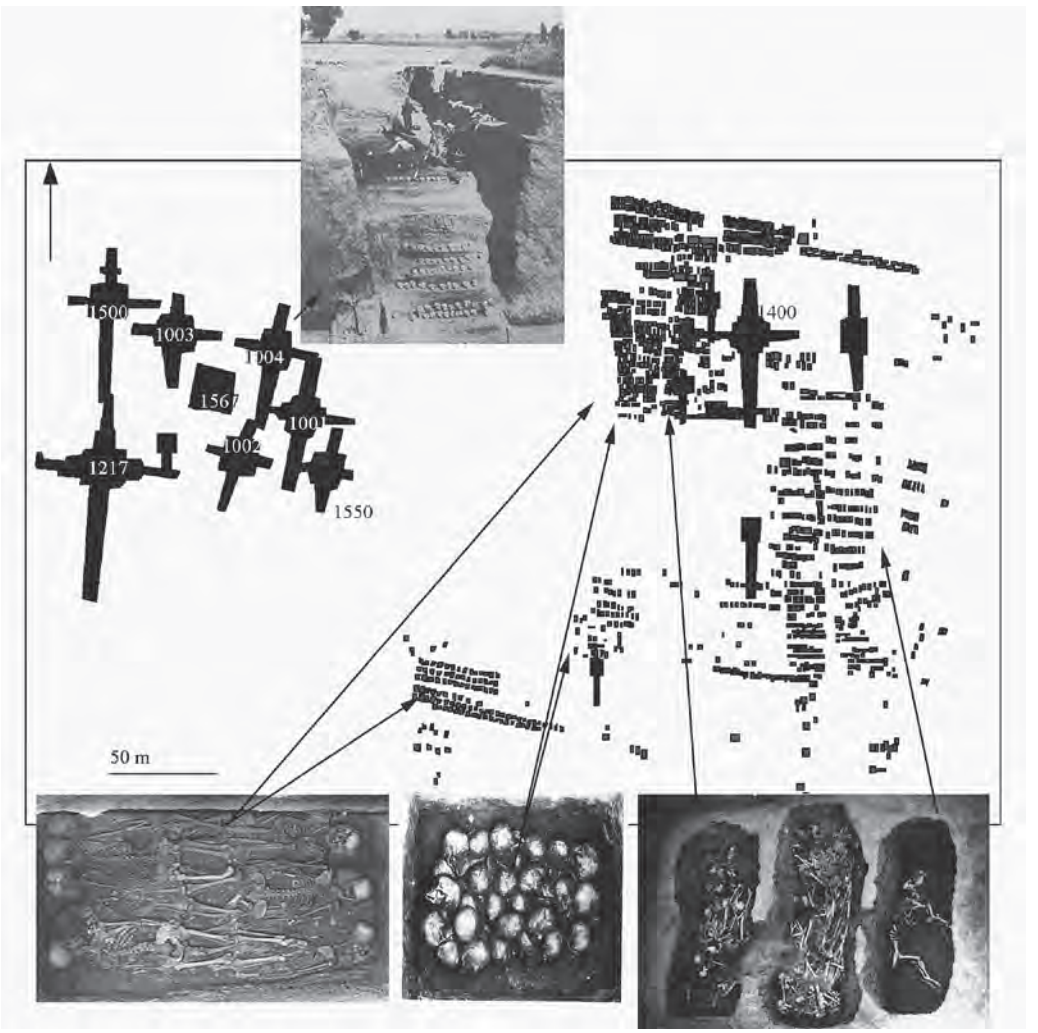


Fig. 3. Royal Cemetery, Anyang.

Looking at spatial contexts first, Shang sacrificial practices have been preserved in three different contexts: in or under architectural features such as rammed-earth foundations, in tombs, and in pits associated with cemeteries and large-scale buildings.[7] These contexts can further be subdivided in terms of location within the site of Anyang with the majority of the foundation deposits being found in the moated "palace-temple" precinct and the most ostentatious examples of tomb offerings and sacrificial pits in the royal cemetery (fig. 3). Nevertheless, and crucial to the

7. Contemporaneous divinatory inscriptions concerning offerings to the gods and ancestors include throwing victims into rivers as well as burnt offerings. The former is unlikely to be recovered archaeologically, while the latter is unlikely to be noted in the large-scale, rough-grained excavations that have been the norm in China.

overall social context, smaller buildings outside the palace-temple precinct also frequently have human interments in or under them, while cemeteries and tombs beyond the royal burial ground show evidence of ritualized killing and deposition.

In terms of treatment of those ritually killed, while fine-grained forensic anthropological study would have been ideal, a crude division can be made in their deposition: those that were carefully arranged and show no obvious signs of violence and those deposited helter-skelter and/or bearing marks of destruction (for example, decapitation, dismemberment, being cut in half at the waist, and so on). Those placed in tombs, moreover, are generally given a proper burial, sometimes replete with coffins and rich grave goods, sometimes equipped with weapons or tools.

Looking at the things offered/killed, a number of distinctions can also be drawn. For instance, foundation depositions beyond the palace-temple precinct are generally those of children or infants, while those inside the palace-temple precinct range from domestic animals to human adults and children. Sacrificial pits nearby the palace-temple foundations and in the royal cemetery also contain a range of human and animal deposits, but in these cases adult and young adult human males predominate. Non-primary tomb interments, however, excluding food offerings, include horses, dogs, and humans (mostly children and young adult women).

Though it would be ideal to recover the entire assemblage of material participants in the process of ritualized killing and deposition, this is probably never realizable in practice. In the Shang case, the instruments of death can only be imputed from iconographic and circumstantial evidence and then only in some cases. Altars, though known from text and symbol, have not been identified, and costumes and ritual accoutrements can only be speculated based on figurines and tomb offerings. Nevertheless, there are two categories of potential sacrificial paraphernalia that stand out conspicuously in tombs: jade artifacts and bronze vessels. Jade and oversized bronze blades, correlated with other signs of rank and status (Liu 2003; Tang 2004), may have been simultaneous symbols of sacrificial potency, military might and authority in general. On the other hand, the vast resources expended on the sometimes-monumental bronze vessel sets found in Shang tombs are highly suggestive of both feasting activities (especially drinking) and their relationship to the dead. If neither of these categories of artifact is obviously related to sacrificial practices on first glance, the expense and prominence of these artifact classes bespeak, nonetheless, a significance to their broader contextualization.

Before turning to the wider connections between ritualized killing and deposition and other practices, at this point it might be productive to combine the above axes of analysis and look for an overlap in the patterns already seen (see table 1). Combining the four axes of analysis, the distinctions noted above tend to form three different patterns. The first might be termed death attendant, the second architectural deposit, and the third offering pit.

Looking at the wider context of Shang practices, we can bolster the hypothesis that the first category of sacrifice-like phenomena is a kind of attendant-in-death. To date, more than 10,000 Late Shang tombs have been excavated at Anyang, and

Table 1. Patterns in Ritualized Killing and Deposition

Spatial Context	within tombs	in or under foundations	pits associated with cemeteries or "palace-temples"
Treatment of Offering	bodies intact, careful placement	bodies frequently show signs of violence, sometimes buried with animals	bodies frequently decapitated, dismembered, and stacked or thrown in pits
Nature of Offering	children and young women most common, dogs replace humans in smaller tombs, horses and chariots can be associated with larger tombs	palace-temple offerings range from livestock to human, outside palace-temple precinct infants and children placed in urns prevail	humans most common, generally young adult and adult males, cattle, sheep, pig and dog also appear, as does the occasional bronze vessel, ceramic pot, or weapon
Associated Assemblage	often none (other than the burial assemblage of the primary tomb occupant); sometimes typical Shang grave goods; in the largest tombs, inner and outer coffins, bronze vessels, and jade paraphernalia	generally nothing	almost always nothing; many of the decapitations leave part of the mandible and base of skull attached to the cervical vertebra, suggesting they were cleanly cloven with a large sharp implement

many hundreds more at other Central Plains sites as well. Given this, there is a good basis for understanding Late Shang burial practices and for stating that death attendant burials look like ordinary Shang burials except that they are placed in another person's tomb and have far fewer grave goods associated with them than the primary interment. There is an interesting homology between larger, richer tombs and smaller ones as well: whereas in the largest tombs some of the death attendants were given the burial equipment of lesser elites (fig. 4), in the smallest class of tombs human attendants were replaced with dogs, sometimes equipped with bronze bells (Campbell 2007). The sheer number of death attendants and their widespread use argues against coincidental death at the same time as the principal interee, while the fact that the tombs appear to be the remains of single burial events argues against their being secondary burials (Porter, in this volume). If we consider as death-attendant phenomena the dozens of chariot pits replete with horses, chariots, chariot gear, and charioteers associated with the largest tombs (fig. 5), and the armed men or dogs in the "waist-pits" below the bodies of the principal tomb occupants in more than 50 percent of the tombs at Anyang (Campbell 2007), then it appears that those most privileged in mortuary ritual were buried with a varied retinue of guards, servants, charioteers, and concubines, while more ordinary people had to make do with dogs as companions in the afterlife.



Fig. 4. Death attendants in royal consort's burial (reconstruction).

The greatest difference between death attendants and the other two categories of Shang sacrificial practice lies in the treatment of the deposited people or animals. If the first category is essentially a form of Shang mortuary treatment, governed by its norms concerning the preparation of the body for the afterlife, architectural sacrifices and ancestor offerings seem more focused on the act of killing or extinguishing. Several lines of argument support this observation. The first is the conspicuous destruction of the offering in the context of other possibilities of ritualized killing that left no obvious (skeletal) damage. Contrast the carefully laid out death attendant with the architectural sacrifice that appears to have been tied, chopped and toppled into the pit (figs. 4 and 6). A second line of evidence is the contrast between the individualized treatment of the death attendants versus the frequent anonymous stacking, or piling of the other forms of sacrificial practice (figs. 7–9). A third line of evidence is that ancestor offerings and architectural sacrifices often appear in contexts mixed with animal and artifact remains (fig. 9), suggesting on the one hand a basic equivalence of things offered and, on the other, a stark contrast with the careful layout of a tomb. In these contrasts, it seems apparent that the actual arrangement of the deposit in architectural sacrifice or offering pits was



Fig. 5. Chariot burial with horses and charioteers (M54).



Fig. 6. Foundation sacrifice (Xiaotunnandi F20?).

not as important; what was significant was the often-spectacular destruction of the offering.

This distinction noted, we might expect that death attendants and the other two categories of sacrificial practice would use different classes of offering. Indeed, this is the case, as can be seen in the animal offerings where livestock predominate in the latter cases, while dogs and horses are nearly the only nonhuman species that appear as death attendants. The predominance of military-aged males in palace-temple architectural deposits and in offering pits then is perhaps not surprising and suggests a phenomenon of captive sacrifice.

Despite sharing common features, however, architectural deposits and offering pits differ in their spatial contexts and likely their function. In the case of the An-yang palace-temple architectural kill-deposits, their location under doors, pillars, and foundations is suggestive of concern for both access and structural integrity. A focus on access can also be seen in the architectonics of Central Plains palace-temples with their single-entrance walled-courtyard structure as this example from a better-excavated but slightly earlier palace-temple structure indicates (fig. 10). In general, the placement of offerings in and under the rammed earth layers of the palace-temples indicate that the killing and deposition of human and animal offerings was an integral part of the construction process.

Given that offering pits can be distinguished from architectural deposits solely in terms of their location, it might be useful to consider architectural deposits a



Fig. 7. Headless human offering pit in royal cemetery.



Fig. 8. Human and animal offering pits in the royal cemetery.

subcase of offering pit. It might be that some of the offering pits located near some of the palace-temples were also related to their construction, but this is not necessarily the case. Indeed, the vast majority of offering pits were located in the royal cemetery although some occurred in non-royal cemeteries as well. The location of offering pits among the monumental tombs of the Shang kings and in cemeteries in general, moreover, suggests a relationship between this type of sacrificial practice and the dead, although not, apparently, the same as that pertaining to death attendants. The mixture of livestock and decapitated human remains here is suggestive. As noted above, it appears that it was lives, and perhaps blood and flesh, that were offered to the dead in the sacrificial pits rather than the service that the death attendants seem to represent.

Another piece of the puzzle to be considered here are the feasting vessels that were central to Shang mortuary assemblages. Bronze vessels found in hordes attest to the fact that these vessels were not merely made to be interred in tombs while scorch marks on some vessels indicate their use in food preparation. If feasting vessels imply a feast, and the dead apparently needed them, then it seems logical to conclude that offerings made to the dead may have come in the form of food and drink.

Though humans predominate in offering pits and the animals found within appear to have been interred whole, there are some tantalizing clues from what little faunal analysis has been done at Anyang that sacrificial pits and tombs may not be the whole picture when it comes to sacrificial practices. In 1986–87, a midden near the palace-temple district yielded more than 100,000 bone fragments, nearly all of them cattle (ZSKYAG 1992), in stark contrast to normal residential faunal assem-



Fig. 9. Skull pit in the royal cemetery.

blages (which tend to be dominated by pig; Yuan 2004), suggesting feasting events: possibly the end-result of sacrificial feasting.[8]

Turning to the diachronic axis of analysis, interesting long- and short-term trends can be seen in sacrificial practices. To summarize, although architectural offerings, sacrificial pits, and death attendants all have antecedents in earlier mainland East Asian Bronze Age and Neolithic societies, Late Shang Anyang seems to represent a dramatic zenith both in terms of scale and elaboration of sacrificial practice. Indeed, looking a little more broadly, it could be said that Anyang shows a dramatic development of an entire ritual, economic and political complex involving sacrifice and burial, materially symbolized by the astounding resources dedicated to offerings, bronze feasting vessels and the construction of tombs. Given that bronze vessel sets were almost exclusively found in tombs, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the economy of Late Shang Anyang, a 30-km-square site referred to in dynastic hymn as the "pivot of the four quarters" and that drew resources from as far away as the Yangtze river and the Indian Ocean, revolved around ritual service to the dead. Indeed, the vast majority of Anyang sacrificial practices, be they death attendants or offering pits, are in tombs or cemeteries. Even without texts then, these contexts strongly suggest some form of ancestor veneration, something not

8. This hypothesis is supported by the high frequency with which cattle appear in divinations as sacrificial offerings to the royal ancestors, by the fact that cattle were one of the most frequently divined categories of royal tribute, and by the curious discrepancy between the scarcity of animal victims relative to humans in the royal cemetery offering pits compared to what one would expect based on the oracle-bones (which suggest parity [Campbell 2007]). That the missing animals were consumed in ancestor veneration feasts is suggested in the prominence of bronze ritual feasting vessel sets inscribed with ancestor dedications, and later textual accounts of sacrificial feasts.

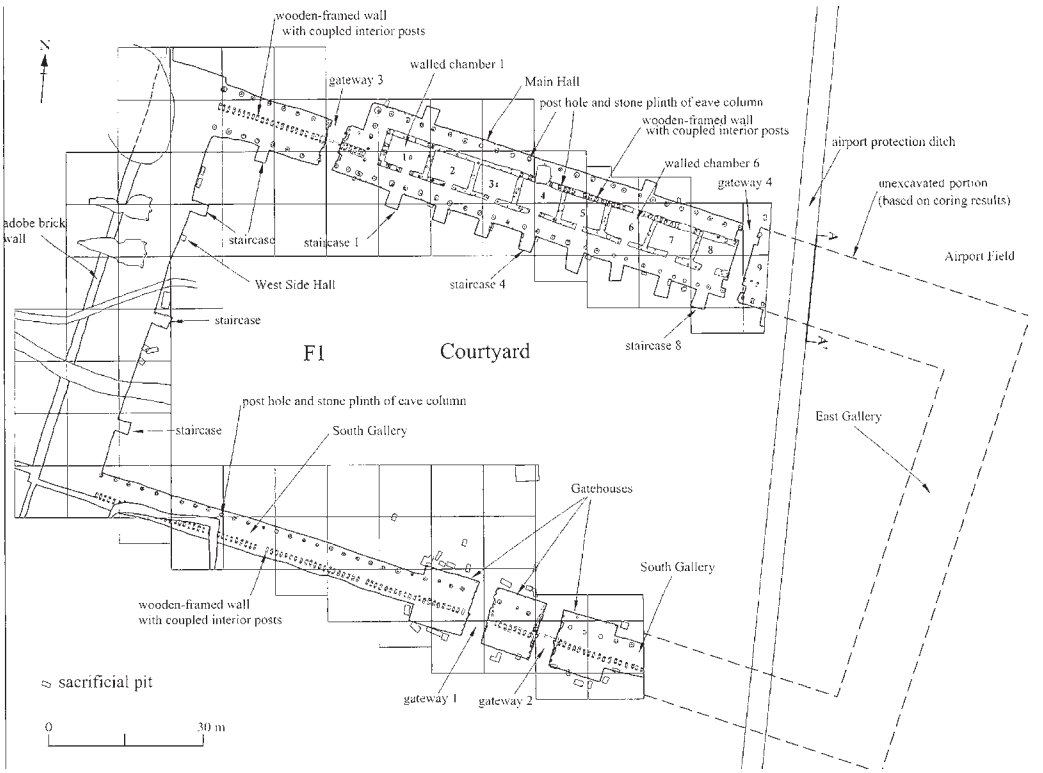


Fig. 10. Sacrificial pits at Huanbei "Palace 1."

unexpected considering the longevity and ubiquity of such phenomena in historical and modern China.

Examining the development and decline of the sacrificial practices suggested for Anyang across the centuries before and after, their separate histories do indeed suggest that they were three distinct practices. Architectural offerings, for instance, basically disappear after the Zhou conquest of the Shang, and human death attendants appear to decline in number, occurring mostly in lower elite Shang-style tombs during the following Western Zhou period, only to reappear in the tombs of regional state rulers in the Springs and Autumns period before essentially disappearing by Imperial times. Sacrificial offerings to gods and ancestors and their bronze paraphernalia were still central concerns in the Western Zhou, but pit offerings decline and the use of human victims becomes rare, leaving only trace references in classical ritual texts and historical narratives.

To summarize this brief and rather crude archaeological sketch of Shang sacrificial practices, several points emerge. First, much can indeed be learned from spatial-material analyses of patterns of practice, even when dealing with something as supposedly nebulous as "religion." Ritualized killing and deposition at Anyang

seem to be divisible into at least two distinct logics: one basically a form of mortuary rite and the other an act of destruction and consumption. Shang sacrificial practices can be further divided into three based on location: tomb, sacred ground (palace-temple courtyard and cemetery), and structure. Based on the locations of these deposits, focus of the ritual or recipient of the offering seems to fall into two major categories: the dead and whatever forces were thought to govern the integrity of buildings. Combined with the prominence of feasting vessels and the resources expended on provisioning the dead (and/or negotiating the status of the living), the ritualized killing and deposition of large numbers of people and animals in tombs and cemetery offering pits demonstrates the link between most Shang sacrificial practice and ancestor veneration. Indeed, within the larger context of graded but broad participation in mortuary ritual and the extreme inequality displayed between the mortuary resources expended on the largest and smallest tombs, Shang sacrificial practices appear to be closely linked to social hierarchy and political power.

The second point that emerges is support for the contention that sacrifice is not a unitary, universal phenomenon but rather a collection of variable, culturally embedded practices involving ritualized killing/destruction and offering. Commensural consumption, communication, scapegoating, category marking, provisioning of the dead, and enactment of mythic events or cosmologies are all possible elements of sacrificial phenomena, and the three forms of Shang sacrifice partake of some of these rationales to lesser or greater degree. The killing of people or animals to accompany the dead, for instance, does not seem to focus on the death of the individuals so chosen so much as their preparation for the afterlife and inclusion among the equipment of their patron. These killings, nevertheless, could also be seen as acts of communication: of filial piety to the dead and status to the living. The ritual destruction displayed in structural sacrifices and offering pits, on the other hand, also seem to be acts of communication, but partake of a different logic. In these cases, the offerings do not seem to be companions but rather are things consumed. Bronze vessels and midden remains suggest that commensural feasting may have been an aspect of Shang sacrificial practice, but the human offerings, though found with livestock in pit deposits, show no sign of having been eaten by the living. More likely, given the age and sex profiles of the human victims, is a logic of consumption by the gods and ancestors, of the lives of livestock and captives: a tribute to the royal ancestors of the blood of their enemies.

Turning to contemporaneous texts, the archaeological impression of a linkage between Shang sacrifice and ancestor veneration is confirmed. While a paramount deity and powers of mountains, rivers, winds and lands all appear within Shang royal divinations concerning sacrifice, not only do the royal ancestors predominate but there is a progressive movement toward ancestralizing the powers of the world during the Late Shang period (Itō 1996). The fact that thousands of human beings were offered to the ancestors along with livestock is also reflected in the oracle-bone divinatory inscriptions and the suggestion that they were war captives is given support. Indeed, the categorical equivalence suggested by the juxtaposition



Fig. 11. Yue-axe from Fu Hao's tomb and bronze insignia involving yue-axes.

of human and animal remains in sacrificial pits is born out in serial divinations where human and nonhuman offerings were alternatives for the same rite.

At the same time, however, divinations and later textual accounts suggest that Shang captive sacrifice operated in a logic of punishment and ancestral service. It is not surprising then that the *yue*-axe (fig. 11), symbol of kingly and military authority, was also the likely instrument of ritual decapitation. Moreover, if sacrifice often concerns communication, Shang captive sacrifice was embedded in the king's ritual communication with his ancestors concerning his successful defense of the world order. In Western Zhou times, left ears taken in battle were offered at the ancestral temple and in Warring States Qin, taking heads was transformed into service to the state rewarded with promotion in rank. In spite of the frequent assumption that sacrificial phenomena need to be categorically separated from execution, in the Shang case, drawing a distinction between the execution of prisoners and "religious sacrifice" is neither desirable nor possible. Rather, in being taken prisoner, former enemies were reduced to "bare-life," transformed into another form of sacrificial livestock, validating through their pacification and destruction the king's simultaneously political and religious ordering of the world.

In summary, I would argue that there is no hope of understanding ritualized violence through history and thus making ancient sacrificial practices more than exotic instances of irrationality and barbarism, if we insist on studying sacrifice as the

product of a particular social-evolutionary stage such as that of "early states." Sacrificial practices are historically as well as culturally embedded in particular times and places, and, as their varied development and decline in ancient China and the various contributions to this volume show, they can scarcely be understood without their specific historical contexts. The pinnacle of early Chinese human sacrificial practices, for instance, appears to have come during the reign of King Wu Ding, extolled in later texts as a righteous and industrious restorer of Shang dynastic fortune. By contrast, the earlier Shang site of Zhengzhou, and putative first capital of the dynasty, is relatively poor in sacrificial remains, as is Erlitou, location of what some have argued to be China's first state (Liu and Chen 2003). Could monumental human sacrifice have been Wu Ding's "final solution" to the Qiang problem (an influx of people from the north and the west)? Perhaps, unlike the Late Roman Empire that could absorb defeated Goths into the army and the slave trade (Heather 2006), Shang institutions of relocation and attached dependency were unable to accommodate so many enemies.[9] On the other hand, tightly linked as war and sacrifice were in Early China (Lewis 1990; Campbell 2007), perhaps there was no better expression of pious ancestral service and martial accomplishment for a restorer of dynastic fortune like the "Warlike" Ding than to host his ancestors with the blood of their enemies.

One final point needs to be made concerning "sacrifice" and history. Theoreticians from Robertson Smith (1973) to René Girard (1979) have portrayed sacrifice as a product of a certain historical moment, an artifact of primitive magico-religious thought or of underdeveloped social mechanisms for mediating violence. These universal originary claims for sacrifice, however, serve Western culture as origin myths of primitive violence and the birth of inequality—yet just as religion became a "thing" in the moment of its marginalization at the hands of science and secular rationality, so too the category of sacrifice serves to exoticize safely and partition us from the social violence with which it is often associated. If the distinction between religion and politics is a modern invention, however, then the possibility of distinguishing purely "religious" violence becomes untenable, and if we recognize the culturally constituted and frequently affectively loaded nature of violence, then we must also admit that ritualized, ideologically charged killing and destruction is still very much with us. Whether they are framed as national interest, progress, ethnic purity, or sectarian atavism, our gods still demand sacrifice, and blood has not ceased flowing down their altars.

9. Lincoln (1991: 183) makes this suggestion with respect to ancient Celts, Scyths, and, Germans.

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