

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME



Digital reconstruction of the Katumuwa Stele chamber (Travis Saul)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

FEASTING WITH THE DEAD
IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

edited by

Virginia Rimmer Herrmann

and

J. David Schloen

with new photography by

Anna R. Ressman

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An offering to Virginia's grandparents

Porter & Arlene Frank & Nancy

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FOREWORD

GIL J. STEIN
DIRECTOR, ORIENTAL INSTITUTE

The author William Faulkner touched upon a deep truth when he wrote “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.” One of the strongest and most enduring examples of this continuity is our relationship with the dead. Even as early as 50,000 years ago, in the depths of the Ice Age, we know that Neanderthals believed that there was some kind of continuing existence of the human spirit even after death, so that burials in Shanidar Cave in Iraq contained offerings of flowers and other grave goods meant for the departed person’s spirit in the afterlife. This idea that the human spirit lives on makes it perfectly understandable that the living would want, and need, to have a continuing relationship with the dead, continuing their obligations of filial piety to their parents and others by making periodic offerings and funerary feasts both in remembrance, or even in some cases to actually provide the sustenance and supplies that they would require in the afterlife. Mortuary feasts thus play a key role for both the dead and the living — reaffirming social ties and the status of the living by virtue of their ancestral roots.

For archaeologists and ancient historians, it is often quite difficult to accurately understand these ancient beliefs about death, the afterlife, the soul, funerary feasts, and their relationship to the living. The remarkable discovery of the stele of Katumuwa at the Iron Age Neo-Hittite/Assyrian city of Zincirli in southeast Turkey gives us a unique and almost unprecedented chance to look into the lives, deaths, and religious beliefs of people more than 2,700 years ago. Through the relief carving and inscription, we have the chance to not only see an individual — the royal official Katumuwa — but we can actually hear him speak, in his own words, to his descendants, instructing them in how to celebrate annual funerary feasts in his honor, and make offerings to his soul, which resided inside the stele itself. Thanks to the meticulous excavations conducted by David Schloen, the director of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, and by Virginia Rimmer Herrmann, we have another, no less remarkable opportunity to see the stele in its original context — the household shrine room where the stele stood as an integral part of the living household of Katumuwa’s descendants. In other words, the dead were literally present as an integral part of the fabric of the lives of their families.

Exhibit co-curators David Schloen and Virginia Rimmer Herrmann have done a spectacular job in developing and presenting the exhibition *In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East*. Their creative display of a cast of this remarkable stele and the virtual reconstruction of the shrine where it stood gives us a chance to understand both the beliefs and religious practices of the people of Zincirli. The exhibit places Katumuwa in context by showing that these particular religious ideologies and rituals formed part of the very widespread practice of funerary feasts across the diverse civilizations of the ancient Middle East. Most importantly, *In Remembrance of Me* highlights ancient beliefs about the nature of the soul and the afterlife and how they continue to play a key role in the world of the living.

Many people deserve our thanks for making possible this exhibit, and the exciting discoveries at Zincirli, and in the limited space here I can only acknowledge a few. First and foremost, we are grateful to Joseph and Jeanette Neubauer for their generous sponsorship of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli. Thanks are due to David Schloen and Virginia Rimmer Herrmann for developing the exhibit, and to Museum Chief Curator Jack Green and Special Exhibits Coordinator Emily Teeter. We also deeply appreciate the assistance and encouragement of his excellency Fatih Yıldız, the Consul General of Turkey in Chicago. The exhibit itself could not have seen the light without the generous support of the Estate of Albert and Cissy Haas and the Haas Family, Howard Hallengren, Roger Isaacs, and Anna White. Finally, I want to express my appreciation to the Oriental Institute Museum staff for their creativity and hard work in bringing this exhibit — and the memory of Katumuwa — to life.

PREFACE

JACK GREEN

CHIEF CURATOR, ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM

Death is often a taboo topic in western society. Euphemisms such as “passed away” and “dearly departed” might be used when somebody close dies, either because the loss is hard to bear, or we do not wish to face up to the facts of mortality. Despite the grief and disruption associated with death, memories of the deceased live on long after the funeral. How people choose to remember and celebrate the dead can vary across society and over time. Anthropologists and sociologists have long studied the rites of passage, including the stages of separation, segregation, and reincorporation. This special exhibit presents a material perspective on death rituals and commemoration that has seldom been presented to museum visitors. For many cultures, including those of the ancient Near East, a common thread is the consumption and offering of food and drink in the rites that can occur weeks, months, and years later. New insights were made into our understanding of Near Eastern beliefs about the dead, the soul, and the ritualized care for the dead through the 2008 discovery of the Katumuwa Stele by the Oriental Institute’s Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, Turkey — the starting point for this exhibit — an archaeological project that has been generously supported by Joseph Neubauer and Jeanette Lerman-Neubauer. We are reminded that the dead were never really gone in the ancient Near East, but played a continued, active role among the living. This exhibit provides an opportunity to share these findings and implications with the wider world.

There are many individuals who made this exhibit and its catalog possible. Our gratitude goes firstly to guest co-curators David Schloen, Associate Professor of Syro-Palestinian archaeology in the Oriental Institute and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC) at the University of Chicago; and Virginia R. Herrmann, Visiting Assistant Professor at Dartmouth College and recent PhD graduate of NELC at the University of Chicago. They both helped steer the exhibit and this catalog through their numerous stages, from concept to fruition. The exhibit would not have taken place were it not for the discovery of the Katumuwa Stele as part of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, Turkey, directed by David Schloen. Virginia R. Herrmann helped to excavate the stele, and has continued to research and publish on this topic since that time. It is appropriate that she is now involved in the presentation of this discovery to a wider audience. Virginia’s own acknowledgments can be found in her *Introduction* on the following pages.

We also thank Vincent van Exel for his contribution as an exhibit curatorial assistant to this project, particularly in selecting objects and preparing lists for the show in its initial stages. A considerable contribution to the exhibit has come from Travis Saul of Travis Saul Productions, who has created the atmospheric and powerful short film “Remembering Katumuwa,” which forms a unique and significant part of the exhibit. It will continue to live on as online content long after the end of the show. We also thank Gary Staab of Staab Studios for his recreation of the Katumuwa Stele from its silicone latex squeeze — no easy task. We are also grateful for illustration work by Karen Reczuch, and to Professor Dennis Pardee of the Oriental Institute for his reading of the Katumuwa Stele inscription in English and Aramaic.

In addition to new research and editing conducted by David Schloen and Virginia R. Herrmann, more than a dozen authors contributed to the essays and catalog entries in this volume, several of whom are based at the University of Chicago within the Oriental Institute and NELC. Two museums assisted us with loans, which have helped enhance this exhibit, as well as helping us materialize the representations on the Katumuwa Stele: we thank the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, including Director Thomas Campbell, Curator in Charge Carlos Picón (Department of Greek and Roman Art), Curator in Charge Joan Aruz and Department Administrator Tim Healing (Department of Ancient Near Eastern Art), and Assistant Registrar Nesta Mayo; we also thank the Penn Museum, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, including its Director Julian Siggers, Near East Collection Keeper Katherine Blanchard, and Loans Registrar Anne Brancati. We also thank Haitian artist Kesler Pierre for the loan of a spirit bottle from his collection, and an anonymous lender for a number of the modern items represented in the *Epilogue* section.

The staff of the Oriental Institute has been flexible and supportive throughout the course of the exhibit preparations. I would like to thank Registrars Helen McDonald and Susan Allison, especially for their work on loans, access to the collections, and preparation of object lists; our conservation team Laura D’Alessandro and Alison Whyte — Laura’s communications with Gary Staab on the Katumuwa Stele reconstruction and Alison’s diligent restoration work on the Panumuwa II

PREFACE

cast deserve special mention; Museum Archivist John Larson for access to archives, photographs, and his knowledge of the collections; Anna Ressman, assisted by Bryce Lowry and Austin Kramer, for her excellent new photographs for this catalog; Curatorial Assistant Mónica Vélez, especially for help with image procurement and social media promotion; Erik Lindahl and Keeley Stitt of our Preparation Department, assisted by Matt Federico, designed and built the show. We are also grateful to our colleagues in the Public Education and Outreach Department, Catherine Kenyon, Carol Ng-He, and Moriah Grooms-Garcia, for their help in developing creative educational activities and programs related to the exhibit.

Emily Teeter continued to play her integral role as Special Exhibits Coordinator, keeping the exhibit, catalog, and publicity on schedule, preparing many catalog entries and labels, and contributing to the exhibit design and object selection. In our Publications Department, Thomas Urban and Leslie Schramer provided us with this marvelous catalog. It has been a pleasure to work with such patient and professional colleagues. We thank the anonymous reviewers of the catalog for their valuable input and feedback, as well as François Gaudard and Theo van den Hout of the Oriental Institute for their feedback on specific catalog entries. We of course also thank Oriental Institute Director Gil Stein and Executive Director Steve Camp for their continued and generous support of the exhibit program, and for their close interest and engagement with this show. We are particularly grateful to Gil Stein, who generously provided Oriental Institute funds to permit us to commission the reproduction and digital reconstruction of the Katumuwa Stele, including Travis Saul's film. Additional thanks go to Tracy Tajbl, Director of Development at the Oriental Institute, for all her help with building support for the show.

Our community focus group assisted with a review of the exhibit in its formative stages. Many thanks to Dianne Hanau-Strain, Matt Matcuk, Beverly Serrell, Nathan Mason, Molly Woulfe, Nancy Levenson, and Amy Alderman, who provided many useful comments and ideas that we integrated in to the exhibit. We are also grateful for support from the Center for Jewish Studies of the University of Chicago, who assisted as a sponsor for the public symposium coinciding with our exhibition.

We thank a number of individuals who have helped to make this exhibit happen. The special exhibit and catalog are generously supported by the Estate of Albert and Cissy Haas and the Haas Family, Howard Hallengren, Roger Isaacs, and Anna White. Finally, we thank the Members of the Oriental Institute and our public visitors who regularly contribute donations which help us to put on our special exhibitions. We hope that the exhibit provides food for thought, as well as appreciation of the many strands of that bind together the worlds of the living and the dead.

CONTRIBUTORS

About the Contributors*

Dominik Bonatz is professor since 2003 at the Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin. His doctoral research on Iron Age funerary monuments laid the foundations for his key interest in the study of ancient Near Eastern visual arts with a focus on the anthropology, performance, and perception of images. As a Principle Investigator in the cluster of excellence “Topoi,” he puts a new emphasis on this interest by investigating the modes of representing and ordering space, including social space, in the pictorial systems of ancient Near Eastern civilizations. He also heads two excavation projects, one in north Syria since 2005, the other on Sumatra in Indonesia since 2002. The results of the excavation in Syria contribute to an understanding of the territorial expansion of the Middle Assyrian empire in the late second millennium BC.

JME **Jean M. Evans** is a postdoctoral fellow in the Munich Graduate School for Ancient Studies at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität and a research associate at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. She has been the recipient of fellowships from the Getty Foundation, the American Academic Research Institute of Iraq, the Warburg Institute, and other institutions. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, she was a co-organizer of the exhibition *Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium BC* and co-editor of its corresponding publication. She is also the author of *The Lives of Sumerian Sculpture: An Archaeology of the Early Dynastic Temple* (Cambridge University Press, 2012) and co-editor of *Evolutionary Theory and Visual Culture: The Darwin Effect* (Routledge, forthcoming).

Marian H. Feldman is professor of the history of art and Near Eastern studies at the Johns Hopkins University. She previously taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and has excavated in Syria and Turkey. Feldman is the author of *Diplomacy by Design: Luxury Arts and an “International Style” in the Ancient Near East, 1400–1200 BCE* (University of Chicago Press, 2006) and a co-editor of *Ancient Near Eastern Art in Context: Studies in Honor of Irene J. Winter by Her Students*, with Jack Cheng (Brill, 2007), *Representations of Political Power: Case Histories from Times of Change and Dissolving Order in the Ancient Near East*, with Marlies Heinz (Eisenbrauns, 2007), and *Critical Approaches to Ancient Near Eastern Art*, with Brian A. Brown (de Gruyter, 2013). Forthcoming is a monograph on early Iron Age Levantine portable luxury goods (University of Chicago Press).

JG **Jack Green** (a.k.a. John D. M. Green) is chief curator of the Oriental Institute Museum and a research associate at the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago. He is co-editor of the Oriental Institute Museum publications *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East* and *Our Work: Modern Jobs—Ancient Origins*. He received his PhD in archaeology from University College, London (2006), and was curator of the ancient Near East collections at the Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, from 2007 to 2011. He is also co-editor and major contributor to the Tell es-Sa‘idiyeh (Jordan) Cemetery Publication Project of the British Museum.

VRH **Virginia R. Herrmann** is a visiting scholar and visiting assistant professor of anthropology at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, and co-curator of the exhibit *In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East*. She received her PhD in Near Eastern archaeology from the University of Chicago’s Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in 2011. The discovery of the Katumuwa Stele during the course of her dissertation fieldwork at Zincirli, Turkey, has inspired her research on mortuary and family religion. Her other research at Zincirli examines the effects of incorporation into the Neo-Assyrian empire on household and neighborhood structure, domestic economies, and urban organization in this peripheral provincial capital. In addition to Turkey, she has excavated at sites in Israel, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Cyprus, and Sicily.

* Initials identify contributors in the *Catalog*.

CONTRIBUTORS

- CK Chelsey Kivland** is the Robert A. and Catherine L. McKennan Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in the Department of Anthropology at Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. She received her PhD in anthropology in 2012 from the University of Chicago. As a cultural anthropologist, she strives to understand how and why people find meaning in power and conflict. Her research focuses on local forms of leadership in a Haitian ghetto and attempts to uncover the multiple and contradictory ways people compete for control over an area. She is currently preparing a book based on her dissertation, titled *In the Name of the State: Politics, Violence, and Development on Haiti's Streets*.
- Theodore J. Lewis** holds the Blum-Iwry Professorship in Near Eastern Studies at Johns Hopkins University. He is general editor of the book series *Writings from the Ancient World* and past editor of the journals *Near Eastern Archaeology* and *Hebrew Annual Review*. He is the author of *Cults of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit*, and co-author of *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry*. He has co-edited (with Gary Beckman) *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* for the Brown Judaic Studies series. He is currently writing *The Religion of Ancient Israel* for the Yale Anchor Bible Reference Library series, for which he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship, and a volume on Archaic Aramaic texts. Lewis is an academic trustee of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem.
- Miriam Müller** is the Oriental Institute 2012–14 postdoctoral fellow. She received her MA from the University of Heidelberg (Germany) and finished her PhD at the University of Vienna (Austria) in 2012, where she worked on the material from the Austrian Archaeological Institute's excavations in Tell el-Dab'a, Egypt. On the basis of the documentation and finds of a residential area, she explored the field of household archaeology and its benefits for Egyptian archaeology. Her interest in the field formed the idea for an interdisciplinary seminar to foster new discussions in the field and bring together a broad range of specialists from all over Europe and the United States; this seminar was held in March 2013 at the Oriental Institute. She has participated in excavations in Egypt, Israel, Austria, and Germany.
- Herbert Niehr** (ThD, University of Würzburg, 1985) is professor of biblical introduction and history of the biblical period at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen (Germany) and professor extraordinary of ancient studies at Stellenbosch University (South Africa). He has published extensively on West Semitic philology and religions, including *Ba'alšamem: Herkunft, Geschichte und Rezeptionsgeschichte eines phönizischen Gottes* (2003), *Götter und Kulte in Ugarit* (2004; co-authored with I. Cornelius), *Aramäischer Aḥiqar* (2007), *Religionen in der Umwelt des Alten Testaments II. Phönizier, Punier, Aramäer* (2010; co-authored with C. Bonnet), and is the editor of *The Aramaeans in Ancient Syria* (2014).
- Dennis Pardee** has been teaching the Northwest Semitic languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Ugaritic, etc.) at the University of Chicago since 1972. His principal field of research is Ugaritic epigraphy and philology — editing and commenting on tablets in alphabetic cuneiform from Ras Shamra and Ras Ibn Hani, Syria, dating to the end of the Late Bronze Age. He first participated in excavations at these sites in 1980–1981 and has since been involved both in the edition of newly discovered texts (texts from Ras Shamra 1974–2002, from Ras Ibn Hani 1977–2002) and in the re-edition by literary genre of texts previously excavated (the hippatric texts in 1985, the ritual texts in 2000, epistolary texts nearing completion). Though less involved in editing texts from the first millennium BC, publications on texts in Moabite, Phoenician, and Hebrew preceded his edition of the Katumuwa inscription. His latest book is *The Ugaritic Texts and Origins of West-Semitic Literary Composition*.
- TS Travis Saul** is a visual artist, programmer, software developer, and educator living in Chicago, Illinois. His artistic work centers on the use of evolutionary algorithms to generate 3-D objects, images, and animations. Saul's collaborations with fine artists and art institutions have resulted in numerous public exhibitions of real-time media projects, interactive installations, 3-D visualizations, and 3-D reconstructions. Saul received an MFA from the Department of Visual Arts (co-sponsored by the Computational Institute) at the University of Chicago in 2012.
- JDS J. David Schloen** is an associate professor of archaeology at the Oriental Institute and Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the University of Chicago, and is co-curator of the exhibit *In Remembrance of Me: Feasting with the Dead in the Ancient Middle East*. His teaching, research, and writing focus on the archaeology and history of the pre-classical Levant from ca. 3000 to 300 BC. He has conducted archaeological fieldwork in both Israel and Turkey. From 1994 to 2002 he was associate director of the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon on the Mediterranean coast, for which he remains co-editor of a series of excavation reports. From 2003 to 2005 he

CONTRIBUTORS

was associate director of the University of Chicago's excavations at the second-millennium BC site of Alalakh (Tell Atchana) near the Syrian border in Turkey's province of Hatay. Since 2006 he has directed the University of Chicago's Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, ancient Sam'al. He is the author of *The House of the Father as Fact and Symbol: Patrimonialism in Ugarit and the Ancient Near East*.

ET **Emily Teeter** received her PhD from the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. She is an Egyptologist, research associate, and coordinator of special exhibits at the Oriental Institute and the editor of the exhibit catalogs *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt*, *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization*, and *Picturing the Past: Imaging and Imagining the Ancient Middle East*. Her most recent books are *Religion and Ritual in Ancient Egypt* and *Baked Clay Figurines and Votive Beds from Medinet Habu*.

TVdH **Theo P. J. van den Hout** (PhD, University of Amsterdam, 1989) is professor of Hittite and Anatolian languages at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, and editor-in-chief of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary since 2000. He is the author of several books, most recently *The Elements of Hittite* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), and many articles. While interested in all aspects of Late Bronze and Iron Age Anatolia, his work focuses on Hittite culture, history, and language. Besides his work on the dictionary, his recent personal interests are ancient record management, literacy, and writing in Hittite society.

Karel van der Toorn is faculty professor of religion and society in the Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam. He has also served as dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Amsterdam (1998–2004) and president of the University of Amsterdam and the University of Applied Sciences of Amsterdam (2006–2011). His long-standing interest in the ancient Near East, with a focus on the Hebrew Bible in its cultural context, has led to such books as *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (1985), *From Her Cradle to Her Grave: Religion in the Life of the Babylonian and the Israelite Woman* (1989), and *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel* (1996).

VJVE **Vincent J. van Exel**, exhibit curatorial assistant, came to the University of Chicago to pursue a PhD in Near Eastern archaeology in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations after receiving his MPhil at the University of Leiden (The Netherlands). His current research focuses on Early Iron Age states in Syria and southeastern Turkey, that is, the so-called Neo-Hittite and Aramaean states. In particular, his excavations on the southern part of the citadel mound of Zincirli (Turkey), ancient Sam'al, aim to shed new light on the chronology and on the cultural changes that make this period so interesting.



Map of select sites

1. INTRODUCTION: THE KATUMUWA STELE AND THE COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

VIRGINIA R. HERRMANN

*Honor your father and your mother,
so that you may live long.*

— Exodus 20:12

In the city of Sam'al, 2,700 years ago, a man named Katumuwa contemplated his own mortality and took steps to keep his memory alive. He knew the realm of the dead could be a cruel and lonely place, but he had hopes of a blessed afterlife in the company of the gods. But for this happy fate, the essential thing was not to be forgotten by the living, especially your own family. Katumuwa was a man of means and connections, so he commissioned a stone monument bearing not only his likeness and his name, but specific instructions for annual sacrifices for his soul and an image of himself enjoying the feast, and he set it up in a special building next door to the temple of his god. This monument, or stele, would be not only a carrier of his memory, but also an enduring home for his soul among the living, and the annual feast would be a point of connection with his descendants.

Katumuwa's plan for remembrance was successful for several generations after his death, but in time things changed, and his city was abandoned, its people leaving his heavy memorial behind. The walls caved in and covered up it, and the stele sat in darkness and oblivion for millennia. It was just by chance that in 2008 the Oriental Institute's expedition to Zincirli, Turkey, brought Katumuwa's stele to light again, but because he took care to inscribe his memorial in stone, his name is restored to the tongues of the living.

Katumuwa's rediscovery is the inspiration for this exhibit. A considerable part of both the show and the accompanying catalog are devoted to an examination of this individual's life, death, and afterlife and the insights his memorial provides into beliefs about death and practices of remembrance in

the Syro-Hittite¹ realm of the eighth century BC. The Katumuwa Stele does not stand in isolation, however, but rather is part of a web of ideas, traditions, objects, and images that spans the Middle East and Egypt and extends through millennia. Other sections of the exhibit and catalog follow two particular threads that connect the Katumuwa Stele to practices of commemoration and care for the dead common across Egypt, the Levant, Anatolia, and Mesopotamia. First, despite great variability in burial and mortuary practices and beliefs about the afterlife and the status of the dead, archaeological, textual, and iconographic evidence point to a widespread tradition of sharing food and drink with the ancestral dead at regular intervals, as described by the Katumuwa Stele's inscription and depicted in its relief. Second, Katumuwa's inscription makes explicit how his "soul" would be present in the stone stele to receive these offerings (in fact, this is the first mention in a West Semitic context of the concept of a soul that was separable from the body). This practice of representing the dead in their interactions with the world of the living through a material effigy or likeness, usually in stone, is common in other times and places as well.

These common practices express a widespread belief in a reciprocal relationship between the living and dead members of a family that continued long after the funeral was over. The underlying theme of this exhibit is how this relationship contributed to the construction of identity and memory in the ancient Middle East and Egypt (see, e.g., Chesson 2001, Meskell 2003, Schwartz 2012). Remembrance and reverence toward forebears provided a fundamental component of identity for the living: who are you without your ancestors? As breaking bread together strengthens people's connections in life, so too feasting with the ancestors is an effective way of remaining connected to the past. On the other side of the divide, who were you if you are forgotten by your

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

descendants? Those who had the means made great efforts in life for the preservation of their memory after death, as witnessed by the many surviving memorial monuments found by archaeologists, some of which bear first-person pleas for remembrance such as Katumuwa's. In some sense, it is this tension between the knowledge of the inevitability of death and the comfort of the succession of generations that gives life its drama and meaning (see Assmann 2005, pp. 2–11).

The Katumuwa Stele embodies one individual's response, grounded by deep cultural and religious roots, to quandaries concerning the prospect of one's own death and the loss of loved ones that are universal in scope. The answers it gives provide an opportunity to reflect on how we contend with these issues today, and the epilogue to the exhibit and catalog traces points of comparison and divergence between the traditions of the ancient Middle East and Egypt and practices of commemoration of the dead across the contemporary world.

THE KATUMUWA STELE

A major goal of this exhibit is to present the discovery of the Katumuwa Stele fully to the wider public and highlight the work of Oriental Institute archaeologists at the site of Zincirli, Turkey, the ancient

city of Sam'al, where it was found. The discovery of this monument was a notable event in the world of ancient Middle Eastern scholarship and even made headlines in the world beyond (Wilford 2008; Bonn-Muller 2008, 2009). For linguists, the addition of a major new inscription in the Aramaic language (only roughly a dozen others of this length are known), perfectly preserved and full of intriguing details, was an exciting development. Art historians gained a nearly intact, high-quality relief rich in symbolism and iconographic connections. And for archaeologists, the all-too-rare preservation of relief and inscription in their original archaeological context presented a new opportunity to understand the *Sitz im Leben*, the life setting, of such monuments. The "Remembering Katumuwa" video (Catalog No. 2), produced by digital artist Travis Saul for the exhibit, uses archival photos and videos from the excavations to try to capture some of the excitement of the stele's initial discovery (figs. 1.1–4). Finally, the addition of a faithful reproduction of the stele's face (Catalog No. 1), created for the exhibit by Gary Staab, to the museum's permanent collection serves as a testament to the ongoing contribution of the Oriental Institute's work in the field to ancient Middle Eastern scholarship.

Most advances in archaeology today are made in the lab and at the desk, compiling, analyzing, and comparing countless fragments of excavated data that tell stories of gradual change and long-term



FIGURE 1.1. Virginia Herrmann and Çağrı Çetin, the worker who first noticed the inscribed stone, pose at Zincirli with the top of the Katumuwa Stele, discovered just a few centimeters below the surface (photograph by Eudora Struble, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)



FIGURE 1.2. The excavation of the stele in progress: (from left to right) Zincirli associate director Amir S. Fink, camp manager Zeki Cemali, excavators Teyfik Gün and İsa Kılıç, trench supervisor Joshua Cannon (at back), and excavator Bestami Bozkurt (photograph by Virginia R. Herrmann)

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FIGURE 1.3. Virginia Herrmann and Ben Thomas study the Katumuwa Stele on the day of its discovery, July 21, 2008 (photograph by Eudora Struble, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)



FIGURE 1.4. Zincirli director David Schloen (top left) looks on in the Zincirli dig house as University of Chicago students (from left to right) Sam Boyd, Chip (Humphrey) Hardy, and Ben Thomas produce the first reading of the Katumuwa inscription, in July 2008 (photograph by Eudora Struble, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

trends on the order of generations, centuries, or even millennia. But occasionally a special object is encountered, in the form of an image or inscription, that gives a different kind of insight into the past and allows us to connect with individual people and events at a more familiar, human scale. The Katumuwa Stele is one such object, an appeal in the first person to sustain the memory and essence of the man depicted on its face, giving the history and function of the monument itself, and describing its inauguration and future events connected to it. A window is opened, feeding our imagination of life in a different time and place.

On their own, the inscription, decoration, and archaeological context of the stele are worthy of detailed study, but for deeper understanding, it is necessary to set these into their broader context, from excavating the building and neighborhood where the stele was found, to assembling a chronology and social history of the city as a whole, to comparing the stele with similar discoveries in this region and in the wider ancient world. This task was taken up immediately after its discovery, with the initial publication of the text, image, and context by members of the Zincirli Expedition (Schloen and Fink 2009; Pardee 2009; Struble and Herrmann 2009). A number of additional studies on various aspects of the stele have since appeared (Younger 2009; Mazzini 2009; Melchert 2010;

Masson 2010; del Olmo Lete 2011; Lemaire 2012; Sanders 2013; Hawkins, forthcoming; Pardee, forthcoming; V. R. Herrmann, forthcoming a and b), and it is making its way into new synthetic and reference works as well (Niehr 2010a; Chavalas 2011; Gilibert 2011; Bryce 2012; Bonatz 2014).

The Katumuwa exhibit incorporates the fruits of these dialogues since the stele's discovery, and *Part I* of the catalog presents the most comprehensive collection of scholarship on its interpretation yet published. Members of the Zincirli expedition responsible for its excavation and decipherment (Schloen, *Chapter 2*; Pardee, *Chapter 4*; and Herrmann, *Chapter 5*) come together with foremost authorities on the mortuary art (Bonatz, *Chapter 3*) and religion (Niehr, *Chapter 6*) of the Syro-Hittite kingdoms to create a holistic picture of the Katumuwa Stele and its significance. The results are synthesized in the catalog entry for the stele reproduction (Catalog No. 1). In the exhibit, in addition to the reproduction of the stele itself and the video about its discovery and the reconstruction of Katumuwa's annual mortuary feast (Catalog No. 2), text panels and photographs introduce the Oriental Institute's excavations at Zincirli and the decipherment and interpretation of the stele's Aramaic inscription. Finally, a case entitled "An Eternal Feast: Reading the Stele's Image" dissects Katumuwa's relief-carved banquet scene through the

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medium of three-dimensional artifacts that correspond to the elements depicted on the stele (Catalog Nos. 3–11), such as the pinecone, drinking bowl, and duck.

The Katumuwa Stele is a rich new document of the religious and social life of the Syro-Hittite cities in the Iron Age. The information provided by its inscription, relief image, and archaeological context add a great deal of detail to our fragmentary picture of the beliefs behind Syro-Hittite ancestor cult, the mechanics of its practice, and the social background of its participants. As noted above, the stele of Katumuwa and the reconstruction of the annual feast in his honor are also evocative illustrations of the creation of identity and memory through the material practices of ancestor cult, a theme that cuts across the cultures of the ancient Middle East and is explored in the remainder of the exhibit and catalog.

COMMEMORATION, COMMUNION, AND CARE: THE DEAD AND THE LIVING IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST AND BEYOND

Another aim of this exhibit is to show the roots and connections of the mortuary beliefs and practices revealed by the Katumuwa Stele by surveying the relationship between the living and the dead in the broader Middle East, as well as the epicenter of mortuary culture, Egypt. Inhabited by many geographically, linguistically, and ethnically diverse groups, this large region hosted considerable diversity in mortuary belief and practice over several millennia. Four essays by specialists in mortuary and family religion draw out distinctions among the mortuary cultures of the Levant (Lewis), Anatolia (van den Hout), Mesopotamia (van der Toorn), and Egypt (Müller). However, the exhibit and the remainder of this chapter point to broad similarities in commemorative practices across the region. In particular, analogues to key aspects of the Katumuwa Stele (highlighted in the entry for Catalog No. 1), namely, the use of stone effigies of the dead, the sharing of food and drink offerings with the deceased, and the potent use of banquet imagery, can be found across the region. In the exhibit, the thematic organization of around forty additional memorials, images, texts, and artifacts from the Oriental Institute's collections and from lending institutions highlights these common threads in the

visual and material cultures of the different parts of the Middle East and Egypt.

Throughout the region, some part of the living person was believed to survive death: a “soul,” “spirit,” or “ghost.” In Egypt, the deceased person took a whole variety of forms in different contexts and with different abilities (Müller).² The border between the realms of the living and the dead was not always closed, and interaction between the two ranged from positive and controlled (regular offerings for the dead, necromancy, and divinatory dreams) to negative and uncontrolled (malevolent or vengeful ghosts, possessions, and nightmares) (Müller; Assmann 2005, pp. 14–16; Scurlock 1995).

Depictions of the afterlife varied from blessed immortality, as in Egypt, to a dark realm of sorrow and deprivation where the dead eat clay and drink muddy water (van der Toorn) and know nothing (Lewis), as in Mesopotamia and Israel (Assmann 2005, pp. 10–11). But at each extreme, and especially in Anatolia (as discussed under Catalog No. 1), there was room for improvement or degeneration in the state of the dead soul, depending in part on the remembrance and care or nourishment by descendants. The contrasting conditions of the dead with few or many children are vividly portrayed in the Sumerian tale of Gilgamesh cited by van der Toorn. A pious son (or daughter) would never abandon a parent to such a fate of want and grief.

What Müller writes of ancient Egypt — “the relationship between the living and the dead was one of reciprocal need” — was true everywhere. Their interaction provided not only the abstract, reassuring psychological benefits noted above, but also tangible protection on both sides. As seen above, the dead were dependent on the living for the quality of their afterlife. For the living, care for the souls of the dead was literally a condition of the inheritance of property and status, hence it was most often the responsibility of the eldest son and heir, though the whole family would participate (van der Toorn; Müller). It could also prevent harm inflicted by angry, neglected ghosts and obtain the intercession of benevolent souls, such as an Egyptian *akh*, with the gods (Müller). The biblical commandment to “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long” (Exodus 20:12) expresses this give and take (Lewis).

Perceptions of the power of the dead to affect the world of the living clearly varied not only from place

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to place, but also from person to person. Though rites performed for the dead are sometimes referred to in scholarship as ancestor “worship” or “deification,” and the dead are called “gods” in certain ancient texts (Lewis), these terms are perhaps misleading (especially from the predominantly monotheistic perspective of the contemporary world), and the term “veneration” (Lewis) might be a safer alternative (cf. Schmidt 1994, pp. 4–13). The status of the most exalted dead, such as a king, may have approached that of a god, but the power and status of the dead were clearly as variable as those of living persons. In Egypt, not everyone would become an *akh*, an “effective spirit” (Müller; Catalog No. 19). In the ancient Middle East, the odds of becoming a venerated “ancestor” were not often favorable (see Teinz 2012), and countless indigent, childless, or unburied dead were soon forgotten and neglected. Even those who were remembered and honored by name could only count on two to at most four generations of such individual care, unless they were kings with genealogies recorded by diligent scribes. After this point, one became “really dead” (van der Toorn) or joined the community of anonymous, communal ancestors (see also Müller; Pfälzner 2012).

How could the living continue to interact with the dead? To what or whom could they address prayers and offerings for individual ancestors? A stone effigy like the Katumuwa Stele was not the only means, but was one of the most widespread throughout the region. For those who had the resources to procure one for themselves or their recently departed family member, stone offered a reassuring permanence and solidity, while an image (even if not an individual portrait), or better yet an inscription, reinforced the memories of the living and helped ensure that the individual identity of the deceased would survive in their thoughts, speech, and actions. Images such as these had a power beyond mere representation, however, as texts like the Katumuwa Stele show that they were believed to be inhabited by the souls of the dead, providing them a physical form in which to receive sustenance from offerings. The section of the exhibit and catalog called “The Soul in the Stone” (Catalog Nos. 12–20) displays a variety of these effigies of the dead from across the region. Though they run the gamut in style and scale and come from temple, tomb, and domestic contexts, these statues and

steles all served as focal points for ritual that united living and dead.

Regular remembrance of the dead seems to have been practiced across the region, but it is the two most consistently literate societies, Egypt and Mesopotamia, that provide the most detail about the rhythms and occasions of this practice. In contrast, we have only a fragmentary picture of the timing, location, and scale of the cult of the dead in Anatolia and the Levant (Lewis), though discoveries such as the Katumuwa Stele are slowly ameliorating this situation, and evidence of feasts for the dead in the mixed community of Tell el-Dab’a described by Müller seems to reflect a complex blend of Egyptian and Levantine practices. Van der Toorn describes daily, monthly, and annual food and drink offerings of different scales in Mesopotamia, both in the house and at the family tomb or cemetery. At its simplest, this consisted of flour and water presented in the household shrine every day by the head of the household. In Egypt, too, communion with the dead often seems to have taken place at home, through offerings of food and drink, incense, and even flowers to steles, busts, or false doors, but there is also evidence for banqueting at tombs on special occasions. The freestanding neighborhood chapels where regular banquets were held for communal ancestors and individuals of community-wide importance (Müller) form a striking parallel to the architectural context of the Katumuwa Stele (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*).

Despite the evidence for regular, post-funerary food and drink offerings for the dead, archaeological remains of these practices at places of mortuary cult are often elusive, poorly recorded, or difficult to distinguish from the remains of everyday meals in the home, sacrifices to the higher gods, or offerings at the time of burial (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*; Müller). However, intact burials from across the region regularly produce anywhere from one to hundreds of pottery and metal vessels, representing a parallel practice of food and drink offerings that accompanied the body into the grave or tomb. “Dishes for the Dead” (Catalog Nos. 27–47) presents a sample of such tomb vessels from each sub-region, including a set of pots associated with Egypt’s most famous tomb, that of King Tutankhamun. Though we do not always know the exact contents or meaning of these funerary vessels, they represent a gift to the dead from the living. In the exhibit, the vessels are displayed on a

food-laden dining table, as if to invite the spirits of the dead to eat and drink in our midst.

In Egypt, food and drink for the dead were considered so essential that they were not always left up to descendants or mortuary endowments (which would inevitably wither with the passage of time) to provide. Magical devices and means such as those collected here (Catalog Nos. 48–50) were a more reliable source of provisions for eternity. This section is nicknamed “Fast Food” because, with the exception of “voice offerings” (Catalog No. 50), these methods of feeding the dead lack the social aspect that is central to mortuary cult in the Ancient Middle East and in other instances in Egypt, that is, the communion inherent in the giving or sharing of food between people (see Pollock 2003, p. 17).

The meal as a social affair is the theme of Marian Feldman’s essay (*Chapter 7*) and of the part of the exhibit titled “The Banquet in Life and Death” (Catalog Nos. 21–26). The banquet scenes surveyed by Feldman and represented in the exhibit depict meals in religious, political, and mortuary contexts and demonstrate the continuity among ceremonial practices honoring the gods, the living, and the dead. Like Katumuwa, the dead are often depicted alone at their table (but see figs. 3.4 and 3.6), but archaeological and textual evidence indicate that in many cases the surviving family members shared in the food offered to the dead (see chapters by Herrmann, Lewis, van den Hout, van der Toorn, and Müller). This sharing of food and drink changes the offering from a gift or payment into an act of communion between living and dead.³ By defining and organizing social groups (Feldman, *Chapter 7*), such communal meals play a role in identity formation and maintenance and create new memories of the deceased that sustain his or her social existence (see Sutton 2001).

Finally, an epilogue to the exhibit and catalog, “Contemporary Commemorations” (Catalog Nos. 51–57), explores traditional, annual festivals for the dead around the world today, such as the Día de los Muertos and Qingming Festival, through contemporary artifacts that link the living and the dead. Many of these celebrations contain echoes of ancient Middle Eastern and Egyptian practices that, just as in antiquity, allow people to maintain an ongoing relationship with those they have lost.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I would like to thank for their contributions to this exhibit, but since it originated with a discovery made at Zincirli, I will begin with the sponsors of and participants in that project. First of all, I thank David Schloen in his triple capacity as eminent director of the Zincirli expedition, generous doctoral advisor and mentor to me and others, and insightful co-curator of this exhibit. I thank Amir S. Fink, associate director of Zincirli, for his energy and expertise both logistical and intellectual, and Gil Stein for his support of the project as director of the Oriental Institute. I am grateful to all of the Zincirli team, specialists, students, and workers alike, but I must single out several people for special contributions to the discovery and study of the Katumuwa Stele and its context: camp manager Gazi Zeki Cemali, site guard Faruk Bolat, conservator Evren Kıvançer, illustrator Karen Reczuch, zooarchaeologist Nimrod Marom, excavation supervisors Joshua Cannon, Kate Morgan, and Eudora Struble (also photographer and co-author of the first publication of the stele), Çağrı Çetin of Fevzipaşa, who first discovered the stele, Teyfik Gün, İsa Kılıç, and Bestami Bozkurt of Zincirli village, who excavated it, and Fevzipaşa mayor İsmet Ersoy. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Gaziantep Archaeological Museum, especially its director Ahmet Denizhanogulları, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and its representatives who have supervised excavation at Zincirli over the past eight years. None of this work would have been possible without the generous sponsorship of Joe and Jeanette Neubauer and the Neubauer Family Foundation, as well as the financial support of the Oriental Institute and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In preparing this exhibit, we have benefited enormously from the expertise and professionalism of the staff of the Oriental Institute Museum, from registration, conservation, and photography to preparation and education. We would like to thank especially chief curator Jack Green and special exhibits coordinator Emily Teeter for the assistance, advice, and ideas they have provided at every step along the way. Thanks also to curatorial assistants Vincent van Exel and Mónica Vélez and artist and video producer Travis Saul for their invaluable work. We thank all of the authors who contributed to this catalog for joining in this project and making it their own,

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the museums and artists who enhanced the show with their loans, as well as those who have provided material support for the exhibit and catalog.

Finally, I would like to offer my husband Jason, son Henry, parents, and sister my sincere gratitude for their support and patience during my work on the exhibit. I would particularly like to thank my grandmother, Nancy Ryland Williamson, who passed away during the writing of this catalog, for supporting and encouraging my education and endeavors. Her passion for history, and especially family history, were an inspiration in the development of this exhibit.

NOTES

¹ The term “Syro-Hittite” is used as shorthand for the Iron Age (ca. 1200–700 **BC**) kingdoms of modern-day northern Syria and southeastern Turkey that retained certain cultural and administrative features of the Anatolian Hittite empire that had controlled them in the preceding Late Bronze Age, but whose kings were divided between those who used Aramaic in their royal inscriptions and those who used Luwian (“Neo-Hittite”) (see Schloen, *Chapter 2*).

² See Scurlock 1995, p. 1892, for the different concepts of the deceased in Mesopotamia.

³ The title of the show contains an echo of the words spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper: “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me’” (Luke 22:19). This idea of eating and drinking in communion with a person’s memory is rooted in the ancient Middle Eastern traditions described here and forms the basis for the consumption of consecrated bread and wine in the Eucharistic rite, though the concept is taken to a different level by the belief that the sacrifice being consumed is the body and blood of Christ himself.

I

THE KATUMUWA STELE
FROM ZINCIRLI

2. THE CITY OF KATUMUWA: THE IRON AGE KINGDOM OF SAM'AL AND THE EXCAVATION OF ZINCIRLI

J. DAVID SCHLOEN

The Katumuwa Stele was discovered on July 21, 2008, in the course of archaeological excavations directed by the present author on behalf of the University of Chicago. These excavations were at an archaeological site near the Syrian border in southeastern Turkey, in the province of Gaziantep, about 48 kilometers inland from the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea (fig. 2.1). The site is called Zincirli, pronounced “Zin-jeer-lee.” This is the modern Turkish name for a 40-hectare ruin mound (called a *höyük* in Turkish and a *tell* in Arabic), a mound that contains the remnants of an Iron Age settlement that was the capital of the kingdom of Sam'al.

This kingdom flourished during the Iron Age, from roughly 900 to 700 BC (for historical surveys, see Sader 1987; Dion 1997; Lipiński 2000; Hawkins 2008; V. R. Herrmann 2011). Shortly before 713 BC, it became a province of the vast Neo-Assyrian empire, based in what is today northern Iraq, until the collapse of that empire several decades later. The kingdom of Sam'al is mentioned in cuneiform clay tablets found in the archives of the Neo-Assyrian empire, where it is called “Samalla” (^{KUR}*Sa-ma-al-la*). It is also documented in local alphabetic inscriptions made by its rulers, which were carved on stone monuments erected at Zincirli and unearthed there by archaeologists (see Tropper 1993; Younger 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d).

The name Sam'al is related to the Semitic word *ŠM'L*, written here without vowels, which means “left (side)” but also means “north” because that is the direction to your left as you face east, toward the rising sun. Similarly, the Semitic word for “right,” *YMN*, also means “south.” The territory around Zincirli was presumably designated as “northern” from the perspective of Semitic-speaking settlers who had migrated from the south. Such migrants may have given it this name as early as the second millennium BC, when the Amorite empire of Yamḥad, based at

Aleppo, dominated north Syria, or possibly even earlier, in the third millennium BC, when the empire of Ebla and its vassals held sway as far north as Zincirli (Astour 1992, pp. 67–68).

In addition to Sam'al, another ancient name for the kingdom is *Y'DY*, written consonantly (without vowels) in local inscriptions that employ the international alphabetic script that was originally invented to write Phoenician. We do not know how to pronounce this name, but it does not appear to be Semitic, indicating that at some point a non-Semitic-speaking population had moved into the area and become politically dominant. This could have happened under the Mittanian empire of northern Mesopotamia, which dominated the region in the mid-second-millennium BC, or under the Hittite empire based in central Anatolia, which ruled north Syria from the late fourteenth century until the early twelfth century BC.

Although the Assyrians called it Samalla, the name of the kingdom in the alphabetic inscriptions of its Iron Age kings is *Y'DY* rather than the expected term *ŠM'L*. But the Assyrians tended to label an entire kingdom using the name of its capital city, so it is likely that *Y'DY* was the name of the larger territory, whereas Sam'al was, strictly speaking, the name of the Iron Age capital at Zincirli, which had been newly founded by a Semitic-speaking dynasty that ruled the territory from about 900 to 713 BC. Thus, it has been suggested that *Y'DY* is an Anatolian (Luwian) name, pronounced “Yādiya,” which reflects the earlier period of Hittite dominance (Starke 1999, p. 525).

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Zincirli lies alongside the eastern foothills of the Amanus Mountains, called the Nur Dağları (“Mountains of Holy Light”) in modern Turkish. This steep

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FIGURE 2.1. Map of the northeastern Mediterranean region showing the location of Zincirli and other Iron Age sites (courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

2. THE CITY OF KATUMUWA

north–south range extends southward from the Taurus Mountains and separates the broad and lush plain of Cilicia to the west from the Syrian interior and the upper Euphrates River. The city of Tarsus in Cilicia, birthplace of Saint Paul, is 160 kilometers west of Zincirli. The even more prominent classical city of Antioch on the Orontes River (modern Antakya) is located 110 kilometers to the south. The upper Euphrates River is only 100 kilometers east of Zincirli.

From the time when a walled town was first established at Zincirli around 2500 BC, during the Early Bronze Age, until the site was finally abandoned around 300 BC, after the Greek conquest of the Middle East under Alexander the Great, the inhabitants of this site controlled the eastern outlet of a major pass across the Amanus Mountains. This steep mountain range, which reaches heights of more than 2,000 meters, blocks access to the north Syrian interior from the Mediterranean Sea. It has only two main crossing points. These serve to channel east–west traffic along two routes: one at the north end of the Amanus range near Zincirli, through the Bahçe Pass, called the “Amanian Gates” by classical authors; and one at the south end of the range near Antakya, through the Belen Pass, which was called the “Syrian Gates.”

Thus, the site of Zincirli had natural advantages as a royal capital because it lay astride the ancient caravan route that ran eastward from the Cilician Plain, famous for its horses, up through the forests and logging camps of the Amanus Mountains, and then due east toward the Euphrates River. This caravan route met the Euphrates at the point where it comes closest to the Mediterranean and from which the river provides easy transportation downstream to the great population centers of Mesopotamia. The kings of Sam'al controlled a major choke-point on this international trade route and so profited from the caravan traffic between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean.

Furthermore, the inhabitants of Zincirli had easy access to the heavily forested slopes of the Amanus Mountains, which were only a few kilometers away (fig. 2.2). These mountains were famous in antiquity for their timber, especially tall pine and cedar, which was shipped overland to the Euphrates and then downstream to treeless southern Mesopotamia. It is not surprising, therefore, that timber and other tree products such as resin were sources of wealth for the kings of Sam'al and feature prominently in



FIGURE 2.2. Aerial photograph of the mound of Zincirli with the Amanus Mountains (modern Nur Dağları) in the background (facing to the northwest). Rectangular excavation trenches can be seen on the central citadel mound and in the southern lower town. The curve of the circular outer city wall is visible at left as variation in the vegetation (photograph by Erhan Küçük, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

the lists of tribute demanded of them by their Assyrian overlords.

Zincirli is not only adjacent to the Amanus foothills, but only 60 kilometers south of the towering Taurus Mountains. The snow-capped Taurus range extends in an east–west direction across southern Turkey, reaching elevations as high as 3,750 meters and separating the Anatolian plateau to the north from the Syrian and Mesopotamian plains to the south. In ancient times, the Taurus Mountains were a major barrier to travel and communication. There were only a few routes by which they could be crossed. The mountain pass known to classical writers as the Cilician Gates, 160 kilometers west of Zincirli on the western edge of the Cilician Plain, was the principal route. Alternatively, the valley of the upper Euphrates, 100 kilometers east of Zincirli, connects the northbound traveler with a series of mountain valleys in eastern Anatolia through which ancient caravans passed.

Bounded as it was by tall mountains to the west and north, the region around Zincirli was relatively well protected from invasion, as long as its inhabitants could defend a few key access points. For this reason, small independent kingdoms like Sam'al could emerge and flourish, preserving their cultural and political independence for long periods. But because the region was traversed by major routes of trade and communication, it was not isolated from outside influences. The kingdom of Sam'al lay astride both the

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east–west route between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates and a north–south route from the Taurus foothills down to the Orontes River. The kingdom occupied a narrow valley that was bordered on the west by the Amanus range and on the east by a lower range of arid hills, called Kurt Dağ in modern Turkish (fig. 2.3). Through this valley flowed the Karasu River, a northern tributary of the Orontes River, which it joins 100 kilometers south of Zincirli in the broad valley known as the Plain of Antioch (also called the Amuq), which was the heartland of the neighboring Iron Age kingdom of Patina, whose capital was at Tell Ta'yinat (Harrison 2009).

The Karasu Valley is only about 15 kilometers wide in most places and much narrower at some points. It was created by a major geological fault formed by the clash of two tectonic plates. In fact, it is the northernmost extension of the 6,000-kilometer Syro-African Rift that skirts the eastern shore of the Mediterranean and includes the Orontes Valley in Syria, the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, and the Dead Sea, and extends

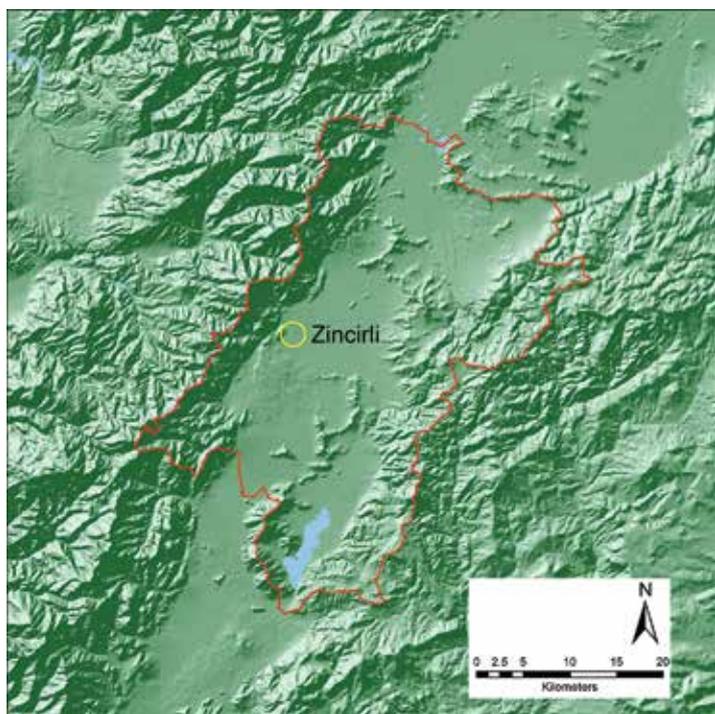


FIGURE 2.3. Map of the upper Karasu Valley, flanked by the Amanus Mountains to the west and the Kurt Dağ mountains to the east. The natural topographic boundaries of the kingdom of Sam'al are outlined in red, although the kingdom was probably larger in extent in some periods, depending on the political conditions in the region. The area immediately around the site of Zincirli is indicated by a yellow circle (courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

all the way to Mozambique in east Africa. This rift valley system provided a natural corridor that channeled human travel and communication in certain directions. For example, we can see by their material culture that the inhabitants of Zincirli were often in close contact with people to the south in the Plain of Antioch and elsewhere in inland Syria but had far fewer contacts with the inhabitants of Cilicia and the Mediterranean coast, which are not far away as the crow flies but are much harder to reach on foot. Likewise, in most periods the inhabitants of Zincirli had little contact with Anatolian peoples who lived north of the Taurus Mountains. It was only during the period of the Hittite empire (ca. 1340–1180 BC) and its successor states — a rare episode when Anatolian kings overcame the barrier of the Taurus to conquer and rule north Syria — that the Zincirli region was exposed to northern influences. It is not surprising, therefore, that Zincirli lies near a major linguistic frontier, at the edge of the most northwesterly area in which Semitic languages have traditionally been spoken. This area was open to migrations from the south and east but was usually quite isolated from the Indo-European-speaking populations that lived on the other side of the mountains to the north and west.

CLIMATE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The kingdom of Sam'al flourished in a Mediterranean climatic zone characterized by hot, dry summers and cool, rainy winters, with favorable conditions for rain-fed agriculture in the valley bottom and for pasturing herds and flocks in the nearby hills. The Amanus Mountains receive substantial precipitation, averaging 1,000 millimeters or more per year. In ancient times, before modern deforestation due to logging and overgrazing, the well-watered mountain slopes supported dense forests consisting mainly of coniferous species such as fir, spruce, cedar, pine, and juniper. This region was thus a major source of high-quality timber and other tree products such as resin, which were exported to the great cities of Mesopotamia from very early times. East of Zincirli, where annual rainfall rapidly declines with increasing distance from the sea due to the rain-shadow cast by the Amanus range, the dense forest gave way to a typical Mediterranean scrubland or *maquis* that consisted of

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clumps of terebinth, oak, pistachio, and other small trees and broad-leaved evergreen shrubs — many of them aromatic, such as mint, laurel, and myrtle.

Wild game abounded around Zincirli in ancient times, as attested in the hunting scenes found on Iron Age stone reliefs at Zincirli and in animal bones excavated at the site. Native to the wooded mountains and foothills near the site were deer, hares, and wild boars, as well as large predators such as wolves, lions, and bears. The streams and marshes of the Karasu Valley were home to a wide variety of fish, turtles, and waterfowl, augmented seasonally by the millions of migratory birds that flew along the rift valley corridor in their seasonal movements from Russia to Africa. In the arid lands to the east roamed large herds of gazelles.

In addition to exploiting these abundant wild resources, the ancient inhabitants of Zincirli farmed the rich alluvial soils of the valley, raising wheat and barley and legumes, and also cultivating grapes, olives, and figs — for all of which there is excavated botanical evidence. These crops, combined with the herding of sheep, goats, and cattle, supported a typical Mediterranean subsistence economy in the kingdom of Sam'al, though it is likely that the inhabitants of this kingdom were able to supplement domesticated crops and animals to an unusual extent by fishing, fowling, and the hunting of wild game.

PREVIOUS EXCAVATIONS OF ZINCIRLI BY THE GERMAN EXPEDITION

From 1888 to 1902, a team of pioneering archaeologists led by Carl Humann, Felix von Luschan, Robert Koldewey, and Gustav Jacoby conducted five seasons of excavation at Zincirli on behalf of the German Orient-Comité and the Berlin Museum. They published their results in four large volumes entitled *Ausgrabungen in Sendschirli* (von Luschan et al. 1893, 1898, 1902, 1911). These volumes deal with the architecture, sculpture, and inscriptions found at the site. A fifth volume describing the most important small finds — selected pottery and hundreds of artifacts made of stone, ivory, bronze, iron, and other materials — was published some years later, by Walter Andrae (von Luschan and Andrae 1943).

The German expedition is described in detail, with many archival photographs and drawings, by

Ralf-B. Wartke of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, where the finds from Zincirli are displayed (Wartke 2005). This expedition delineated the city walls and gates of Iron Age Sam'al and exposed several palaces and other large structures on the 4-hectare upper mound in the center of the site (see also Wartke 2008). The upper mound was formed by the stratified remains of Bronze Age mudbrick settlements that had accumulated over a thousand-year period from ca. 2500 to 1500 BC. The Iron Age kings built a royal citadel on top of this old mound in ca. 900 BC, raising the mound to a height of 15 meters above the surrounding plain. At some point, they also built a large circular wall in the fields 360 meters from the royal citadel in order to enclose and protect the land around it. The 4-hectare citadel of the later kings of Sam'al thus sat in the midst of an extensive walled area totaling 40 hectares (fig. 2.4).

Dozens of sculpted stone pieces were recovered by the German expedition and are now in museums in Istanbul and Berlin, including statues of lions and sphinxes that had guarded the entrances of important buildings, as well as decorated column bases from the porticoes of royal palaces and rows of relief-carved basalt orthostats (rectangular standing slabs) that had lined the inner walls of the principal gateways into the city (fig. 2.5). Several royal inscriptions carved in stone were also found. The earliest — the inscription of Kulamuwa — was written in Phoenician, a lingua franca of the Iron Age, and dates to about 830 BC (see Younger 2000c). Later inscriptions were written in the local Sam'al dialect and in the Official Aramaic dialect that became widespread in the Neo-Assyrian empire, using a variant of the Phoenician alphabetic script to record the deeds of various kings of Sam'al (Younger 2000a, 2000b, 2000d). The German expedition also found an imperial Assyrian inscription carved in the Akkadian cuneiform script on a large stone monument. This is the Esarhaddon stele, which celebrates the conquest of Egypt in 671 BC by Esarhaddon, ruler of the Neo-Assyrian empire and overlord of Sam'al (see Leichty 2011 for a recent translation).

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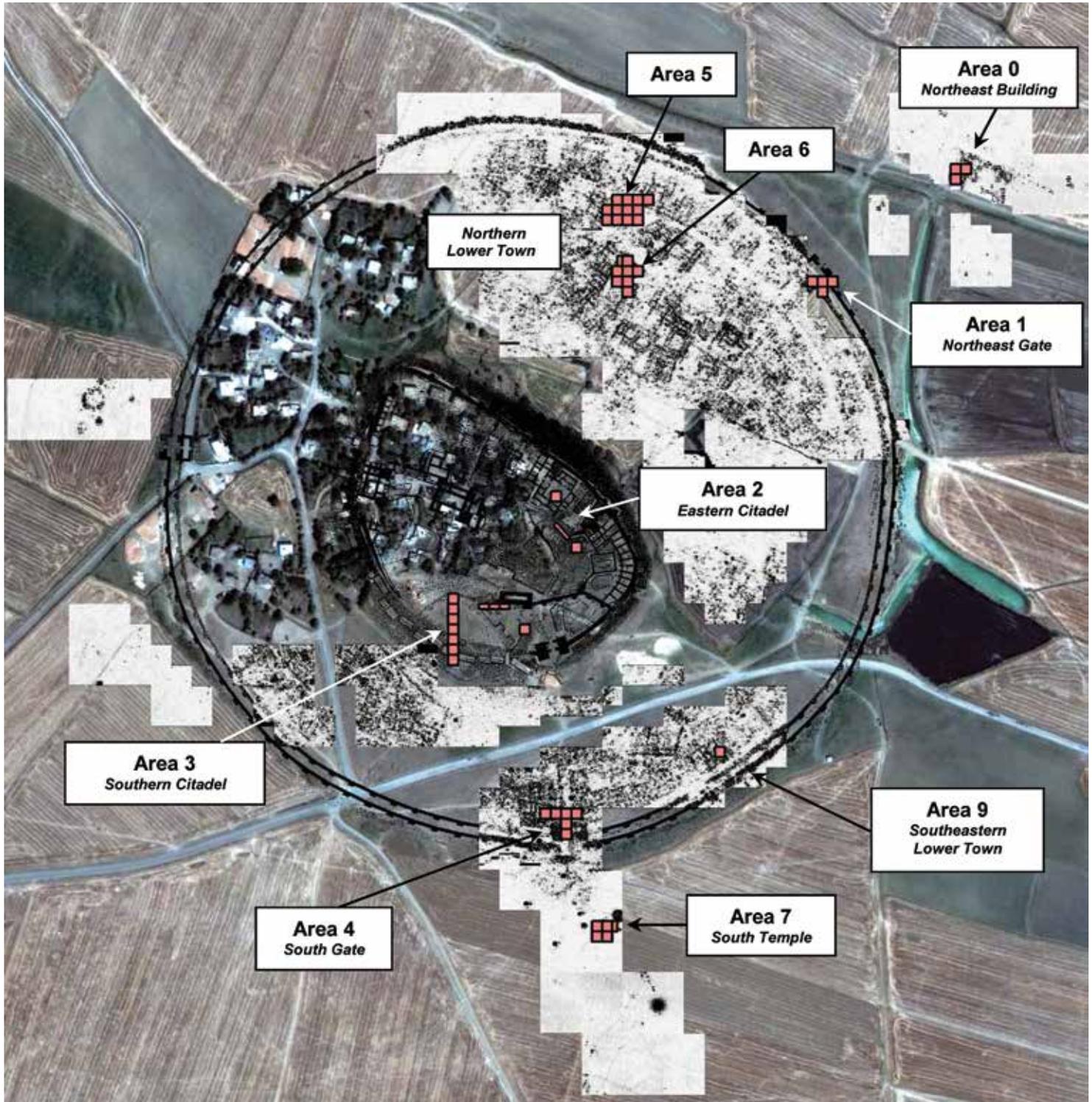


FIGURE 2.4. Satellite image of Zincirli showing the current excavation areas (pink squares) and a plan of the outer walls and citadel structures that were excavated by the German expedition. The results of the sub-surface geomagnetic survey (performed by Jason T. Herrmann) are shown in shades of gray (the basalt architectural foundations appear dark gray among the light gray open areas and streets). The Katumuwa Stele was found in Area 5 in the northern lower town (courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli, based on von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898, pl. 29)

2. THE CITY OF KATUMUWA

CURRENT EXCAVATIONS
BY THE NEUBAUER EXPEDITION
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The nineteenth-century German excavators of Zincirli used methods that were considered good by the standards of their day. However, they excavated rapidly on a massive scale, with a staff of only a few archaeologists supervising large numbers of workmen. They produced detailed architectural plans that remain a valuable resource for modern archaeologists but they had no understanding of modern techniques such as debris-layer stratigraphy and the use of pottery to date soil layers. As a result, many details concerning the dating and function of the structures unearthed by the German expedition are unclear and it is difficult to associate the artifacts they found with their original findspots. Moreover, they focused their efforts on the palaces and other monumental architecture on the upper mound, neglecting to excavate structures in the large lower town between the royal citadel and the outer walls, which constitutes the majority of the site.

For this reason, the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago decided to undertake new,

large-scale excavations at Zincirli using modern methods, with the generous financial support of the Neubauer Family Foundation (see Schloen and Fink 2009). At the time of writing, the Neubauer Expedition has completed eight seasons of excavation in a series of annual two-month summer campaigns from 2006 to 2013. A total of 5,500 square meters in nine different excavation areas has now been excavated (fig. 2.4). More excavation seasons are planned in order to enlarge the extensive horizontal exposures in the lower town, where the remains are relatively shallow, and to deepen the soundings in the upper mound in order to reach the Middle Bronze Age and Early Bronze Age strata created during the earlier period of occupation from ca. 2500 to 1500 BC. A full description and analysis of the Neubauer Expedition's discoveries will appear in a series of volumes to be published by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

The work to date has demonstrated that the site of Zincirli is unusually well suited to achieving large horizontal exposures of a late Iron Age lower town. This is important because a quantitative increase in the scale of excavation can yield a qualitative leap in our understanding of city life and culture in this



FIGURE 2.5. Sculpted orthostats found in situ in the citadel gate at the base of the upper mound of Zincirli during the first German excavation season in 1888 (von Luschan, Humann, and Koldewey 1898, p. 91)

formative period of Mediterranean history. An ancient settlement's social and economic organization cannot be understood from a limited sample of individual houses, to which archaeologists are too often restricted. Careful investigation is needed of clusters of adjoining houses spanning thousands of square meters. Indeed, it is necessary to study entire neighborhoods — large blocks of houses bounded by streets and open spaces — in different parts of the settlement, because such neighborhoods were coherent architectural and social units whose inhabitants interacted in ways that actually constituted “urbanism” in a particular place and time.

Accordingly, in order to understand the economy and society of the Iron Age settlement at Zincirli, the Neubauer Expedition is examining not just individual houses on a local scale of analysis but also interlocking groups of houses and their shared facilities, their overall architectural arrangement, and their degree of isolation from other house clusters. By this means, the social and economic relationships among households, and not just within them, can be understood in light of historical and ethnographic analogies in more recent Mediterranean and Middle Eastern societies. An important tool in this effort is the expedition's geomagnetic survey of the lower town (Casana and Herrmann 2010), which has revealed in remarkable detail the outlines of buried structures and streets across about two-thirds of the lower mound (the rest of it is covered by modern trees and buildings and so was inaccessible to the geomagnetic survey). The geomagnetic map of sub-surface features is being used to guide the excavations and to provide additional data in areas that are left unexcavated (fig. 2.4).

In summary, the current excavations of Zincirli are organized around the following research interests: (1) the chronology and architectural character of the settlements at the site over more than two millennia, from 2500 to 300 BC, in light of their wider political and economic contexts and contacts; (2) the population composition and cultural influences in Iron Age Sam'al, in particular, from 900 to 600 BC; and (3) the socioeconomic organization of the Iron Age lower town and the changes in this organization over time, as the kingdom of Sam'al moved from political independence to vassalage within the Neo-Assyrian empire and ultimately to its final phase as an Assyrian province.

The Katumuwa Stele, found in Area 5 of the northern lower town, is an extremely valuable discovery that helps in answering these questions (Struble and Herrmann 2009; Pardee 2009; Younger 2009). This stele can be dated quite precisely to around 735 BC, so it provides a chronological anchor for the investigation of the architectural phases in the lower town. Its inscription, authored in the local Semitic dialect of Sam'al by a royal official who himself had a non-Semitic Anatolian name, reveals new information about the Iron Age inhabitants of the site and especially their mortuary practices and beliefs about the relationships among the dead, the living, and the gods. And the striking fact that this mortuary stele of an elite official was discovered in what had been assumed to be an ordinary residential structure, but which turned out to be a mortuary chapel attached to a small neighborhood temple, has shed light on the politically and socially exclusive character of the northern lower town of Sam'al.

OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF IRON AGE SAM'AL

The pottery found at the site shows that Zincirli was originally settled during the Early Bronze Age, in the period of the kingdom of Ebla, which dominated the area that is now Syria from ca. 2500 to 2300 BC (Lehmann 1994). The site was also occupied during the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000–1600 BC), in the period of the Amorite empire of Yamhad that was based at Aleppo. There is no ceramic evidence of occupation in the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600–1200 BC) or in the first part of the Iron Age (1200–900 BC), suggesting that the site was abandoned during the period of the Mitanian and Hittite empires and for much of the Neo-Hittite period. However, in the late tenth century BC the long-abandoned Bronze Age mound was resettled by Gabbār, who is mentioned in later inscriptions as the founder of the Iron Age dynasty that ruled Sam'al from about 900 to 713 BC. Initially, Gabbār's settlement was restricted to the original 10-acre mound left over from the Bronze Age, but at some point he or one of his descendants greatly expanded and massively fortified the site. The royal fortress on the mound was enlarged and rebuilt, while an imposing circular outer fortification was constructed on empty farmland 360 meters from the royal palace, enclosing

2. THE CITY OF KATUMUWA

a much larger area of 40 hectares within two concentric walls placed 6 meters apart that was punctuated by a hundred towers and three monumental gates (fig. 2.4).

The establishment of the kingdom of Sam'al around 900 BC is attributed by many scholars to the migration of Aramaeans from the Euphrates River region to the southeast (e.g., Sader 1987; Dion 1997). Various Neo-Assyrian and Northwest Semitic inscriptions reveal that Aramaic-speaking warlords managed to establish kingdoms in various parts of Syria during this period, often at the expense of the Luwian-speaking Neo-Hittite rulers of Anatolian extraction who had previously dominated the area. The Luwian rulers had themselves inherited power from the Hittite empire, which was based far to the northwest in central Anatolia but had conquered the region south of the Taurus Mountains in the late fourteenth century BC and had ruled north Syria for more than a century until the empire collapsed shortly after 1200 BC. Luwian, an Indo-European language closely related to the Hittite royal dialect, was the language of the Anatolian people who entered the region during the Hittite empire as imperial soldiers and administrators or who migrated there after the empire's collapse to escape the turmoil in Anatolia (Bryce 2012, pp. 53–55). Luwian inscriptions written in a distinctive hieroglyphic script — several of which have been found near Zincirli — attest to the political dominance of this group in the post-Hittite period.

It is such Luwian-speaking rulers who were replaced in the upper Karasu Valley by new rulers, starting with Gabbār, who founded a dynasty that spoke a Northwest Semitic language that is revealed in later Sam'alian royal inscriptions and in the Katumuwa Stele itself. It is possible that these new rulers were not invading Aramaeans, as is commonly assumed, but were in fact indigenous Semitic-speakers of Amorite extraction who had lived in the area for centuries, being descended from the Middle Bronze Age inhabitants of the valley. The Sam'alian dialect does not share morphological innovations found in all other examples of Aramaic, calling into question its linguistic classification as a dialect of Aramaic (Huehnergard 1995). Moreover, there is evidence that the name Sam'al for this region was in use long before the Iron Age because it appears in an Old Assyrian text of the Amorite period (Kültepe c/k 441, published in Nashef 1987, pp. 18–20, text no. 7).

In any case, whether the new Iron Age rulers were invading Aramaeans or indigenous Amorites, we can certainly say that there was an alternation of power in the region between two distinct ethno-linguistic groups of Anatolian and Syrian origin, respectively. And, quite strikingly, within the Semitic-speaking royal dynasty that ruled Sam'al after 900 BC there were kings who bore Luwian names, even though they did not use Luwian in their inscriptions and there is no evidence that they spoke this language. The Hittite cultural tradition in north Syria was quite tenacious. It was transmitted within the rump kingdoms that emerged after 1200 BC in the wake of the Hittite empire. The chief among these kingdoms was the kingdom of Carchemish on the Euphrates River, 120 kilometers east of Zincirli. Carchemish was formerly the seat of the Hittite viceroy (and prince of the imperial dynasty) who ruled Syria on behalf of the Hittite emperor. After the collapse of the empire, it became the capital of a powerful local kingdom with a Luwian-speaking royal dynasty that continued many Hittite traditions (Hawkins 1982, 1995; Bryce 2012). The presence of Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions at various sites in the Zincirli region suggests that, in the early Iron Age, the Karasu Valley was part of the kingdom of Carchemish or was controlled by Luwian-speaking local rulers (whose kingdom perhaps had the Luwian name Yādiya) until Gabbār conquered it in around 900 BC and chose the abandoned mound of Zincirli as his capital, ushering in a period when the old Luwian nobility of the region were subservient to a non-Hittite Semitic-speaking regime.

Complicating the picture, however, is the fact that Semitic-speaking rulers in Iron Age north Syria, including the kings of Sam'al, embraced the Neo-Hittite style of architecture and iconography, demonstrating the continuing prestige of that cultural tradition, which was widely imitated even by non-Hittite elites. The Semitic kings of Sam'al adopted Neo-Hittite iconography and decorative styles very similar to those of Luwian-ruled Carchemish, as shown by the sculpted orthostat reliefs that lined the gates of their city (Orthmann 1971; Winter 1976b). A “tree of life” orthostat discovered by the Neubauer Expedition in 2008 is very similar in style to orthostats found at Carchemish that were similarly placed outside a major gate and depicted a procession of soldiers and royal officials (fig. 2.6). But we must be careful to distinguish the adoption of the prestigious Neo-Hittite

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style in royal art and architecture from a political identity rooted in the Hittite empire and exemplified most tellingly in the use of hieroglyphic Luwian for royal inscriptions. Indeed, it is quite likely that the Semitic rulers of Sam'al were strongly opposed to the Luwian regimes around them, seeing them as rivals, and were consciously anti-Hittite in their political ideology in order to bolster their authority among their non-Luwian followers, who were usurpers from the perspective of the old Luwian nobility that they had deposed from power. The kings of Sam'al — even those who had Luwian names — did not use Luwian in their inscriptions and they did not venerate Kubaba, the chief goddess of Carchemish (who is probably related to the Anatolian goddess Cybele known from later Greek texts). They were also selective in their use of Neo-Hittite iconography, avoiding the depiction of Anatolian mountain gods, which were a direct iconographic link to a specifically Hittite and non-Syrian tradition (Barnett 1964).



FIGURE 2.6. The Zincirli “tree of life” orthostat sculpted in Neo-Hittite style, discovered by the Neubauer Expedition in August 2008 (courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

Thus, Iron Age Sam'al was not Neo-Hittite in a political or cultural sense. Its non-Hittite rulers employed prevailing Neo-Hittite symbols of royal power but they presumably did so not to show allegiance to Carchemish or any other truly Neo-Hittite polity but to bolster their own authority. They were politically independent from neighboring Neo-Hittite kingdoms, so they imputed their own meaning to Neo-Hittite styles, as so often happens when a prestigious imperial aesthetic is deployed for local political purposes within a quite different cultural and political tradition.

What the evidence shows, therefore, is that Sam'al was not monolithically “Neo-Hittite” or “Aramaean,” despite the tendency of scholars to speak in terms of essentialized ethnic and political categories of this kind. The Karasu Valley had witnessed the coexistence and mutual cultural adaptation of Anatolian and Syrian populations over a long period of time, with a Luwian-speaking elite politically dominant during and after the Hittite empire, from about 1340 to 900 BC, and Semitic-speaking elites dominant both before the Hittite period and subsequently, in the period after 900. Scholars have long suspected that the rivalry between these two groups is reflected in the enigmatic reference to the downtrodden *muškabim* (literally, “those who lie down”) and a superior group called the *baʿririm*, who are mentioned in the Phoenician inscription of King Kulamuwa of Sam'al from about 830 BC (translated in Younger 2000c; cf. Landsberger 1948, pp. 54–56; Tropper 1993, pp. 41, 45; Dion 1997, p. 286 n. 67; Lipiński 2000, p. 236). Kulamuwa claims to have aided the *muškabim* (the disgruntled descendants of the old Luwian nobility?) and to have fostered mutual respect and cooperation between the two groups. Moreover, despite a long period of coexistence and even intermarriage, as has been suggested to explain the intermingling of Semitic and Luwian names within the Sam'alian royal dynasty (e.g., Kulamuwa himself, whose father Ḥayyā and brother Ša'il had Semitic names, but whose own name is Luwian — it has been suggested that he was the son of a wife of Ḥayyā who belonged to a Luwian family), the original ethnic identities were not forgotten and could surface and be re-deployed in various forms. This phenomenon is widely attested in other historical periods, including the modern Middle East.

The Katumuwa Stele provides a striking example of this phenomenon. It was made by “Katumuwa,

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Table 2.1. Chronology of the rulers of Sam'al and Assyria

Kings and Governors of Y'DY/Sam'al		Neo-Assyrian Kings	
Gabbār	ca. 920–880	Ashur-dan II	934–912
		Adad-nirari II	911–891
		Tukulti-ninurta II	890–884
BNH/Bānihu	ca. 880–870	Ashurnasirpal II	883–859
Ḥayyā(n)	ca. 870/860–850		
		Shalmaneser III	858–824
Ša'il	ca. 850–840		
Kulamuwa	ca. 840/835–815/810		
?		Shamshi-adad V	823–811
QRL/Qurila/Qarli	ca. 810–790	Adad-nirari III	810–783
Panamuwa I	ca. 790–750	Shalmaneser IV	782–773
		Ashur-dan III	772–755
Bar-Šūr?	ca. 750	Ashur-nirari V	754–745
<i>Interregnum/Usurper</i>	ca. 750–745		
Panamuwa II (<i>Katumuwa Stele</i>)	743/740–733/732	Tiglath-pileser III	745–727
Barrākib	733/732–ca. 720/713		
		Shalmaneser V	726–722
?		Sargon II	722–705
Nabû-ahhe-ereš (governor)	681	Sennacherib	705–681
?		Esarhaddon	680–669
Bēl-usāti (governor)	?	Ashurbanipal	668–627
?		Ashur-etel-ilani	627–623
		Sin-shar-ishkun	623–612
		Ashur-uballit II	611–609

After Wartke 2005, p. 90, and Lipiński 2000, p. 247. All dates are BC.

servant of Panamuwa” — a Sam'alian official with a Luwian name in the service of a Sam'alian king with a Luwian name, a king whose predecessor and successor both had Semitic names (assuming that the Panamuwa in question is Panamuwa II, son of Bar-Šūr and father of Barrākib; see the king list, table 2.1). Katumuwa's own Luwian heritage can be seen not just

in his name, but in the fact that his inscription refers to offerings for the goddess Kubaba, the “Queen of Carchemish,” who is strikingly absent from the Sam'alian royal inscriptions (Niehr 2004). It can also be seen in the fact that Katumuwa was memorialized by means of a pictorial stone monument, following a practice attested in Bronze Age Anatolia and in Iron

Age Syro-Hittite settlements (Bonatz 2000 and *Chapter 3*, this volume). His bodily remains play no part in the mortuary ritual he prescribes. Indeed, it is likely that he was cremated, an Indo-European practice attested in Carchemish and other Syro-Hittite cities but traditionally regarded as abhorrent in the West Semitic world (e.g., in ancient Canaan and Israel), where the bones of the ancestors were an important locus of communion with the deceased.

In both his name and his mortuary customs, if not his spoken language, Katumuwa had plainly not forgotten his ancestral traditions, even though he lived two hundred years after the Luwians had lost their political control of the region. It seems that Luwian names and Luwian gods were still favored by some influential people in Sam'al, even at this late date, along with distinctive Anatolian mortuary practices. Perhaps these names and practices were adopted even by people of non-Anatolian extraction for political or social reasons, just as people today will adopt foreign names and identities to enhance their social standing. We may speculate that Luwian names and practices, redolent of the glorious Hittite empire of days gone by, re-emerged under King Kulamuwa in the late ninth century BC and became politically acceptable in Sam'al precisely when Carchemish and other Neo-Hittite powers were no longer a threat to the kingdom because a far greater threat — the Assyrians — had provoked an anti-Assyrian defensive alliance among all the north Syrian kings, Neo-Hittite and non-Hittite alike, which is documented in the accounts of the western campaigns of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (Yamada 2000). In any case, we must reckon with the ongoing vitality of inherited Luwian cultural traditions at Sam'al in the midst of an equally vital Semitic cultural milieu.

The archaeological question is whether these enduring social identities held by intermingled ethnic groups, and the cultural influences exerted by these groups on one another, can be detected in their material remains. The Neubauer Expedition is approaching this question through the careful analysis of spatial and temporal patterns of architecture, artistic styles and iconography, cuisine (detected via pottery and botanical and faunal remains), mortuary customs, and other social practices revealed by extensive exposures of buildings and streets. The goal is not to identify specific households or individuals

in reductive terms as permanent members of this or that monolithic, crudely reified ethnic group, but to study processes of group-identity formation and identity maintenance from the point of view of the nonverbal social practices and habits that in every society accomplish the socialization of individuals into communities.

But such negotiations concerning culture and identity reflect a political balance that existed only for a limited time. The internal struggles for supremacy in Sam'al were eventually overshadowed by the menace from Mesopotamia, as in other Iron Age kingdoms of the Levant. Cuneiform texts and local alphabetic inscriptions show that Sam'al was conquered and episodically invaded by Neo-Assyrian imperial armies beginning in 858 BC, with the first western campaign of Shalmaneser III (Yamada 2000). For a long time, the Assyrians controlled Sam'al through native vassal kings who continued the dynasty of Gabbār (see table 2.1). But shortly before 713 BC, Sam'al was “provincialized” with the removal of the native dynasty and the installation of an Assyrian governor. It was during the provincial period that the monumental inscribed stele of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, was installed inside the citadel gate of Sam'al to commemorate his conquest of Egypt in 671 BC.

When the Assyrian forces retreated several decades later, the city was abandoned. It was not destroyed but was apparently evacuated in an orderly manner, leaving no people or goods behind. Thus, in the entire lower town and in most places on the citadel mound, remains of the seventh century BC form the final stratum and are easily accessible for excavation. There is a small area of subsequent occupation on the upper mound, probably a fortress built under the aegis of the Achaemenid Persian empire to control the nearby pass over the Amanus Mountains, which the army of Darius III used in 333 BC to cross over to the Mediterranean coast and attack the army of Alexander the Great from the rear in the Battle of Issos. But Zincirli was abandoned again soon after Alexander's conquest of the Persian empire. A new Greek city called Nikopolis (modern İslahiye) was built in the Amanus foothills 10 kilometers to the south, while the ruins of Sam'al, the former capital of the region, lay unoccupied until a modern village was built on the site in the late nineteenth century.

3. KATUMUWA'S BANQUET SCENE

DOMINIK BONATZ

Among the most impressive finds from the Oriental Institute excavations in Zincirli is the large basalt stele that according to its Aramaic inscription was made for “Katumuwa, servant of Panamuwa.” The arch-shaped stele is framed by a border, signaling that the image of Katumuwa occupies a physical, bounded space (cf. fig. 3.1). The thirteen-line inscription covers the upper part of this space, which is topped by a winged sun-disk, now damaged by modern plowing but still identifiable. This symbol evokes the protective power of the sun or sun-god Šamš, who is mentioned in line 4 of the inscription.

Katumuwa is depicted sitting in a straight-backed chair, his feet resting on a footstool. He wears a conical cap with a pointed tip and a fringed tassel hanging behind the tip. His clothing consists of two pieces: a long, short-sleeved tunic and a fringed garment that covers his shoulder. With his right hand raised in front of his face, Katumuwa grasps a drinking bowl between thumb and extremely long index finger. His left hand holds a curved branch or stem to which an oval object is attached. This object could represent a cone from a coniferous tree — a fir, cedar, or pine such as flourished in the Amanus Mountains near Zincirli.

In front of Katumuwa is a table with rectangular top on which different sorts of food are presented. From left to right appear a small container with lid usually referred to as a pyxis (cf. Catalog Nos. 8–9), a footed platter (cf. Catalog No. 11) on which a waterfowl (probably a duck; cf. Catalog No. 10) with its head turned back is placed, and a stack of flatbread with an oblong object nested on top of it which may represent another type of baked food.¹

The image of Katumuwa sitting alone at a feasting table fits in a group of stone memorial monuments that were erected in the area of the Luwian and Aramaean polities mainly during the ninth and eighth centuries BC. Apart from some regional variations

in the iconography of these monuments, the overall image of a mortuary repast virtually embodied in the conception of these monuments attests to a joint cultural practice adopted in a widespread area of diffusion (see Bonatz 2000, fig. 1). The term “mortuary repast” is used because most of these monuments show a table with offerings of food presented to the deceased.² It has to be distinguished from the idea of a funerary or mortuary banquet, as there is no pictorial evidence for a ritual meal shared by others. The image seems to have been created for the memory and benefit of the deceased and is thus clearly eschatological (mortuary) in its meaning. It also describes the memorial rite — the feeding of the dead — for which the stele marked the proper place of performance. As for their social dimension, the high number of funerary monuments attests to a new practice that for the first time includes non-royal elites, who along with royals were looking to assert their “spiritual” status after death.

The various types of food and drink offered to Katumuwa can in fact be seen as representing a source of continuous life and regeneration after death. He enjoys a quantity of bread, a portion of meat, and probably some sort of spices or aromatics kept in a luxury stone or ivory pyxis. The importance of bread as the main foodstuff for the deceased is clear from numerous ritual texts, and it is the essential element in all of the meal scenes on mortuary steles (e.g., figs. 3.1–3.6 and Catalog No. 13). The duck served on the footed platter does not correlate with the leg-cut of mutton which is prescribed as the offering for Katumuwa in line 13 of the inscription of the stele. Thus one can conclude that the image on the mortuary stele could not have been a substitute for actual offerings. Waterfowls, however, are depicted on several other mortuary steles, where they are either placed on a plate or on top of the stack of bread (fig. 3.2). Geese are also very common in Egyptian funerary art

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and are often mentioned in ritual texts as a food offering to the dead. As for the Syro-Anatolian area, a ritual text from the Hittite capital Hattusa asserts the long tradition of bird offerings in funerary rites. Herein it is stated that the storm-god prescribes neither a cow nor a sheep but birds as offerings for the dead (Otten 1961, pp. 130–33, Rs. III 32–39). In a very different context, the typical form of the stone and metal weights that circulated in this area since the Late Bronze Age is a duck with its head and neck turned back in a sleeping posture (see Catalog No. 10). This comparison shows how artistic traditions were transferred into different media with different connotations.

To complete the mortuary meal, drink is a ubiquitous element of the offerings. Thus, like Katumuwa, all the other images of deceased on mortuary steles are also shown with a drinking vessel in one hand. The manner in which they hold the vessel in front of their faces underlines the active role the deceased play in the ritual. He or she is consuming water, beer,

or wine for a prosperous afterlife. As for Katumuwa, one may expect that he is enjoying wine, since “the best (produce) of this vineyard” is prescribed as an offering for him in line 9 of the inscription, although, as noted above, text and image do not necessarily match in the description of the mortuary meal.

The only object that does not specifically belong to the mortuary meal is the conifer cone on a branch in Katumuwa’s left hand. It is a unique object in the known art of the Syro-Hittite mortuary steles, but it occurs in the position where a flower or grain stalk commonly appears in other reliefs. On a stele from the citadel of Zincirli (fig. 3.1), the flower appears drooping, thus probably symbolizing the status of



FIGURE 3.1. Mortuary banquet stele of a woman, from Zincirli, H: 1.52 m, Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum, inv. VA 2995 (Bonatz 2000, no. C 46) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)

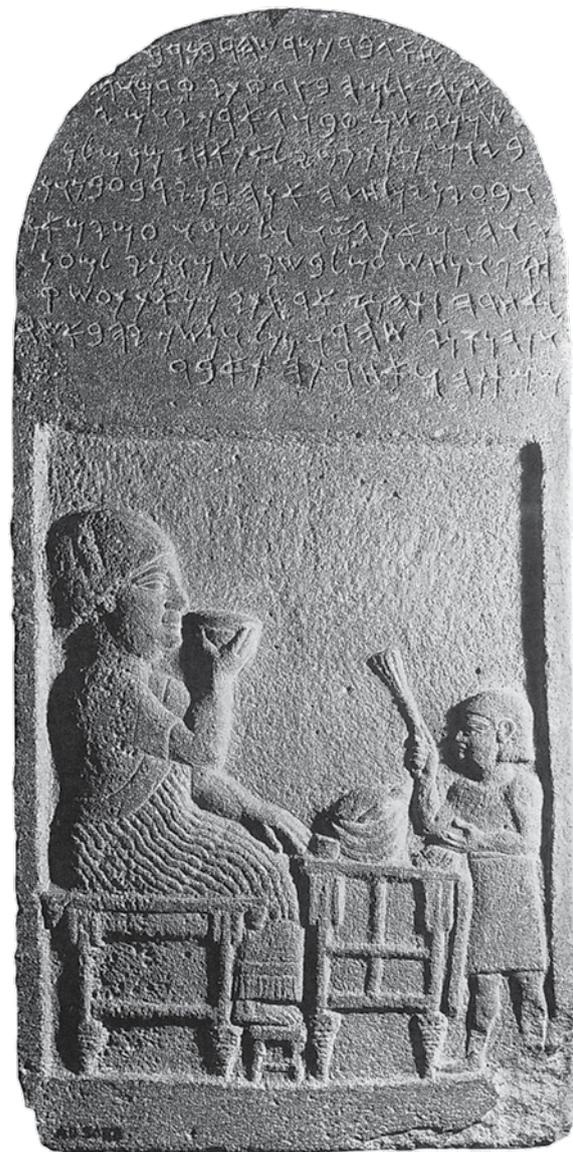


FIGURE 3.2. Mortuary banquet stele of a priest named Si'-Gabbār, with an Aramaic inscription, from Neirab, H: 0.95 m, Paris, Louvre, inv. AO 3027 (Bonatz 2000, no. C 35) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)

3. KATUMUWA'S BANQUET SCENE

the person as already deceased. Since the cone in the hand of Katumuwa is also slightly drooping, we may think about the same kind of symbolism. However, as it is well known that coniferous trees were a valued resource and played a role in trade and ritual (Meiggs 1982, pp. 41–44), the cone of Katumuwa may also point to his wealth during life. In the same sense, the drinking bowl which Katumuwa raises in his right hand is not only a sign for his eternal life, but can also be considered as an attribute of his social status both here and in the hereafter. This type of vessel with curved bottom and gadroons on its body is commonly referred to as a phiale (plural phialae) (Muscarella 1988a). As a hallmark of eighth-century BC Phrygian minor art production, phialae, which are mostly made of bronze, became a luxury good among elite classes throughout the ancient Middle East. On exhibition is the example of a bronze phiale

from southwestern Iran (probably Luristan; Catalog No. 6), while other examples have been found in Assyria, Babylonia, and the Syro-Anatolian region. At Zincirli, bronze phialae and one fragment of a silver phiale with gadroons have been found in the area of the outer citadel gate (von Luschan and Andrae 1943, pp. 117–18, pl. 56). That Katumuwa indeed belonged to the elite of Sam'al is visually confirmed by his clothing, especially the hat, and the carving style of his relief, which is strikingly similar to the other mortuary relief recovered from Zincirli (fig. 3.1) and to the carved reliefs portraying King Barrākib (see fig. C5). This, together with the royal service mentioned in the inscription, provides strong evidence of a date in the mid- to late eighth century BC, that is, to the reign of Panamuwa II, father of Barrākib, who reigned from 743/740 to 733/732 BC, contemporary with Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria.



FIGURE 3.3. Mortuary banquet stele, probably from Marash, H. 0.61 m, Adana Archaeology Museum, inv. 1785 (Bonatz 2000, no. C 12) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)



FIGURE 3.4. Mortuary banquet stele of a couple, from Marash, H: 0.88 m, Marash Museum, inv. 1040 (Bonatz 2000, no. C 21) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)

ICONOGRAPHIC PARALLELS: PICTORIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE MORTUARY REPAST

In the Syro-Anatolian context, the artistic means of visually representing the mortuary repast existed mainly in two forms. One is the subject's two-dimensional depiction in relief on steles, the other is its rendering in sculpture in the round. The latter provides an interesting spatial concept, as it implies that some sort of action was to take place in front of the image. All of the seated figures and some of the standing figures present a cup or bowl in their raised right hand (compare Catalog No. 13: the seated woman holds a mirror in her right hand). This attribute, in combination with the gesture, functions as a proper invitation for offerings the image is expecting to receive. One could also imagine a table set in front of the figures on which to place food and drink offerings, but in fact the table is already incorporated into the tectonic model of the statues. Especially in the case of the two female figures from Tell Halaf (fig. 3.7 and Bonatz 2000, no. B 5), the lower part of

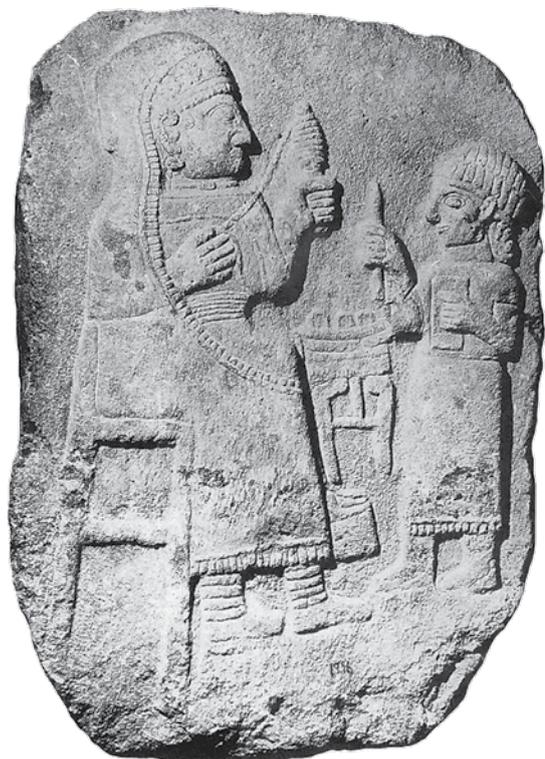


FIGURE 3.5. Mortuary banquet stele of a woman with a male attendant or son, probably from Marash, H: 1.02 m, Adana Archaeology Museum, inv. 1756 (Bonatz 2000, no. C 51) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)

the body is sculptured in a cubic shape, turning the knees and thighs into a horizontal flat surface that in theory would easily have allowed use of this part of the sculpture as a table for offerings placed next to the cup in the right hand. As for standing figures, a table-like installation is often provided by the pedestal on which they are erected. The pedestal of a monumental statue from Zincirli (see fig. 6.1) even has cup-marks on its top, which stresses the probability that this image was also intended to receive offerings.³

In all of these examples in the round, the idea of a mortuary repast is implicitly suggested in the petitioning character of the image. The object of this petition — in other words, the person in charge of the mortuary offerings — is visually addressed by the image. Thus the image creates a vivid atmosphere, with spectators expected to play an active role in the performance of the image. As for the numerous reliefs on steles, which essentially deal with the same subject, the means of transmitting their message is similar, but due to the different nature of this visual medium, they are also distinct from the statues in several respects.

A few of the steles bear inscriptions, such as the Katumuwa Stele and two examples from Neirab (fig. 3.2 and Bonatz 2000, no. C 11), that confirm that the main figure (or occasionally figures) represents the

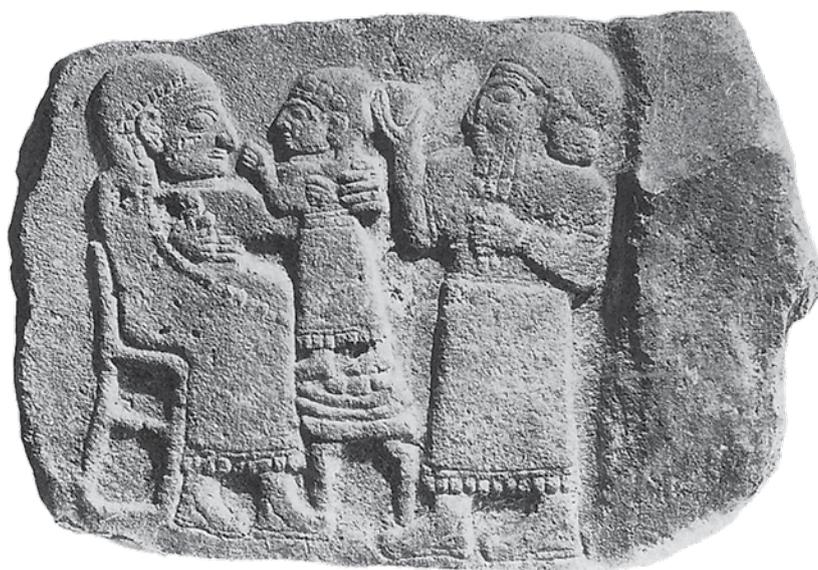


FIGURE 3.6. Mortuary banquet stele of a family group, from Marash, H: 0.60 m, Marash Museum, inv. 214 (Bonatz 2000, no. C 62) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)

3. KATUMUWA'S BANQUET SCENE

deceased. As in the case of the Katumuwa Stele, the basic concept is that of a male or female person seated alone at the feasting table (compare fig. 3.3), but sometimes a deceased couple is depicted instead (e.g., fig. 3.4). The visual focus is on the table, emphasized by food and drink laid on it near the cup in the hand of the seated figure.

In this context, the sense of the repast as renewal is often symbolized by the attributes held in the hands of the dead. The grain stalk and the grapes (e.g., figs. 3.3 and 3.4) refer to the generative power of bread, beer, and wine, confirmed by their numerous citations in ritual texts.⁴ Flowers (e.g., fig. 3.1) and the conifer cone in Katumuwa's hand can similarly be interpreted as symbols of the afterlife of the deceased. The distaff and spindle, carried by women (e.g., figs. 3.4–3.6), might be seen as a symbol of constant rotation, in the sense of regular regeneration. But these

can also be interpreted as personal attributes of a woman in life. Other objects, such as writing implements (fig. 3.5), balances, musical instruments (see Catalog No. 13), mirrors, staffs (fig. 3.4), bows, folded cloths, and animals such as horses and falcons, may also have been intended to communicate the status or vocation of those depicted,⁵ not only the deceased but also the persons who perform the rite in life.

On twenty-three steles, in contrast to the Katumuwa Stele, the repast is offered by a figure holding a fan, cup, or other attribute in his raised hand (e.g., figs. 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5). Arguably, this figure represents the surviving heir of the deceased who was responsible for the regular offerings (Bonatz 2000, pp. 103–05, 116–17; Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 30 n. 24). In a Syrian tradition going back to the second millennium BC, the duties of a “good” son include the performance of mortuary rites for the deceased father.⁶ The continuation of this tradition in the Syro-Anatolian area of the first millennium BC is attested by several mortuary inscriptions on steles that express that the children, or more specifically the son(s), were expected to take care of the dead parents, both father and mother.⁷ What becomes clear in these inscriptions — the integrity and continuity of the immediate family — is also emphasized in the iconography of the funerary monuments, through the actual depiction of the heir serving his mother or father with offerings, and/or through the visual demonstration of the relationship of the person who had the monument erected to the deceased. Scenes with more than two persons depicted around the offering table (e.g., fig. 3.6) seem to confirm this family group aspect, which is specific to this period and very distinct from the concept of a “court banquet scene” (compare Catalog Nos. 21 and 24).



FIGURE 3.7. Mortuary statue of a woman, found marking a cremation burial at Tell Halaf, H: 1.42 m, National Museum of Aleppo, inv. 7536 (Bonatz 2000, no. B 4) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)

NOTES

¹ For a more detailed description of the iconography and style of the stele, see Struble and Herrmann 2009.

² Among the seventy-two steles collected in Bonatz 2000, plus the new Katumuwa Stele, only thirteen do not depict a mortuary repast. These represent the deceased standing alone and holding attributes such as a staff, spear and bow, or writing instruments (Bonatz 2000, nos. C 1–11).

³ On the cup-marks, see Ussishkin 1975.

⁴ These texts are often connected to ancestor and funerary rites dating from the second millennium BC onward (Tsukimoto 1985;

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

Gonnet 1995). In an Iron Age context, grain stalks, grapes, and vine tendrils are the attributes of the vegetation god Tarhunzas represented on the rock relief at Ivriz (Orthmann 1971, pl. 14:e). In the inscription of the Katumuwa Stele, provisions are made to offer the best produce of the vineyard (wine, in other words) to the deceased “year by year.” Both sources indicate that wine was also an important product in the economy of southeast Anatolia;

hence it can be considered to be a prestigious regional symbol invested with different religious and eschatological meanings.

⁵ For a detailed iconographic analysis of all these attributes, see Bonatz 2000, pp. 76–107.

⁶ Loretz 1989; E. Otto 1996, pp. 265–69.

⁷ Bonatz 2000, p. 117, with reference to the relevant inscriptions.

4. THE KATUMUWA INSCRIPTION

DENNIS PARDEE

- 1) *I am Katumuwa, servant of Panamuwa, who commissioned for myself (this) stele while*
- 2) *still living. I placed it in my eternal chamber and established a feast (at)*
- 3) *this chamber: a bull for Hadad Qarpatalli, a ram for NGD/R*
- 4) *ṢWD/RN, a ram for Šamš, a ram for Hadad of the Vineyards,*
- 5) *a ram for Kubaba, and a ram for my “soul” that (will be) in this stele.*
- 6) *Henceforth, whoever of my sons or*
- 7) *of the sons of anybody (else) should come into possession of*
- 8) *this chamber, let him take from*
- 9) *the best (produce) of this vineyard (as) a (presentation)-offering*
- 10) *year by year. He is also to perform the*
- 11) *slaughter (prescribed above) in (proximity to) my “soul”*
- 12) *and is to apportion*
- 13) *for me a haunch.*

The Katumuwa inscription is remarkable for its state of preservation, for the form of linguistic expression, and for its content.¹ This essay reviews significant features of the text in the context of similar West Semitic inscriptions.

A LOCAL ARAMAIC DIALECT

Aramaic, of the family of Northwest Semitic languages that includes Hebrew and Phoenician, is well attested in a series of inscriptions on stone that date from the late ninth through the seventh centuries BC in the kingdoms that resulted from the Aramaean infiltrations of north Syria from the east that had begun at least two centuries earlier. The earliest

well-preserved inscription from Zincirli, known from its author’s name as the Kulamuwa inscription, is actually in Phoenician, surely because that was the prestige language of the time, not because this ruler, whose name is Luvian, was a native speaker of that language. Next in chronological order are two long inscriptions in an archaic Aramaic dialect known as Sam’alian, after the name of the kingdom, that were discovered at or near the nearby cultic site of Gercin late in the nineteenth century. These two texts, known as the Hadad and Panamuwa inscriptions, are considerably longer than the Katumuwa inscription, but unfortunately much less well preserved, and their interpretation thus less clear in many places. In contrast, the Katumuwa inscription is so well preserved that every one of its 202 letters is readily identifiable (fig. 4.1), the only problem for decipherment arising from the similarity of two signs, those for *d* and *r*, which are so alike as to be indistinguishable on the basis of paleography alone.

The language of the Katumuwa inscription is a previously unattested dialect of Aramaic, not quite so archaic as the language of the Hadad and Panamuwa inscriptions, but more so than the standardized language of the larger body of Aramaic inscriptions from the Aramaean kingdoms of the ninth to seventh centuries BC. Only a few years after the Katumuwa Stele was erected, the ruler who bore the Aramaic name of Barrākib had a series of inscriptions prepared, but now in the more standardized form of Aramaic attested in the inscriptions from other sites. Because this Barrākib makes a point of submitting to Assyrian hegemony at the time of the campaigns of Tiglath-pileser III, one might see in his linguistic choice a conscious move away from Sam’alian particularism toward a more commonly used form of Aramaic — which was clearly already on its way to becoming the international language of the time.

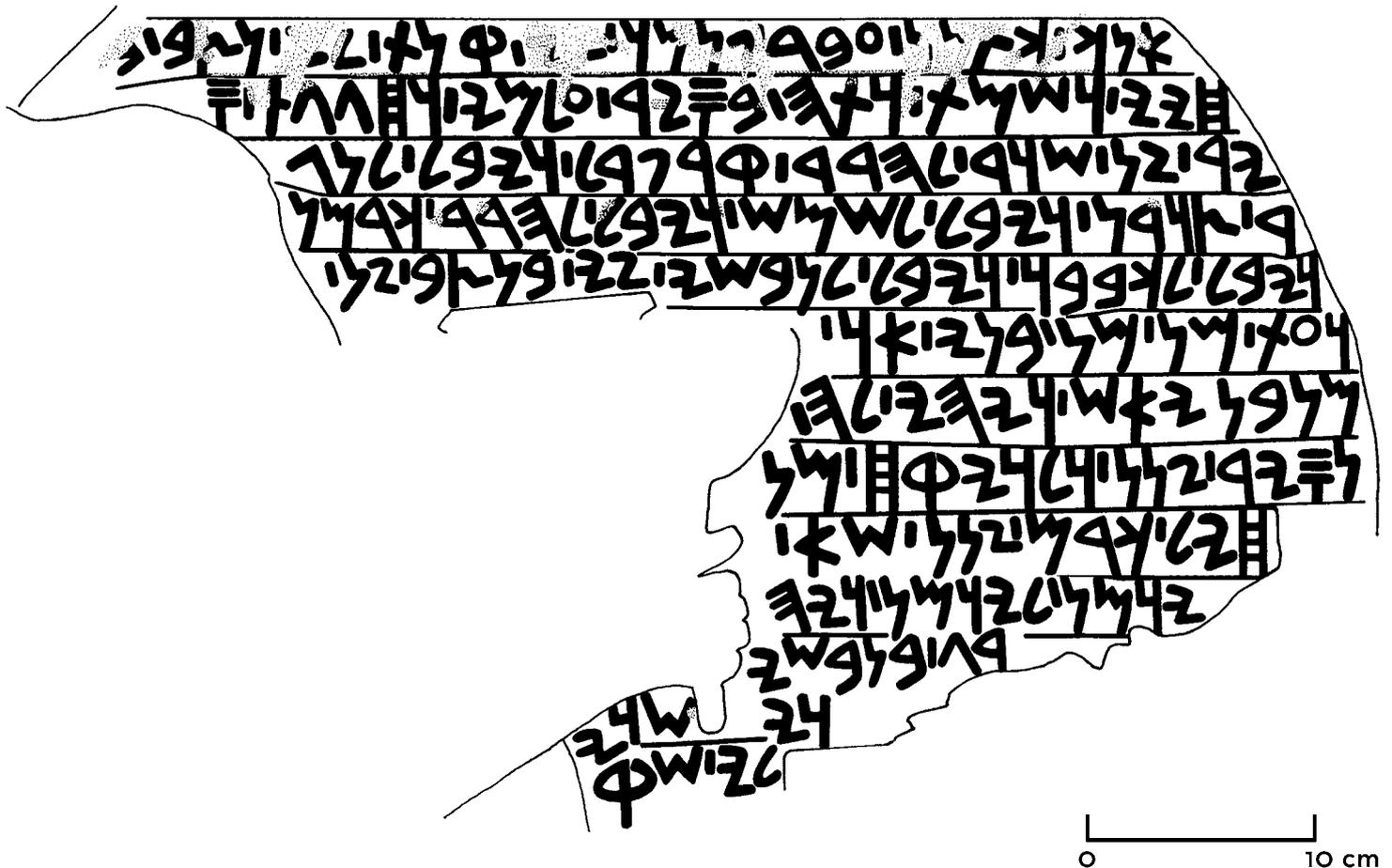


FIGURE 4.1. Drawing of the Katumuwa inscription. The text is read from right to left (courtesy of Dennis Pardee)

KATUMUWA AND HIS PANTHEON

The most striking features of the content of the inscription are discussed in the following commentary, but may be summed up under the headings of authorship — the author is not of royal status and says nothing specific about his origins — and view of the afterlife — the author depicts his being as continuing after his death in the form of a *nbš* [nabsh], conventionally translated as “soul,” which will live on in the stele that he has erected and which will be nourished by the offerings made there.

The author’s name, KTMW, is previously unattested and of uncertain vocalization, though composed of Luwian elements denoting “conflict” and “might.”² He identifies himself as “servant of Panamuwa,” referring probably to the later of the two well-known kings of Sam’al who bore that name, who reigned for roughly a decade, ca. 743/740–733/732 BC. This is a relative rarity, for in most cases only royal figures had inscribed steles erected.

The verb that the author uses for the establishment of the annual feast in his honor (ḤGG) is not commonly used with this meaning in the related languages, but the root appears elsewhere in various forms denoting a feast or festival that occurs at the end of a pilgrimage. This leads to the conclusion that the author hailed from outside the capital — perhaps a district administrator who had been moved to the capital when Assyrian pressure led to centralization of the royal administration and massive growth of the city itself (see Herrmann and Schloen, forthcoming), or even from the neighboring kingdom of Carchemish, for he includes among the deities named a goddess who is particularly associated with that kingdom (Kubaba).

The word translated “chamber” (*syd/r*) is previously unattested, and its actual reading is uncertain, because it contains the sign that may be read either as *d* or as *r*. Various scholars have pointed out functional similarities with an Old South Arabian term *mswd* that denotes a chamber where festal gatherings

4. THE KATUMUWA INSCRIPTION

occur, sometimes as part of a tomb complex.³ The findspot of the stele, though not a tomb per se, fits this definition, for the small room would have functioned well as a place for the family to gather around the ancestor's stele and celebrate the feast as he had prescribed (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*, this volume).

The deities to whom the offerings are made appear to be Luwian gods of the author's personal pantheon, but their names are expressed for the most part in Aramaic. This conclusion appears necessary because the royal Sam'alians inscriptions mention deities with clearly Semitic names,⁴ whereas three deities in this text are designated by terms that appear either to be Luwian or to be Aramaic renderings of Luwian names. The latter procedure appears clear for "Hadad of the Vineyards," because this divine name is previously unattested in Aramaic, whereas a Luwian deity "Tarḥunt of the Vineyard" is known.⁵ This allows for the interpretation of the compound name as based on substitution (the name of the Luwian storm-god is simply replaced by "Hadad," the local Semitic name for the storm-god) and translation (the Aramaic word for "vineyards," *krmn*, has replaced the Luwian term). The name Hadad Qarpatalli is more enigmatic, because a corresponding Luwian divine name is not attested, but the second element may correspond to the Luwian word for "companion."⁶ NGD/R ṢWD/RN is even more enigmatic, in part again because of the presence of the sign that may be read *d* or *r*, but the first element may express the obscure Luwian divine name Nikarawas.⁷ Šamš is the Northwest Semitic word for "sun" and would correspond to Tiwad, the solar deity in Katumuwa's Luwian pantheon,⁸ while Kubaba, a female deity of non-Semitic origin, was the tutelary deity of neighboring Carchemish.

FEASTING WITH THE GODS

The last on the list of honorees for the sacrifices is the author himself, in the form of "my 'soul' that (will be) in this stele." He thus sees himself as associated with divinity, as sharing with the named deities the benefits of the offering, with the stele functioning as the nexus of the human and the divine. In the earlier Hadad inscription of the first Panamuwa, the royal author had prayed that his "soul" might eat and drink with the storm-god Hadad. The new inscription provides the mechanism of such a feast between the

gods and the dead: when the author had the stele erected and established the feast, animal sacrifices were made in honor of the named divinities and of the author's soul, the last act in anticipation of the feast prescribed in the second part of the text. There specific mention is made of the "best (produce) of this vineyard" and of a "haunch" to be set aside for the author.

The frequency of the feast prescribed for the heirs is stated as "year by year." The argument that this phrase prescribes an annual feast is based on comparative evidence. The best biblical parallel is the story of the pilgrimage of Samuel's family to the sanctuary at Shiloh, which took place *miyyāmim yāmīma* "from days unto days" (1 Samuel 1:3). This story, built around the conception and birth of Samuel, reflects an annual feast. The best inscriptional parallel is the Phoenician inscription from Karatepe in the same general region as Zincirli. Here there is a reference to three annual feasts: a bull for the *zbḥ ymm* ("the sacrifice of days"), a sheep in the time of plowing, and another in the time of harvest.⁹ Here also the word "days" defines the first sacrifice, while there is no doubt that the other types occurred once a year.

The two sections of the inscription are joined conceptually by the appearance of the word *nbš* [nabsh] "soul" near the end of each section (lines 5 and 11), each time explicitly associated with the sacrifice of an animal, and by the explicit stipulation of how the "eternal" chamber is to be maintained as such: whoever comes into possession of the chamber, whether the author's son or someone else's son, is to carry out the annual feast. At the first mention of the "soul," it is said to reside in the stele; in the second, the animal sacrifice is to be slaughtered in proximity to the *nbš*, doubtlessly so that it might be nourished by the blood of the slain beast. From this stipulation, it appears plausible to deduce that wine would also have been poured out as a libation over the stele/"soul," permitting the "soul" of Katumuwa to "eat and drink with Hadad," in the words of the royal figure of the preceding generation.

Despite the indications just described, the author has set us a difficult task when it comes to sorting out exactly how the feasts were carried out. He states that the stele was set up while he was still alive and that he himself instituted the offerings to the gods and to his "soul," but he then goes on to describe in

somewhat different terms the yearly observance of the mortuary feast. In the prescription of this feast, there is no mention of the gods, but there is an explicit reference to the best produce of a vineyard, as well as a description of the author's own part as only a "haunch" (the word is *šq* [shuq], denoting in the related languages the "thigh" or "upper leg" of a human or an animal). One possible explanation of these differing features of the text is as follows:

The first reference to the "soul" is temporally ambiguous, perhaps purposely so, for it is in the common Semitic form of a nominal sentence, that is, one with no expressed verb, necessitating the addition of a form of the verb "to be" in an English translation. In stating that his "soul" was included among the honorees at the inaugural feast, the author appears to be setting up an identification of his living form in attendance at that feast with the representation of that living form on the stele, also in attendance at that feast, and with the continuation of that being in the stele after his death. It is the last form of existence that (one must conclude by comparison with the Hadad inscription) was to go on eating and drinking with the gods in the "eternal chamber."

It appears plausible to infer that the inaugural feast was of a more grandiose nature than what was expected of the heirs to the mortuary chamber. Indeed, a bull and five rams would constitute a considerable contribution from the herds of the offerer, or a considerable outlay of funds if he is entirely urbanized and thus obliged to purchase the animals. Moreover, the amount of meat supplied by this number of animals would far surpass the needs of a familial feast (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*, this volume). Katumuwa, in his munificence and in his own honor, made this offering, but one may doubt that he expected his heirs to match his generosity. He appears to have sensed that a less onerous requirement was more likely to be carried out on a regular basis, particularly if some of the participants must travel from the family seat. The person responsible for the annual offering may thus only have been expected to present a single animal and then to have reserved only a single haunch for the festal meal in the presence of the stele, it being assumed that the rest of the meat and the by-products were for his own use. There is, by the way, no archaeological indication of an altar on which any part of the sacrifice may have been presented as a

burnt offering, and it would hardly be expected, in any case, that a local mortuary shrine would have been equipped with an altar of the type permitting the incineration of significant portions of a freshly slaughtered animal, let alone six of them.¹⁰

The mention of "this vineyard," where the demonstrative particle (*znn* "this") denotes proximity, provides another possible clue to the different forms of the feasts. Because the mortuary chamber is located in a populated area of the city, the reference can hardly be to a vineyard of significant economic proportions. For this reason, one might assume that the reference was to a small number of vines in a nearby courtyard or open area,¹¹ a common feature of homes in villages and towns in the modern Middle East, and that it is the product of these vines that was to be part of the mortuary feast that was to be carried out in the author's memory. One might even imagine, given that wine is not mentioned in the first section, that the vines were first planted as part of the inaugural ceremony. "This vineyard" was then expected to have grown and begun producing grapes by the time of the author's demise.

NOTES

¹ The interested reader will find more details on these matters in the original edition (Pardee 2009) and in my more recent review (Pardee, forthcoming), where all of the secondary treatments of the text of which I was aware are cited.

² The second element, /muwa/, is well known in Luwian proper names as denoting "might," but the first element, written KT, is new. K. L. Younger (2009, pp. 159–66) identifies the first two signs with Luwian words for "combat" and suggests three possible vocalizations of the entire name, Katamuwa, Katimuwa, or Katumuwa, expressing a preference for the last.

³ See the discussion and bibliography in Sanders 2013.

⁴ Hadad, El, Rakib'el, Šamš, and Rašap.

⁵ Hutter 2003, pp. 220–24.

⁶ Yakubovich 2010b, p. 396.

⁷ As proposed by É. Masson (2010, p. 53).

⁸ Hutter 2003, pp. 224–27.

⁹ Donner and Röllig 2002, no. 26, A III 1–2.

¹⁰ What has been identified as a "neighborhood temple" (Building A/III) just to the west of the stele room contained what appears to be an offering table, but no altar for burnt offerings (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*, this volume).

¹¹ Such an open area, "Plaza 2," measuring roughly 15 × 15 meters, is located immediately to the east of the stele room (see fig. 5.2).

5. THE KATUMUWA STELE IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

VIRGINIA R. HERRMANN

On July 21, 2008, the Neubauer Expedition of the Oriental Institute made an exciting discovery in its new excavations at Zincirli, Turkey, the Iron Age city of Sam'al. The ground had been broken in the northern lower town only four days earlier, and the excavators were still removing the hard, clayey topsoil that covered the remains of the Iron Age architecture below when one of the local workers called over his supervisor: "Something is written on this stone!" The top of the Katumuwa Stele lay only a few centimeters below the surface and is scarred by the marks of farmers' plows dragged across it innumerable times over the ca. 2,600 years separating its burial and rediscovery, so it is truly remarkable that it was preserved standing upright in the original position where it was dedicated by Katumuwa himself so long ago.

The Katumuwa Stele is not the only mortuary stele showing a banquet scene from the Iron Age Syro-Hittite kingdoms (see Bonatz, *Chapter 3*, this volume; and Catalog No. 13), nor is it the only inscribed example (though its inscription is particularly long and informative). But it is so far the only mortuary stele from this period that was found and documented in its original archaeological context, and this context opens a new window onto how families cared for and commemorated their ancestors in the Iron Age Levant and Anatolia and the place of these rituals in the life of the ancient city.

THE MORTUARY CHAPEL OF KATUMUWA

Though the Katumuwa Stele itself was quickly excavated in a small sounding and removed to the Gaziantep Archaeological Museum for its protection, over time the rest of the building in which it was found (called Building A/II) and most of the larger architectural complex to which it belonged (called

Complex A) have been exposed by the Oriental Institute expedition. A geomagnetic survey of a large part of the lower city has also revealed the rough plan of the still unexcavated architecture surrounding the stele building and gives us an idea of its broader urban context (fig. 5.1; Casana and Herrmann 2010; see fig. C3b for a reconstruction of the city's plan).

The perfectly circular lower city, where the bulk of the population lived, surrounded on every side the old citadel mound on top of which the royal palaces perched (see fig. 2.4). The block that we call Complex A was made up mostly of modest houses, and it appears that similar residential neighborhoods continued to the west of this area. Across the street to the east, however, began an area occupied exclusively by very large, formal houses organized around internal courtyards that probably belonged to the city's elite, including top officials. One of these houses may have been the home and office of Katumuwa himself, who calls himself a "servant [official] of Panamuwa [II]," the second-to-last king of Sam'al.

Building A/II seems originally to have been an ordinary house (though probably too humble in formality and size at only 9 × 12–13 meters to have housed a wealthy courtier like Katumuwa himself), and the room where the stele was found had previously been a kitchen containing two clay bread ovens. At the time when the stele was set up (apparently while Katumuwa was still alive), this house was renovated and converted into a special-purpose building at least in part dedicated to the performance of his mortuary cult (fig. 5.2). In Mesopotamian culture, the primary location of both burial and rites for deceased kin was within the family house. In the Levant, however, a variety of textual and archaeological evidence indicates that communion with the dead was equally (if not more) common in proximity to a divine presence, far from either house or tomb (van der Toorn 1996, p. 153; Bonatz 2000, p. 152; Niehr 2006; Struble and Herrmann

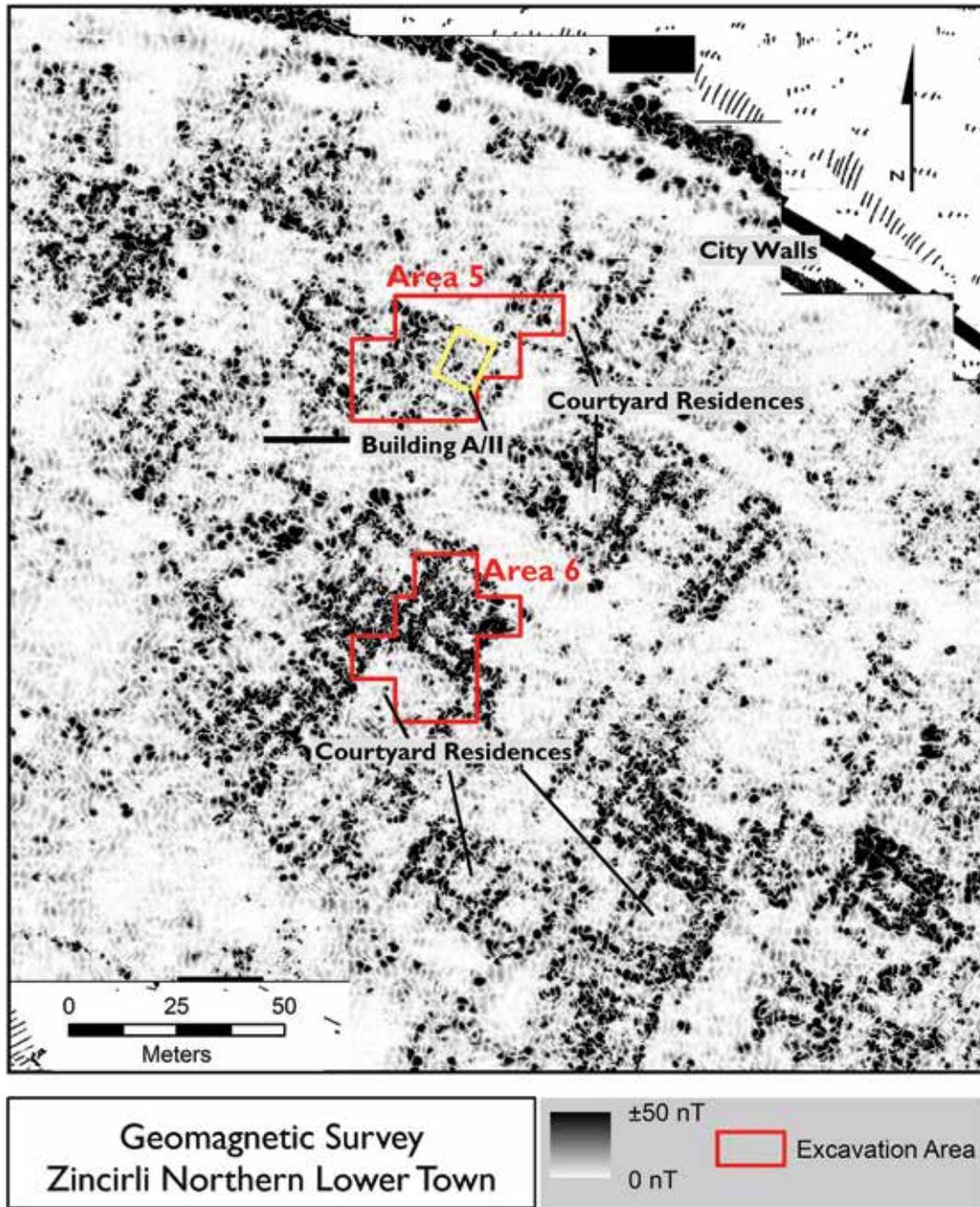


FIGURE 5.1. Geomagnetic map of the northern lower town of Zincirli showing excavation Areas 5 and 6 as of 2010. Building A/II, where the Katumuwa Stele was found, is highlighted in yellow. The basalt architectural foundations appear dark gray among the light gray open areas and streets (Virginia R. Herrmann; data used with permission of Jason Herrmann and the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

2009, pp. 36–39). This could take place either directly in the sanctuary of a god or in a separate, secondary shrine nearby, as seems to be the case here.

In the stele’s inscription, the location where it was set up (either the room or the entire building) and where the mortuary or funerary feast was to take place is called an “eternal *syd/r*.” As described by Pardee in *Chapter 4*, this term may be related to a word that in other West Semitic languages means a

kind of reception hall. Elsewhere in the inscription we learn that the *syd/r* can be inherited or otherwise transferred as property that carries with it the responsibility for the annual mortuary offerings. The use of this specific terminology in the inscription strengthens the impression that Building A/II was no mere domestic building, but a special-purpose mortuary “chapel” for the perpetuation of Katumuwa’s name and “soul.”

5. THE KATUMUWA STELE IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

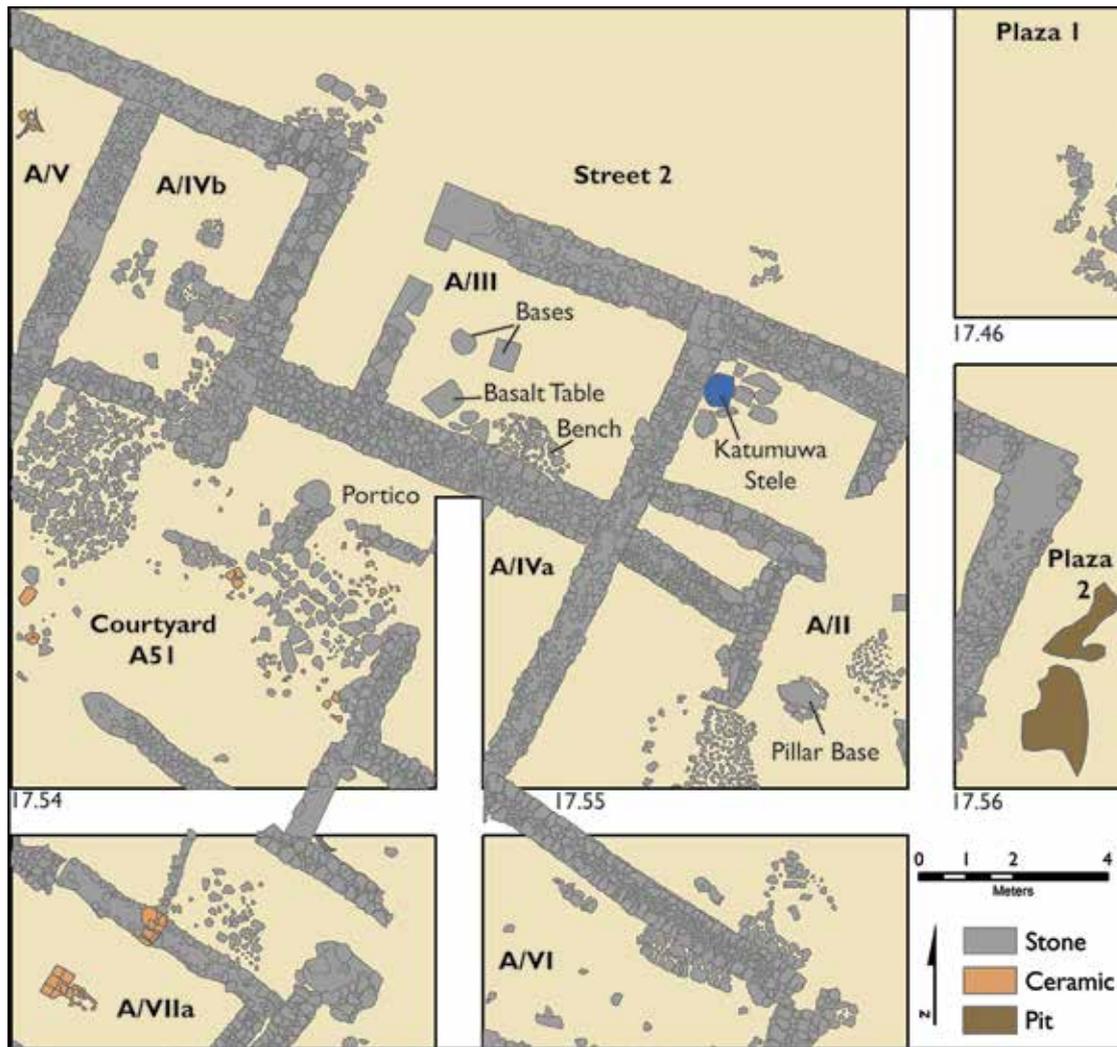


FIGURE 5.2. Plan of Building A/II, the mortuary “chapel” where the stele was found, and Building A/III, the neighborhood temple (Phase 2c, late 8th c. BC) (Virginia R. Herrmann)

As we found them, the walls of Building A/II were reduced to only their stone bases, the upper, mud-brick part having rapidly collapsed and eroded after the building’s final abandonment. The rooms had been fairly well cleaned out as well (see figs. C3d–g for a reconstruction of this building), and any remaining wood, cloth, or other organic material they contained had long since decayed to nothing, leaving only stone pavements and bases and a few fragmentary objects to inform us about their function and appearance (see V. R. Herrmann 2011, pp. 268–71, 480–83).

The building was entered from an open area to the east, probably through a walled forecourt that has not been fully excavated. A very wide open entrance, whose lintel must have been supported in the center by a wooden post or pillar (though no base for such a support was found) gave access to the building itself.

Against the wall in the entry room was the stone base of a short bench or shelf with a small cobble pavement in front of it. Ahead was a broad back room that may have served for storage or food preparation and whose wide entrance was spanned by another cobble pavement. Turning to the right, one would have passed a large stone base, irregular in shape, that may have supported another wooden pillar, and arrived before the door to the stele room by crossing another cobble pavement. The stele was in the most secluded part of the building, requiring two turns through three outer rooms and courtyards to reach from the outside. The entrance to this room was also the only one narrow enough to have been closed by a door, and in fact, we found an iron bar with two attached rings on the floor just outside this doorway, which we reconstruct as part of a locking device to secure this door when the room was not in use (fig. 5.3).

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In the corner of this small, innermost room we found the stele of Katumuwa standing upright, but fallen backward slightly against the wall behind it (fig. 5.4). It was framed by a small flagstone pavement in front, a low stone bench to the right, and a stone “pedestal” (a large, flat-topped stone set onto a now-eroded base of stone and clay) to the left. These modest features, proportional to the stele in size, would have served as the immediate setting for rituals related to it and very likely as the places where food and drink offerings were deposited.

Though steles of this type seem to have sometimes serve as grave markers, excavation beneath the floors of this room has turned up no trace of human remains. It seems that Katumuwa’s “soul” could inhabit this place quite apart from his body, which presumably lay in a necropolis elsewhere (whether inhumed in typical Semitic fashion or cremated according to the practice of some Anatolian groups, as well as the nearby Phoenicians), and in fact the bodies of the dead were almost always banished beyond the city walls in the Iron Age Levant (Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 40).

THE NEIGHBORHOOD TEMPLE

Why did Katumuwa choose to install the eternal abode of his “soul” in this humble neighborhood in the lower town, far from the monumental palaces, temples, and gates elsewhere in the city? The answer seems to lie in the building next door to his mortuary “chapel,” called by us Building A/III. When we first uncovered the stele in 2008, we had only excavated a small part of this adjacent building and did not yet recognize its special characteristics. Following its full exposure in the 2009 and 2010 excavation seasons, however, it began to seem very likely that this was a small temple, and that a desire for his “soul” to be forever close to the house of a particular god led Katumuwa to set up his stele in this place.

The plan of Building A/III bears little resemblance to the typical monumental temples of this region, which are usually freestanding and symmetrical, with a direct, central approach toward the divine image. However, it does share a number of features with a group of smaller Late Bronze and Iron Age temples (Mazar 1992, pp. 177–82) that have an indirect approach to the holiest space and, like Building A/III,

are often equipped with pillars and benches (figs. 5.6–7; V. R. Herrmann, forthcoming a).

Building A/III is small, at only ca. 6 × 9 meters, but it has quite thick walls for its size, which would have allowed it to have at least two stories and perhaps stand up above its neighbors. A shallow portico with a cylindrical pillar base extends from the south side of the building and may have supported a second-story balcony that overlooked the courtyard to the south. Unlike the stele building, A/III could be



FIGURE 5.3. Iron bar and rings – possibly a locking device – found in the doorway of the Katumuwa Stele room, Building A/II, Zincirli. L: 22 cm (photograph by Eudora Struble, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

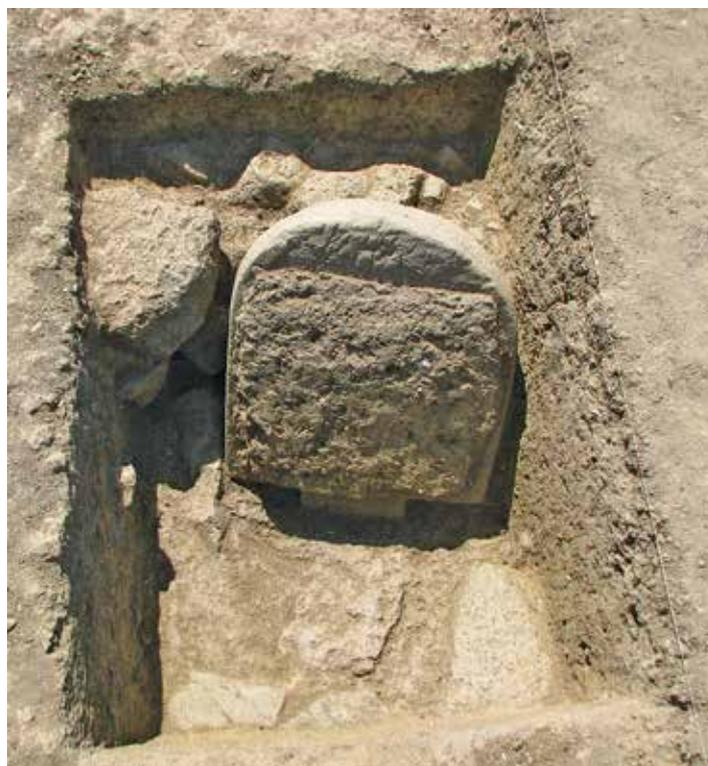


FIGURE 5.4. The Katumuwa Stele as first excavated in a small probe, dirt left adhering to the inscribed face for its protection. Also visible are the small pavement in front of the stele, a low bench at right, and pedestal at left (photograph by Eudora Struble, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

5. THE KATUMUWA STELE IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

entered directly from the major street to the north, a ring-road that connected this neighborhood to the rest of the city, and when the building was eventually renovated, a wide stone porch and a thick pier were added to aggrandize this outer entrance (see fig. 5.5).¹ From a small antechamber, a left turn led through a much narrower doorway into the larger, inner room of the building. In this room were several distinctive stone elements: a circular post or pillar base near the west wall, a square base or plinth in the center of the room, a wide bench against the south wall, and a large table-like basalt block with a shallow depression in its upper surface. If this room, found otherwise almost empty, was indeed the “cella” of a small temple, a wooden, metal, or stone image of the god or goddess could have stood on the square plinth or the bench, and sacrificial offerings could have been deposited atop the basalt “table,” which in fact resembles similar stone “tables” from contemporary temples elsewhere (V. R. Herrmann, forthcoming a).

If our interpretation of A/III as a temple is correct, Katumuwa’s stele, placed just on the other side of the wall from the “cella,” was located as close as

possible to the divine presence without being in the temple itself. This physical link between Katumuwa’s mortuary “chapel” and a small neighborhood temple echoes the inscription’s mingling of the gods and the dead together as recipients of sacrifice. By founding a mortuary chapel next door to this temple, Katumuwa intended to ensure that his “soul” would eat and drink with the gods through simultaneous offerings.

The principal god of the A/III temple was probably one of the gods mentioned in the inscription, most likely the first named, the storm-god Hadad Qarpatalli, for whom the most prestigious offering (a bull) was prescribed. The idiosyncrasy of the list of gods found in the inscription (quite distinct from the god lists found in royal inscriptions) suggests that they were carefully chosen by Katumuwa for reasons of personal devotion, family tradition, or the proximity of their cults to his home. It seems quite possible that Katumuwa even sponsored the construction or renovation of Building A/III as a temple for his personal god next door to his mortuary “chapel,” as an additional act of patronage benefiting the neighborhood.

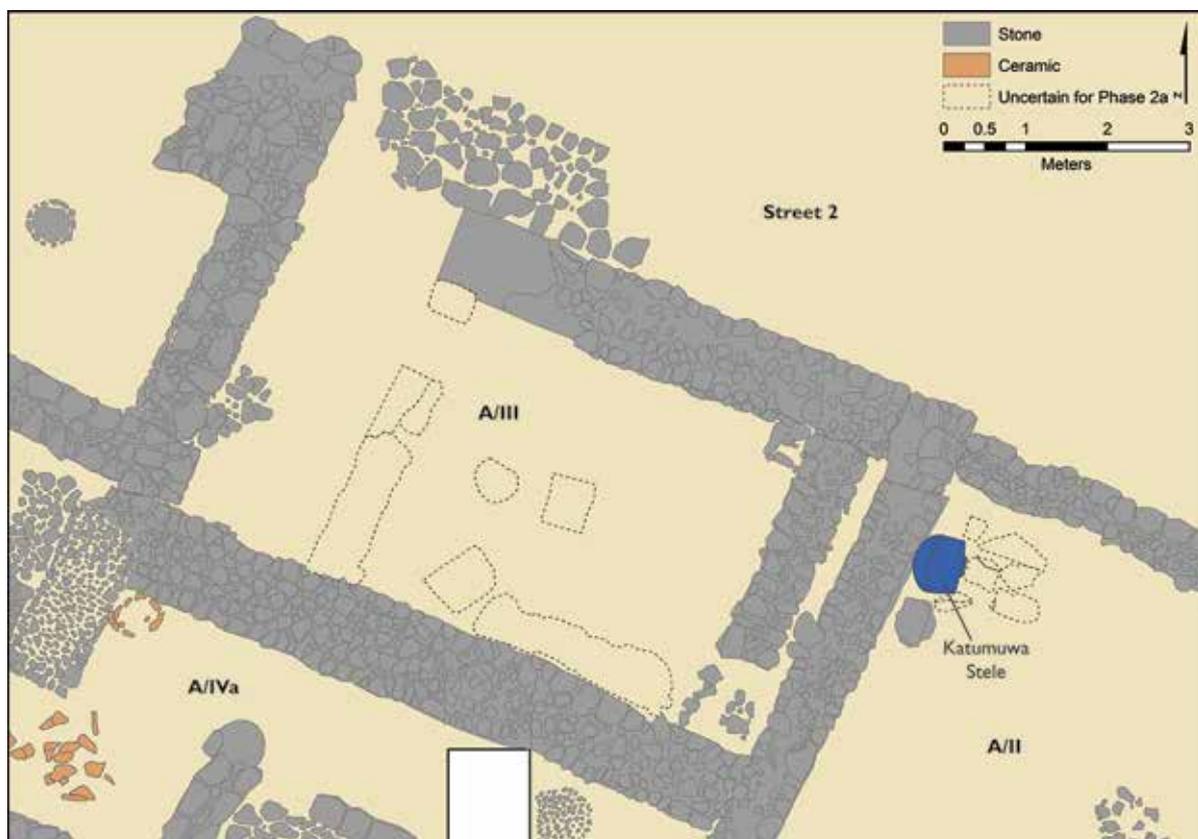


FIGURE 5.5. Plan of temple Building A/III after its renovation (Phase 2a, 7th c. BC) (Virginia R. Herrmann)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

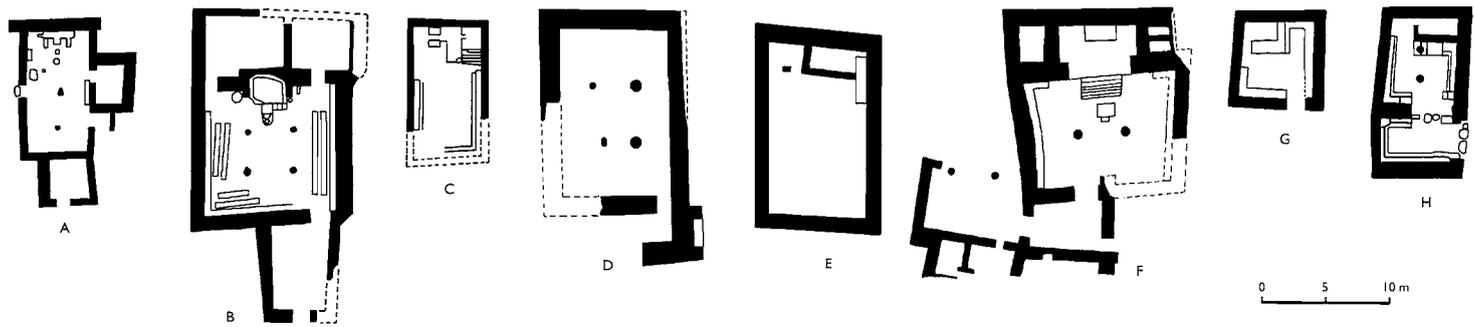


FIGURE 5.6. South Levantine temples with irregular plans, indirect approach, benches, and pillars: A. Lachish, Fosse Temple I; B. Lachish, Fosse Temple III; C. Tel Mevorakh; D. Beth Shan, Stratum V, North Temple; E. Tell Abu Hawam, Stratum IVa; F. Beth Shan, Stratum VI; G. Tell Qasile, Stratum XI; H. Tell Qasile, Stratum X (after Mazar 1980, fig. 15)

THE MORTUARY FEAST

What does the archaeological context of the Katumuwa Stele tell us about the mortuary feast prescribed by its inscription? To start, we can compare the stele's architectural context with the dimensions of the feast portrayed by its inscription. The stele room itself is quite small at ca. 11 square meters, with scarcely room for ten people to stand comfortably around it (fig. C3f). The sacrifice and offering ritual must therefore have been attended by quite an intimate group, likely consisting only of Katumuwa's immediate descendants. The feast described in the first half of the inscription is by contrast very substantial, including six sacrificial animals: a bull and five rams. By any estimate, this amount of meat would have fed hundreds of people,² far more than could have fit into Building A/II or even the open areas surrounding it.

The celebrants probably included not only Katumuwa's immediate family, but also a much more extended kinship and patronage group that likely encompassed the entire neighborhood or even district of the city. This feast thus represented an extravagant benefaction that would have enhanced Katumuwa's prestige and political and moral clout in the city already during his lifetime. As Pardee argues in *Chapter 4*, the word for feasting used in the inscription implies some kind of pilgrimage, so in addition to or instead of this local group, we should perhaps envision Katumuwa's entire clan coming to Sam'al from their outlying villages or strongholds to join in inaugurating his mortuary chapel. While the core group of Katumuwa's close kin could have dined and celebrated in Building A/II itself or the courtyard outside (see fig. C3g), the remainder of the meat that did not go to the gods and priests was likely distributed to other

groups who would have cooked and eaten it in gatherings elsewhere.

In contrast to this large inaugural feast, the annual feast to be carried out following Katumuwa's death may have been restricted only to the single ram for the deceased's "soul," as implied by the inscription's last lines. Nevertheless, even a single male adult sheep could have fed a sizeable group of thirty to forty people, subtracting the portion dedicated to the deceased. Building A/II and its forecourt could have comfortably housed this extended family group

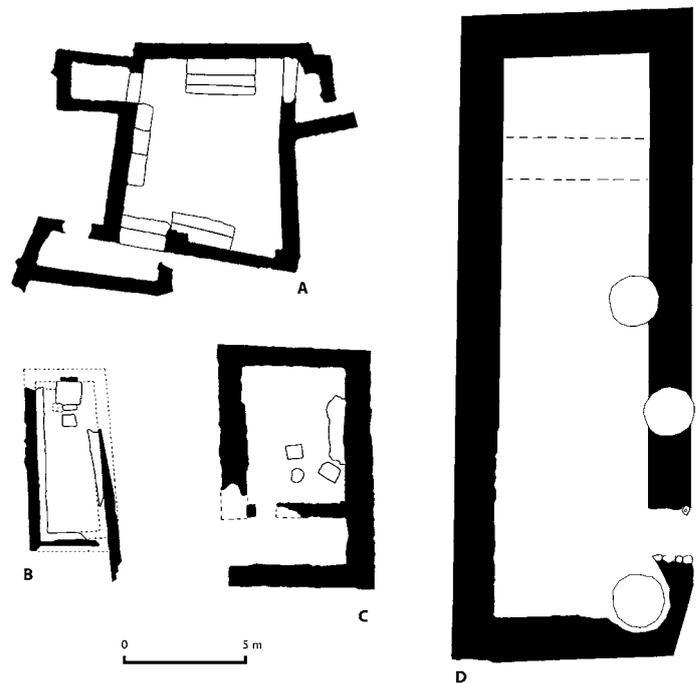


FIGURE 5.7. North Levantine temples with irregular plans, indirect approach, benches, and pillars: A. Ugarit, Temple of the Rhytons (after Yon 1996, p. 419, fig. 1b); B. Sarepta (after Pritchard 1978, fig. 125); C. Zincirli Building A/III, Phase 2c-b; D. Tell Judaidah (after Haines 1971, pl. 57)

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for an annual celebration, allowing Katumuwa's heirs to continue to develop both family solidarity and local influence by sharing food in his name.

What archaeological evidence is there that these feasts actually took place? Among the fragmentary artifacts that were found abandoned on the floors of Building A/II are some objects that may have derived from cult furniture or votive offerings related to the mortuary cult: five stone bowl fragments found in the stele room and the vestibule before it (fig. 5.8), as well as two blue frit beads, a ceramic animal figurine, a small bronze nail, two further fragments of bronze, and a thin silver ring or earring found in the other rooms. One of the stone vessel fragments was made of a finely veined imported stone, while another was the high foot of a large bowl resembling the one depicted on the stele and was found directly in front of the stele itself. Built into a later wall that bordered the stele room (and thus possibly deriving from the use of this room) was a fragment of a stone block with a circular depression blackened by burning (fig. 5.9). These circular holes or "cup-marks" are found at other sites on stone cult tables of the kind found in temple A/III next door and on the bases of statues identified as representations of deceased rulers (Ussishkin 1975; Woolley 1921, fig. 27). Other items found in the building relate to food preparation and storage, perhaps for the mortuary feast itself, and include a cooking pot, loaf-shaped stones and a stone mortar used for grinding flour and other foods, ceramic jar or jug stoppers, burnt olive pits, and a number of large fragments of storage jars. Still other artifacts suggest a range of additional activities that seem unrelated to the mortuary cult, including textile production, metallurgy, and possibly agriculture, and may point to alternative uses of the building at other times of year.

Though the rooms of the stele building and temple were kept quite clean, the adjacent open areas and street were convenient places for the disposal of trash, especially animal bones from the consumption of meat. Though the debris excavated in these areas gives us a composite view of the year-round activities of all the adjacent buildings, traces of Katumuwa's mortuary feast can still be detected, especially near temple A/III (see Marom, forthcoming), reminding us again that the annual remembrance of the dead here took place in the context of sacrifices to the gods. In the courtyard overlooked by the temple, sheep and

goat bones³ came to dominate compared to other animals in the period when the temple was in use, probably as a result of the sheep sacrifices prescribed by the Katumuwa Stele inscription. Furthermore, there was a significant emphasis on right upper hind limbs of adult sheep and goats in the trash in this courtyard.⁴ In the street outside the temple a significant number of left pelvis fragments of sheep and goats were found, while in the open area east of the stele building more left-sided cattle bones were found than right.

In the eastern Mediterranean, the right side of the animal, and particularly the right fore- or hind limb, was often considered the portion suitable for offering to the gods and consumption by the priests, leaving the left side to be consumed by lay people. This is attested both in the Old Testament (e.g., Exodus 29:22; Leviticus 7:32, 9:21; Numbers 18:18) and in contemporary Iron Age archaeological remains from

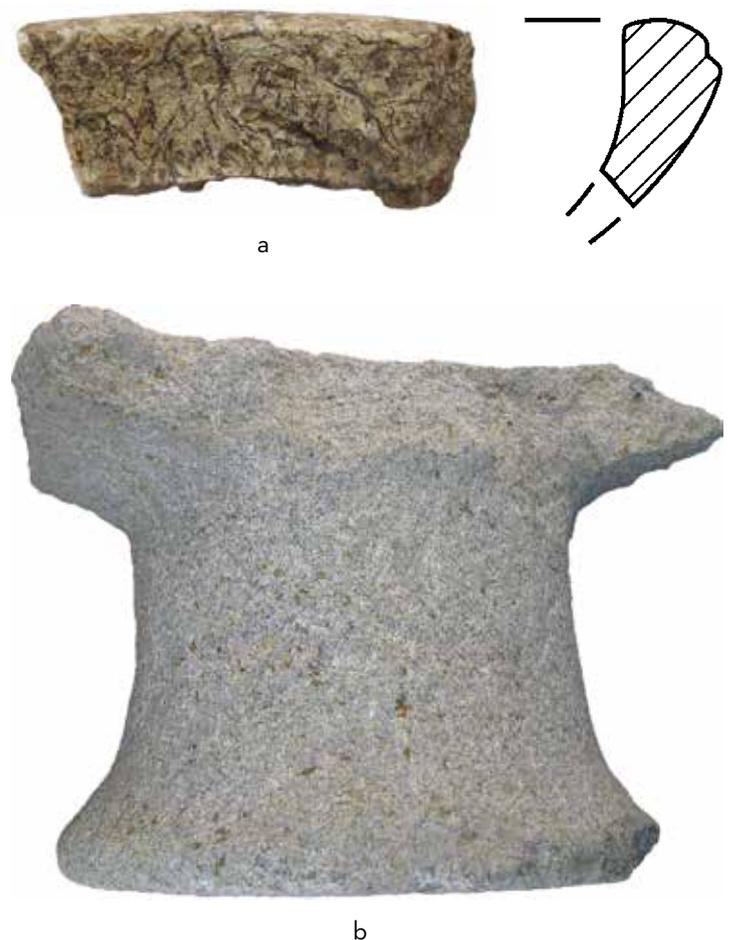


FIGURE 5.8. Stone vessel fragments found in mortuary "chapel" Building A/II, Zincirli. (a) W: 6 cm; (b): W: 22.5 cm (photographs by Eudora Struble, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

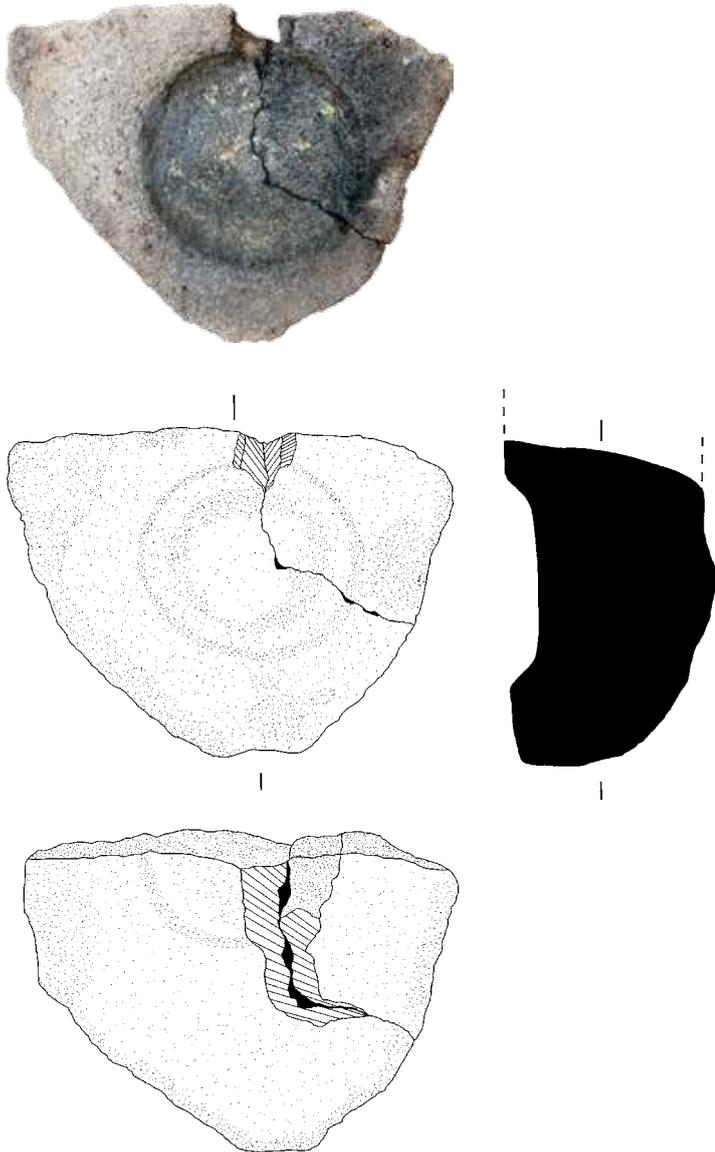


FIGURE 5.9. Stone fragment with a round “cup-mark” bearing traces of burning, found in a later wall of Building A/II. W: 22.5 cm (photograph by Eudora Struble, drawings by Karen Reczuch, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

Israel, Greece, and Cyprus (see Davis 2008). Katumuwa himself requests a “haunch” (*šq*, upper hind limb) from the ram sacrificed for his “soul.” It seems significant, therefore, that there is a bias toward right, or holy, limb bones in the temple’s secluded interior courtyard, whereas in the public areas outside the emphasis is on the profane left sides. One can envision the cultically pure priests dining on the sacred portion inside the temple, while the worshipers, including the family of Katumuwa, ate the leftover portions elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

On its own, the Katumuwa Stele provides invaluable new insights into religious belief and practice in the Iron Age Levant. The addition of the artifacts, architecture, and urban setting associated with it restores to life this stone document of the dead. Combining image, text, and context, we can picture how the dead lived on in the society of their descendants: in intimate family ceremonies in a small, dim chamber, in a lively annual banquet in the company of the gods, and in a lavish gathering of neighborhood or clan meant to firmly embed the name of Katumuwa in the living memory of Sam'al.

NOTES

¹ From the ragged gap in this pier, it seems likely that a large dressed block or orthostat once flanked this entrance, but was later robbed out and taken away. Similar gaps in the wall foundations on the other side of the outer entrance and at the entrance to the inner room suggest that dressed stones once decorated the building’s doorways also in the earlier phase of the temple.

² If we use figures of 500 pounds (227 kg) of meat from a 1,000-pound (454 kg) bull and 40 pounds (18 kg) of meat from an 80-pound (36 kg) ram (small animals by modern standards) (see Lyman 1979, table 4), a generous portion of one pound (half a kilo) of meat per person would have fed 700 people.

³ Sheep and goat bones are in most cases indistinguishable, so these animals are considered as a single group.

⁴ The other bones from this courtyard give us an intriguing hint at sacrificial practices not mentioned in the text. Almost all of the deer and gazelle bones found in the neighborhood come from the temple courtyard (Marom, forthcoming). Though almost exclusively domesticated animals are mentioned in contemporary texts concerning sacrifice, at two other sacrificial sites in Iron Age Israel, the bones of wild game animals have been found alongside those of domesticates (Borowski 2002, p. 412).

6. THE KATUMUWA STELE IN THE CONTEXT OF ROYAL MORTUARY CULT AT SAM'AL

HERBERT NIEHR

The excavations at Zincirli (Sam'al) and its surrounding region, which began in 1888, brought to light some evidence of the practice of royal mortuary cult during the ninth and eighth centuries BC. Thus, this part of life in the ancient kingdom of Sam'al has become well known to historians and archaeologists. The written and iconographic sources of this royal mortuary cult originate mainly from the three sites of Ördekburnu, the acropolis of Zincirli, and Gercin.

In contrast, the Katumuwa Stele was neither found on the acropolis of Zincirli nor in the royal necropolis of Gercin, but in the lower city of Zincirli (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*, this volume). This findspot at first glance obscures the stele's relationship to the royal mortuary cult. Nevertheless, its connection to said cult is closer than expected.

THE EVIDENCE FOR MORTUARY CULT FOR THE FIRST KINGS OF SAM'AL (NINTH CENTURY BC)

The oldest evidence that a royal mortuary cult was practiced in Sam'al is given by the statue of a deceased king which was erected outside the southeastern wall of Palace J on the acropolis of Zincirli (i.e., not within the area of the royal tombs). This royal statue was standing on a base formed by two lions which were subdued by a hero depicted in a kneeling run (fig. 6.1; see von Luschan and Jacoby 1911, pp. 362–69). As such bases were typically used as pedestals for statues of deities, the divine status of the deceased king can be assumed. This impression is reinforced by the cuplike holes that were embedded in the heads of the lions and the hero and served to receive libations. The statue is dated stylistically to the time before King Kulamuwa of Sam'al (ca. 840/835–815/810 BC), that is, in the first half of the



FIGURE 6.1. Statue of a ruler from Zincirli, H. (including pedestal) 3.22 m, Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, inv. 7768 (Bonatz 2000, pl. 2:A 6) (courtesy of Dominik Bonatz)

ninth century BC (Bonatz 2000, pp. 25–26; Niehr 2006, pp. 114–15; Gilibert 2011, pp. 77–79). Thus one of Kulamuwa's predecessors is represented here, perhaps even the founder of the dynasty, King Gabbār (Niehr 2006, p. 114 with n. 17).

A new epigraphic analysis of the sepulchral stele of Ördekburnu (Lemaire and Sass 2013) indicates that an early royal necropolis existed south of Zincirli before the period of King Panamuwa I (ca. 790–750 BC). The sacrificial instructions in the stele's inscription specify in line 9: "... and in the royal necropolis two sheep for me." The speaker is a princess or a queen of whose name only the element "Piya" remains. The exact findspot of the Ördekburnu stele is possibly the mound of Karapınar Mezarlık near Ördekburnu. This mound might have been the necropolis since the time of King Ḥayyān (see table 2.1), whose accession to the throne marked a dynastic change.

MORTUARY CULT FOR THE EIGHTH-CENTURY BC KINGS OF SAM'AL

Other than an order from the storm-god Hadad, the reason that King Panamuwa I built a new necropolis at Gercin (KAI 214)¹ only several decades later is unknown. This site, located 7 kilometers northeast of Zincirli, is a bedrock hill that clearly dominates the surrounding landscape. The site was dominated by the huge statue of the highest god of Sam'al, Hadad (fig. 6.2). At Gercin and nearby Tahtalı Pınarı, the remains of five statues were found, some of which contained inscriptions. The inscriptions, but also the statues themselves, clearly refer to the practice of the royal ancestor cult and the existence of a necropolis at Gercin (Niehr 1994, pp. 116–19; 2001; 2006). However, Gercin has not yet been explored archaeologically; there were only two small campaigns in June 1888 and February 1890 to inspect and recover the statues, and further information on this site is only provided by a map drawn by Robert Koldewey in February 1890 (Wartke 2005, p. 25). So any statements made about royal funerals and ancestor worship at Gercin are based only on archaeological stray finds (the statues) and epigraphical evidence.

King Panamuwa I describes his building activities in his inscription on the Hadad statue, found at Gercin:

1) I am Panamuwa, son of Qarli, king of Yādiya, who has raised this statue for Hadad at my tomb.

...

14) And I [erec]ted this statue of Hadad and the necropolis of Panamuwa, son of Qarli,

15) king of Yādiya, next to the statue (in) the cham[ber]. (KAI 214)

The above-mentioned statue of the storm-god Hadad was therefore not placed directly in the grave chamber, but probably at a central cult place on the hilltop of Gercin. It implies that in the grave chamber, which has not yet been identified due to lack of excavations, there was a second statue, this one of the king himself, Panamuwa I (Niehr 2001). The Hadad statue and grave chamber presented an architectural and ritualistic ensemble for the king's funeral and the royal mortuary cult. This ensemble is also indicated by the inscription on the Hadad statue, which speaks of the cult of the deceased king (Niehr 1994, 2001).

It is within this context that these instructions with regard to the cult should be considered. To the descendant of Panamuwa I who would follow him on the throne, the request to conduct royal ancestor worship is spoken thus:

...

15) Whosoever from my sons should grasp the [scep]ter and sit on my throne and maintain power and do sacrifice,

16) to this Hadad ...

17) let him then say: "[May] the [spi]rit (*nbš*) of Panamuwa [eat] with thee, and may the spirit (*nbš*) of Panamuwa dri[nk] with thee." Let him keep remembering the spirit (*nbš*) of Panamuwa with

18) [Had]ad. (KAI 214)

Thus the person conducting the sacrifice calls the late King Panamuwa I to mind before Hadad to invite the deceased to take part in the sacrifices. The Aramaic interpretation of *nbš/npš* has to be emphasized: *nbš pnmw* is understood as the spirit of Panamuwa who is present in the royal statue. This is the oldest evidence for the Aramaic use of *nbš/npš* in terms of "spirit of the dead." As part of the royal ancestor cult, Hadad, as the supreme god of the pantheon of Sam'al, is asked to assign the rations of the sacrifice.

6. THE KATUMUWA STELE IN THE CONTEXT OF ROYAL MORTUARY CULT AT SAM'AL

Therefore, the sacrifice is made to Hadad, who invites the *nbš* (“spirit”) of Panamuwa to partake in the celebration. This seems to be an echo of the earlier Hittite royal ancestor cult, in which images of the

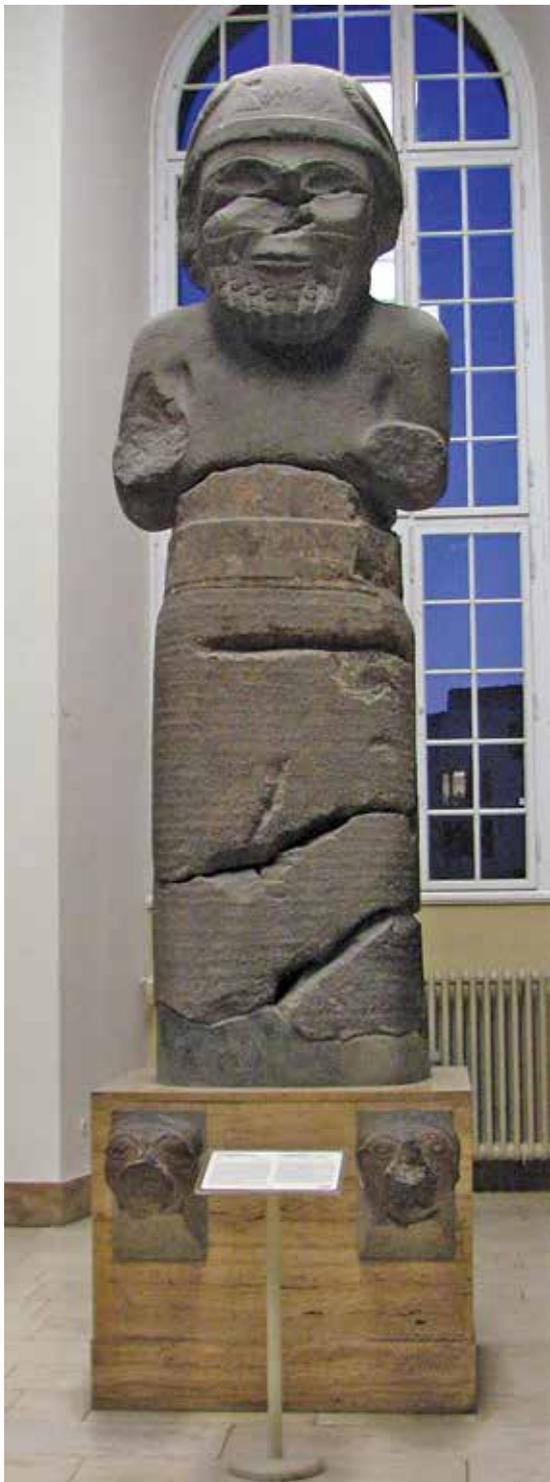


FIGURE 6.2. Statue of the storm-god Hadad bearing the memorial inscription of King Panamuwa I of Sam'al, found at Gercin, H: 2.85 m. Berlin, Vorderasiatisches Museum, inv. VA 2882 (photograph by Virginia R. Herrmann)

deceased king were placed in temples, including the temple of the weather-god.

The statue erected by the last king of Sam'al, Barrākib, for his deceased father Panamuwa II (see Catalog No. 12) had likely also originally been at Gercin, or was being brought from there to Zincirli but was left halfway en route at the spring of Tahtalı Pınarı. The relevant text states:

- 16) ... And my father Panamuwa died while following his lord Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, in the campaigns. Even [his lord, Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, wept for him],
- 17) and his brother kings wept for him, and the whole camp of his lord, the king of Assyria, wept for him. His lord, the king of Assyria, took ...
- 18) [And he made] his spirit [eat and drink]. And he set up an image for him by the way, and brought my father across from Damascus to this place. In my days ...
- 19) all his house we[pt] for him. (KAI 215)

Thus, King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria took care of the spirit of the deceased, which was important because Panamuwa had died abroad, and the funeral in the royal tomb could not take place immediately. In light of the newly found Katumuwa inscription from Zincirli, it is clear that the construction of an image by Tiglath-pileser was intended to house the spirit, that is, the *nbš*, of the dead king. The inscription on this statue also prescribes some rules for the cult of the deceased king. However, this text is too fragmentary to deduce the precise rituals for the royal funerary cult. It can be seen at most as a royal offering rite.

CONNECTIONS OF THE KATUMUWA STELE TO THE ROYAL MORTUARY CULT

Continuing from this short overview of the royal mortuary cult of Sam'al to the stele of Katumuwa, some aspects of the new stele show connections to the royal mortuary cult of Sam'al, based on philological aspects and literary background.

The inscription's first line, "I am Katumuwa, servant of Panamuwa," corresponds to King Barrākib's introduction, "I am Barrākib, ... vassal ("servant") of Tiglath-pileser" (KAI 216, line 1). Thus, Katumuwa

introduces himself as vassal of the king of Sam'al and therefore must be part of a dynasty from the region around Sam'al (Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 41; Masson 2010, p. 51). Katumuwa's inscription also shows clear parallels to the inscription of King Panamuwa I of Sam'al (KAI 214). Both inscriptions begin with the building of a necropolis or memorial site during the lifetime of the author and then address what offerings should be given to the dead (Lemaire 2012).

The maintenance of the deceased's spirit belongs in the area of religious history and plays a large role in Katumuwa's inscription, as well as the memorial inscriptions of kings Panamuwa I (KAI 214) and Panamuwa II (KAI 215). The spirit lodges itself in a statue (KAI 214), an image (KAI 215), or, in the case of Katumuwa, in a stele (line 5). The burial is not critical. It is not mentioned in these inscriptions and takes place elsewhere. What is crucial is the continued existence and provisioning of the spirit alongside the gods. Hadad is mentioned in the royal inscriptions (KAI 214, lines 1.15–19, 21–24; cf. KAI 215, lines 22–23), and other manifestations of this god are found in the Katumuwa inscription (lines 3–5). There one can find a Hadad QRPDL, which either refers to a (so far unknown) place-name or means “Hadad the Companion” (Yakubovich 2010b, pp. 396–97), a “Hadad of the Vineyards,” the god Nikarawas (Masson 2010, p. 53), and the goddess Kubaba, who also appears in conjunction with the god Rakib'el in the inscription from Ördekburnu (Lemaire and Sass 2013, p. 124).

Sacrifices to the gods and the spirits of the dead include sheep in both the inscription from Ördekburnu (Lemaire and Sass 2013, p. 124) and in the inscription of Panamuwa I (KAI 214, line 18; Lemaire 2012, p. 132), and five rams (in addition to a bull) in Katumuwa's inscription (lines 3–5). In all cases, the deities and the deceased are presented with offerings during the same rite. The responsibility for conducting this

cult always falls to the son as the legal successor of the deceased (KAI 214, lines 15.20–21, 24–25; KAI 215, line 19). A son or other legal successor is also named in the inscription of Katumuwa (lines 6–7).

The signs from the inscription and from comparison with other religious documents pointing to the royal status of Katumuwa are supplemented with further iconographic and archaeological evidence. The depiction of Katumuwa resembles in several respects that of King Barrākib on his reliefs from the Hilani IV building on the city's acropolis. Similarities can be seen in the representation of the throne and footstool, the position of the arm and hand, and in the garments and headdress (Struble and Herrmann 2009, pp. 16–29; Gilibert 2011, p. 95). Additionally, the solar deity rounding off the image on the top parallels the solar deity depicted on the sepulchral stele of a princess found on the acropolis of Sam'al (fig. 3.1; von Luschan and Jacoby 1911, pp. 325–28).

The archaeological findspot of the stele is illuminating, as the site where the stele was erected was an intra-urban sanctuary (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*, this volume). This sanctuary may be compared to several other sites, for example the “sanctuaire aux rhytons” in Ugarit, the “cult room” in Guzana (Tell Halaf), and the *hilani*-building in Carchemish (Niehr 2006, pp. 129–32; Struble and Herrmann 2009, pp. 36–39). These are all examples of a sanctuary located at the city center where the spirits of the royal dead, among others, were venerated.

All these elements demonstrate the royal status of Katumuwa and the integration of the Katumuwa Stele into the royal mortuary cult of Sam'al.

NOTE

¹ The abbreviation KAI is used to refer to texts in Donner and Röllig, 5th edition, 2002.

II

FEASTS FOR THE DEAD
IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

7. RELIGIOUS, COMMUNAL, AND POLITICAL FEASTING IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

MARIAN H. FELDMAN

*Then in the shrine Nippur
Enki made a banquet for his father Enlil.
He sat An in the lofty place,
He placed Enlil next to An.
He sat Nintu at the long side (of the table).
He sat the Anunna at their places.
Waiters gave them beer to drink, sweetened the fine beer,
Heaped up the trays (with food)
Over the service they made Urash hold a dispute.*

— from Enki's Journey to Nippur¹

Katumuwa's stele, showing the deceased with raised bowl and table laden with foodstuffs, makes explicit the centrality of feasting in funerary rites of the early first-millennium BC Middle East. Yet feasting, as a central social experience, extends well beyond the grave to the world of the living and the realm of the divine. Indeed, one reason feasting may have played such a critical role in a funerary context has to do with its importance during life — in both the religious and political realms. Feasting marked the positive outcome of an event, whether that event was a successful hunt, battle, building activity, or interaction with the divine.

Food and drink are at the base of subsistence and existence, and as such, partaking of them has always held significance in social activities. Feasting describes ceremonial or ritual instances of the sharing and consuming of food and drink, and entails groups of people coming together for this purpose on special occasions. It serves two important functions that may appear contradictory, but are in fact equally essential to social workings: it brings people together to form common social bonds, while at the same time organizing those people in relation to one another to create hierarchies of privilege, inclusion, and exclusion. Thus in almost all societies, examples of feasting of a religious, communal, and political nature can be

found. In the ancient Middle East, these three elements of society were closely intertwined and largely dependent on one another.²

The connection between the gods' favor and the agricultural abundance that provided both subsistence and wealth was a key leitmotif in the ancient Middle East, a geographical expanse that included the Fertile Crescent where the earliest domestication of animals and plants occurred in the tenth through sixth millennia BC. The ancient Middle East was also home to the surplus-rich lands of southern Mesopotamia, where crops and wool provided the basis for great wealth in the fourth and third millennia BC.

One of the earliest complex representations from Mesopotamia, the so-called Uruk Vase from the Eanna temple precinct of the goddess Inanna at Uruk (ca. 3200 BC), explicitly details this relationship (fig. 7.1). In the structured registers of the carved relief, the divine and human authorities at the top meet on either side of a brimming container of foodstuffs, further iterations of which are being carried in the middle register by men who are marked as ritually special by their nudity and clean-shaven heads and faces. This agricultural abundance is specified in the lower registers in which pairs of rams and ewes, as well as barley and flax, are depicted. The imagery itself is carved around the exterior of a tall vessel that could have contained foodstuffs for a cultic feast held within the Eanna precinct.

A third-millennium BC door plaque from the temple of the moon-god Sîn at Khafajah in the Diyala River region of central Mesopotamia displays the use of such agricultural abundance in ritual feasts (Catalog No. 21). The square-shaped, carved stone plaque (20 × 20 cm) is divided into three registers with a hole in the center for affixing it to the wall by means of a peg. In the upper register, a female sits to the left facing a seated male on the right; both of them raise a cup in one hand and hold something vegetal — maybe

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a cluster of dates — in the other hand, while smaller figures wait on them. The female sits higher than the male, with her feet raised on a footstool, indicating her elevated position, perhaps as a high priestess. The middle register details the provisioning of the banquet, with a large vat of what is probably beer carried by two men, followed by more attendants carrying an animal for slaughter and containers of food held atop their heads. In the lower (incomplete) register, music-making and dancing take place, with a harpist and singer preserved on the left side.

Set into the wall as part of an elaborate door-securing mechanism, the plaque is one of a well-known type found in Early Dynastic temples (in the Diyala River region, at Mari, and at Nippur) that share the same basic imagery, reinforcing the widespread association between the temple and feasting activities. Another of these wall plaques from the Diyala region (Agrab; OIM A18073) extends the association

to include military celebrations. While the top two registers exhibit similar banqueting and provisioning scenes, the bottom register shows a man in a chariot pulled by striding onagers (*Equus hemionus*, smaller members of the horse family). Similarly, the association of feasting with military victory finds expression during this period on the “Standard of Ur” (ca. 2600 BC), an irregularly shaped box of uncertain function found near the body of a sacrificed man in one of the royal tombs at the southern Mesopotamian site of Ur. The item preserves an inlay composition arranged in three registers on each of the two long sides of the box (fig. 7.2). On one side, a banquet is depicted in the top register, presided over by a seated male figure whose head breaks through the upper line of the register, signaling his status as greater than that of his companions seated facing him. Musicians accompany the meal, while in the lower two registers a procession of figures brings the various foodstuffs for its preparation. The connection with warfare is made by means of the panel on the other side, in which a taller male figure likewise dominates the upper register, as scenes of battle, including chariots drawn by galloping equids, fallen bodies, and captured enemies, unfold in the registers below.



FIGURE 7.1. Uruk Vase (plaster copy). Uruk, Eanna precinct, Late Uruk period, ca. 3200 BC, H: ca. 100 cm. Iraq Museum, Baghdad, inv. 19606 (bpk, Berlin / Art Resource, NY / © Artres)



FIGURE 7.2. Standard of Ur, banquet scene, Ur, Royal Cemetery, grave PG 779, Early Dynastic III period, ca. 2600 BC, 21.6 x 49.5 cm. British Museum, London, inv. ME 121201 (© Trustees of the British Museum)

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The concentration of banquet imagery during the Early Dynastic period (ca. 2900–2350 BC) — as already seen in the door plaques and the Standard of Ur, but also depicted on other inlaid items and numerous cylinder seals — suggests that the act of feasting held an especially key place in the cultural imagination of the time; while feasting occurs in almost every time and locale, that it should be so celebrated in figural depictions is less common. Susan Pollock (2007), in evaluating the rationale that might have compelled hundreds of young people to go willingly to their deaths at the time of the burial of high-ranking individuals, as found in the mass burials at the Royal Cemetery of Ur, argues that feasting played a particularly important role in the establishment of hereditary kingship during the Early Dynastic period. As a bridge between the mundane activities of living and the spectacular rites of burial, feasting and its associated etiquette

and social norms prepared subjects to participate in the massive displays of disposable wealth — including human lives — with which the great households of Ur competed with one another for status over a period of about one hundred years. Once the notion of a single, dynastic succession was established and accepted, the need for such socially impressive displays abated; after this, not only do we find no more human sacrifice in Mesopotamia, but representations of banquets decrease dramatically in number, though we know from textual sources that such feasting still occurred.

In areas to the west of Mesopotamia, such as Syria-Palestine, we also see the close relationship between feasting, the divine world, and earthly achievements, in addition to a strong association with funerary activities. In the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000–1600 BC) at Ebla, near Aleppo in western Syria,



FIGURE 7.3. Banquet scene with seated female and male on the long side of a basin. Limestone, Ebla, Temple D, Middle Bronze Age, 17th c. BC. National Museum, Aleppo, TM.65.D.236 (Erich Lessing, Art Resource, NY)

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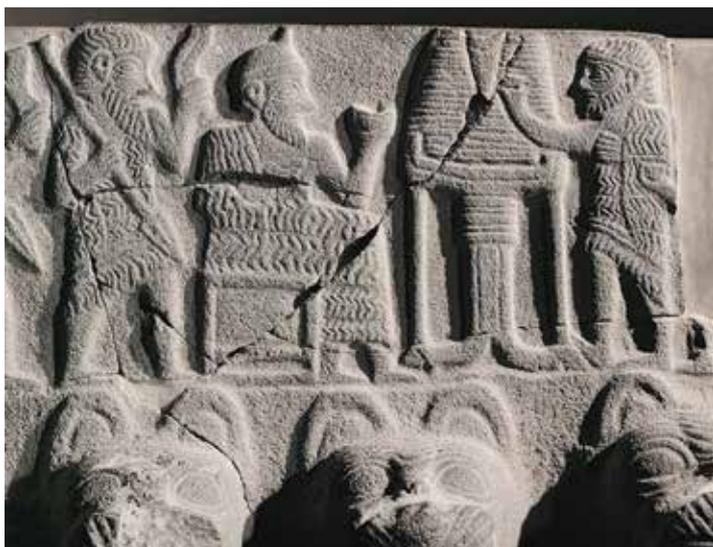


FIGURE 7.4. Banquet scene with seated male on long side of basin. Basalt, Ebla, Temple B1, Middle Bronze Age, 17th c. BC. National Museum, Damascus, S 7372 (Erich Lessing, Art Resource, NY)

a special, bull-footed table heavily laden with food-stuffs is presented centrally in carved relief on two cultic stone basins (figs. 7.3 and 7.4). On one basin, a female and a male figure face each other across the table, while on the other, a single male figure sits as attendants stand before him. The basins were located in temples associated with pits in which large quantities of feasting and votive materials had been deposited. The basins themselves may thus have served a role as containers during feasts, while their imagery ornamented the very spaces in which such activities occurred (Petty 2013).

From the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1600–1200 BC) comes a group of carved ivory furniture elements from a palace at Megiddo, farther to the south. Catalog No. 24 depicts a banquet in which a male figure holds aloft a large bowl in one hand and a flower in the other. Across from a large, laden table and a smaller stand holding a vessel for liquids, several lesser personages face him and likewise hold bowls before their faces. This ivory piece belongs with at least three others preserved among the ivories from Megiddo that, as a group, would have adorned items of furniture. One of them shows men walking toward the left carrying waterfowl, presumably for slaughter and consumption. The object of their procession is only very poorly preserved, but may be a seated individual. The other two ivory furniture pieces depict battle scenes instead of banquets. On one, chariots

rush toward the right as collapsing enemies fall beneath the horses' hooves. On the other, a stately procession of soldiers and chariots may represent either the beginning or the end of a military campaign. These slats displaying military and feasting activities together may have decorated seats like the very ones depicted on Catalog No. 24 itself, perhaps along the stretchers between the legs.

The bowls shown on the Megiddo ivory specimen find their counterpart in actual drinking vessels called in scholarship by the Greek word *phiale*, many made of precious metals, preserved from the Late Bronze Age and especially abundantly from the first part of the first millennium BC. Such bowls, around 15 to 20 centimeters in diameter (perfectly sized to fit in the palm of a hand) have been excavated at sites around the Middle East and eastern Mediterranean, from Iran to Italy (Catalog No. 6). They are often found in burials and can be associated with funerary feasting, but they were also likely used in ceremonial banquets in life.

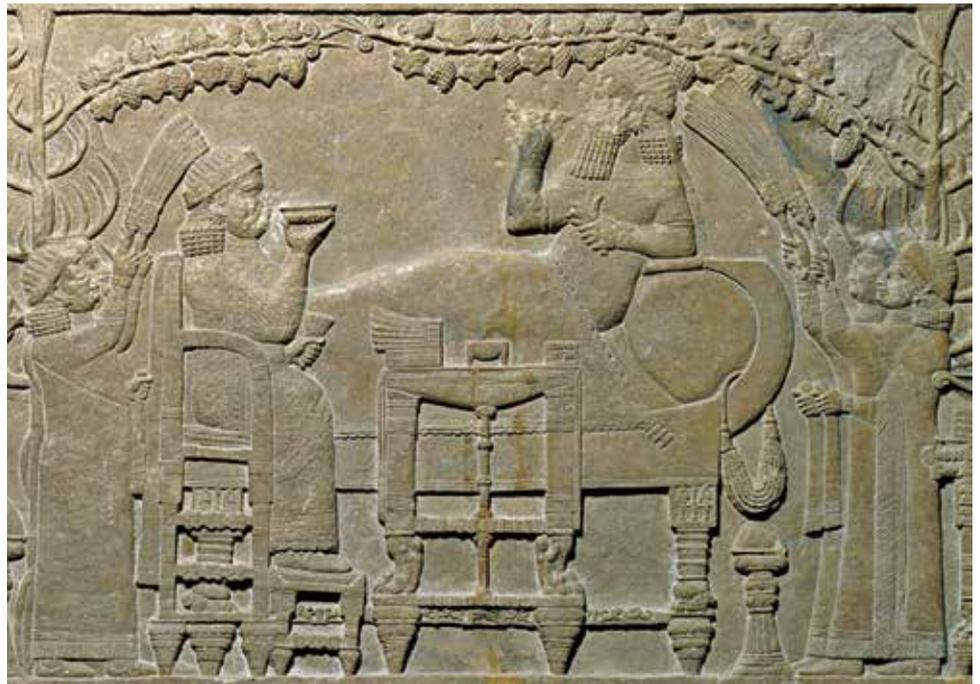
A large hoard of bronze bowls, along with cauldrons, ladles, and other drinking utensils, was found in an eighth/seventh-century BC storeroom of the Northwest Palace at Nimrud in northern Iraq, representing the collected booty of the Assyrian kings' campaigns in the regions to the west. The construction of this palace in the ninth century by Ashurnasirpal II (r. 883–859 BC) was itself celebrated by an enormous banquet for over 69,000 foreign and local guests, which was commemorated in a carved stele erected in a small niche off the main palace courtyard. At Zincirli (ancient Sam'al), Hilani III in the northwest area of the mound, excavated in the late nineteenth century by a German expedition, has been interpreted as a reception building connected in particular with social banqueting conducted for a small elite group under the aegis of the ruler (Gilibert 2011, p. 90). At the back of the building was a small kitchen area and storeroom in which numerous ceramic bowls were stored for use during the ceremonial meals. The archaeological evidence for ceremonial banquets in Hilani III is particularly notable, but it is probable that feasting was also a primary activity in the other so-called *bit hilani* structures that are characteristic of palatial buildings in the north Syrian region during the early first millennium BC.

The practice of reclining on a couch during a banquet, later associated with the *symposia* of ancient

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FIGURE 7.5. Carved wall relief of Ashurbanipal reclining on a couch in a garden with a queen and (right) detail of king and queen. Nineveh, North Palace, Neo-Assyrian, ca. 645 BC, 58 x 140 cm. British Museum, London, inv. AN32865001 (© Trustees of the British Museum)



Greece and the funerary banquets depicted on the walls of Etruscan tombs, is thought to have been a practice adopted in these areas from the Levant and Cyprus. It appears in a unique scene from Assyria: a carved relief from the North Palace at Nineveh shows the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (r. 668–627 BC) reclining on an elaborately decorated couch, holding a bowl aloft in his right hand (fig. 7.5). Opposite him sits an Assyrian queen on a high-backed throne with footstool, one of the few images of an Assyrian royal woman. Her upright seated stance contrasts with

Ashurbanipal's more languid pose. The scene, set in a garden arbor of grape vines, conifers, and date palms, is explicitly associated with military victory, as indicated by the severed head of the defeated Elamite king Teumman hanging in a nearby tree. The type of couch, the reclining pose, and the items on the table before Ashurbanipal point to his rule over lands to his west. The queen herself may also be a trophy of military domination, as several vassal queens from the west are known from the textual sources to have been taken into the Assyrian court.

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Feasting is a complete sensory experience and entails elaborate preparations, from the growing and hunting of the foodstuffs, to the cooking and serving of the meal, as well as the construction and ornamentation of the spaces or structures in which the feast is prepared and consumed. Apart from the representational evidence, what survive are typically the structures in which these activities took place, the utensils employed, and occasionally, residue of a faunal or botanical nature. Lost to the archaeological record are the ephemeral components — the smells, tastes, and textures of the different ingredients. The consumption of alcoholic beverages, such as beer or wine, would have contributed to heightened sensory experiences that would have been further accentuated by the sounds of music (harps, drums, clappers,

singers) and the movement of dancing. Such sensory components are hinted at in the representations surveyed above: the large piles of various foodstuffs, the massive vats of beverages, the presence of musicians with their instruments. When coupled with our imagination, the lively feasts of the ancient Middle East — kingly and divine, as well as social and funerary — spring to life again.

NOTES

¹ Translation by P. Michalowski (1994, p. 34).

² For an overview of banqueting in the ancient Middle East and feasting more generally, see Winter, forthcoming.

8. FEASTS FOR THE DEAD AND ANCESTOR VENERATION IN LEVANTINE TRADITIONS

THEODORE J. LEWIS

THE ACTIVE DEAD IN LEVANTINE TRADITIONS

Though no longer among the living, the dead were thought to be quite “actively alive” in the netherworld. According to various Levantine traditions, they eat, drink, wear customary attire, look upon their children, support and frustrate monarchs, attend funerals, even ride on chariots to banquets held in their honor. They are described as being in control of their faculties, speaking from beyond the grave to bring blessings and curses alike.

At the city of Ugarit in Late Bronze Age Syria, the dead residing in the netherworld are called *rapi'ūma* (*rp'um*), a term with exact etymological counterparts in Phoenician (*rp'm*) and Hebrew (*rəpā'îm*). A funerary liturgy (KTU 1.161, in *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit* with the translation reading “The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit,” the standard reference collection for the cuneiform texts from that site, abbreviated KTU) (fig. 8.1) invokes the royal *rapi'ūma* (also called *malakūma* “kings”) to appear in the land of the living to take part in a sacrificial ceremony aimed at securing the transition of the recently deceased king to the underworld and the well-being of his heir. The sentiment “The king is dead, long live the king!” is early indeed. Another text (KTU 1.108) describes Rapi'u, the head of these *rapi'ūma*, as bearing the title *malku 'ālamī* “king of eternity,” a title well known among Jews to the present day as *melek ha'ōlām*. Here Rapi'u is engaged in a drinking rite filled with music and feasting that ends with a request for his paternal care and power (along with that of “the *rapi'ūma* of the netherworld”) to be in the midst of the city of Ugarit. Yet other texts (KTU 1.20–22) invite the *rapi'ūma* to dine at a banquet of the high god 'Ilu. Thus they hastily hitch their stallions and set out galloping for three days to reach the feast 'Ilu has set just for them. As one can easily see,

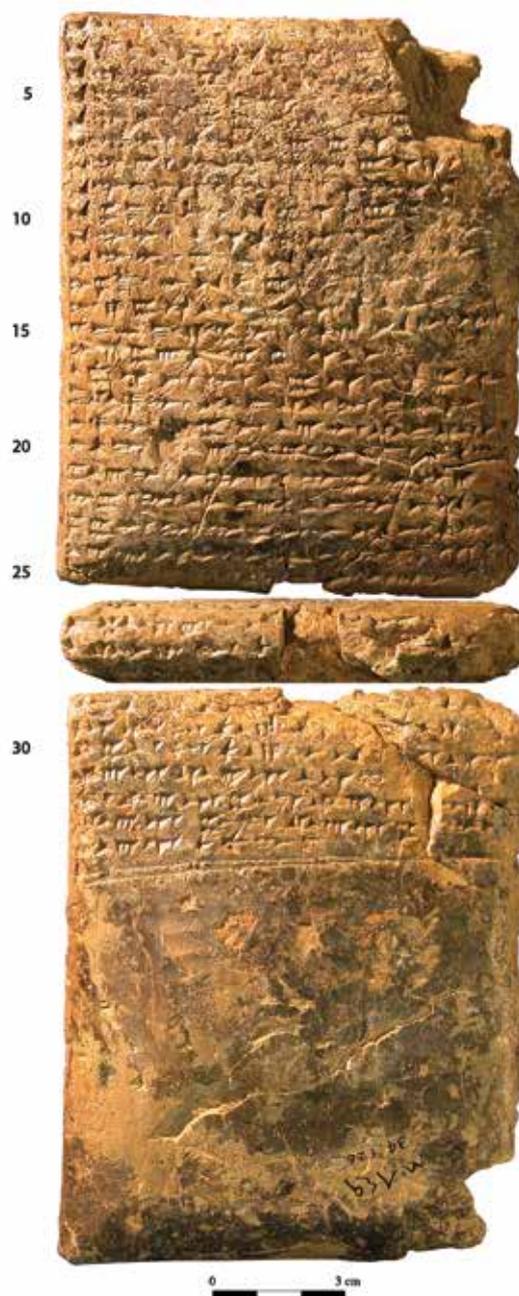


FIGURE 8.1. A funerary liturgy (KTU 1.161 = RS 34.126) from Late Bronze Age Ugarit that describes the invocation of the royal dead known as *rapi'ūma* and *malakūma* (image courtesy of Project PhoTÉO, Mission de Ras Shamra)

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here there is no notion that the dead are removed from the land of the living or that they are quietly at rest as certain biblical authors would argue (cf. Job 3:13–18; Isaiah 14:10, 26:14; Psalm 88:11).

Other examples of the active dead can be gleaned from tomb inscriptions where the dead were thought to speak from beyond the grave. An early seventh-century BC Aramaic inscription from Neirab (south-east of Aleppo) tells of the death of a priest named Si'-gabbar. The priest, shown with cup in hand and seated at a food-laden table (fig. 3.2; so too Katumuwa; cf. Niehr 2010a), talks in the first person about the day he died, how he was still able to use the gift of

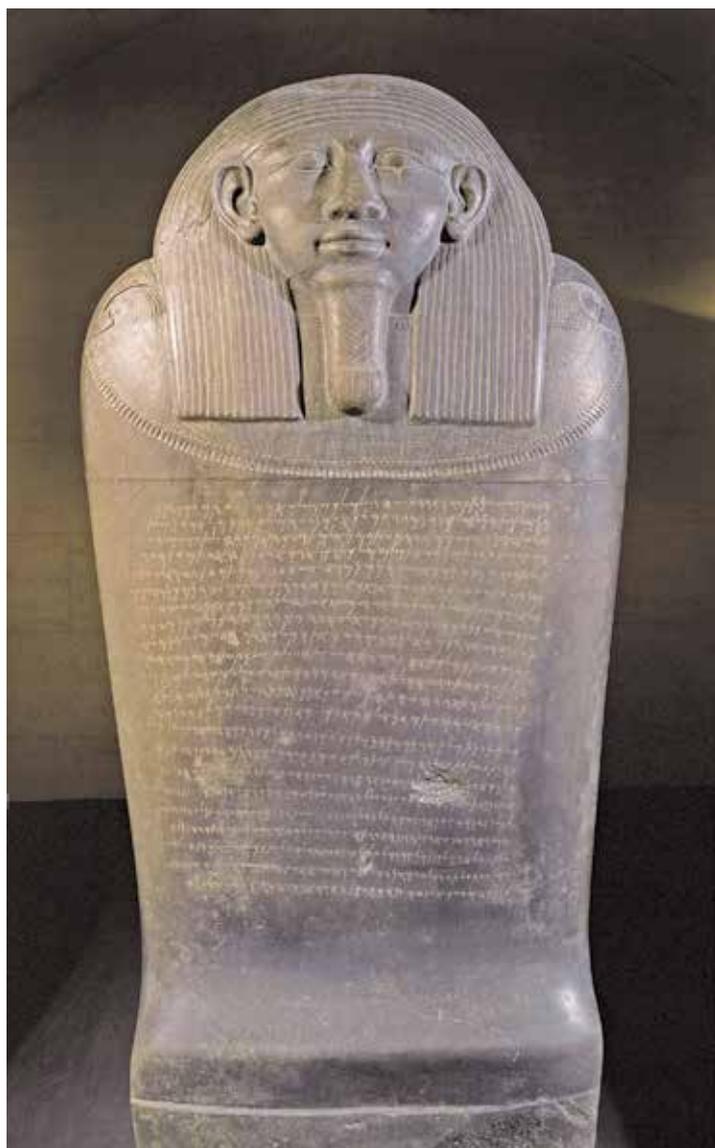


FIGURE 8.2. The sarcophagus of the fifth-century BC Phoenician king Eshmunazor II. Amphibolite, necropolis of Magharat Abloun, Sidon, Lebanon, Louvre AO 4806 (Erich Lessing, Art Resource, NY)

speech, and how he was able to see with his own eyes his distraught children mourning over him. The dead Phoenician king Eshmunazor II (r. ca. 465–451 BC) reflects on his own death from his afterlife perspective: “Surely I am to be pitied. I am snatched away before my time, as a son of a few days I am swept away” (fig. 8.2). The story of the dead Samuel rising from the grave in his customary robe and speaking from beyond the grave at length to denounce King Saul (1 Samuel 28) reveals that some Israelites also held the belief in a recognizable and active afterlife existence. Yet another tale tells of the power of Elisha’s bones that miraculously brought a dead man back to life (2 Kings 13:20–21).

Sociologically, in the Levant we have good evidence that the deceased were thought to remain a part of one’s family in death as they were in life. Late Bronze Age Ugarit gave physical expression to this solidarity by the frequent practice of locating the family tomb immediately beneath one’s house. While Iron Age Israelite culture had differing purity laws (i.e., regarding corpse contamination) that would forbid such a practice, they too expressed familial intimacy with the dead by idioms that described death as being “gathered to one’s people” (*wayyē’āsep ’el-‘ammāyw*, e.g., Genesis 25:8, 17; 35:29; 49:29, 33; Numbers 20:24, 26; 27:13; 31:2; Deuteronomy 32:50) or “lying down/sleeping with one’s ancestors/fathers” (*šōkēb ’im-’ābōt*, e.g., Genesis 47:30; Deuteronomy 31:16; 2 Samuel 7:12; 1 Kings 1:21; 2 Maccabees 12:39). The Old Aramaic inscription found at Tel Dan contains the same phraseology (“My father lay down, going to his [ancestors/fathers] *yškb ’aby yhk ’l [’bht]h*).

INTERACTING WITH THE DEAD

Because the dead were thought to be “actively alive,” their survivors could interact with them — through rituals of commemoration and feasting should the dead be viewed as beneficent, and via apotropaia (protective magic) should they be perceived as malevolent. The locale of such interactions could vary, from the tomb itself to a marker (e.g., stele) thought in some way to embody the essence of the deceased. As noted above, at Late Bronze Age Ugarit, the beneficent royal dead could be invoked to legitimize a new king as he took the reins of power, whereas the Iron Age biblical text about the dead Samuel coming back

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from the grave delegitimizes the reign of King Saul.

Fear is well attested, especially in Phoenician and Hebrew mortuary inscriptions that mention how the dead fear that their tombs might be desecrated. Some tomb inscriptions vehemently curse would-be tomb violators, while others discourage the practice by noting that their tomb contains no silver, gold, or bronze. Behind such words is the fear that one's "resting place" (*miškāb*) would be disturbed and thereby affect one's afterlife existence. As for fear of the dead among the living, apart from the ghost of Samuel terrifying King Saul (1 Samuel 28:20–21), we do not have explicit Levantine texts telling of ghosts haunting the living. Yet the presence of amulets in the archaeological record suggests such a reality; demons came in all varieties, including those of a chthonic (underworld) nature. Conversely, that amulets are also found among the grave goods placed with the deceased suggests that they had their own concerns about what ills they might face in the netherworld.

COMMUNING WITH THE DEAD VIA COMMEMORATION AND RITUAL MEALS

A Ugaritic tale of a legendary patriarch named Dani'ilu (KTU 1.17–19) tells of how he is blessed with a long-desired son. This son is portrayed ideally with regard to his filial piety, a piety that includes the responsibility of setting up a *skn ʿilʿib*, that is, "a stele of his divine ancestor"¹ in a sanctuary and eating his father's portion (either in his stead or along with him) in the temples of the gods ʿIlu and Baʿlu. If the Ugaritic word *skn* (like its Akkadian cognate *sikkānu*) represents a stele in which a deity could dwell,² then like the Katumuwa Stele, the *skn ʿilʿib* might house the essence of his deceased father who was accorded upon death some type of divine status.³

Two inscribed steles (fig. 8.3: KTU 6.13 and 6.14) mentioning mortuary offerings to the god Dagan (as well as a bull for an accompanying feast) have been preserved at Ugarit near one of the temples on the acropolis.⁴ The two individuals whose names are

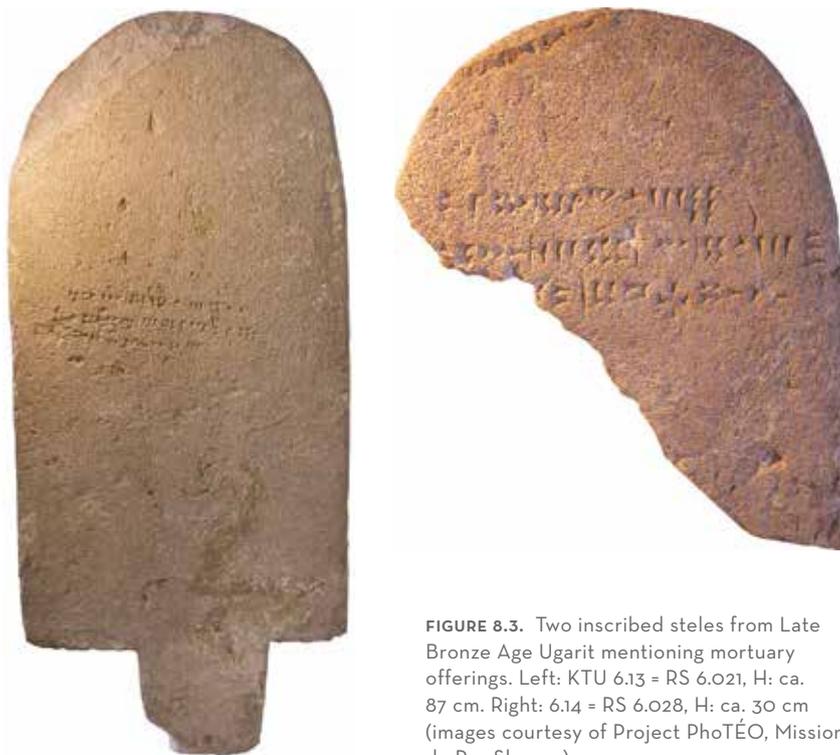


FIGURE 8.3. Two inscribed steles from Late Bronze Age Ugarit mentioning mortuary offerings. Left: KTU 6.13 = RS 6.021, H: ca. 87 cm. Right: 6.14 = RS 6.028, H: ca. 30 cm (images courtesy of Project PhoTÉO, Mission de Ras Shamra)

inscribed as the dedicators could be commemorating their unnamed ancestral dead (Pardee 2002, p. 123; Lange 2012, p. 168), who may have shared in the offerings alongside the deity. Alternatively, these individuals could, like Katumuwa, be engaging in actions of "self-memorialization" whereby they themselves (once deceased and via the presence of their "soul" in the stele) would share in a meal with the god Dagan and a mortuary banquet with their descendants (Niehr 2012).

Our oldest extant Phoenician sarcophagus (fig. 8.4; dating to ca. 1000 BC) depicts on the top of its lid "the earliest representation of a royal father and son in Western Asia" (Porada 1973, p. 359). The inscription on the side of the lid likewise mentions that this is the sarcophagus that Ittobaʿl, the son, made for Ahiram, his father, "when he placed him in eternity (*ʿlm*)."⁵ Funerary scenes are in full view with female mourners on both ends of the coffin and a mortuary banquet scene on the main side. Here the king sits holding a drooping lotus flower signifying his death. Nonetheless, his right hand holds a raised bowl, and a table amply laden with food is set before him. Seven men are in procession leading up to the table, one holding an angled fly-whisk, two bearing bowls, and

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four with upraised hands. The back of the sarcophagus includes another procession, this one depicting attendants bearing provisions (two women with baskets on their heads, two men bearing jars on their shoulders, and a man leading an animal) and three more men with upraised arms. (For analysis of the iconography, see Porada 1973; Ziffer 2005, pp. 154–58; Sass 2005, pp. 75–82).

Moving down to the eighth century BC and to the site of Gercin, which neighbors the site of Zincirli, we come across an inscription describing a funerary meal of King Panamuwa I (r. ca. 790–750 BC). This inscription (carved on a 3-meter-high statue of the god Hadad; fig. 6.2) predates the Katumuwa Stele by a generation (Katumuwa was a servant of King Panamuwa II, who reigned ca. 743/740–733/732 BC). With language that is strikingly similar to that found in the Katumuwa inscription, we read of the king’s concern about his afterlife in which his heir is to play a critical

role. His sons who will come to sit on his throne are to sacrifice to “this (statue of) Hadad” and invoke the name of the deceased King Panamuwa, while praying the following: “May the ‘[so]ul’ (*nbš*) of Panamuwa [eat] with you [i.e., Hadad], and may the ‘soul’ (*nbš*) of Panamuwa drink with you [i.e., Hadad].”⁵ Providing for the afterlife feeding of one’s ancestor so that he could dine with his god was of such dire concern that King Panamuwa went on to inscribe on this stele a lengthy, wrath-filled cursing of any of his future heirs who do not carry out this combined ritual of sacrifice and invocation.

The biblical world knows about commemorative steles and funeral meals too, yet our data are more opaque. During his lifetime, David’s son Absalom engages in an act of “self-memorialization” by erecting a pillar for himself while he, like Katumuwa, is still alive. Yet, unlike Katumuwa, his stated rationale is much sadder: “I have no son to invoke my name” (2



FIGURE 8.4. The sarcophagus of the Phoenician king Ahiiram depicting an elaborate funerary scene. Limestone, Byblos, ca. 1000 BC, National Museum of Beirut (American Colony (Jerusalem) / Wikimedia Commons)

8. FEASTS FOR THE DEAD AND ANCESTOR VENERATION IN LEVANTINE TRADITIONS

Samuel 18:18). Clearly then such pillars (also called standing stones; Hebrew *maṣṣēbôt*) could mark the deceased's presence and presumably sacred space where the type of cult we find detailed in the Katumuwa inscription might occur. Biblical texts (though mostly pejorative) also mention ancestral statuettes, known as *tērāpîm*, that were used as divinatory devices for consulting the souls of the dead (see Deuteronomy 18:11; 2 Kings 23:24; Ezekiel 21:26; Lewis 1999). One of the words for such souls refers to them as “knowing ones” (*yiddē'ōnî* from the root *ʿydy* “to know”), reflecting the notion that the dead have a type of knowledge unavailable to the living, a knowledge that could be accessed for one's benefit. Such was certainly the intent of King Saul when he sought out the necromancer at En-dor (1 Samuel 28). Though Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) would assert that “the dead know nothing” (Qohelet 9:5), several laws warning against conjuring and consulting one's dead ancestors (Deuteronomy 18:10–11; Leviticus 19:26–32; 20:6, 27) show that necromantic practices must have had some popularity.

Mention is made of funerary feasts (e.g., 2 Samuel 3:35; Jeremiah 16:5–8; Ezekiel 24:17) where people certainly mourned the dead especially with drinking, yet there is no *explicit* mention of a ritual banquet with the dead or the presentation of ongoing food offerings to one's ancestors. This is not to say that such was not practiced, just that we have no clear evidence of such. 1 Samuel 20:6 mentions how David felt compelled to attend “a yearly sacrifice for the entire family clan,” a gathering that several scholars argue to be a banquet on behalf of and with the ancestral dead (see van der Toorn 1996, pp. 211–18). Prophetic polemics such as that found in Isaiah 57:6 and 65:3–5 strongly hint at the practice: “With the dead of the valley is your portion ... even to them you have poured libations and brought offerings”; “a people (provoking God) who sit in tombs and spend the night in secret places [probably for necromantic purposes]; who eat the flesh of swine [perhaps in a ritual meal with the dead], and in their vessels is the broth of a desecrated sacrifice” (see Albertz and Schmitt 2012, pp. 457–59; Blenkinsopp 2003, pp. 157–63, 271–72). Liturgical texts speak against “offerings to the dead” (Deuteronomy 26:14; cf. Psalm 106:28; Sirach 30:18; Letter of Jeremiah 27) from which one can posit an occasional practice. The attestation of offerings in the Iron Age archaeological record might suggest as

much, especially as the deceased transitioned from the land of the living to the world of the dead (Bloch-Smith 1992a, pp. 218, 220–22; Bloch-Smith 1992b, pp. 105–08, 122–26, 149; Albertz and Schmitt 2012, p. 469; contrast Milgrom 2000, pp. 1772–85; see Catalog Nos. 27–35).

FROM COMMUNING TO VENERATION

Levantine societies held their elders in high esteem while living, especially with regard to the collective wisdom of the elderly (see Deuteronomy 32:7; Job 8:8–10). Parentage was of such importance that it served as a metaphor for how God cared for his firstborn son, Israel (e.g., Exodus 4:22; Psalm 103:13; Hosea 11:1–4), and thus he was due honor and reverence as a father (Malachi 1:6). Taking our cue from our inscriptional data and the expenditure of funerary resources, there is every indication that one's ancestral dead were equally respected and venerated. Honoring one's father and mother (see Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) continued after their death.

The veneration of the dead took various forms, with some adherents according the dead divine status. The Ugaritic, Phoenician, and Israelite dead are at times referred to as *'lm/ʿlōhîm*, vocabulary that designates divinity elsewhere. (For the key biblical example, see *'lōhîm* referring to the dead Samuel conjured from the netherworld in 1 Samuel 28:13; cf. Isaiah 8:19.) Presumably, the status of the dead as “gods” was much lower hierarchically than the status of the primary gods who made up the canonical pantheon. At Ugarit, the *malakūma* appear at the very end of the deity lists, and the *rapi'ūma* are missing altogether (see Pardee 2002, pp. 14–16). In Samuel's case, his designation as an *'lōhîm* seems simply to indicate his preternatural essence, for there is no indication that he was ever a recipient of cult. Nonetheless, that parted ancestors were thought of as “god-like” shows that they were esteemed highly even in death, and certainly venerated by those who held them dear.

ABBREVIATION

KTU Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani und anderen Orten* [The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts

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from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places]. Third enlarged edition. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013.

NOTES

¹ On ʾilʾib (ʾIlu-ʾibi) designating the divine ancestor, see van der Toorn 1993; 1996, pp. 154–68; and Lewis 1989, pp. 56–59; 2008, pp. 69–70). Alternatively, *skn ʾilʾib* could designate “a stele of *his ancestor’s god*.” See Pardee 1996, pp. 279–80, 283 n. 17; and Schmidt 1994, pp. 53–59. ʾIlu-ʾibi regularly receives cult in the ritual texts (indeed, he is listed prominently at the head of deity lists), as does another category of the ancestral dead known as the ʾInāšū-ʾIlīma (“men [who have become] divine”; Pardee 2002, p. 280). Yet our picture is murkier when we look at the two groups of the deceased (the *rapiʾūma* and the *malakūma*) mentioned in the royal funerary liturgy KTU 1.161 noted above. Apart from KTU 1.161,

the *malakūma* have only a single mention of cult (KTU 1.119, line 25ʿ) and, most surprising, there is no mention of cult in the regular ritual texts being offered to the *rapiʾūma*. See Pardee 1996, pp. 283–85; cf. Lange 2012, pp. 162–64.

² Cf. the widespread use of *sikkānu* as an abode of deity; see Schmidt 1994, p. 50; Catalog Nos. 14–17.

³ Cf. the divine determinative on the names of ancestors in KTU 1.113; cf. Pardee 2002, pp. 199–200.

⁴ Usually this temple has been labeled the “Temple of Dagan” due to these steles that were found nearby, yet some scholars make a case for it being the temple of ʾIlu.

⁵ For a convenient translation of the entire text, see Younger 2000b, pp. 156–58. The relevant lines are KAI 214, lines 16–17, 21–22. Though its Aramaic inscription does not mention a “soul” (*nbš*), see once again the iconography of the seventh-century BC Neirab stele pictured above (see Niehr 2010a).

9. DEATH BINDS: ON SOME RITES SURROUNDING DEATH IN ANCIENT ANATOLIA

THEO P. J. VAN DEN HOUT

No funeral without something to eat and drink. At first people whisper, quietly acknowledging each other, but once the reception starts a lively atmosphere often ensues, and family, friends, and acquaintances reconnect. Funerals bind and can have a positive effect on social cohesion, whether in small families or an entire society. This is true now as it was in antiquity.

The evidence for death-related rituals in Anatolia in the days of the Hittite kingdom (ca. 1650–1200 BC) and those of the Neo-Hittite city-states (ca. 1000–700 BC) is rich but uneven. There is, for instance, a sharp contrast between royalty and common people. The archaeological record is abundant enough with several burial sites. Bodies were either cremated or buried without any monuments and with little or no pomp, if judged by the exceedingly sparse grave goods. Earlier burials are unceremoniously pushed aside to make room for newer ones. It may, of course, be that austerity in funeral matters was part of the culture, but the average life expectancy of approximately thirty-five years in these gravesites suggests we are not dealing with the higher social strata. An overall picture emerges of a hard and tough life for most people dominated by a struggle to survive and filled with personal hardship.

The Anatolian elite, on the other hand, not only claimed a more pleasant continuation of life after death, but their whole existence on earth was more shielded and pleasurable. Because of better living conditions, their life expectancy could reach modern standards: kings and queens living into their sixties and seventies are no exception. A thirteenth-century BC Hittite queen may have made it into her nineties, and another from the tenth(?) century even claimed to be a centenarian. Yet no royal tombs or graves have been identified with any certainty.

For royalty, direct contact with the population at large was probably kept limited. As representative of

the sun-god on earth, the Hittite king could not be simply approached. The purity of the royal person was of the utmost importance: the servant accused of leaving a hair in the king's washbasin was subjected to a kind of water ordeal with death as the ultimate punishment if he were found guilty. The king had a staff of eunuchs who may have been the only ones who had direct access to him in his private quarters. They, too, are warned to be very vigilant in their dealings with him:

You, eunuchs, who come in close contact with the king's ritually pure [bod]y: be alert on (your own) ritual purity and if [so]me eunuch has a bad impurity and he nevertheless approaches the king's body..., let that be placed under oath! (KUB 26.12 + KUB 21.42 iv 33–37)

The text leaves the implications of that eventuality to our imagination, and it is not hard to picture them.

DEATH AND HITTITE ROYAL IDEOLOGY

For most of the history of the Hittite kingdom, the king was considered mortal during his lifetime, although he was definitely closest to the divine world of all his subjects (fig. 9.1). It was only at death that he "became a god," as the standard expression went. During his life he was seen as the steward of his lands that were entrusted to him by the gods. If he did well, the country fared well, but the opposite was also true. Any signs of illness presaged potential dangers for the country, be they failed harvests, enemy invasions, an earthquake, or other catastrophes. This explains the care taken of the king and the general nervousness surrounding his person. The greatest threat was obviously the death of a monarch. This was a very vulnerable moment, at which it was feared that the

netherworldly powers would claim him for themselves, as they would any mortal.

THE HITTITE ROYAL FUNERARY RITUAL: INTRODUCTION

In order to reduce any risk to the country and its people and to ensure as smooth as possible a transition to the next ruler, a complex fourteen-day ritual was carried out. The text that we have contains first of all a detailed scenario describing all actions of the participants. Besides this there existed a “script,” with only the lines and prayers to be spoken during the days of the ritual. A third series of tablets consisted of an inventory per day of the objects needed to carry it out in a proper way. These texts were necessary: sometimes a king would reign for more than two decades and there might be little institutional memory of the last time the rite was carried out. Also, there is some evidence that the scenario changed over time: practical and/or ideological considerations may have prompted successive generations to tweak the text and do things differently next time. Finally, the proceedings were logistically complex. Scores of officials and personnel were involved, who all had to be fed, probably over a hundred animals were slaughtered, and innumerable dough products and lots of produce were called for. Having a day-by-day description of all this was simply an organizational necessity.

The two-week period was divided into several parts. First, the body of the deceased was cremated on the first day. The unincinerated bone remains were carefully collected, cleaned with fine oil and wiped down with cloths, and finally deposited on a bed in a mausoleum-like structure called the Stone House. Meanwhile a seated statue was made, which for the rest of the two-week period was treated as if it were the king himself: in the morning he was picked up from the mausoleum, he was given to drink and to eat, and brought back to spend the night there when the day’s rites were over (see Catalog No. 20). The second part, days two through six, were mostly spent bringing offerings to the gods of the netherworld. It was believed that the deceased first went down to the netherworld and that his body needed to be reclaimed before he could ascend to his divine status.

On day seven, the third part began. During this stage, every day was dedicated to an aspect of daily

life that was considered essential for the living and that was somehow embodied in the royal person: animal husbandry (day 8), products of animal husbandry like dairy (day 9), agriculture (day 10; see Catalog No. 20), hunting (day 11), and viticulture (day 12). The purpose of day seven is not clear: its theme is given in the Hittite text as the day “they burn straw.” The text describing this day is poorly preserved and what is left does not help us understand what the straw-burning might have symbolized. But the text mentions “ceremonial clothing” and “fine oil,” two ingredients of a king’s accession rite. It is true that these two elements return later on toward the end of the ritual, but only here do they burn them, which seems to be significant, as we will see below. Was day seven devoted to the institution of kingship, perhaps? Likewise unclear is what happened on day thirteen. It is called “the day of the *lahanzana*-birds.” These

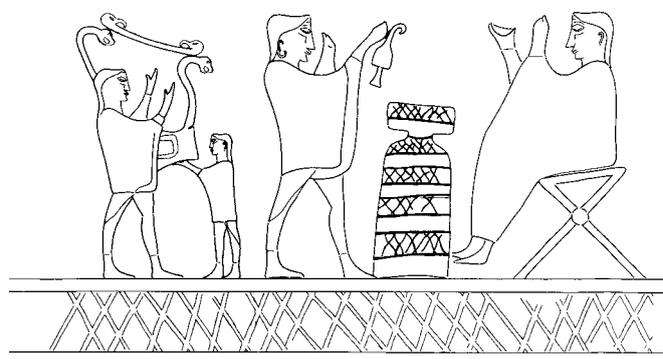


FIGURE 9.1. Relief from Chamber B at Yazılıkaya, the rock sanctuary just outside the Hittite capital Hattusa (modern Boğazköy, Turkey). King Tudhaliya IV (r. 1240–1220 BC), dressed in the regalia of the sun-god, is embraced by his tutelary deity Sharruma. Chamber B is thought by many to have served as a tomb or center of ancestor cult for Tudhaliya IV (photograph by Virginia R. Herrmann)

9. DEATH BINDS: ON SOME RITES SURROUNDING DEATH IN ANCIENT ANATOLIA

have been interpreted as a kind of migrating duck (see Catalog No. 10). Migratory birds were a common phenomenon for people in Anatolia. All kinds of birds crossed its skies twice a year coming from eastern Europe and central Asia on their way to east Africa in the fall and returning later along the same route, heralding the spring. But what was their connection, if any, to kingship? Was it the change of the seasons marked by the birds' coming and going, which was so essential to the country's well-being and thus synonymous with that of the king?

Everyday objects were used that represented each particular day's theme. For the most part, they were ordinary but adorned: for the day devoted to the products of animal husbandry, for instance, there was a decorated wooden churn and a churning stick or dasher plated with silver in three spots. At the end of the day, these objects were stripped of their precious materials and then burned, just like the king's body. Burning was probably seen as the ultimate way to "send" things to the hereafter (cf. Catalog Nos. 53–54).

Finally, the description of the fourteenth and last day has not yet been recognized among the tens of thousands of Hittite texts that have come down to us. It seems likely that this day saw the apotheosis of the king. Seen in this light, days seven and fourteen, if the former was indeed devoted to the institution of kingship, could bookend the funeral rites as expressions of the king's "body politic" (oil and robes as royal insignia) and "body natural" (the statue representing the individual king), respectively. What exactly took place on that last day, however, we can only guess at. Was the effigy also burned? Whatever happened, it was the culmination of the past fourteen days and it was time to return to the status quo between heavenly and netherworld powers embodied by the king that had been uprooted by his death. The bond that had been severed could now be reconnected, and his successor, who had been largely invisible in the past two weeks, could now come out of the shadows and assume his new position.

ACTING AND MUSIC

Entertainment was a familiar element in Hittite religious life. Our texts mention dancing, songs and music, athletic contests like boxing, "stone throwing" (probably a form of shot put), weight lifting,

wrestling, and the enigmatic but intriguing-sounding "cheese fighting." But such forms of entertainment were probably considered inappropriate for a royal funeral. No contests are attested during the two weeks of mourning. There was music in the form of singing to lyres (see Catalog No. 13), probably the large kind that was played by multiple musicians, but music can be easily attuned to sad occasions. Many festival texts mention "*kita*-singers" as crying out, but in the funerary ritual they are explicitly described as holding their tongues. Similarly, the "*ALAN.ZU*-men," probably reciters of some kind, who usually make their presence loudly felt, are here only "whispering" (see below).

Drama was likewise a common part of Hittite cult. Mythological tales were acted out, like some of the so-called "disappearing deity" myths: whenever misfortune struck, this was envisioned as a deity withdrawing from the land out of anger over something. Once it was decided which god was responsible, a rite was carried out with dramatic parts and a varied cast of characters. At religious festivals, tales were told and dramas staged both to entertain and to inform. A performance could explain most effectively what religious or royal ideology wanted to convey. The royal funerary ritual was no exception. Take, for instance, the dialogue for two priestesses — called "Old Women" — that takes place on the morning of the second day, after the bones have been collected and moved to the mausoleum (the following quote is from a text in the *Keilschrifturkunden aus Boghazköi* "Cuneiform texts from Boğazköy," commonly cited as KUB. It closely follows the Hittite text but is formatted here to resemble a script with stage directions).

The Old Woman takes a pair of scales and puts on one side silver, gold, and all kinds of precious stones, while putting dirt on the other. The Old Woman addresses her colleague as follows and mentions the name of the deceased:

PRIESTESS 1: Will he bring him, so-and-so (i.e., the deceased)? Who will bring him?

PRIESTESS 2: The Hittite funerary priests will bring him.

PRIESTESS 1: Don't let them bring him!

PRIESTESS 2: Take the silver and the gold!

PRIESTESS 1: No, I will not take them. (*She says so three times; at the third time she*

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says as follows:) I take the dirt. (She breaks the scales, holds them up to the sun-deity, howls, and wailing starts.)

(KUB 30.15 obv. 26–36, ed. Kassian, Korolëv, and Sidel'tsev 2002, pp. 266–69)

The exchange between the two women takes the form of a commercial transaction. It sounds as if Priestess 2 is trying to convince the Priestess 1 to accept the valuables in exchange for the dead person. Having the funerary officials take charge of the deceased would apparently be tantamount to accepting the king's mortal fate. But steadfastly and unselfishly, Priestess 1 does not buy this and contents herself with the worthless dirt, making it official by saying “no” three times. By breaking the scales and raising the pieces to the sky she makes the deal irreversible with the all-seeing sun-deity as her witness.

Another dramatic piece is set up on the roof of a building, and a dialogue ensues between somebody on the roof and people who are down below that are called “gods” (again, the following quote closely follows the Hittite text but is formatted here to resemble a script with stage directions):

Next, the patili-priest who is on top of the roof calls down into the house and calls the name of the one who died:

PATILI: Where has he (i.e., the dead man) gone?

“GODS” (with whom he [i.e., the dead man] is, each from below:) He went to the sinapsi-house.

PATILI: Where did he go?

“GODS”: To X he went. (When they finish the round of “gods” they say:) To Y he went (or) To Z he went.

(Thus the patili-priest) calls down from the roof six times and the “Gods” answer six times upwards. When the patili-priest calls down for the seventh time:

PATILI: Where did he go?

“GODS”: (from below upward to the patili-priest:) The day of his mother has come: she has taken him by her hand and she has led him out.

(KUB 30.28 rev. 1–12, tr. in van den Hout 1994, p. 42)

This conversation, too, probably is to be placed in the early days of the funeral rites. The *patili*-priest, who is associated with birth and death, seems to represent the world of the living trying to track the whereabouts of the deceased in the netherworld. The people down in the building keep him informed of where he is each time. Finally, the reassuring message comes that he is on his way up. It is interesting to see that it is the mother who originally brought her child into this world who is, so to speak, giving birth to her son a second time by bringing him back from the netherworld. Only from there can he start his ascent to his divine fate.

EATING AND DRINKING

As noted above, the logistics of the funeral were complex. Besides the “Old Women,” wailing women, the *patili*-priest, and the actors playing the role of the netherworld gods, scores of personnel were involved. We read about cupbearers, cooks, waiters, singers, the ALAN.ZU- and *kita*-men. All these people had to be fed for fourteen days, and this explains the presence of the cupbearers, cooks, and waiters. Every day ended with a communal meal for all participants, including — with small variations — a series of offerings and libations to the core of deities in the Hittite pantheon: the sun-deity, the storm-god, the “Tutelary” or “Protective” deity (fig. 9.1), and the sun-goddess of the Earth. She was the embodiment of the sun at night, traveling through the netherworld until she would rise again the next morning and be the sun-deity again (see Catalog No. 3). After these, the king's “Soul” and the “Good Day” (probably a euphemism for the day of death) were bestowed offerings. Sometimes the ancestors were included as “the grandfathers and grandmothers.” The typical Hittite way of expressing all this is “to drink the god,” that is, drinking to a god. Here is, as an example, the description of the end of day eight after the rites dealing with animal husbandry were finished:

The main meal of the day is announced, and they give the assembled *taptara*-women *samma*-bread, and a dressed cupbearer gives them each to drink. He drinks (to) the sun-god, the storm-god, the Tutelary deity, the sun-goddess of the Earth, each separately, once. The si[ng]er sings (accompanied) by the Ishtar-instrument, the ALAN.ZU-men call out *aha* in a whisper (and) they break thick breads.

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Afterwards he drinks (to) the grandfathers (and) grandmothers, the singers sing (accompanied) by the Ishtar-instrument, the ALAN.ZU-men call out *aha* in a whisper (and) he breaks thick bread. Afterwards he drinks [his] soul three times, the singers [sing] (accompanied) by the Ishtar-instrument, the ALAN.ZU-men call out *aha* in a whisper, the *kita*-man does not call out. Two sweet thick breads they break.

When he drinks his Soul for the third time, he also mentions [the Good Day] in addition. He does not break thick bread. The cupbearer smashes the *isqaruh*-vase on the ground, the[n he si]ngs? and the assembly [start]s wail[ing].

(KUB 30.24 + KBo 39.292 ii 17–34, ed. Kassian, Korolëv, and Sidel'tsev 2002, pp. 386–89)

Who is the “he” whom we see repeatedly? Given the appearance of the cupbearer at the beginning of this passage, one might be tempted to identify him as such, but the way in which he is mentioned at the end makes that unlikely. The description of other days makes clear that it is the deceased king or queen, present in their statue, who are supposed to do the drinking and breaking of bread. Compare day ten:

They take the [sta]tue down from the hearse, bring it in the tent, and seat it on a silver throne. If it is a woman, they seat her on a *hapsalli*. They announce the day's main meal and make the round of the following gods: he drinks (to) the sun-deity,

the storm-god, the Tutelary god, the sun-goddess of the Earth, each separately. Then he [drink]s his Soul three [tim]es [while] m[entioning] in addition the Good Day a[t the third time].

(KUB 39.14 iv 4–14, ed. Kassian, Korolëv, and Sidel'tsev 2002, pp. 462–63)

Since the king is officially still among the living, he naturally leads his people in the ceremony. Sitting with a cup raised is a posture that we encounter several times in Hittite iconography. Compare the figure seated before an altar on the relief vase found in Inandık, northeast of Ankara (fig. 9.2). The function of these vases is still obscure, but the scene depicted here comes very close to what we saw just described: “a dressed cupbearer gives ... to drink. [The deceased] drinks (to) the gods. ... The singer sings (accompanied) by the Ishtar-instrument.” This does not mean that these vases had a funerary role. The scene is simply characteristic of Hittite cult practices and can thus also be found in a funerary context.

This combination of textual and iconographic evidence for feasting brings us back to the first millennium BC, or Iron Age. As opposed to the impersonal and logistically oriented state records of the Hittite empire, we now hear the voices of the deceased. We have funerary steles sometimes with inscriptions and with or without portraits of the dead. Not only the erecting itself of monuments, but also the

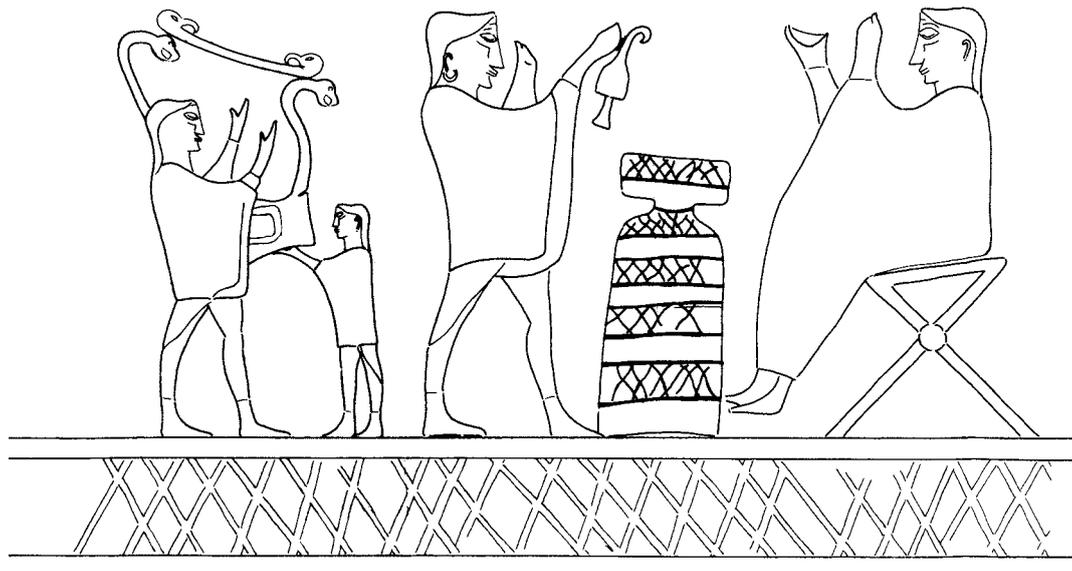


FIGURE 9.2. Scene from the relief vase found at Inandık, Turkey (after Özgüç 1988, foldout opposite p. 174)

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inscriptions show that we are dealing with members of the local elites. The texts are usually quite brief, often poorly preserved and – certainly in the case of the Luwian inscriptions – not yet fully understood. In them the dead can sometimes be seen to reflect on their piety and good deeds, and they curse any future violators of their monuments. In the case of reliefs, we often see persons – a couple or a single individual, once two women – depicted at a table filled with food (cf. figs. 3.1–6). Sometimes attendants are present fanning the person at the table, and occasionally we even see in addition a cupbearer and a musician

just as on the Inandık vase. With the Katumuwa Stele in mind, such scenes serve a double purpose: they refer back to the funerary rite, while serving also as an eternal instruction to those left behind. In Katumuwa's case, the text explicitly encourages future visitors to bring the appropriate offerings, including a "leg-cut" for the deceased. Where no text is present, the relief leaves a pictorial instruction, which needed no explaining. But each time people would gather around his monument sharing food to honor him, they reinforced what they had in common and reconnected as a group.

10. DEAD THAT ARE SLOW TO DEPART: EVIDENCE FOR ANCESTOR RITUALS IN MESOPOTAMIA

KAREL VAN DER TOORN

It takes time before the dead are truly gone. Even years after they have left, it still happens that we see them two blocks down the road as they cross the street. We realize it is an illusion, but for a moment we were sure we saw them. It is hard to believe that the dead are definitively departed.

In the ancient Middle East, the social survival of the dead gave rise to the belief in their continued existence in a world of their own. This essay looks at the ancestor cult in Iraq and Syria at the time when those lands were called after such cities as Assur and Babylon. The Greeks called this region “the Land-between-the-Rivers,” or Mesopotamia. The people who lived there in the days of Gilgamesh (ca. 2500 BC), Hammurabi (r. 1792–1750 BC), or Nebuchadnezzar (r. 605–562 BC) had no doubts about the survival of the dead. Nor was their belief merely theoretical. To the Mesopotamians, the dead were an important part of life. They took care of them. Not only by a proper burial, but also through invocations and offerings. Children honored their forefathers by the daily gift of water and flour; families gathered once a month for the cult of their ancestors. And the ancestors were believed to respond to such acts of piety by bestowing their blessing upon their offspring. The communion between the dead and the living was part of family life.

The evidence for ancestor rituals in Mesopotamia is both literary and material. Since the material evidence speaks mainly in light of the written, this essay focuses on the latter. The literary evidence is, broadly speaking, of two kinds. Within the “stream of tradition” (the phrase of A. Leo Oppenheim), we find references to the life of the dead in epics, myths, prayers, and rituals from the third to the first millennium BC. Among documents of everyday life, we come across references and allusions to the ancestor cult in inheritance texts, adoption contracts, letters, and various other genres. While not answering all our

questions, this material provides us with a fair idea about Mesopotamian beliefs and practices concerning death and the afterlife.¹

THE ABODE OF THE DEAD AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN

Some of the great religions of the world promise believers a life of bliss after death if they make the right choices before. Mesopotamian beliefs about the afterlife are less cheery. According to the myth known as the Descent of Ishtar, the departed continue to live, but their life is hardly pleasant. They eat “clay for bread, drink muddied water for beer.” The phrase occurs in a first-millennium BC version of the myth, but the image of life in the underworld was basically the same in the late third millennium. The Sumerian myth about Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld implies that the afterlife is but a dim and dull version of life under the sun. Even such simple pleasures as clean clothes and body-oil are unknown there.

The same Sumerian tale shows that different dead live in different conditions. The more sons a man leaves behind, the better off he is. The man with one son is weeping; the one with two sons is “sitting on two bricks and eating bread.” Luckiest of all is the man with seven sons. “He sits on a throne as a companion of the gods and listens to their deliberations.” What a contrast with the eunuch or the barren woman. They have no one to take care of them and lie discarded in a corner (lines 253–272).

The message of these myths is that the dead continue to live but in conditions that no one would envy — unless their children take care of them. There is some degree of happiness available, but only for those with enough sons to provide for them. Sons are a better insurance for a happy afterlife than moral behavior. So if you have no children of your own, you are

well-advised to adopt one. Indeed some of the adoption contracts that archaeologists have discovered are quite explicit in the matter. Adoption was a matter of mutual interest. The son was usually a grown man. As his part of the deal, he had to take care of the adoptive parent in old age and offer invocations and food to his ghost after death; the inheritance of house and fields would be his reward. Such contracts demonstrate that allusions to the ancestor cult in the myths corresponded with practical realities.

DAILY RITES, MONTHLY CELEBRATIONS, AND THE ANNUAL FESTIVAL FOR THE DEAD

According to the Old Babylonian (1800–1600 BC) version of the epic that bears his name, Gilgamesh is to make sure that he will always have clean water on his journey to the Cedar Forest. Why? Every day at night-fall, as the sun-god enters the underworld, he must offer water for his father Lugalbanda (Gilgamesh, Yale Tablet, vi 40–43). The son takes care of his deceased parents on a daily basis.

The name of the food offerings to the dead is *kispu*, a word derived from a verb that means “to break into small pieces.” In its simplest form, the *kispu* involves the presentation of water and flour. It is primarily a duty incumbent upon the eldest son. At the death of the paterfamilias, the eldest son succeeds him in that position. As the head of the family, he must assume responsibility for the ancestors as well. In token of his new status, the “ceremonial table” is now his. Located in the main house of the family, this is the table from which the dead will eat.

How did the Mesopotamians picture this meal happening? We don’t know. There are one or two texts that speak about a “seat for the ancestor-spirit,” which suggests the possibility of an empty seat near the table for the invisible guests. What we do know is that the daily offerings were usually domestic. In the words of a Sumerian hymn, “Let the dead man eat in front of his house, let him drink water in his house, let him sleep in the shade of his house.” The “ceremonial table” used for the daily ancestor cult stood in a room that did duty as the house sanctuary (known as *ishertum* in the texts). This was “the room for the *kispu*,” furnished with a fireplace and a lamp, in addition to the table.

The practice of domestic offerings to the dead is most easily explained if the ancestors were buried underneath the floor of the house. This is the implication of the Sumerian hymn quoted in the previous paragraph. We know that some of the dead were indeed “sleeping” in the shade of their house. A passage in a letter from the time of Hammurabi mentions a woman who died in an epidemic and is to be buried in her house. Other allusions to in-house burial exist, but they are scarce. The archaeological evidence indicates that interment underneath private houses did occur, but that it was not the standard practice. So the domestic *kispu* rite is not performed on the grave of the dead, so to speak. As various incantations and diagnostic texts imply, the spirits of the dead can move freely around.

Once a month, the ancestors received a more substantial meal. In the time between the old and the new moon, the day when the moon was invisible and believed to pass through the underworld, the family came together for a celebration to which the ancestors were also invited. It was a holiday. Work was suspended and people relaxed. In the context of this feast, the ancestors received their share. This time not merely water and bread, but onions, garlic, fish, and meat as well. From the time of the first Babylonian dynasty, we have a prayer to the moon-god pronounced at this occasion (see Box 10.1). Recited by the eldest son, the prayer asks the moon-god to release three generations of ancestors so they can have their share of bread and water. The early morning rite presumably concluded a night of vigil.

Though the text does not specify where the ritual takes place, it does provide a clue. As the speaker gets to the generation of his parents, he refers to the murder of one uncle and the burial place of another. The significance of these details is that neither of these men lies buried in the family grave. Why would he mention this? Since this is a prayer asking for the “release” of the dead from the netherworld, the information must have been relevant for the moon-god, who is to grant the request. The moon-god has to be informed that other graves are involved, in addition to the one where the family is gathered. For the monthly celebration, apparently, the family goes to the place where the ancestors are buried. As we have seen, that was usually not under the floor of the family home.

BOX 10.1. AN OLD BABYLONIAN PRAYER TO THE MOON-GOD SÎN

[S]în, you are the god of heaven and earth.
 [In the mo]rning I am pouring water to you
 [for the f]amily of Sîn-nāšir, the son of Ipqu-Annunītum.
 Release the family of Sîn-nāšir, the son of Ipqu-Annunītum,
 that they may eat his bread and drink his water:
 Išme-Ea, son of Šamaš-nāšir, his wife and his family;
 [Il]tani, *nadītum* of Šamaš, his daughter;
 [Sîn]-nāšir, son of Išme-Ea;
 Kasap-Aya, *nadītum* of Šamaš, his daughter;
 Sîn-iddinam, son of Sîn-nāšir;
 Iddin-Ea, son of Išme-Ea;
 Amat-Aya, *nadītum* of Šamaš, his daughter;
 Di-Utu-binduga, his son;
 Ebabbar-nu-u'ulše-ḫegal, his son;
 Eḫursag-mušallim, his son;
 Ipqu-Ea, son of Išme-Ea;
 Amat-Mamu, *nadītum* of Šamaš, his daughter;
 Nidnuša, his son;
 Ibni-Ea, his son;
 Iqīš-Ea, son of Išme-[Ea], his wife and [his] family;
 Ipqu-Aya, son of Išme Ea, Abī-mattum his wife [and his family(?)];
 Lamassani, *nadītum* of Šamaš, his daughter;
 Ilšu-ibnišu, his son;
 Sîn-nādin-šumi, his son;
 Sîn-kabit-biltum, son of Sîn-nādin-šumi;
 Ikūn-pî-Sîn, son of Ipqu-Aya, whom ... have struck to death;
 Sîn-erībam, son of Ipqu-Aya, who sleeps in Maškan-Adad;
 Ipqu-Annunītum, son of Ipqu-Aya, Bēlessunu his wife.
 [R]elease the family of Sîn-nāšir, son of Ipqu-Annunītum,
 that they may eat [h]is [br]ead and drink his water!

Source: *BE 6/2, no. 111, lines 1-33; see van der Toorn 1996, p. 53.*

Every year in the heat of summer, there was a kind of All Souls' Day. Since it coincides with the normal day for the monthly family invocation of the dead, it should probably be viewed as a grander version of the usual celebration. The texts emphasize the nocturnal character of the festivities. The night is lit by torches and fires as people sit in a kind of death watch. Their devotion this time is not restricted to the family dead. All the Annunaki, the collective

name for the spirits of the deceased, get their share. It is a way of keeping at bay those who died without children or burial.

THE ANCESTOR CULT AS A FAMILY AFFAIR

The social reality where the ancestor cult is found is the family. That family embraces several generations.

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Those who are alive will often live in proximity to one another, in a single house or neighborhood; those who have gone are never far away. The link between the living and the dead is the man who is the *zakir shumī*, literally, he “who invokes the name,” a reference to a crucial element in the ancestor rituals. The first-born among the male siblings inherits this position. He has “to uphold the family and the ancestral spirits,” as an Old Assyrian letter puts it.

Families have long histories. For the living, however, the ancestors past the fourth generation are really dead, so to speak. The prayer to the moon-god previously mentioned (Box 10.1) has a litany of names of the various ancestors to partake in the offerings. The paterfamilias begins with the name of his great-grandfather (including the name of *his* father); the names of his grand-uncles and his own grandfather follow; the next names are his uncles’ and finally his father’s. The generation beyond the great-grandfather’s has lost sufficient reality to be included in the ritual. The ancestor cult in Mesopotamia, as elsewhere in western Asia, is thus more limited in scope than the ancestor cult practiced in the Far East.

The evidence surveyed so far leaves the impression that the ancestor cult was mainly the business of the men in the family. This impression is not entirely correct. There are two sides to the ancestor cult: there are those who give and those who receive. On the giving end, the women of the household did certainly participate, as we can infer from a number of letters. In fact, considering the need of the ancestors for food, the women who prepared the food are likely to have been intimately involved in its presentation. Domestic rites were often small acts of devotion by women. An example of female piety toward dead kin is the mother of King Nabonidus (r. 556–539 BC). In her autobiographical inscriptions she emphasizes her role in maintaining the cult of the royal ancestors.

At the receiving end of the ancestor cult, the position of women is subordinate to that of men. The prayer to the moon-god in Box 10.1 does mention a few women. However, most of those women had been

married to men of the family. The rest were daughters that had never married because they had entered the famous cloister of the sun-god in Sippar. Marriage means either entry into the family or exit from it. A woman belongs to the family of her husband or, if not married, her father. At the occasion of the wedding, the bride is presented to the family ancestors as she is made to sit at the family table. A change of clothes symbolizes her passage into the new family. Daughters that do not marry are the exception. When they die, the duty to provide for them rests with their birth family. The family identity is vested in the male line. The ancestor cult thus underscores and reinforces the patrilineal character of the Mesopotamian family.

The rituals for the dead are a way of holding the family together. They foster a sense of family history as well. Non-participation in the ancestor cult amounts to self-exclusion from the family. And life outside the family is a terrible thing. To signify disinheritance and expulsion from the family, the woman or man is to leave her (his) clothes behind, as legal texts say. Symbolically? Hardly. At any rate, the act underscores that without the family there is no protection. The cult of the ancestors, therefore, is as much a demonstration of family loyalty as an act of filial piety. And the very act of commemoration (“invoking the names”) was an occasion for the rehearsal of family lore. Those litanies of names may sound as dull as biblical genealogies, but they constitute the skeleton of a family saga.

It takes time before the dead are truly gone. In the case of Mesopotamia it took about four generations. Only beyond that point did physical death and social death coincide. Until then, the cult of the ancestors kept the dead alive.

NOTE

¹ For further details and bibliography of Mesopotamian ancestor cult, see van der Toorn 1996, pp. 42–65.

11. FEASTS FOR THE DEAD AND ANCESTOR VENERATION IN EGYPTIAN TRADITION

MIRIAM MÜLLER

*I have gone forth in the form of a living akh
whom the common folk on earth worship.*

— Book of the Dead Spell 65¹

INTRODUCTION

The importance of the ancestors in the lives of the ancient Egyptians is attested in a great number of forms (Fitzenreiter 1994). The idea of preserving the memory of the deceased and their position in society on earth is fundamental to the ancient Egyptian worldview (Assmann 1992, pp. 60–63). The interaction between the living and the dead in dynastic Egypt revolved around the tomb, but also took place in the domestic realm. The ancestors played an important role in the collective memory of their kin and represented an integral part of the cohesion and continuity of the family (Moreno Garcia 2010). The dead could, however, be benevolent or malevolent toward the living. Thus they needed to be pacified with regular offerings that were presented at the tomb. Family and friends presumably visited the burial places of the deceased on a regular basis, for instance, during festivals. On these occasions, feasts were held in honor of the dead (Harrington, in press). The deceased were also addressed through letters deposited in the tomb, in which family members sought help and presented their needs and wishes to the ancestors in hope of beneficial interference. In the domestic sphere, communication with the ancestors was maintained through offerings, libations, and burning incense on small altars or before niches inside the houses. The relationship between the living and the dead was one of reciprocal need. The deceased were dependent on the care given by the living, just as the living needed the favorable intervention of the ancestors.

EMBODYING DIFFERENT CONCEPTS: THE BA, KA, AND AKH

The nature of the deceased was expressed in different forms. The *ka*, the *ba*, and the *akh* denote different concepts of a deceased person that became significant after death, although the *ka* and the *ba* were also with the person during life.² The *ka* was embedded in the social sphere and embodied the vitality and spirit of the deceased. The *ka* resided in the tomb owner's statue (Catalog No. 18) and was served with



FIGURE 11.1. Statuette of a *ba*-bird. Wood and pigment, Dendera, Late Period, Dynasties 25–30, ca. 750–350 BC, 6.9 x 7.1 x 2.8 cm. OIM E4461 (D. 17908)

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offerings. The *ba* was depicted as a human-headed bird (fig. 11.1) that had the ability to move around and to serve as a medium for the transmission of offerings from the living to the dead, but was not able to communicate.

The *akh* was regarded as the personification of the deceased in his or her entirety, in a transfigured state that was able to communicate and interact with the living. Addressing the deceased as *akh iqer en Ra* (“the excellent or able spirit of Ra”) indicated their revered status (Demarée 1983) (Catalog No. 19). The *akh* was perceived as a manifestation that the individual hoped to achieve after death, but could also be denied if the necessary offerings and recitations were not performed upon death. Once transmuted into an *akh*, the deceased became a powerful ancestor who could act as an intermediary between the gods and the living. In rare cases the *akh* itself could become a god (Lloyd 1989, pp. 119–22; Harrington 2013, pp. 3–15).

THE MORTUARY LANDSCAPE: FEASTS FOR THE DEAD AND ANCESTOR VENERATION AT THE TOMB

The ancient Egyptians believed in an afterlife that had all the characteristics of the earthly life. Thus their main interest was the preservation of the body and the provisioning of the deceased with everything that had guaranteed a good life on earth. This was achieved by written accounts on the tomb walls and coffins, called Books of the Underworld, and on papyri deposited in the tomb, such as the Book of the Dead, a collection of spells that would empower the deceased to survive the perils of the netherworld by giving practical help and magical assistance (Hornung 1999). But idealized depictions of life on earth on the tomb walls, including fertile fields and happiness and harmony at home, could also ensure a joyful afterlife (Hodel-Hoernes 2000). Grave goods included precious objects and items that were significant to the tomb owner, but also objects that embodied magical powers. The provisioning of the deceased was secured by food offerings and models, such as baking and brewing scenes that symbolized a continuous supply of bread and beer, or model vessels that had only a symbolic function (Catalog Nos. 46–48) (Teeter 2011, pp. 130–31).

After the burial, which was accompanied by all the necessary performances and recitations to guarantee the rebirth and rejuvenation of the deceased, family and friends would pray and leave offerings at specific architectural features of the tomb. The chapel or the forecourt of the tomb, with access to the tomb shaft through which the coffin was lowered to the subterranean burial chamber, served as the place for the family gathering in order to address the deceased, keep his or her memory alive among the living, and provide the essential provisions for the afterlife. Food offerings, libations, and incense-burning were carried out in front of the false door, a niche with an indication of doorjambs and a lintel that was decorated with inscriptions and often a scene of the tomb owner sitting in front of an offering table. These niches were designed as blind doors that were intended as portals for the dead (fig. 11.2). Offerings were also presented to the tomb owner’s statue (fig. 11.3) or a stele with the depiction of the deceased before an offering table.



FIGURE 11.2. False door of Ny-su-redi. Limestone, Old Kingdom, late Dynasty 4, ca. 2500 BC, H: 50 cm. OIM E10825

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These architectural elements and features of the tomb represented different ways the living could communicate with the dead. Each medium was focused on a specific aspect of the interaction with the deceased. The statue incarnated the *ka*, the spirit of the deceased, and was thus centered on the tomb owner himself. The stele with the image of the deceased symbolized the participation of the tomb owner in a family gathering and as such was important

in the family and community realm. The false door presented an interface for the deceased to literally step out of the door in order to receive the offerings.

Immediately following the burial, a funerary meal was held, presumably in the courtyard of the tomb enclosure. Offering tables and libation basins were placed before the statue, stele, or false door (Catalog No. 49). Offerings were deposited on the table and liquids were poured into the basin (Catalog No. 26).

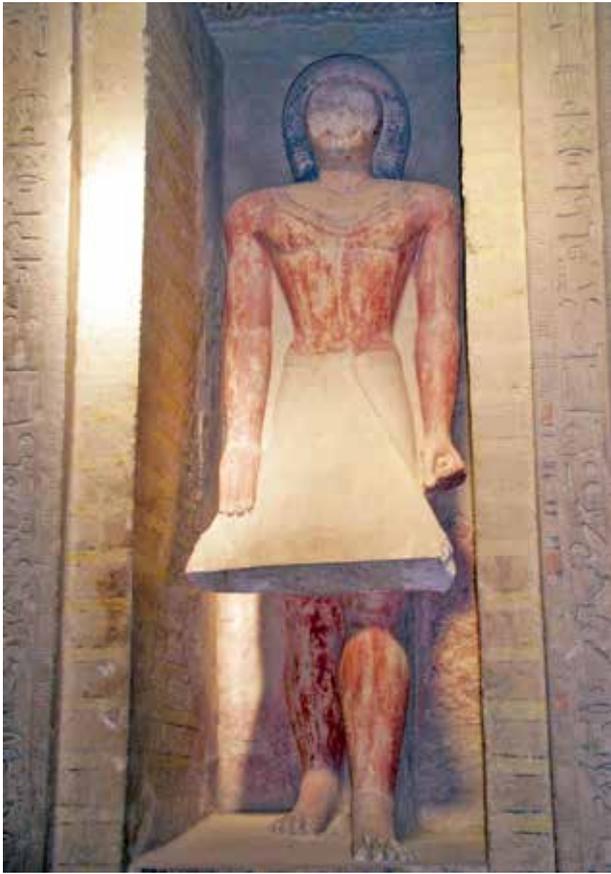


FIGURE 11.3. Mereruka *ka* statue (courtesy of Emily Teeter)



FIGURE 11.4. Top: guests at a feast, tomb of Nebamun and Ipuky (Theban Tomb 181). Left: singers and dancers, lost tomb chapel of Nebamun (Davies 1936, vol. 2, pls. 61 and 70)



Tall stands supported shallow bowls of offerings and burning incense. The eldest son had the principal responsibility to care for his deceased father and guarantee regular offerings in his name (Harrington 2013, pp. 29–62).³ Individuals who owned sufficient resources could set up a mortuary endowment in their name that was managed by *ka*-priests (Teeter 2011, p. 129).

Family and friends presumably came for regular visits to the burial site outside the settlement, in particular during festivals such as the Beautiful Feast of the Valley (Schott 1953). Evidence for these visits and the continuous offering cult is rare, but depictions in tombs document post-funeral banquets and family gatherings accompanied by ritual performances and offerings, as well as singing, dancing, and the playing of musical instruments, that differ from the funerary repast that took place right after the burial (fig. 11.4) (Harrington 2013, p. 113).⁴ These banquets were presumably held in the courtyard or accessible superstructures of the tomb such as the chapel. Participants in these ceremonies were foremost the family, but also friends, and the banquets were intended to celebrate with the deceased and served as a form of solace for the bereaved. Other deceased family members were included in the celebration and rituals. The drinking of alcohol and the use of narcotic substances might have facilitated the communication with the ancestors (Harrington 2013, p. 119). Remains of these banquets are hardly detectable, mostly because in early excavations the courtyards of tombs were cleared without documenting the finds. In a few cases in more recent excavations, artifact assemblages related to mortuary and presumably ancestor cult and feasting have been found (Seiler 1995; Raven 2001, p. 8, cat. no. 6, pl. 14 Chamber G).

THE DOMESTIC SPHERE: FEASTS FOR THE DEAD AND ANCESTOR VENERATION INSIDE THE HOUSE

The ancestors played an active part in family life, and their memory was kept alive, not only by visits to the tomb, but also by everyday activities in the domestic sphere. The extremely rich archaeological and textual records of the workmen's village Deir el-Medina, home of the artists engaged in the tomb carving and decorating process in the Theban Valleys of the

Queens and Kings, preserve architectural features and artifacts related to the veneration of ancestors inside the houses of the workmen's families (fig. 11.5).

Steles and busts that clearly indicate a link with deceased family members were set on altars and in niches (for a discussion of the niches, see Bruyère 1939, pp. 55, 19; for a summary of the discussion and reinterpretation of the so-called *lits clos* as altars, see Weiss 2009). The steles of the *akh iqer en Ra* type typically show a seated person holding or sniffing a lotus flower (water lily) as a sign of rebirth (Harer 2001) and receiving offerings (Catalog No. 19). The offering recipient, the *akh iqer en Ra*, is explicitly referred to by name (Demarée 1983).

Other artifacts found inside the houses that were very likely related to the ancestor cult are anthropoid busts (fig. 11.6; compare Catalog Nos. 14–17). These busts display a featureless torso and a human head often characterized by a tripartite wig, a hairstyle typically worn by women. However, busts without wigs but with caps or beards — only worn by men — and even busts with two heads are also known. Busts are depicted on coffins and in vignettes of the Book of the Dead and are, in this context, clearly linked to the deceased by the citation of his or her name (Keith 2011, pp. 76–80; Harrington 2011, pp. 91–93). Very few of the actual busts are inscribed. The texts on the inscribed busts include dedications to deceased (without mentioning an *akh iqer*, however), dedications to a specific god, and inscriptions naming devotees who have commissioned the bust and are still alive (Keith 2011, pp. 69–74). Since calling out the deceased's name is an integral part of the ancient Egyptian ritual of remembering the dead (Assmann 1992, p. 63), it has been assumed that the majority of the busts without inscriptions were personalized by small wooden tags hanging around their necks — however, the evidence is questionable (Keith 2011, p. 80). Another possibility for personalizing the busts was by an inscription on the lintel, the altar, or the niche where the bust was placed (Harrington 2013, p. 50). Since the evidence for linking the busts with an ancestor cult is not unequivocal, Keith advocates an interpretation of less formal use, with the possibility of various meanings of the busts as dedications to (multigenerational) deceased, but also to gods (Keith 2011, p. 90). Small statues of individuals holding a lotus flower represent another medium to display deceased family members, and at least one example

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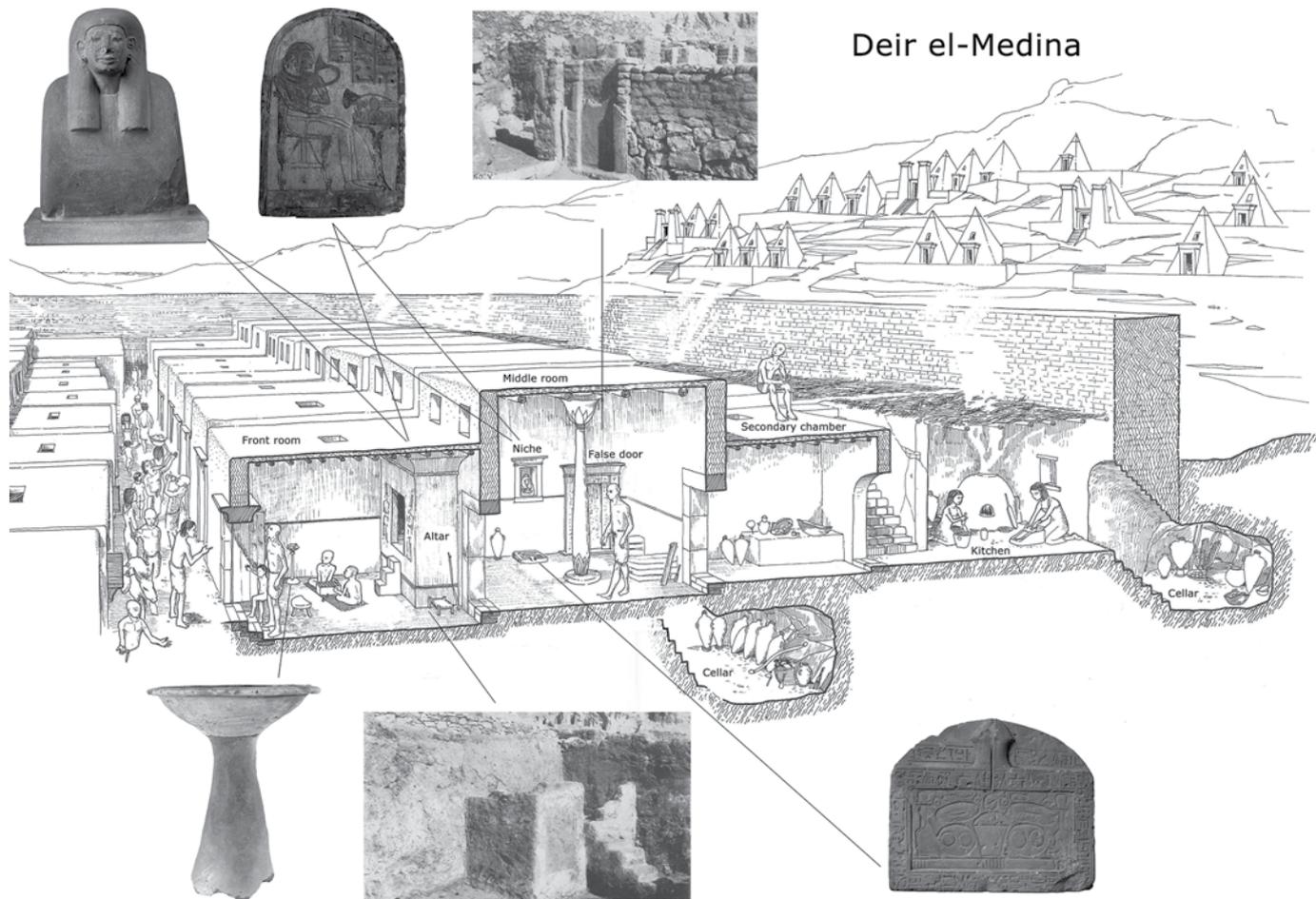


FIGURE 11.5. Installations and finds in a typical Deir el-Medina house (courtesy of Miriam Müller, based on Koenig and Jay 1984, pp. 13–14, and Bruyère 1939, pls. 9, 12, and E16348, E13994, E14581, E16367, © Musée du Louvre)

derives from a domestic context (Schulman 1986, pp. 307–18; Fitzenreiter 1994, pp. 62–63; Harrington 2013, pp. 80–81).

Offering stands, incense burners, libation slabs,⁵ and offering tables found in close proximity to the altars and niches inside the houses indicate that offerings were regularly dedicated to the cult image, the *akh iqer en Ra* stele, statuette, or bust, as depicted in scenes such as the one on a stele that shows a woman holding an incense burner and pouring a liquid in front of a bust (fig. 11.7; see Vandier d’Abbadie 1946, fig. 1, based on Mariette 1880, pl. 60; see another example in Keith 2011, pp. 321–24). Flower bouquets were also offered, as indicated by written requests for flowers and replicas thereof in limestone (Bruyère 1939, pp. 210–11, 322–23; Harrington 2013, p. 52). Niches in the central rooms of houses at Deir el-Medina that resemble the false doors of the tombs may represent another place of communication with the



FIGURE 11.6. Anthropoid bust, Louvre, inv. E16348 (courtesy Musée du Louvre)

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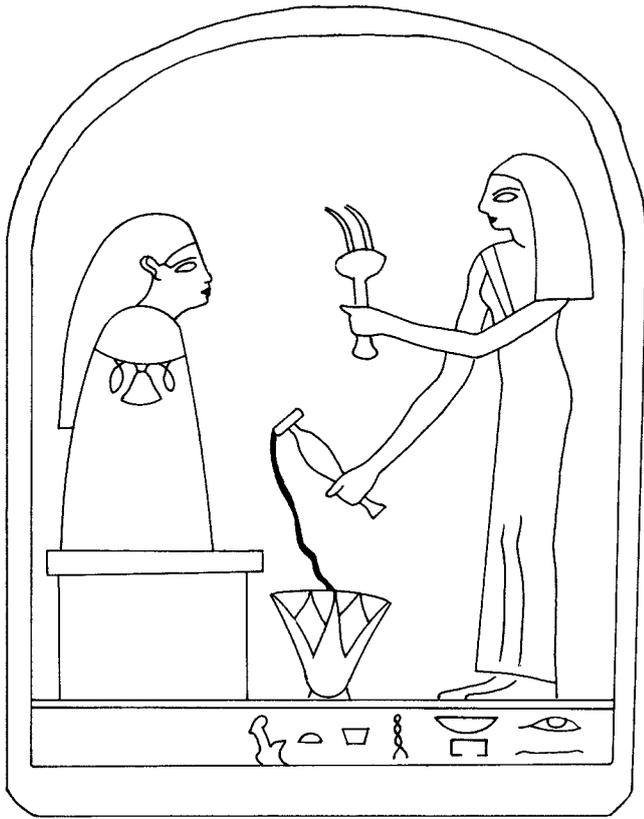


FIGURE 11.7. Line drawing of a stele with libation scene (drawing by Mary Winkes after Florence Dunn Friedman)

dead, since offering vessels and in one case fragments of an *akh iqer en Ra* stele and a bust were found nearby (Bruyère 1939, pp. 309–10). Finds from other settlements complement the evidence from Deir el-Medina and support a similar picture of an active ancestor cult in the domestic sphere.⁶

THE DECEASED AS HARMFUL SPIRITS

The deceased could, however, also turn into malevolent spirits, causing their family members on earth a lot of trouble. This is expressed in letters, the so-called “Letters of the Dead,” and mentioned in the interpretation of dreams. The letters allowed people to make the ancestors aware of their problems, needs, and wishes, such as requests for the healing of diseases, infertility, or the resolution of quarrels with neighbors. People asked for their help, but also complained about harmful activities of the deceased directed at the living or their general inactivity and reluctance to help their family members (Wente 1990,

pp. 210–19; Ritner 2002). The letters were mostly written on pottery vessels, with offerings placed therein to influence the favorable intervention of the ancestors, and then deposited in the tomb (fig. 11.8) (Teeter 2011, pp. 153–58).

One of these letters mentions the wish and thus the possibility of seeing a deceased family member in a dream, acting on behalf of the writer (Wente 1975–76; Szpakowska 2003a, pp. 23–24). Through dreams, people were able to see the deceased, but not influence their actions (Szpakowska 2003a, pp. 123–24). The so-called Dream Book from the Ramesside period lists, in a few cases, dreams that are specifically related to the ancestors and, depending on the dream, to a positive or negative outcome of their actions (Gardiner 1935, pp. 7–23, pls. 5–12a; Szpakowska 2003a, pp. 125).

Spells against the terrors of the night mention harmful activities directed at the sleeping person by a “dead man” or a “dead woman” (Ritner 1990, p. 26).



FIGURE 11.8. Jar stand with a letter to the dead. First Intermediate Period, Dynasty 11, ca. 2119–1976. Baked clay, pigment, H: 23 cm. OIM E13945 (D. 009257)

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Means for protection included the deposition of uraei — snake figurines — in each corner of the bedroom. They are designated as being made of clay with “fire in their mouths” to ward off evil spirits (Szapkowska 2003a, pp. 169–71).⁷ Protective images, such as the depiction of the knife-wielding household god Bes, on headrests (supports for the head during sleep) were also meant to repel evil spirits (Szapkowska 2003a, pp. 171–74; Harrington 2013, p. 24, fig. 12).

The need for protection against potential evil spirits is also preserved in the act of the intentional smashing of vessels during the offering rites at the tomb. Breaking the pottery symbolized the frightening of unhappy spirits in the liminal zone of encounter between the living and the dead (Ritner 1993, pp. 144–47; Van Dijck 1993, p. 188). The so-called “Ritual of Breaking the Red Pots” is depicted in offering scenes of the funerary cult (Van Dijk 1993, pp. 179–84), and it has to be assumed that also on the occasion of post-funeral banquets, the dining and offering pottery was intentionally smashed (cf. Catalog Nos. 41–47). The ritual of breaking the vessels also implied, however, the transference of the offerings to the deceased, in the same way the burning of offerings was intended (Harrington 2013, pp. 37–39).

THE COMMUNITY REALM: FEASTS FOR THE DEAD AND ANCESTOR VENERATION IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The care for a specific ancestor usually lasted only one or two generations (McDowell 1992, p. 107), and thereafter he or she was included in the general community of ancestors (Harrington 2013, pp. 29–31). The veneration of this group of ancestors took place in neighborhood shrines that were visited by different families (V. Müller 2008, vol. 1, p. 337). Private chapels at Deir el-Medina and Amarna were, in a few cases, associated with tombs in their vicinity or even underneath the chapels’ floors (Bomann 1991, pp. 35, 51; Weatherhead and Kemp 2007, p. 408; V. Müller 2008, vol. 1, p. 334). Some chapels possessed benches for the cult participants. Associated ovens indicated the preparation of food (fig. 11.9). Banquets attended by the family and friends were presumably also held in these chapels during feasts and festivals that commemorated deceased ancestors (Harrington 2013, p. 98). *Akh iqer en Ra* steles and busts⁸ were also found in these neighborhood shrines; these must have been dedicated to individuals who had greater importance in the community, since in a few cases more than one

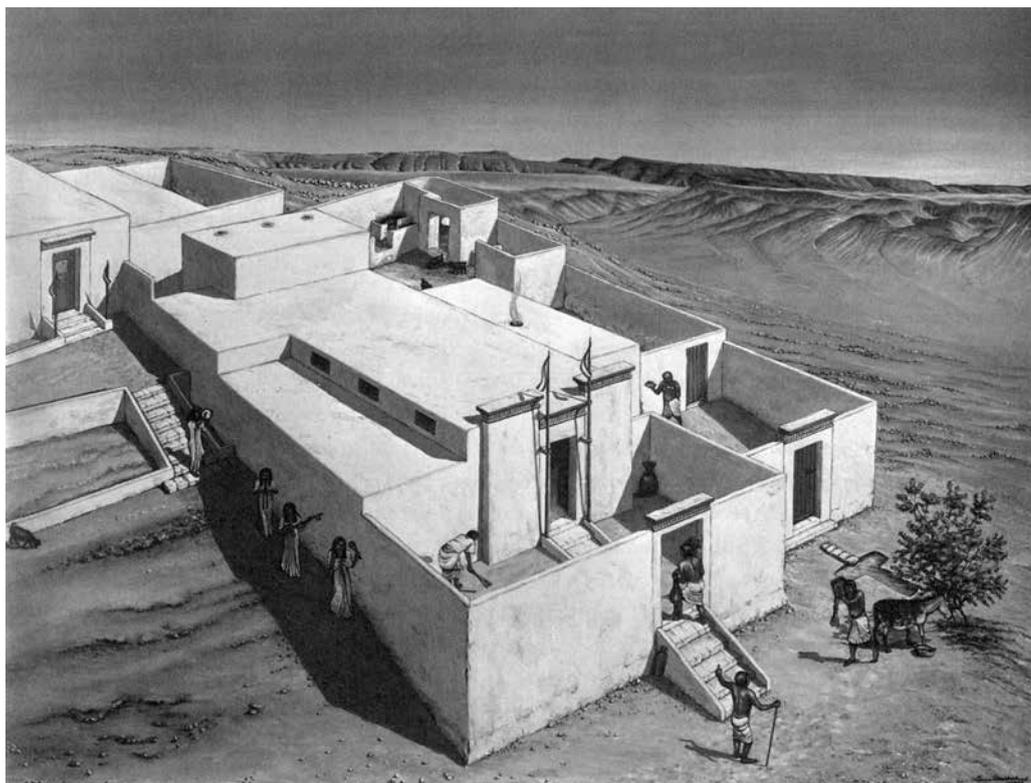


FIGURE 11.9. Reconstruction of a private chapel at Amarna (courtesy of the Egypt Exploration Society)

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stele was dedicated to a single individual (Fitzenreiter 1994, p. 64). Some prominent individuals were the focus of popular cults venerated in sanctuaries or at their tombs, such as the Old Kingdom dignitary Heqaib on Elephantine (Franke 1994; Baines 1987, pp. 87–88; Wildung 1977). In the Middle Cemetery at Abydos, small chapels and tombs were built adjacent to, or even within the walls of the tombs of deified dignitaries, apparently seeking participation in their cult (Richards 2005, 2010).

MIXING LEVANTINE AND EGYPTIAN TRADITIONS: THE SPECIAL CASE OF TELL EL-DAB'Ā

The eastern delta site Tell el-Dab'ā, famous for its multi-ethnic (Canaanite/Levantine and Egyptian) population and its later role as the capital of the Hyksos dynasty (1638–1530 BC), yields a unique combination of Egyptian and Levantine afterlife beliefs

and ancestor cults. The city's inhabitants traditionally buried their dead within the settlement, thus displaying a different conception of the interaction between the living and the dead. Tombs were dug in house courtyards, but also under house floors (for an overview on Tell el-Dab'ā, see Bietak 1996; Hein, Mlinar, and Schwab 1994). A specific feature are so-called Houses of the Dead, prominently found in the neighborhood with the local designation F/I.⁹ These Houses of the Dead were small rooms that were attached to the houses of the living, usually onto the bedroom. With a large chambered tomb in the center and smaller tombs around the sides, they clearly represent family vaults (Bietak 1996, pp. 49–54) (fig. 11.10). The head of the household literally slept next to deceased ancestors. The Houses of the Dead were, however, only accessible from the outside. In one instance, a bench is part of the layout of one of these vaults, suggesting that seats were required for a number of people. The finds inside these Houses of the Dead point to cultic activities such as offerings

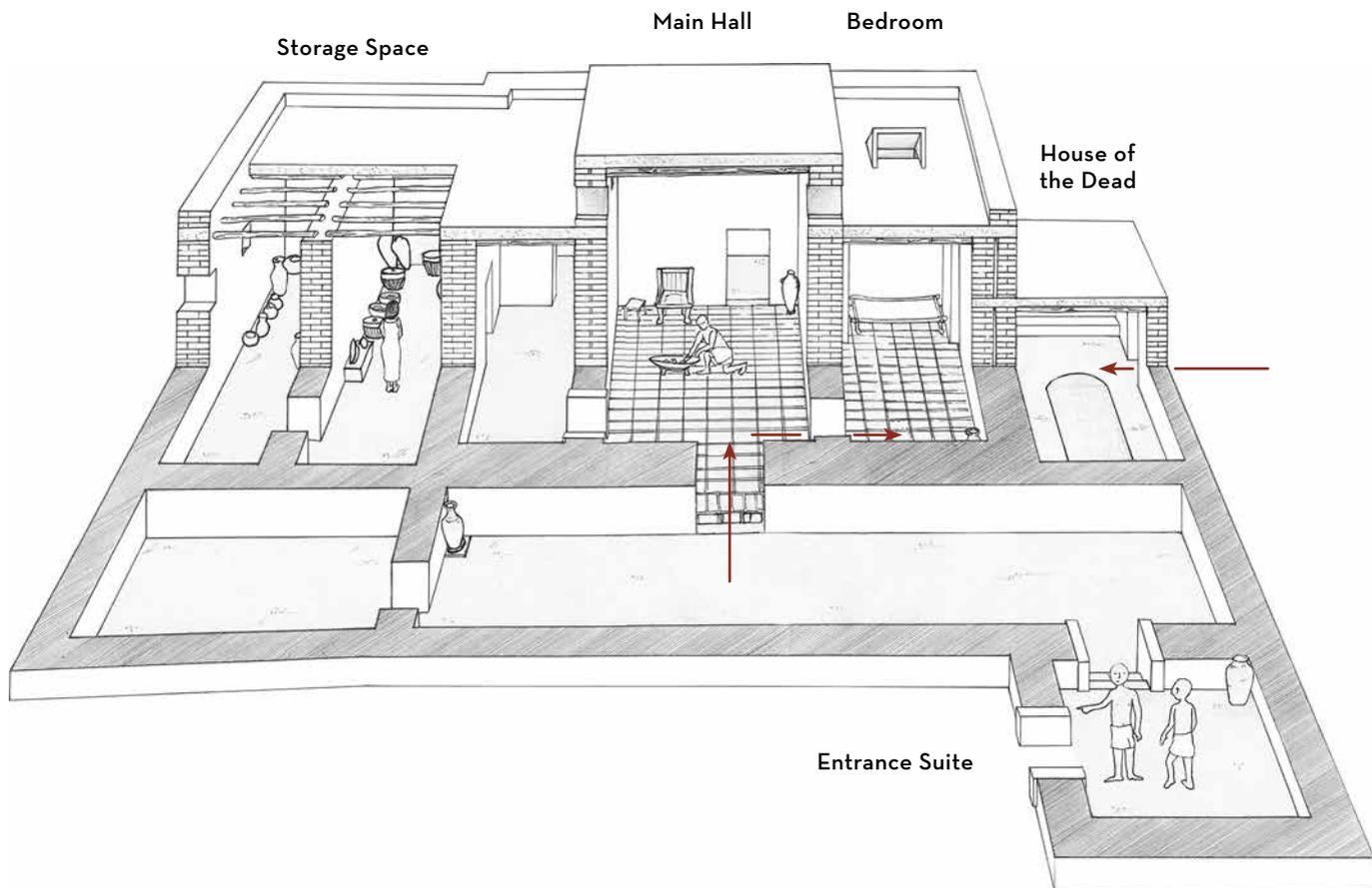


FIGURE 11.10. Reconstruction of a house at Tell el-Dab'ā (courtesy of Katinka Strzeletz and Pablo Garcia Plaza)

11. FEASTS FOR THE DEAD AND ANCESTOR VENERATION IN EGYPTIAN TRADITION

and libations, leading to the conclusion that feasts were held inside. Numerous offering pits adjacent to tombs and inside the vaults that contained intentionally smashed pottery, burnt pots, and animal bones, as well as model vessels, demonstrate the dedication of offerings to the deceased, the continuation of this practice over a certain time period,¹⁰ and presumably also banquets in honor of the dead (V. Müller 2008). Another building of this neighborhood that has a large chambered tomb in an exceptional position under the floor of the central room probably represents a village shrine. The house lacks any evidence for household activities, but it is surrounded by a high number of tombs that are clearly focused on the building. The unusual arrangement is reminiscent of Egyptian private chapels, and it must be assumed that an ancestor cult for an individual with a special significance in the community was enacted in this building (M. Müller, forthcoming; compare a similar arrangement in Bietak 1991, pp. 78–79, 108–16).

The evidence from Tell el-Dabʿa deserves special attention due to its display of a blend of Egyptian and Levantine afterlife beliefs. The archaeological record of the site, with its long tradition of intercultural contacts between Egyptians and “Asiatics,” demonstrates the close connection of activities related to ancestor veneration both at the tomb and in the house. By burying the deceased under house floors and attaching the so-called Houses of the Dead to the dwellings of the living, the two spheres lost the strict separation that is displayed in the Egyptian tradition. Cultic performances in the house and at the tomb were closely intertwined and presumably formed a standard set of rituals executed in honor of the dead.¹¹ The positive influence of the ancestors and their importance within the family, not only for their ability to help with all earthly matters, but also for the reputation of the family and possible territorial claims, mark the interaction between the living and the dead at Tell el-Dabʿa. The significance of kin relations might have also been expressed in the concept of the neighborhood chapel centered on the cult of an important individual in the community. Over the long process of acculturation, the foreign (Canaanite/Levantine) burial customs were, however, strongly influenced by Egyptian beliefs such as the ancestors’ potential to harm the living. Even though they were close by, the thick wall between the houses

of the living and the Houses of the Dead without connecting doorway might have been one expression of this new perception of the afterlife and the role of the ancestors.¹²

CONCLUSION

Based on her detailed examination of the evidence for ancestor veneration in dynastic Egypt, Nicola Harrington (2013, p. 102) concludes that, “the Egyptian house was the seat of ancestor worship, and the place where most of the regular cultic activity in relation to the dead took place” (see also Fitzenreiter 1994, p. 63). In this context, women played a significant role in performing the cult (Harrington 2013, pp. 83–84, 148–49). They are depicted on steles executing offerings and libations before busts, and they could also commission them in their own name (Keith 2011, pp. 74–76, 81). The responsibility for the funeral and the continuous offerings at the tomb, however, lay in the hands of the eldest son. But the deceased were also honored in joyful gatherings of the whole family, such as the feasts at the tomb. Offering rites dedicated to the ancestors went hand-in-hand with protective actions for the living while contacting the deceased. The ancestors were deeply embedded in the perception of the family and represented continuity and solidarity. In a few instances, important individuals also played a significant role on the community level and were venerated in community shrines. Throughout dynastic Egypt, ancestor cults always played a vital role in the lives of the ancient Egyptians.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to use this opportunity to thank Emily Teeter and Robert Ritner for their useful comments and Manfred Bietak and Kate Spence for their encouragement to pursue the aspect of ancestor veneration at Tell el-Dabʿa. A lot of people have helped me with the illustrations, and I would like to thank Emily Teeter, Marie Millet, Guillemette Andreu, Joanna Kyffin, Florence Dunn Friedman, Katinka Strzeletz, and Pablo Garcia Plaza for their permission to use the photographs and drawings, and Leslie Schramer and Tom Urban for their wonderful job on the final output.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

NOTES

¹ Harrington 2013, p. 27, after Allen 1974, p. 60.

² Another important element of the deceased is the *shut*, the shadow, which is most often mentioned in connection with the dead and depicted as a black-colored silhouette of the deceased (Lloyd 1989, p. 119).

³ The Hermopolis Legal Code, a compilation of legal texts from Ptolemaic Egypt, specifically states that a daughter can also act as the “eldest son” and that a parent is free to choose any child to fulfill the duty of regular offerings after the parent’s death (Johnson 2009, p. 87).

⁴ Assmann (1989, n. 1) was able to show that these banquets were not part of a fictitious afterlife.

⁵ These limestone slabs, formerly known as lustration slabs, were originally interpreted as facilities for washing, since they have the same form as the basins in “bathrooms,” where they appear in conjunction with architectural features that indicate toilets. Spence, however, convincingly proved their function as libation slabs (2007).

⁶ For an overview, see Stevens 2009, pp. 12–20; Smith 1997, pp. 73–75, fig. 5.5; and the recent in situ find of an anthropoid bust in a house at Amara-West (Spencer, in press).

⁷ Kasia Szpakowska (2003b) has related the considerable number of snake figurines found in settlements to this practice.

⁸ Busts were also found in tombs and temples (Keith 2011, pp. 13, 22–25). The link with the veneration of ancestors at the tomb is obvious, whereas the participation of the deceased in the temple cult was limited and inaccessible for the majority of the population. Cult participation could only be effected via intermediaries such as the statues of deified individuals or the king (Harrington 2013, pp. 99–101).

⁹ The archaeological context of this neighborhood, including all the finds, will be published in M. Müller, forthcoming. For preliminary reports, see Bietak 1984 and M. Müller 2011. The tombs of the area have been studied by Kopetzky 1993.

¹⁰ In her meticulous analysis of the offering pits, V. Müller (2008, vol. 1, pp. 303, 352) showed that in a few instances, based on the dating of the pottery from the offering pit, an offering cult lasted for at least two generations.

¹¹ Compare a possibly similar, but so far unique case at Amarna (described in Stevens 2006, pp. 294–95).

¹² V. Müller (2008, vol. 1, p. 384) also shows a strong influence of the Egyptian tradition in the offering cult.

III

CATALOG

CATALOG

THE KATUMUWA STELE



D. 019597

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST



FIGURE C1. The Katumuwa Stele (drawing by Karen Reczuch, courtesy of the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli)

1. KATUMUWA STELE (CAST)

Man-made materials (Original: basalt)

Gary Staab, 2013

Original: Iron Age II, ca. 743–732 BC

Original: Turkey, Zincirli, Area 5

Original excavated by the Oriental Institute, 2008

99 x 72 x 25 cm

OIM C5677

The discovery of the Katumuwa Stele, excavated at Zincirli, Turkey, by the Neubauer Expedition of the Oriental Institute, is a significant development for the history of ancient Middle Eastern religion. The original stele resides in the Gaziantep Archaeological Museum in eastern Turkey, but a reproduction of the face of the stele is displayed in the exhibit and has been added to the collections of the Oriental Institute Museum to document its discovery and expose it to a wider public. Elsewhere in this catalog, the stele's relief-carved image (Bonatz, *Chapter 3*; Catalog Nos. 3–11), inscription (Pardee, *Chapter 4*), archaeological context (Herrmann, *Chapter 5*), and historical and cultural background (Schloen, *Chapter 2*; Niehr, *Chapter 6*) are described and discussed in detail, and comparisons with other monuments and artifacts are made in passing in other chapters and catalog entries. Here, the significance of the Katumuwa Stele for our understanding of the religious and social life of the Syro-Hittite kingdoms and particularly for the beliefs, practice, and sociology of Syro-Hittite ancestor cult is summarized and synthesized.

Since 2006, the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli (ancient Sam'al), directed by David Schloen (exhibit co-curator), has been investigating the remains of this Iron Age (ca. 900–600 BC) city on the cultural and geographic border between the highlands of Anatolia and the plains and river valleys of Syria and Mesopotamia. Schloen's chapter on Zincirli (*Chapter 2*) puts the Katumuwa Stele into its immediate geographical, historical, and cultural context, piecing together evidence from the original nineteenth-century German excavations at the site, the results of the Oriental Institute's recent work, and references to the city in Assyrian accounts. The city of Katumuwa's day was at a crossroads, not only geographically and

culturally, mingling Levantine, Anatolian, and Mesopotamian people, languages, and religions, but also historically, at the turning point between local independence and absorption by the imperial behemoth of Assyria and its cosmopolitan culture. The king named in the stele's inscription as Katumuwa's lord, Panamuwa II, is a well-known figure whose own colossal memorial statue is represented in the exhibit by a full-sized cast (Catalog No. 12). Panamuwa II was first ousted in a dramatic coup and then restored to the throne of Sam'al by the king of Assyria. The kingdom, including its high officials like Katumuwa, seems to have prospered under his reign, but at the price of close Assyrian supervision. Less than twenty years later the dynasty disappeared and Sam'al became just one more Assyrian province.

In *Chapter 3*, Dominik Bonatz first dissects the relief-carved banquet scene of the Katumuwa Stele, identifying the function and likely significance, both in life and death, of the various objects and clothing accompanying the seated man. In the exhibit, the case entitled "An Eternal Feast: Interpreting the Stele's Image" accomplishes the same purpose through the medium of three-dimensional artifacts that match the elements depicted on the stele (Catalog Nos. 3–11), such as the pinecone, drinking bowl, and duck. Bonatz then puts the Katumuwa Stele into the context of similar memorial steles and statues from the Iron Age Syro-Hittite kingdoms (including Catalog No. 13, on loan from the Metropolitan Museum of Art).

There is often considerable ambiguity in mortuary art of the Mediterranean and ancient Middle East (and consequent disagreement among scholars) concerning whether the banquet scenes so frequently depicted reflect mortuary (eschatological) beliefs of abundance in a blessed afterlife, funerary or post-funerary food offerings shared by the family of the deceased, an idealized picture of the deceased in life, or a mix of the three (see most recently Draycott and Stamatopoulou, forthcoming, and bibliography therein). A significant contribution of the new Katumuwa Stele, as noted by Bonatz, is that it is the first Syro-Hittite mortuary monument to make an explicit connection between the image of the deceased at a banquet table and actual offerings of food and drink (Struble and Herrmann 2009, p.

30). Contrary to proposals that the banquet scene depicts only a happy afterlife (Kestemont 1983), or that the depiction of food was a substitute for real offerings (Orthmann 1971, p. 378; Voos 1988, p. 361), as it could be in Egypt (see Catalog No. 50), the Katumuwa inscription's prescription of regular sacrifices and offerings seems to confirm Bonatz's interpretation of the banquet steles as appeals for the feeding of the dead by the living (2000, pp. 115–17; *Chapter 3*, this volume; see also van den Hout, *Chapter 9*, this volume).

Chapter 4 begins with Dennis Pardee's translation of the thirteen-line inscription that fills the space above the seated figure and his table. The text, written in a local dialect of Aramaic, is of considerable interest from a linguistic point of view, presenting new words and grammatical puzzles (Pardee 2009 and forthcoming), but this contribution focuses on its content. Pardee (as well as Schloen, *Chapter 2*) raises the question of Katumuwa's social and cultural identity and how this affects our interpretation of the stele's significance for eschatological (mortuary) belief. Though he uses a West Semitic script and language, Katumuwa's name and the majority of the gods he mentions are Anatolian Luwian (Indo-European) in origin: do the beliefs and practices espoused in the stele reflect a Semitic or Anatolian cultural and religious background, or a hybrid of the two? Calling himself only "a servant of [King] Panamuwa," Katumuwa also seems to be a non-royal, even if a relatively wealthy and powerful, individual.

Why is Katumuwa's social and cultural background relevant? A major new contribution of the stele is that it contains the first mention in a West Semitic context of the concept of a soul that was separable from the body (see Wilford 2008; Schloen and Fink 2009, p. 11). For the contemporary Israelites, body and soul were considered inseparable, making cremation after death an unthinkable fate. Line 5 of the inscription describes the sacrifice of a ram for "my 'soul' (*nbš*) that (will be) in this stele." Later, in line 11, Katumuwa mentions a future sacrifice "in (proximity to) my soul," meaning again the stele. No human remains have been found anywhere in or below the building where the stele was found, indicating that if Katumuwa's soul was considered to be in the stone

stele itself, it must thus have been separate from his bones (which may have been either cremated and/or buried in a cemetery outside the city walls), or able to travel between remains and stone image (see Herrmann, *Chapter 5*, this volume). After the stele's first publication, several Anatolian specialists hastened to point out that from an Anatolian perspective, the separability of body and soul is unremarkable, well attested in second-millennium Hittite texts (see Masson 2010; Melchert 2010; Hawkins, forthcoming).¹ It may well be that Katumuwa felt the need to describe explicitly how his soul was to receive sustenance from offerings performed far away from his remains or despite the destruction of his remains by cremation (i.e., by inhabiting the stone monument bearing his image) because he retained Anatolian Luwian religious beliefs in an area increasingly dominated by people with a West Semitic cultural and linguistic background.²

Another very significant passage in the inscription stipulates sacrifices for a list of five gods (discussed by Pardee in *Chapter 4*) followed by the soul of Katumuwa himself (lines 3–5). The fact that gods and the dead are mentioned as recipients of sacrifice together in the same breath seems to indicate that Katumuwa had hopes for a blessed afterlife dining in the presence of deities. As Pardee (*Chapter 4*), Niehr (*Chapter 6*), and Lewis (*Chapter 8*) all point out, this passage is clearly parallel to one in the mortuary inscription of King Panamuwa I of Sam'al (KAI 214) that calls upon Panamuwa's heir to sacrifice to the storm-god Hadad, saying, "May the soul of Panamuwa eat with you and may the soul of Panamuwa drink with you!" (See also fig. C2, and the description of sacrifices for the gods and the dead in the Hittite royal funerary ritual described by van den Hout in *Chapter 9*.)

As this common meal between the gods and the dead has been considered by a number of scholars to represent a privilege of royalty (see citations in Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 31), representing the deification and worship of the deceased king, it is important for the sociology of Syro-Anatolian religion that Katumuwa seems to be a non-royal individual who is accorded the same privilege. In Hittite texts, it is clear that a blessed afterlife in the company of the gods is guaranteed to the royal family, while an alternative existence of

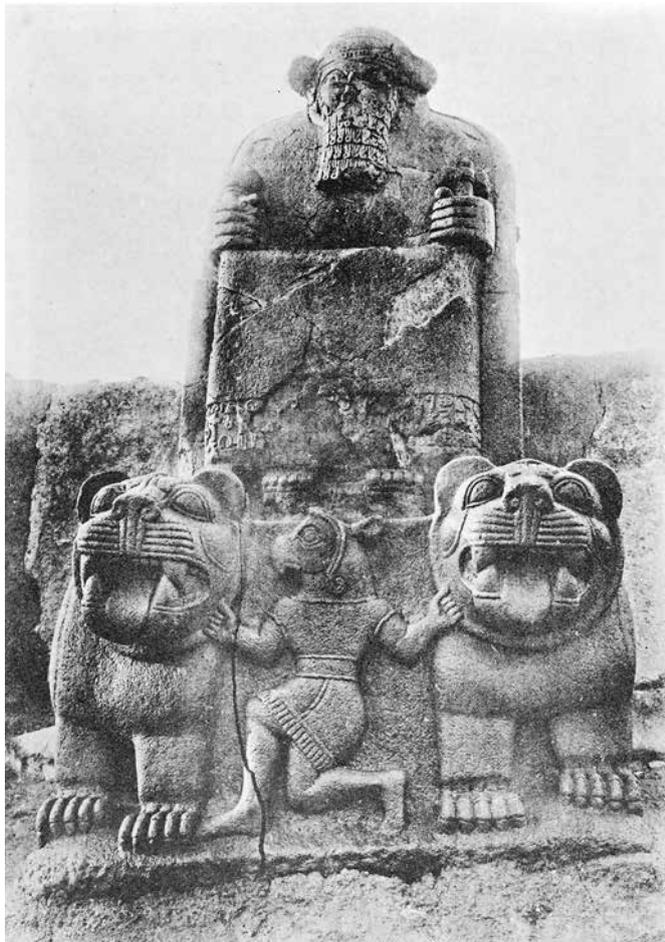


FIGURE C2. Statue of “Atri-Suhas,” “Soul of (King) Suhi (I)” from Iron Age Carchemish (Woolley 1921, pl. B.25; © 1969, Trustees of the British Museum). From the name, the statue apparently embodied the soul of the dead king, and its Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription (KARKAMIŠ A4d) stipulates food offerings for both the deceased and the gods: “(He) who does not [offer] annual bread, an ox, and two sheep for this god Atrisuhas with the gods, may Atrisuhas come against him fatally!” (after Hawkins 2000, part 1, pp. 100–01)

deprivation and unhappiness after death is the fate of most others (van den Hout 1994, and *Chapter 9*, this volume). The Katumuwa inscription seems to show, however, that at least in the Iron Age, royal status was not the only factor determining the fate of one’s soul (cf. Melchert 2010, pp. 7–8); instead, it was likely an interdependent combination of one’s socioeconomic status in life, one’s virtues and good deeds, and the care offered by one’s surviving family or subjects (in the form of invocations and food and drink offerings) that was considered to lead to a happy or unhappy afterlife. However, Niehr (*Chapter 6*) comes to an alternative conclusion: he identifies so many similarities between the royal mortuary cult and the mortuary cult of Katumuwa

that he decides that he must have had royal status, even if as only a local prince or vassal. This interpretation may be thrown in doubt, however, by the inscription, which identifies Katumuwa with no other title than “servant of Panamuwa,” suggesting that he held a vaguely defined bureaucratic office (as some kind of “minister” or “vizier”) rather than a hereditary position in his own right.

Another remarkable feature of the Katumuwa Stele is its status as the only Syro-Hittite (Iron Age Aramaean or Luwian) mortuary stele to have been fully documented in its original setting. This archaeological evidence, in combination with the inscription, guided the digital reconstruction of the annual mortuary feast in the “Remembering Katumuwa” video that forms a cornerstone of the exhibit (Catalog No. 2). In *Chapter 5*, I describe not only the immediate setting of the monument itself, but its position within its architectural complex, neighborhood, and city. From these architectural and spatial data and accompanying material finds, I also try to deduce the size and composition of the social group involved in the mortuary cult of Katumuwa.

When the stele was first published, only part of the building in which it was found and a few neighboring rooms and open areas had been excavated, limiting our understanding of its function, though it was already apparent that this was neither a necropolis nor an elite residence, but some kind of freestanding mortuary “chapel” (Struble and Herrmann 2009, pp. 33–39). Two additional seasons of excavation revealed much more of the surrounding neighborhood, making it clear that the stele was indeed set up in a relatively modest special-purpose building (referred to in the inscription as a *syd/r*, perhaps “reception hall”) and located so as to be as close as possible to a small neighborhood temple next door (see also V. R. Herrmann forthcoming a; forthcoming b). The animal bones discarded in and around these buildings further demonstrate the unity, or perhaps complementarity, of the deity and mortuary cults. In combination with the inscription, the archaeological evidence shows how Katumuwa tried to ensure a happy afterlife for himself, placing his “soul” (in the stele) near to one of the homes of the gods on earth to facilitate the communal meal he would share with them through simultaneous sacrifices.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

Furthermore, it is significant that the annual offerings for Katumuwa took place not in a palatial precinct or monumental temple compound, but in a very modest neighborhood in the city's lower town, located on the edge of the district of large, elite homes where Katumuwa likely lived. This signals that mortuary cult was fundamentally a family affair. The relatively small size of the building in which the stele was found contrasts with the large amount of meat that would have been produced by the sacrifices stipulated in its inscription. This suggests that the practice of annual mortuary feasts not only piously maintained a family's relationship with their dead, but also strengthened or created social bonds with the living through the sharing of food as widely as possible within a broad social network. VRH

PUBLISHED

Original: Struble and Herrmann 2009; Pardee 2009; Schloen and Fink 2009

NOTES

¹ Hawkins (forthcoming) also rejects the interpretation that Katumuwa's soul is said to inhabit the stone stele. Rather, he sees Aramaic *nbš* as a translation of Luwian *atri-*, which (although it originally meant "soul") could also mean simply "image, likeness." He would translate this part of line 5 more prosaically as "a ram to my 'soul' (likeness), which (is) on this stele." However, even if *atri-* can be translated as "image" in some cases (but see Yakubovich 2002, pp. 194–97; 2010a, p. 164), the fact that sacrifices and offerings are clearly being made to the *nbš* argues that the animate, spiritual meaning of this word, rather than the man-made image, is referred to in the inscription. My thanks to David Hawkins for providing early access to his manuscript.

² The same general explanation may be offered for the unusual detail concerning mortuary offerings and rites given by the two royal mortuary inscriptions from Sam'al (KAI 214 and 215), known to be an ethnically hybrid or mixed kingdom (see Schloen, *Chapter 2*). See Niehr, *Chapter 6*, this volume, for what is known of royal mortuary cult in Sam'al.

2. VIDEO: “REMEMBERING KATUMUWA”

Travis Saul (in collaboration with Virginia R. Herrmann and J. David Schloen; voiceover by Dennis Pardee), 2014

Digital media

Video ca. 5 min 30 sec; http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/oimp/oimp37/oimp37_Remembering_Katumuwa.mp4

Audio ca. 2 min 40 sec; http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/oimp/oimp37/oimp37_Reading_Katumuwa.mp4

In order to summarize for museum visitors the discovery of the Katumuwa Stele and what we have learned about the mortuary cult associated with it, curators Virginia Herrmann and David Schloen worked with digital artist Travis Saul to create “Remembering Katumuwa.” In the exhibit, the video is projected as a diptych, presenting complementary scenes on two juxtaposed screens. Katumuwa’s intent in making his stele was to be remembered by his sons or the “sons of anybody else.” The video reenacts this remembrance both in

the present, as he is rediscovered by archaeologists, and in the past, as his soul was feasted by his descendents.

Working from photographs, drawings, and a latex “squeeze” [“mold”] of the face of the stele, Saul’s first task was to sculpt an accurate virtual Katumuwa Stele in three dimensions, using the 3-D modeling software ZBrush (fig. C3a). He then made another version that repaired all of the damage from erosion and the plows that had scraped the stele’s top, using parallels from contemporary Syro-Hittite sculpture to restore the winged sun-disk that once crowned the stele (fig. C3b). Using satellite photographs, remote-sensing maps (e.g., figs. 2.4 and 5.1), and excavation plans and photos (e.g., figs. 5.2 and 5.4), and in consultation with the exhibit curators, he recreated the city of Sam’al in the second half of the eighth century BC (fig. C3c) and Katumuwa’s mortuary chapel and the stele chamber (figs. C3d–g). He then peopled the chapel with figures whose dress is based on Syro-Hittite reliefs (e.g., figs. 3.1–3.7) created “props” based on contemporary artifacts and images and animated the mortuary feast using graphics software Modo and Maya.



FIGURE C3a. 3-D model of the Katumuwa Stele



FIGURE C3b. 3-D model of the Katumuwa Stele with winged sun-disk restored

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FIGURE C3c. Reconstruction of the city of Sam'al in the late 8th century BC, based on and extrapolated from excavations and remote sensing



FIGURE C3d. Reconstruction of Katumuwa's mortuary chapel, approached from the east



FIGURE C3e. Reconstruction of descendants entering the mortuary chapel through a courtyard that may have contained the vineyard mentioned in the inscription as producing offerings for the annual feast

In the video, the viewer first approaches the stele and its chapel from afar, zooming in from region to city and neighborhood, building and room, and finally to the stele itself. Along the way, the past (at left) and present (at right) are seen to intersect through the discoveries and documentation of archaeologists. Next, Katumuwa's remembrance is performed in the present by examining the stele closely — its size, shape, inscription, and imagery — and hearing his name and instructions for his mortuary feast in the inscription, read first in Aramaic and then in English by its translator, Dennis Pardee. The instructions for the feast and annual slaughter in the inscription make the transition to Katumuwa's remembrance in the past. The viewer then witnesses Katumuwa's annual mortuary feast, performed by his descendants: first, the dark, silent stele room before the feast; next, the solemn sacrifice of a ram for Katumuwa's soul; then, the offering of food and drink and the joyous, communal feast itself that revitalizes his soul; and finally, the end of the feast and return to the solitude of the dead. **VRH and TS**

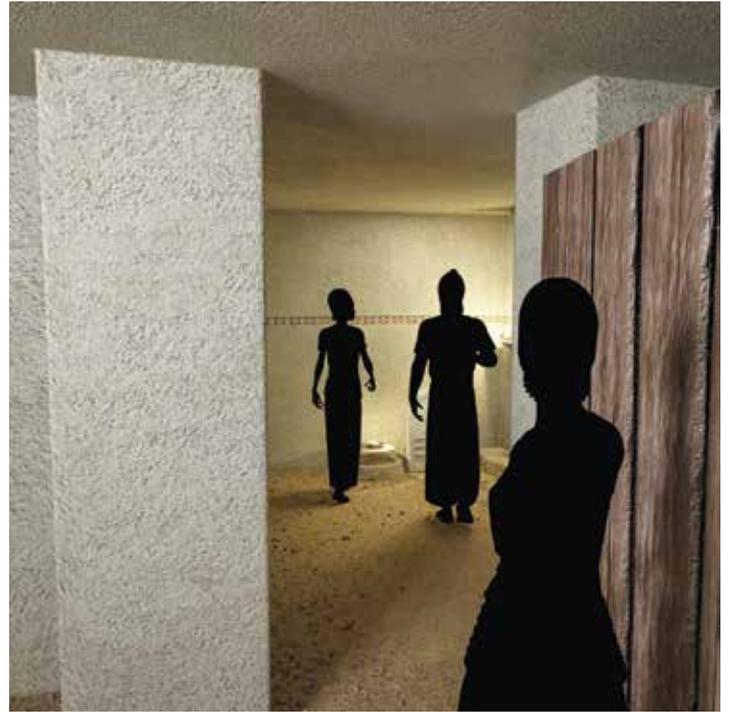


FIGURE C3f. Katumuwa's descendants enter the stele chamber to make offerings for his soul

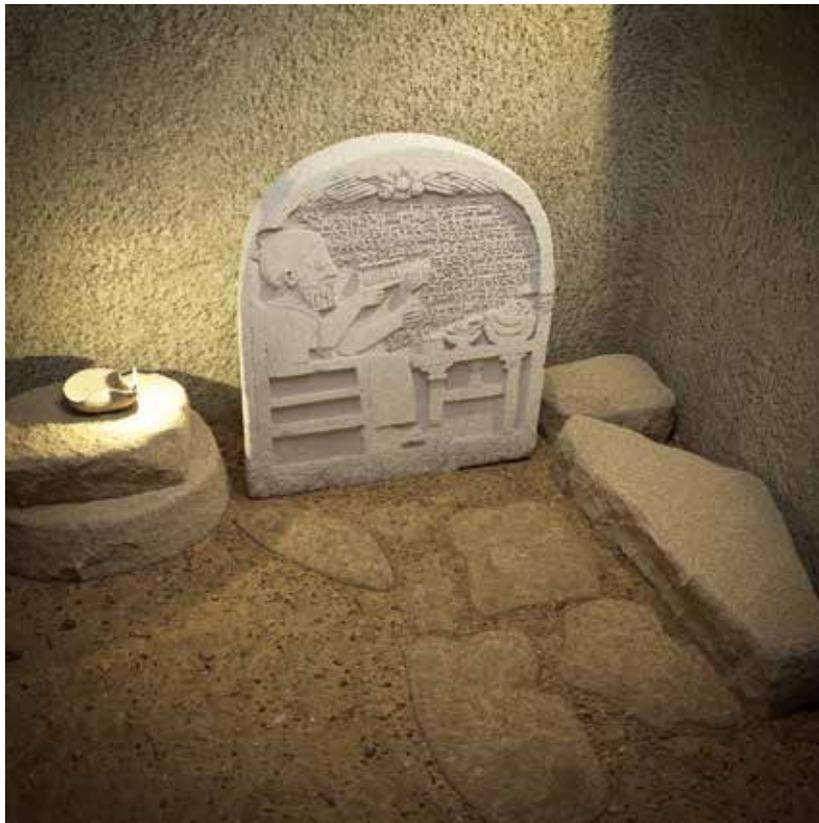


FIGURE C3g. Reconstruction of Katumuwa Stele chamber, showing the stele framed by a stone bench, pedestal, and pavement

AN ETERNAL FEAST: READING THE KATUMUWA STELE'S IMAGE

Sitting beneath the wings of the sun-disk in the elite dress of Sam'al, holding aloft an elaborate drinking vessel at a sumptuous banquet table, Katumuwa made his wish to dine in the company of the gods manifest in both text and image (Catalog No. 1, fig. C1). In the middle of the eighth century BC, Sam'al and most of the other Syro-Hittite kingdoms were already heavily under Assyrian sway. Katumuwa, a high magnate under Panamuwa II, adopted the cosmopolitan style taken on by Sam'al's royal house, but he still expressed his hopes for the afterlife and for an exalted relationship with the gods of Sam'al in a highly traditional way. In *Chapter 3* of this catalog, Bonatz describes the genre of Syro-Hittite banquet steles, spanning the period from 1000 to 700 BC, of which the Katumuwa Stele is quite a typical example.

Nevertheless, each of these steles is unique, with its individual elements and details selected according to the patron's or sculptor's preference or the fashions of the time and arranged within a traditional framework. The Katumuwa Stele even adds a new item to the iconographic repertoire of these mortuary steles by showing Katumuwa holding what seems to be a pinecone in his left hand, in the place usually occupied by other botanical products, such as flowers, grapes, or grain. A conifer cone is a particularly appropriate symbol in Katumuwa's country of Sam'al, nestled below the highly valued forests of the Amanus Mountain slopes (see Schloen, *Chapter 2*). The (heavily damaged) winged sun-disk above his head,

conveying ideas of justice, rebirth from the netherworld, or connections to royalty, is also fairly unusual, though perhaps characteristic of the Karasu Valley around Zincirli (cf. fig. 3.1 from Zincirli, and Bonatz 2000, no. C 30 from near İslahiye), nor is the duck laid out on his table particularly common. Another unusual feature is Katumuwa's hairstyle, or rather, lack thereof. Whereas other bearded men in Syro-Hittite art have curly locks of hair down to the nape of their necks (see, e.g., figs. 3.4 and 3.6), Katumuwa seems to be depicted bald. Baldness is sometimes associated with the physical purity required by priesthood, but priests typically also show a clean-shaven face (e.g., fig. 3.2), so the meaning of Katumuwa's baldness is uncertain (Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 22). (See Bonatz, *Chapter 3*, this volume, and Struble and Herrmann 2009 for more on the Katumuwa Stele's iconography).

This section of the exhibit uses three-dimensional artifacts matching the elements depicted on the stele to dissect the imagery of Katumuwa's banquet scene: the winged sun-disk (Catalog No. 3), chair and table (Nos. 4–5), drinking bowl (No. 6), pinecone (No. 7), cylindrical box (Nos. 8–9), and duck (No. 10) on a raised platter (No. 11). None of these elements is incidental; instead, each was carefully chosen as a meaningful icon, whether bearing religious or mortuary significance, referencing the cosmopolitan elite lifestyle of his day, or mixing spiritual and mundane symbolism. **VRH**



D. 05488

3

3. HITTITE PLAQUE WITH WINGED SUN-DISKS

Ivory

Late Bronze Age IIB, ca. 1400-1200 BC

Israel, Megiddo, Stratum VIIA

Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1937

10.0 x 9.5 x 1.2 cm

OIM A22292

This worn ivory plaque was once an inlay for a box or item of furniture crafted in one of the centers of northern Syria, southeast Turkey, or central Turkey at the height of the Hittite Empire period. Found at Megiddo, Israel, it represents one of the most elaborate Hittite ivories found in the Middle East. It may have arrived in the southern Levant as booty, tribute, or as part of diplomatic gift exchange

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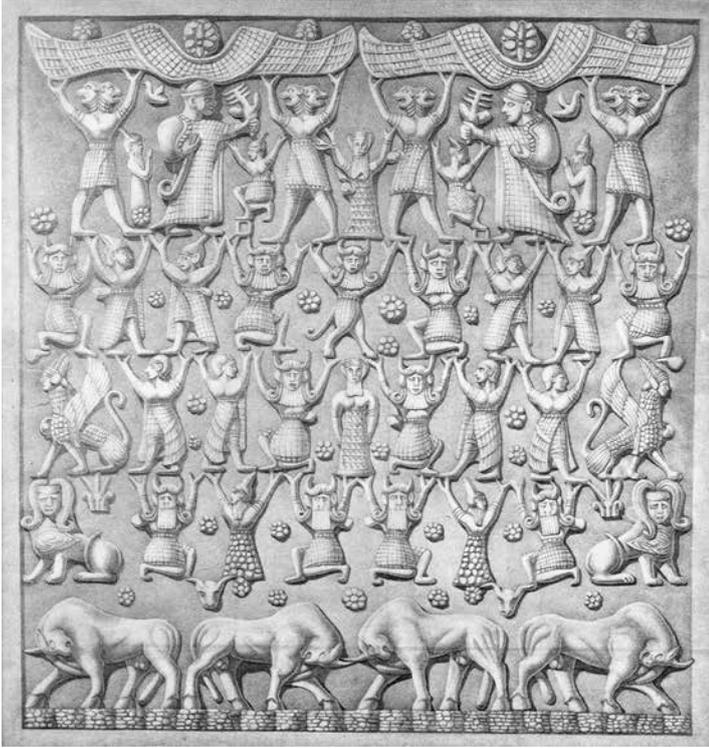


FIGURE C4. Reconstruction of the ivory Hittite plaque (OIM photograph P. 61345)

between the Hittite political sphere and Canaan, which was under Egyptian rule for much of the Late Bronze Age.

The plaque's imagery is typically Hittite with figures closely resembling those represented at the Hittite rock-cut sanctuary of Yazılıkaya (fig. C4; cf. fig. 9.1), close to Hattusa, and the spring sanctuary at Eflatun Pınar, Turkey. The plaque features three registers of bulls and bullmen supporting a pair of figures beneath two winged sun-disks. The winged sun-disks and the robed figures below likely represent the Hittite sun deity, as indicated by Anatolian hieroglyphs in the hands of the figures, which read: "Sun-Heaven." Carved within each sun-disk are rosettes, an established royal symbol in north Syrian and Hittite art. The winged sun-disk was a new development in Late Bronze Age Hittite art, perhaps entering the Hittite visual repertoire as late as the fourteenth century BC.

In the ancient Middle East generally, the sun-deity acted as a divine judge, shedding light on injustice, and had underworld associations, as the sun was thought to travel through the underworld at night. The Hittite and Hurrian pantheons of Anatolia and northern Syria included both a male sun-god of heaven and a female sun-goddess of the earth who ruled over the underworld (Popko 1995).

The Hittite winged sun-disk was likely inspired by Egyptian examples, presumably via contacts with Syria. Egyptian sun-disks with falcon wings represented a form of the god Horus, a protective symbol of kingship, often found in temple doorways and protecting other spaces (Shonkwiler 2012, pp. 52–53). After the collapse of the Hittite empire around 1200 BC, the winged sun-disk continued as a symbol of divine protection in southeast Turkey and north Syria at Carchemish, Tell Halaf, and Zincirli (where the Katumuwa Stele was found). From the ninth century BC, the winged sun-disk was integrated into Assyrian royal imagery, often representing the patron god Ashur, protector of the king. A winged sun-disk containing a divine male figure (often identified as Ahura Mazda), was a source of Achaemenid royal power (sixth–fourth centuries BC). Dominik Bonatz identifies the winged sun-disk on the Katumuwa Stele as the sun-god Šamš, a deity of uncertain gender (Lipiński 2000) who may have had the attributes of earlier male sun-gods of the heavens or female sun-goddesses of the underworld (for the latter, see Winter 1976a, pp. 47–48; Niehr 2010b, p. 275). The Katumuwa Stele and several other other Syro-Hittite mortuary monuments and structures face east toward the rising sun (Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 36). The symbol could also have been interpreted as a symbol of royal power and protection, that is, of Panumuwa II, the king of Sam'al, under whom Katumuwa served. JG

PUBLISHED

Loud 1939, no. 44, pl. 11; Frankfort 1954, pp. 130–31, fig. 57; Alexander 1991, figs. 1–2; Novacek 2011, pp. 56–57, cat. no. 31

4.-5. IVORY FURNITURE INLAYS

Ivory

Iron Age II-III, ca. 900-700 BC

Iraq, Khorsabad

Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1933-34

4. Furniture inlay depicting a “woman in the window”
10.1 x 11.2 cm
OIM A22169
5. Furniture inlay depicting a sphinx
7.9 x 10.4 cm
OIM A22164

These two ivory panels were originally part of a series of inlays decorating a wooden chair or chairs. They were found damaged by fire in the temple of the god Nabu at Khorsabad, the Assyrian capital city Dur-Sharrukin that was built by Sargon II toward the end of the eighth century BC (Loud and Altman 1938, pp. 96-97). The ivories from this room, like many of the fine ivories found in the Assyrian capitals, were not made in Assyria, however, but came there by either plunder, gift, or tribute from the cities of the Levant to the west, which were known for their fine inlaid furniture, sometimes further embellished with gilding or colored glass and stones (G. Herrmann 2000).

In the case of these two panels, their slightly Egyptianizing but mainly Syrian style points to an origin at Damascus (Winter 1981).¹ The originally Egyptian subject of the male, human-lion hybrid known as the sphinx (No. 5) has been transformed in Hittite and Syrian depictions such as this into a winged female creature, wearing long hair instead of the Egyptian *nemes* headdress and crown and staring boldly out of the frame at the viewer, though she wears an elaborate Egyptianizing collar and bib. There have been many theories about the meaning of the so-called “woman at the window” motif (No. 4) of a slightly smiling female face wearing an elaborate forehead frontlet and earrings and looking out of a square frame over a balustrade decorated with palmette capitals, but one possibility is that it is a symbol of courtly love, representing the meeting of the sexes at the opening between the inner realm of women and the outer realm of men (Suter 1992).²



D. 019142

4



D. 019146

5

Whereas the chairs of royalty such as Barrākib, the last king of Samʿal (fig. C5), and Ashurbanipal of Assyria (fig. 7.5) are often depicted with fine decoration probably representing ivory inlays and sculptural elements, those of non-royal figures such as Katumuwa rarely preserve such details (see Catalog Nos. 1 and 13 and figs. 3.1, 3.3-3.7, but cf. fig. 3.2), but whether this is simply a factor of the skill and time of the sculptors or whether it

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

means that such elaborate chairs were reserved for the king and queen is unknown. The conspicuous decoration of royal and elite chairs and tables in the Syro-Hittite kingdoms³ correlates with the prominence and repetition of the enthroned posture in depictions of both the living and the dead that project to the viewer the power and honor of these seated figures. VRH

PUBLISHED

Loud and Altman 1938, pp. 96-97, pls. 52:35, 53:44

NOTES

¹ Ivory-inlaid furniture could also travel within the west: several pieces found at Zincirli have been identified as belonging to the same “South Syrian” style as these panels from Khorsabad, and Irene Winter (1981, p. 128) suggests that they might have been acquired as booty by Katumuwa’s King Panamuwa II on his campaign against Damascus with Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria. Conversely, ivory-inlaid furniture from Zincirli also seems to have ended up in Assyria: several chairs found at Nimrud may have been made in Sam’al (Winter 1976a).

² A similar motif is seen decorating the couch and chair of the king and queen of Assyria in figure 7.5, and these may even depict furniture “imported” from the west (Osborne 2012, pp. 38-39).

³ Decorative elements of the furniture depicted often mimic architectural elements of palaces, such as columns with decorated capitals (cf. the legs and central support of Katumuwa’s table, as well as the ivory throne fragments found in the royal palace of Zincirli: von Luschan and Andrae 1943, pl. 63), further transforming these objects into emblems of royal power (Osborne 2012, pp. 39-44).



FIGURE C5. King Barräkib of Sam'al and his scribe, orthostat from Hilani IV at Zincirli. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, inv. 2817 (photograph by Virginia R. Herrmann)



6

6. PHIALE (DRINKING BOWL)

Bronze

Iron Age III, ca. 750–600 BC

Iran, probably from Luristan

19.9 x 5.1 cm

Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 32.161.1

Gift of George D. Pratt, 1932

Broad, shallow drinking and offering bowls of this type are commonly called phialae (singular, phiale), the Greek term for these vessels.¹ These bowls were usually made of metal, either bronze, as here, or even silver and gold. Below the slightly flaring neck marked with incised lines, many small lobes or “gadrooms” reminiscent of flower petals or spreading leaves curl up the sides of this bowl.² The similar pattern on the stone-carved vessel held aloft by Katumuwa shows that it was also intended to represent a metal phiale and distinguishes it from the plainer, deeper cups represented on most contemporary Syro-Hittite mortuary steles (but see Bonatz 2000, nos. C 28 and C 42; Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 23). By referencing this specific type of vessel, the sculptor was clearly signaling Katumuwa’s place among the cosmopolitan elite who were both able to afford metal tableware and

were privy to international fashions in drinking and offering (see Stronach 1995). The phiale displayed here was found in western Iran, probably Luristan, and very similar vessels have been found in Iron Age Babylonia, Assyria (compare the bowls held by Ashurbanipal and his queen in fig. 7.5), Zincirli itself (von Luschan and Andrae 1943, pl. 56), Phoenicia,³ the southern Levant, and Phrygia, their extensive range demonstrating the broadly shared elite fashion in the Middle East of this period, which was then passed down to the Persian empire and the classical world (Luschey 1939). **VRH**

PUBLISHED

Muscarella 1988b, p. 206 (no. 316)

NOTES

¹ The biblical term for this type of bowl may be *mizrāq*, part of the altar kit for blood sacrifice rituals (Greer 2010).

² It has been suggested that the incurved shoulder of these shallow bowls was intended to trap sediment from the wine being consumed (Hamilton 1966, p. 2).

³ A Persian-period bronze phiale with a Phoenician inscription dedicating it to the *marzeah* (religious drinking society sometimes associated with memorial rites; see McLaughlin 2001) of the sun-god Šamš (also referenced in both the text and relief of the Katumuwa Stele; see Catalog No. 3) suggests that these vessels could be used specifically in mortuary rituals (Avigad and Greenfield 1982). See also Greer 2007 on the use of *mizrāq* vessels in the *marzeah* condemned in Amos 6:1–7.

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7. PINECONE FROM A
FUNERARY CIPPUS

Limestone
 Hellenistic period(?), ca. 333-58 BC
 Cyprus, from Kition or Idalion
 22.9 x 14.0 cm
 Collection of the Metropolitan
 Museum of Art, 74.51.2777
 Cesnola Collection, purchased by
 subscription, 1874-76



7

This large pinecone carved in stone once topped a funerary monument (called a cippus), probably of the Hellenistic period, on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. The pinecone is widespread as a symbolic motif in ancient art (fig. C6). The striking geometric regularity of its hard scales that protect the (apparently) self-propagating seeds within, its phallic resemblance, the evergreen nature of its tree, and the scented resin it produces make it a powerful symbol of fertility and the regeneration of life suitable for funerary monuments. Though the pinecone on a branch that Katumuwa holds up in his left hand is unique among Syro-Hittite memorials, supernatural figures use what seem to be pinecones to purify the sacred tree and the king himself in Neo-Assyrian reliefs (fig. C7; Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 32) and in the temple of the storm-god at Aleppo, and pinecones were used

in Hittite rituals for the deities of the underworld (Collins 2001).¹ In a late version of the myth of Osiris (the Egyptian god of the dead), Isis finds his corpse encased in a conifer tree at Byblos (Plutarch, *Moralia* 5.15), and in the Greek and Roman world, pinecones were associated with the mystery cults of Dionysus (topping his thyrsus staff) and Attis (the lover of the goddess Cybele), who died beneath a pine tree. **VRH**

PUBLISHED

Myres 1914, no. 1228; Hermary and Mertens 2013, no. 507

NOTE

¹ Chairs and tables with pinecone feet were used for royalty both in Assyria (see fig. 7.5) and in the Levant, as seen in the orthostat of Barrākib, the last king of Sam'al (Zincirli) (fig. C5; cf. fig. 3.2).

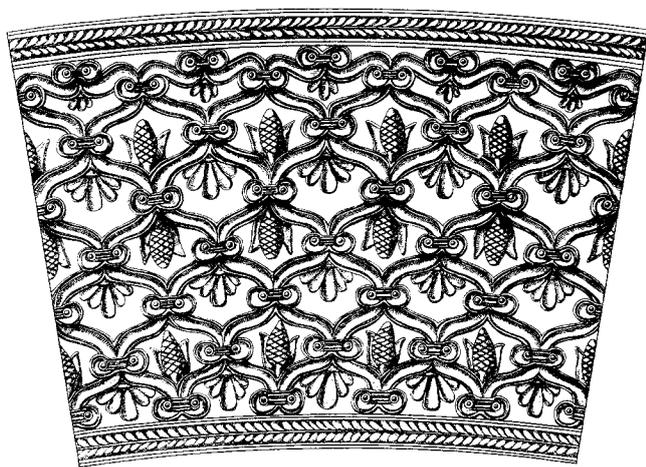
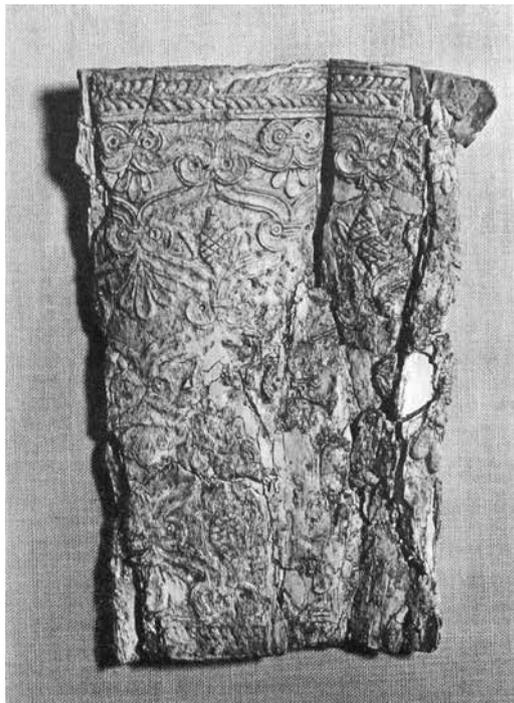


FIGURE C6. Photograph (top) and roll-out drawing (above) of an ivory cup from Late Bronze Age Megiddo with garlands of pinecones and palmettes (Loud 1939, no. 123, pl. 20)



FIGURE C7. Assyrian "genie" with pinecone and bucket, Nimrud, Northwest Palace, Gypsum (?), reign of Ashurnasirpal II, 883-859 BC, 110.5 x 55.4 x 11.0 cm, OIM A34980 (D. 019229)

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D. 019144

9

8

8.-9. CYLINDRICAL BOX (PYXIS) AND LID

Gray stone (steatite)

Amuq Phase O, Iron Age II-III, 900-550 BC

8. Box
 Turkey, Tell Judaidah
 Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1934-35
 9.5 x 5.0 cm
 OIM A17345
9. Lid
 Turkey, Chatal Hüyük
 Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1933-34
 D: 8.9 cm
 OIM A12640



D. 019116

8 & 9

Cylindrical stone or ivory boxes were a common luxury item in the Syro-Hittite kingdoms of the Iron Age. The exterior of this box (commonly called a pyxis, using a Greek term for a similar type of vessel), excavated by the Oriental Institute in the Amuq Valley of Turkey, is decorated with a simple but precisely executed incised pattern of six-petaled rosettes enclosed in concentric circles and separated by crossing zig-zag lines. The flat, circular lid, excavated at a different site and not originally belonging to this pyxis, is engraved with

similar motifs of central rosette (with eight pointed petals), incised circles, and zig-zag lines in a slightly different style. The lid and box would have been attached by a wooden or bone peg, allowing it to swing open and shut, and could have been secured by tying the knob on the lid to a peg protruding from the side of the box (see Wicke 2008, pl. 8).

A cylindrical box of this type with a knobbed lid is depicted on the Katumuwa Stele together with the food offerings. Because of their usual division into several small compartments, many scholars

have assumed that they were used as containers for cosmetic oils or unguents (e.g., Mazzoni 2001, 2005, p. 43; Wicke 2008, p. 119), but their frequent depiction on banquet tables in both Syro-Hittite and Assyrian art (including the banquet of Ashurbanipal and his queen, fig. 7.5; and the other banquet stele from Zincirli, fig. 3.1) suggests that they may also have been used for small amounts of fine foodstuffs, such as spices, condiments, nuts, or sweets (Sams 1980, p. 10; Struble and Herrmann 2009, p. 28; cf.

Wicke 2008, p. 37). Elaborate examples of these boxes can be carved with banquet scenes (see fig. C8), hunt scenes, or wild and mythical animals (Wicke 2008), referencing the very celebratory events at which they might have been used. **VRH**

PUBLISHED

Sams 1980, pp. 5–6, fig. 8; Wicke 2008, pp. 268–69, pl. 38a; Pucci, forthcoming

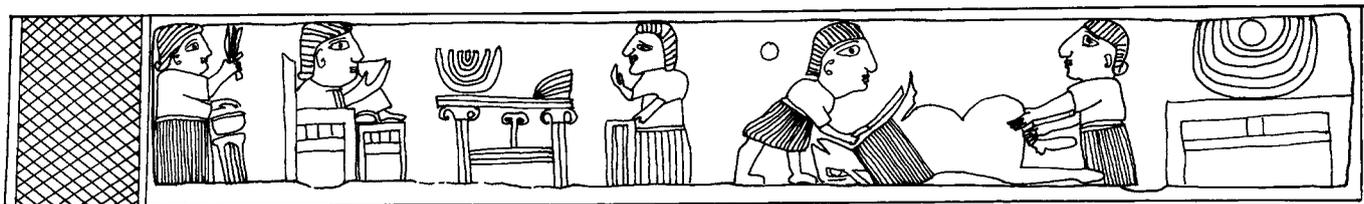


FIGURE C8. Stone pyxis with a carved banquet scene and animal sacrifice found in Iron Age temple Building XVI at Tell Ta'yinat, Turkey. 7 cm wide (photographs by Jennifer Jackson, drawing by Fiona Haughey, courtesy of the Ta'yinat Archaeological Project)

10. DUCK WEIGHT

Basalt

Amuq Phase O, Iron Age II, 720–680

BC

Turkey, Tell Ta'yinat

Excavated by the Oriental Institute,

1936

19.4 x 31.7 x 21.6 cm, 13.6 kg

OIM A27852



D. 019156

10

This stone weight, shaped like a duck, was found at Tell Ta'yinat in an Iron Age context roughly contemporary with the Katumuwa Stele from Zincirli. A duck is depicted on the Katumuwa Stele as part of the meal spread on a table before the deceased. Tell Ta'yinat is the site of the capital of the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Patina (also called Unqi), which bordered the kingdom of Sam'al to the south (Harrison 2009). Waterfowl were abundant in both Sam'al and Patina because of the extensive marshes in both kingdoms. In fact, ducks — presumably actual ducks and not duck-shaped weights — are included in the list of tribute received by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III from the conquered kings of Sam'al and Patina/Unqi in 857 BC (Grayson 1996, p. 11). Ducks were also significant in Anatolian religion, as substitutes who

could absorb impurities during funeral rites (Bonatz 2000, pp. 94–95; *Chapter 3*, this volume).

Duck-shaped stone weights of various sizes were used in ancient Mesopotamia over a long period of time (Powell 1989, pp. 508–17). They and other kinds of animal-shaped weights in stone or metal (e.g., lions) were used in balance-scales to weigh out quantities of silver. Small pieces of broken-up silver called *Hacksilber* (from the German term) were widely used as a medium of exchange before the invention of coined money in the sixth century BC (Thompson 2003). *Hacksilber* was found in an Iron Age context in excavations at Zincirli, as were duck-shaped stone weights (von Luschan and Andrae 1943, p. 121 and pls. 44–45; p. 28 and pl. 11). JDS

Previously unpublished



D. 019154

11

11. RED-SLIPPED FOOTED PLATTER

Baked clay

Amuq Phase O, Iron Age II-III, 900-550 BC

Turkey, Tell Judaidah

Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1933-34

31.4 x 11.4 cm

OIM A27075

On the feasting table depicted in the Katumuwa Stele, the main dish, a duck (see Catalog No. 10), is presented in a bowl with a high foot. The stele probably depicts a footed stone vessel, because these are quite common at Zincirli; indeed, fragments of such vessels, made of basalt, were found in the mortuary chamber near the stele itself (fig. 5.8; Struble and Herrmann 2009, pp. 34-35). However, the stele could instead be depicting a footed metal vessel of a kind that is usually not preserved in archaeological sites, though ceramic imitations of metal serving ware are well known, as in the case of this red-slipped platter, which is roughly contemporary with the Katumuwa Stele.

This ceramic platter was found at Tell Judaidah on the eastern edge of the Plain of Antioch (Haines 1971, pp. 28-31), in the Iron Age kingdom of Patina that bordered the kingdom of Sam'al to the south. Similar red-slipped footed bowls and platters with high, trumpet-shaped bases were widely distributed in the Iron Age Levant. They have been found, for example, at the Israelite capital of Samaria (Amiran 1970, p. 212, photo 224 and pl. 67:15). They are examples of a widely imitated Phoenician ceramic tradition in which, it is thought, the polished red finish was intended to imitate bronze. **JDS**

Previously unpublished

THE SOUL IN THE STONE: EFFIGIES OF THE DEAD

*I am Katumuwa, servant of Panamuwa, who
commissioned for myself (this) stele while still
living*

— Katumuwa Stele, lines 1–2

*... And a ram for my “soul” that (will be) in
this stele*

— Katumuwa Stele, line 5

Even after their physical remains were buried and gone, there were still a number of ways that the living could maintain contact with the dead. Besides dreams and visions, mortuary rites could address the bones themselves; in Mesopotamia the dead were sometimes represented at a dining table by an empty chair; and in Egypt ritual was often directed to false doors that acted as portals for the dead (van der Toorn, *Chapter 10*; Müller, *Chapter 11*, this volume). However, a two- or three-dimensional (usually) stone effigy or likeness of the deceased, such as the Katumuwa Stele, was one of the most common and widespread ways of preserving the individual memory of the dead and providing a medium of interaction and focus of ritual for the living.

In the ancient world, images (and names) had power. In Egypt, a ritual called the “Opening of the Mouth” was performed on statues to allow them to breathe, see, and partake of food and drink (Roth 2001), and a similar “Washing of the Mouth” ritual brought statues to life in Mesopotamia (Walker and Dick 1999). In the ancient Middle East, marauding enemies would destroy or mutilate the statues and reliefs of enemies to neutralize their magical, as well as symbolic, power (Nylander 1980; N. May 2012), and the damaged pieces would be respectfully buried by the survivors much like a slain comrade (Ussishkin 1970). It was the social aspect of the Egyptian dead, the *ka*, that resided in the statue and received offerings (Müller, *Chapter 11*), much as the soul of Katumuwa was said to be “in” the stone stele bearing his image for the purpose of receiving the annual offerings (line 5).

Effigies of the dead could be set up wherever mortuary cult took place. In Egypt, this was most often in the tomb, but anthropoid busts sometimes represented the deceased at home or occasionally in a

temple (Müller, *Chapter 11*). Though anthropomorphic statues are rare in the southern Levant, the statuettes called *teraphim* in the Bible were kept at home or in a sanctuary (Lewis, *Chapter 8*; see also van der Toorn 1990; Lewis 1999), while the schematic stone statuettes of northern Mesopotamia and the Levant have been found in domestic, temple, and burial contexts (Catalog Nos. 14–17). While standing statues of deceased rulers subject to veneration by all have been found primarily in city gates and other prominent places in the northern Levant and southern Anatolia (Ussishkin 1989), seated stone statues and banquet steles of both the Bronze and Iron Ages in this region are most commonly located in or near a temple (sometimes in an adjacent “chapel” as in the case of the Katumuwa Stele), and secondarily in or on tombs (e.g., fig. C9) (Struble and Herrmann 2009, pp. 36–39). Wherever they were set up, they seem to have served as boundary stones (*Grenzsteine*), facilitating but also safely controlling interaction between the realms of the living and the dead (Bonatz 2000, p. 157).

Katumuwa informs us in lines 1 and 2 of his inscription that he commissioned his stele himself while he was still living, and this anticipatory preparation for death was also the norm in Egyptian society. However, a number of Syro-Hittite mortuary inscriptions (e.g., Catalog No. 12) note that a close relative had the memorial made following the death of his or her ancestor (Hawkins 1980, 1989). The biblical story of Absalom’s monument parallels that of Katumuwa, but its somber tone suggests that memorialization by a descendant was considered the ideal in the Levant: “During his lifetime, Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it for himself in the King’s Valley, for he thought, ‘I have no son to invoke my name.’ He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom’s monument to this day” (2 Samuel 18:18).

The effigies of the dead collected here represent Egypt, the Levant, Anatolia, and northern Mesopotamia; appear in two and three dimensions (as well as purely textual description); and range from miniature and schematic to colossal and realistic. Two are closely related to the Katumuwa Stele: a cast of the lower half of a colossal standing statue of Panamuwa II (Catalog No. 12), the king Katumuwa served, allows us to compare and contrast how individuals

THE SOUL IN THE STONE: EFFIGIES OF THE DEAD

of different ranks were memorialized in the same society; and a banquet stele from Marash, Turkey, is of the same type as that of Katumuwa, but depicts a mother-daughter scene that projects a very different tone than Katumuwa's solitary repast (Catalog No. 13).

Also on display, most or all for the first time, are four schematic stone statues from the Levant and northern Mesopotamia (Catalog Nos. 14–17). Van Exel's entry on these little-known and under-appreciated artifacts, which seem to be a cross between the Levantine tradition of aniconic sacred standing stones and the fully representational seated statues from the same period, makes the case for their connection to ancestor cult.

In a lifelike pair statue from a tomb of the Egyptian Old Kingdom, a wife lays an affectionate arm

across her husband's shoulders, united with him in death as in life (Catalog No. 18). Much like the Syro-Hittite steles of Katumuwa and the woman from Marash, the *akh* stele of a man named Nakht (Catalog No. 19) shows a banquet scene of food offerings placed before the deceased, here by multiple family members, recursively depicting the ritual actions that were to take place in front of the object itself.

Finally, no statues of the deceased Hittite kings seem to survive, but the royal funerary ritual described in cuneiform on Catalog No. 20 and by van den Hout in *Chapter 9* show how, once the corpse was disposed of, the statue became a full-fledged stand-in for the dead person, not only receiving offerings, but moving from place to place and even making libations itself. VRH



FIGURE C9. Two seated ancestor statues holding cups in their hands flank the entrance to a royal tomb beneath the Late Bronze Age palace of Qatna, Syria. The remains of food offerings were found in bowls placed before the statues, as well as inside the tomb, which contained the bones of multiple generations of the royal family (cf. the Megiddo tomb depicted in fig. C18) (Qatna excavations, Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)

12. STATUE OF PANAMUWA II OF SAM'AL (CAST)

Plaster, paint (Original: stone)

Early 20th c. AD (Original: Iron Age II, ca. 730 BC)

Original: Turkey, Tahtalı Pınarı

190 x 88 cm

OIM C5676

(Original: Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, inv.

VA 3012)

In 1888, while excavating at the site of Zincirli, the German expedition of the Orient Comité found a large statue (twice life-size) of Panamuwa II, king of Sam'al, at the site of Tahtalı Pınarı, about 2 kilometers north of Zincirli, where there was a spring (von Luschan 1893, pp. 53–55; Wartke 2005, p. 69, fig. 62). Only the lower half of the statue was preserved (see fig. C10). Carved on it in relief is a twenty-three-line alphabetic inscription written in the local Sam'alian dialect (see Pardee, *Chapter 2*, and Niehr, *Chapter 6*). The statue and inscription were commissioned by Barrākib, the son and successor of Panamuwa II, to commemorate his father, who had died in battle at Damascus in 733/732 BC while fighting with the Assyrians as a loyal vassal of Tiglath-pileser III (Tropper 1993, pp. 98–139; Younger 2000d). The inscription describes how Tiglath-pileser made funerary offerings for the soul of Panamuwa upon his untimely death and set up a temporary memorial for him while still on campaign (see the quotation in Niehr, *Chapter 6*). Panamuwa II is almost certainly the king who is mentioned in the Katumuwa Stele, where Katumuwa calls himself the “servant of Panamuwa,” indicating that Katumuwa was a royal official of the kingdom of Sam'al in the period before 733 BC.

On the front of the Panamuwa statue is depicted the hanging hem of a fringed mantle, as in contemporary depictions on orthostats from Zincirli itself. In the Katumuwa Stele, Katumuwa is shown wearing a similar mantle. In the Panamuwa statue, the king is also wearing an ankle-length tunic with a tasseled hem. The curving line that comes down across the skirt seems, from similar depictions on orthostats, to be the edge of another garment worn over the tunic. Panamuwa was probably dressed in the distinctive court dress of



12, front

D. 019160

FIGURE C10. Suggested reconstruction of the top half of the statue of Panamuwa II, based on reliefs of Panamuwa's son, Barrakib (by Karen Reczuch)



late eighth-century **BC** Sam'al, which Katumuwa also wears, though in less elaborate form.

In addition to these visual parallels, the content of the inscription on the Panamuwa statue echoes the inscription on the Katumuwa Stele, with its mention of the “soul” of the deceased king (probably as part of a formulaic wish that his soul would eat and drink in the afterlife). The final lines of the inscription are partly illegible but they appear to indicate that the statue was set up near the tomb of Panamuwa, and that this image of the dead king played a role in mortuary feasts in which rams were offered to the soul of Panamuwa and to the gods, just as Katumuwa's image on his stele was intended to be the locus of similar offerings. **JDS**

PUBLISHED (ORIGINAL)

von Luschan, Schrader, and Sachau 1893, pp. 53–84, figs. 16–17; Younger 2000d



D. 019162

12, left side



D. 019163

12, back

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

13. SYRO-HITTITE BANQUET STELE

Basalt
 Iron Age II, ca. 950-875 BC
 Turkey, probably from Marash
 55.88 x 50.80 x 9.53 cm
 Collection of the Metropolitan
 Museum of Art, 91.34.2
 Purchased in 1891 from Rev. William
 Hayes Ward



13

This roughly shaped, relief-carved stele is a memorial or tombstone collected in the 1880s by an American missionary in Marash, Turkey, the capital of the Iron Age kingdom Gurgum, 58 kilometers to the north of Zincirli. It shows essentially the same scene as the somewhat later Katumuwa Stele, that is, a figure seated before a table bearing food, and has the same basic meaning of prescribing food and drink offerings to nourish the dead in the afterlife, but there are interesting differences in the details of the two depictions (fig. C11).

The main seated figure in this stele, representing the honored deceased, is a woman

wearing a long veil over her square headdress. In contrast to heavily male-dominated genres such as the Assyrian palace reliefs, women appear in over one-third of the known Syro-Hittite memorial steles, sometimes (as here) as the sole honoree, showing the extended social reach of these mostly non-royal monuments. Seated on her knee is a small female figure representing her daughter, who may have been the sponsor of her mother's memorial stele (and was probably thus an adult rather than a child). Such intimate postures can be found in a number of Syro-Hittite steles depicting mother-son/daughter, or father-mother-son/daughter



FIGURE C11. Drawing of Catalog No. 13, a banquet stele, probably from Marash (Perrot and Chipiez 1887, fig. 281)

groups (see fig. 3.6; Bonatz 2000, C 60–C 67, pls. 21–22). These affectionate scenes demonstrate the perceived importance of maintaining the reciprocal parent-child relationship across the divide of death: the children will care for the deceased parents through offerings and invocations, and the spirits of the parents will continue to protect the living children as when they were small.

Two stacks of flatbreads and a goblet or footed bowl (cf. Catalog No. 11) sit on the folding table before the woman, but instead of a cup, she carries a round hand-mirror against her chest, which is also touched by the small daughter. This object, often found in women's graves, seems to represent femininity, and perhaps also symbolized

a protective and regenerative connection to the goddess Kubaba (also named in the Katumuwa inscription) and the sun-disk (see Bonatz 2000, pp. 82–85). With her left hand, she holds out a five-stringed lyre on top of which perches a large falcon or eagle. Both of these objects are associated with the goddess Ishtar (Bonatz 2000, p. 99; see van den Hout, *Chapter 9*, this volume). As the mother protects the daughter, so it is hoped the goddess(es) will protect the mother in the afterlife. **VRH**

PUBLISHED

Perrot and Chipiez 1887, pp. 556–57, fig. 281; Humann and Puchstein 1890, pp. 388–89, pl. 47:2; Bonatz 2000, no. C 64, pl. 22

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

14.-17. FOUR SCHEMATIC “STONE SPIRITS”

14. Basalt
Middle Bronze Age (?), ca. 2000–1550 BC
Israel, Megiddo, surface
Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1930
14.9 x 9.2 x 10.4 cm
OIM A18828
15. Limestone
Late Bronze Age (?), ca. 1600–1200/1150 BC
Iraq, Gohbel, north of Sinjar
Purchased, 1927
35.1 x 16.1 x 10.4 cm
OIM A6716
16. Limestone
Middle Assyrian period, ca. 1400–1050 BC
Tell Rimah, Iraq, Area A shrine
18.5 x 11.6 x 10.0 cm
Penn Museum object 64-11-14, image #243707
17. Limestone
Neo-Assyrian period, ca. 900–600 BC
Iraq, Tell Billa, Level II
28.0 x 14.0 x 8.5 cm
Penn Museum object 32-20-382, image #243709
(front), image #243711 (back), image #243710 (three-quarters)



D. 019141

14

Their simple facades belie the importance of this group of statues. These four statues from Megiddo, Gohbel, Tell Rimah, and Tell Billa exemplify not only the wide geographic distribution of such statues, but also the amount of variation in their form. Schematic stone statues were first recognized as a distinct group of sculpture by Theresa H. Carter, who named them “stone spirits” (1970). Since then, many more examples of such sculptures have been found in excavations, although often their connection to the larger corpus of schematic statues has not been recognized.

As the name “schematic stone statues” suggests, the common denominator among this group of sculptures is the schematic manner in which the human figure is depicted. Recognition of the human form is achieved by carving the head and the facial

features in some detail. The body is deliberately left more amorphous by the sculptor, though some statues depict the arms or indicate pieces of jewelry or clothing on an otherwise amorphous form.

Every surface of the body of the Megiddo statue (No. 14) has been carved and (somewhat) smoothed and the result resembles a squat rectangular pillar, recognizable as a human body only because of the clearly identifiable male head that rests on top. However, the head is also very schematic and only depicts a pointy beard, a nose, and two slight depressions where the eyes are expected.

The other statues all have bodies that were not as carefully worked as the Megiddo example. On the other hand, they all depict slightly more details of the human form. The example from Tell Rimah (No. 16) has a very squat body but does depict the left

CATALOG NOS. 14-17



D. 019101

15



16



17, front view



17, three-quarters view



17, back view

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arm (or hand) and the right arm, which is bent as if the figure were touching its mouth. While the Tell Rimah statue already has a square base, the base must have been a separate element in the examples from Tell Billa and Gohbel. Although still very schematic, the Tell Billa statue (No. 17) includes more details such as bent arms, a beard, and elements of dress. These include a belt and braid on its back along with the rough incised triangle on the front, which is difficult to interpret.¹ The statue from Gohbel (No. 15) has a body shape similar to the Tell Billa statue, but with all the additional details (eyes, nose, beard, and probably a piece of jewelry) executed in relief.

No references to these uninscribed statues have yet been identified in the cuneiform literature. Therefore, the interpretation of the function and the meaning of these statues, in addition to their date, must solely rely on their archaeological context, which is unfortunately not always available. The Megiddo statue (No. 14) was found in a field outside the tell,² but on stylistic grounds should be dated to the second millennium BC, probably the Middle Bronze Age.³ Unfortunately, its closest parallel also lacks a proper context since it was found at the foot of the Iron Age site Tell Rifa'at.⁴ Other close parallels can be found along the upper Euphrates in Syria: for example, at Tell Amarna (Middle Bronze Age; see Tunca 1996) and Tell Hadidi (Late Bronze Age; see Dornemann 1989).

The previously unpublished statue from Gohbel (No. 15) also lacks an archaeological context. E. A. Speiser bought it in the village of Gohbel. Although declining to show him the exact location, the villagers told Speiser that the statue had been found on the nearby small, conical tell.⁵ All similar statues found in archaeological excavations were discovered in Late Bronze Age contexts: for example, at Tell Billa, Tell Rimah, Tell Atchana, and Tell Brak.⁶ Under the direction of Speiser, a total of ten schematic stone statues were excavated at Tell Billa. Unfortunately, aside from some excerpts from Speiser's letters to the American Schools of Oriental Research, very little has been published on these excavations.⁷ Several statues were found in the Late Bronze Age levels, while the rest — including Billa 8 (No. 17) — were found in the Neo-Assyrian levels.⁸

Those statues whose archaeological context is known are often found in association with religious

architecture. The Late Bronze Age statues of Tell Rimah were all excavated in connection with temples. The Rimah statue that is most similar to the Gohbel statue was found on the altar of a neighborhood shrine,⁹ and two more, including the one exhibited here (No. 17), were found in different phases of the impressive Area A temple that included a large ziggurat.¹⁰ During its final phase, the Area A temple was reduced to a small shrine that continued the use of the antecella and the cella. The statue was found buried under the floor next to the doorjamb of the shrine entrance (fig. C12).¹¹

More examples of schematic statues excavated in association with religious architecture can be mentioned. At Tell Atchana, ancient Alalakh, of the eight schematic stone statues excavated by C. L. Woolley, one (Alalakh 7) was found in the entrance hall of shrine B,¹² two more were found outside shrine B,¹³ while a fourth was found in another shrine that was attached to a large domestic house.¹⁴ At Tell Brak, while two schematic stone statues were found beneath a Late Bronze Age house, a third was found inside a small shrine.¹⁵

These contexts demonstrate that schematic stone statues played a significant role in religious life during the second millennium. Their appearance in domestic structures does not demonstrate a profane function, but suggests that they were also part of domestic cults, that is, rites that were part of family life. Indeed, this is confirmed by a schematic statue from Tell Munbaqa, ancient Ekalte, that was found in front of a house altar, a common feature of living rooms at Late Bronze Age Ekalte and nearby sites.¹⁶

It is very difficult to define the meaning and function of schematic stone statues in Bronze Age religions and cult more precisely solely on the basis of archaeological contexts. On the one hand, it is possible to interpret a statue as an object of worship, rather than an implement to be used in a religious rite. On the other hand, the origins of the schematic stone statue tradition suggest that they were associated with mortuary rites, since, aside from a few statues found in houses, most of the Early Bronze Age statues were found in tombs.¹⁷

Fortunately, the Late Bronze Age cuneiform texts from Ugarit and Emar provide a lot of information on ancient religious life, both public



FIGURE C12. Catalog No. 16 photographed close to where it was discovered, under the floor next to the jamb of the entrance to the shrine of Area A at Tell Rimah, Iraq (from Carter 1970, p. 36)

and private. In fact, ancestor veneration is quite well attested at Emar and Ugarit,¹⁸ and in this context references to *sikkānu* are of particular importance. The Emar texts make it clear that *sikkānu* were stones that played a central role in worship.¹⁹ There, major deities such as Hebat, ^dNIN.URTA, and others were said to reside in *sikkānu*, and their worship focused on these stones.²⁰ But *sikkānu* were also clearly used in ancestor cult — according to the myth of Aqhat (KTU 1.17–19) from Ugarit it was part of a son’s duty to “set up the stele (*skn*) of his ancestral god (*ilībh*)”²¹ (see Lewis, *Chapter 8*, this volume).

What did the *sikkānu/skn* look like, and can they be connected to objects known from the archaeological record? Their predominant identification as aniconic (non-representational) steles or *betyls* is based mainly on the analogy with the parallel phenomenon of the veneration of such aniconic steles (*maššebôt*) in the southern Levant.²² However, there are two pieces of more direct evidence. In the Emar and Ekalte texts, the *sikkānu* appear not only in the religious texts but also in curses at the end of legal documents. The curses specify that *sikkānu* will be placed in front of the house of anyone who breaks the written agreement.²³ This seems to be a taboo that makes the house uninhabitable. A. Otto has identified eight large stones found at Tell Bazi as *sikkānu* since they lay in front of an abandoned house.²⁴ Secondly, two undecorated steles found at Ugarit carry inscriptions that identify them as *skn/sikkānu*²⁵ (fig. 8.3; see Lewis, *Chapter 8*, this volume) — direct evidence that the *skn/sikkānu* mentioned in ancient texts should be identified as undecorated, aniconic steles.²⁶ The fact that only the two undecorated steles at Ugarit carry inscriptions (that identify them as *skn/sikkānu*) is direct evidence that *skn/sikkānu* in ancient texts are undecorated, aniconic steles.

This evidence that unworked stone was considered the appropriate medium for a divine presence in the northern Levant of the second millennium BC helps to explain the schematic nature of the statues under discussion here. The schematic style emphasizes the medium: the sacred stone that is a vessel for the divine. Schematic stone statues can therefore be understood as a subgroup of the *sikkānu*. The archaeological evidence for the cultic significance of schematic statues in

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both the domestic and public religious rites (and their earlier, Early Bronze Age funerary contexts) suggests that these statues represent venerated ancestors.²⁷ VJVE

PUBLISHED

14: May 1935, p. 33, pl. 33

15: Previously unpublished

16: Oates 1965, p. 74; Carter 1970, pp. 36–37 (“Rimah #2”)

17: Carter 1970, pp. 30–33 (“Billa #7”)

NOTES

¹ It is possible that these details were added later since they were incised, while the shape of the body as well as the nose (and perhaps the eyes) must be original since they are all in relief.

² H. G. May 1935, p. 33.

³ Other schematic statues were found in the excavations at Megiddo itself, for example, in the Iron Age I level of Stratum VI. A small schematic statue made of chert was found in a large courtyard building. Statue M1558 was found in Room 1780 (Area CC) (H. G. May 1935, pl. 33; Paice 2004, p. 66; Harrison 2004, p. 20).

⁴ Seton-Williams 1961, pl. 33c.

⁵ Letter by E. A. Speiser to Dr. Boyes (dated April 10, 1935), in the Oriental Institute Museum Archives.

⁶ Billa 2: Carter 1970. Rimah 1: Carter 1970; Oates 1965, p. 77, pl. 20:a, c. Alalakh 6: Woolley 1955, p. 239, pl. 64:f. Tell Brak: Oates, Oates, and McDonald 1997, p. 105. See also the surface find Sinjar 1: Carter 1970. The Tell Brak statue is important because it has the same counterweight on its back as the Gohbel statue. However, the Tell Brak statue is not a schematic stone statue, since its body is fully formed. In fact, this statue — depicting a seated man holding a cup — falls somewhere between royal sculpture (e.g., the statue of Idrimi found at Alalakh) and schematic stone statues (e.g., Mbq28/30–11; see Czichon and Werner 1998).

⁷ Speiser 1930, p. 19; 1931, p. 5; 1932, pp. 4, 8. See also Speiser 1933 and Bache 1935.

⁸ A preliminary analysis by E. R. Jewell has redated this level to the ninth century BC (Jewell n.d., p. 17). I am very grateful to Prof. R. Zettler for making this unpublished manuscript available to me.

⁹ Rimah 1 (TR.223): Oates 1965, p. 77, pl. 22:a, c; Postgate, Oates, and Oates 1997, pp. 37–39.

¹⁰ Rimah 3 (TR.4404): Oates 1968, p. 117, pl. 35:d; Postgate, Oates, and Oates 1997, pp. 21–26. Rimah 3 was found in the topsoil over Room II of this temple and the excavators date it to the Middle Assyrian period. However, since later a Neo-Assyrian temple was built over the adjacent Room I (Postgate et al. 1997, pp. 41–42; Oates 1968, pp. 122–24), it is also possible that this statue dates to the Iron Age.

¹¹ This follows the original description of the context (Oates 1965, p. 74). In the later (preliminary) reports (Oates 1968, p. 117; Postgate, Oates, and Oates 1997, p. 25) and in Carter’s description (1970, p. 36) the context has been abbreviated to “found in the doorway of the temple shrine.” This also means that the in situ photograph depicting Catalog No. 16 as standing on a floor in the doorway (fig. C12; Carter 1970, p. 36, Rimah 2 [TR.224]) is a reconstruction and not an accurate reflection of its situation as found.

¹² Alalakh 7 (AT/46/89): Woolley 1955, p. 241, pl. 64:g.

¹³ Alalakh 4 (AT/39/276) and 8 (AT/46/95): Woolley 1955, p. 241, pl. 64:d, h.

¹⁴ Alalakh 3 (AT/39/119): Woolley 1955, p. 241, pl. 64:c.

¹⁵ Oates, Oates, and McDonald 1997, p. 106, 256.

¹⁶ Mbq 8/17–22: Czichon and Werner 1998, pp. 25–26; Machule et al. 1986, pp. 107–11. See also A. Otto 2006b.

¹⁷ Meijer 2001; Orthmann 1991; van Loon 2001.

¹⁸ Van der Toorn 1996, p. 38.

¹⁹ Fleming 2000, pp. 72, 76–78, 83. See Fleming 1992, pp. 76–77, n. 27, for a good summary of the philological arguments to translate *skn* as “stele.”

²⁰ See Fleming 1992, 2000.

²¹ Wyatt 1999. Van der Toorn (1993) equates the Ugaritic deified ancestor (*ilībh*) with the deified ancestors at Emar and Ekaltē (**DINGIR-li₃ E₂ GAL** and **DINGIR.MEŠ**) based on the god list from Ugarit RS20.24:1 (= *Ugaritica* 5 [1968], no. 18:1. See also Pardee 2002, pp. 12–16.

²² E.g., Dietrich, Loretz, and Mayer 1989; De Moor 1995.

²³ See Emar 125:40–41 and 17:39–40 in Arnaud 1985–1987; MBQT 2:28, 9:29, 61:27, and 70,17 in Mayer 2001. This type of curse formula is used in an abbreviated form in several other texts. See Mayer 2001, p. 20.

²⁴ A. Otto 2006a, pp. 207–09, 244.

²⁵ KTU 6.13 = RS 6.021. Pardee 2000, pp. 390, 396–97; Bordreuil and Pardee 1993, p. 26.

²⁶ Van Exel 2010, pp. 58–59.

²⁷ Van Exel 2010.

18. FUNERARY STATUE OF A MAN AND HIS WIFE

Limestone, pigment

Old Kingdom, Dynasty 5, probably reign
of Nyuserra, ca. 2445–2421 BC

Egypt, Giza (?) Purchased in Egypt, 1920

H: 52.4 cm

OIM E10618



D. 019167

18

In Egypt, the dead could be commemorated through statues that were set up in tombs or temples, because it was believed that as long as a person was remembered by the living, he continued to exist in the afterlife. The preservation of the person's personal name was another essential part of commemoration; as later texts relate, "to speak the name of the dead is to make him live again." As a result, statues usually bear the name of the

deceased. This example represents the official Ny-kau-Inpu and his wife Hemet-Ra-djet. In the mid-third millennium BC, such statues were often placed in a chamber (*serdab*, from the Arabic word for "cellar") that communicated with the interior of the tomb chapel by a narrow slit through which the statue could inhale the scent of food and incense (fig. C13). Food offerings could be made by priests who were paid through an endowment left by the

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deceased, or by family members, or even by casual visitors to the tomb. Some funerary texts state that offerings were to be left during certain annual festivals, while other texts are less specific.

This statue was one of twenty-five stone figures that are thought to have come from the tomb of Ny-kau-Inpu (fig. C14). Some of them represent family members, but most are household staff who are shown making bread and beer and slaughtering cattle to produce an unending supply of food for the deceased and his wife (see Catalog No. 48). The group also included musicians to provide eternal entertainment. ET

PUBLISHED

Teeter 2003, pp. 22–23

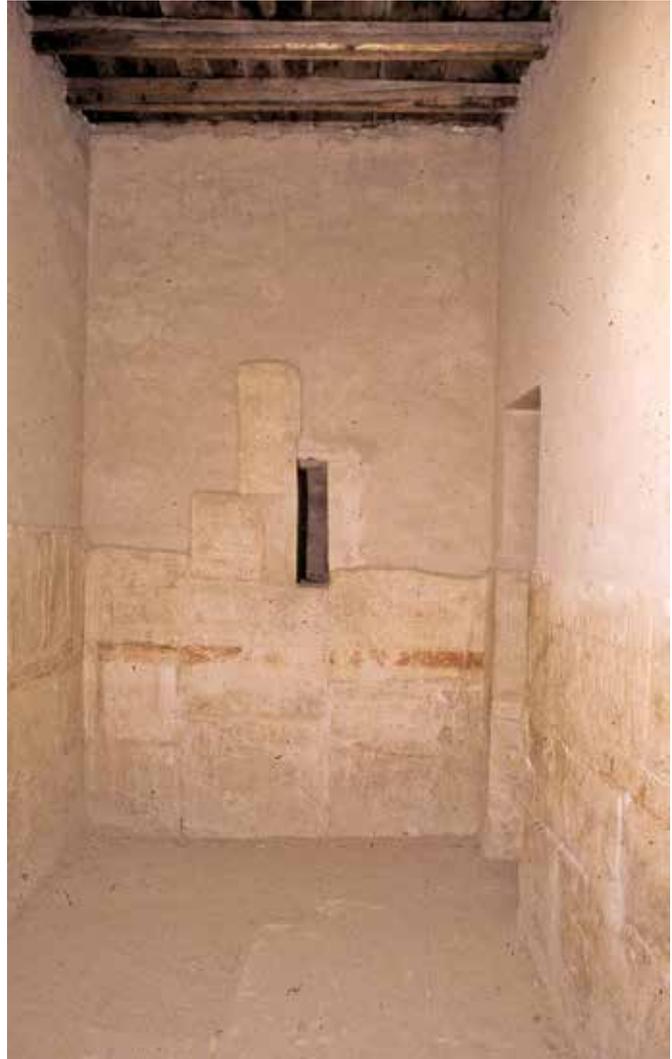


FIGURE C13. Statue chamber (*serdab*) in the tomb of Mereruka at Saqqara, Egypt. Old Kingdom, Dynasty 6, ca. 2345 BC (photograph courtesy of Emily Teeter)



FIGURE C14. View of the statues from the tomb of Ny-kau-Inpu, representing family members, house servants, musicians, and a group of six silos (center) to symbolically store grain (OIM photograph P. 7775)

19. STELE OF AN ANCESTOR (AKH)

Limestone, pigment
 New Kingdom, Dynasties 19–20,
 ca. 1295–1069 BC
 Egypt, Luxor, Medinet Habu
 Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1929
 36 x 21 x 5 cm
 OIM E14287



D. 019182

19

According to ancient Egyptian beliefs, the afterlife was in many ways a replica of the life of the living. The deceased dwelled there as a “transfigured spirit,” or *akh*. The living could contact *akhs* through writing, just as one might write a letter to someone who was away (see fig. 11.8), and the *akhs* and their realm could be seen in dreams. Some deceased members of the community, such as the man shown on the upper left of this stele, were regarded as an “effective spirit (*akh*) of Ra,” a title that identified them as intermediaries who were especially capable of conveying prayers and requests to the sun-god Ra. Steles like this were

set up in houses, and offerings were placed before them to keep the *akh* satisfied, because if properly provided for, the *akh* would protect the living from danger and illness. On this stele, a man named Sethmose (at the upper right) offers to his brother, the *akh* Nakht. In the lower register Nakht’s “sister” (the term also for wife) raises her hands in prayer before a table of offerings. A little girl, presumably her daughter, stands behind her. ET

PUBLISHED

Demarée 1983, pp. 75–77, no. A26, pl. 7; Teeter 2002, p. 4, fig. 6;
 Teeter and Johnson, eds., 2009, p. 72, cat. no. 49

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20, obverse



20, reverse

D. 019103

D. 019105

20. CUNEIFORM TABLET: FRAGMENT OF THE HITTITE ROYAL FUNERARY RITUAL

Clay

Hittite Empire period, ca. 13th c. BC

Turkey, Boğazköy

6.2 x 4.5 x 3.4 cm

Gift of D. von der Osten, 1929

OIM A6723

This two-sided fragment of a Hittite cuneiform tablet was found at the site of the former Hittite capital city Hattusa (modern Boğazköy, Turkey). On the obverse, it contains part of the description of the tenth day of the Hittite royal funerary ritual (see van den Hout, *Chapter 9*, this volume). It describes how at dawn a statue of the deceased receives offerings in the mausoleum(?). After this it will be carried out and brought into a tent. From there it will be taken on a cart to another location to be part of the day's ritual dedicated to

agriculture. The reverse preserves part of the title of the funerary rite: "When in Hattusa a royal loss occurs, that is, when a king or a queen becomes a god" (i.e., dies).

The tablet was probably written in the thirteenth century **BC**. The fragment preserves part of the upper edge on the obverse (i.e., the lower edge on the reverse). **tvDH**

PUBLISHED

Edition: Kassian, Korolëv, and Sidel'tsev 2002, pp. 439–45

THE BANQUET IN LIFE AND DEATH

*I placed it in my eternal chamber and
established a feast (at) this chamber.*

— Katumuwa Stele, lines 2–3

The image on the Katumuwa Stele is of a type utterly familiar to students of ancient Middle Eastern art: a figure seated before a table, cup raised.¹ The repetition of this scene throughout the Middle East in media from the fourth to the first millennium BC speaks to its symbolic potency.² In mortuary art, especially that of Egypt and the Syro-Anatolian region, the banquet scene has a clear meaning, supported by texts: the deceased is shown enjoying food and drink offerings given by the living. It serves as both a request for these offerings and a vision of the future, satisfied state of the honored dead (Bonatz 2000, pp. 115–17). The banquet scene does not always carry this mortuary meaning, however, but often depicts ceremonial meals in life. There is often disagreement among scholars about the meaning (mortuary or not) of particular scenes, and the ambiguity of these images is perhaps telling. For, beyond fulfilling a basic need for sustenance, the sharing of food and drink with the dead depicted by mortuary banquet scenes echoes similar meals in life, from the everyday family dinner to sacrificial festivals for the gods, to banquets following military triumphs or weddings, and in this way a place was maintained for the dead in the social world of the living.

In *Chapter 7* of this volume, Marian Feldman describes the social significance of feasts in the ancient Middle East. Whether they depict a religious, social, political, or mortuary occasion, the crystallization of these events in art marks such ceremonial meals as a “central social experience” with connotations of success, order, and abundance. They can play a major role in reproducing or changing social relations, simultaneously creating social bonds through inclusive commensality, while establishing social

ranking through the allocation of different roles in the festivities.³

The objects presented here (Catalog Nos. 21–26) illustrate the variety of forms taken by the banquet scene in the ancient Middle East and Egypt, appearing in metal, stone, and ivory, and from temple, palace, and mortuary contexts. Their small scale contrasts with the monumentality of the mortuary steles and stone orthostat reliefs where banquet scenes are otherwise commonly found. In some examples (Catalog Nos. 23–24, 26–27), only one person is shown seated with table or cup, underscoring their singularity as the deceased (Catalog No. 27) or divine (Catalog Nos. 23–24) recipient of offerings (cf. Pinnock 1994, p. 24). The two Isin-Larsa-period presentation scene seals highlight the hierarchical significance of food and drink: here, the cup held by the seated god or king is a symbol of his authority over those who approach (Winter 1986; Ziffer 2005, p. 139), but the origin of this symbol lies in the realm of ceremonial meals. The two objects from Khafajah and Megiddo that show multiple people partaking of the meal (Catalog Nos. 22 and 25) are elaborate, convivial scenes that evoke some of the sensory elements cited by Feldman (*Chapter 7*) and vividly depicted in the scripts of the Hittite royal funerary ritual discussed by van den Hout (*Chapter 9*) and in the banquet scenes painted in Egyptian tombs (fig. 11.4): the sounds of music and voices, the smells and tastes of the food and drink, and the movement of entertainers and servants. VRH

NOTES

¹ For more on the banquet motif in the ancient Middle East and Egypt, see, e.g., Dentzer 1982; Pinnock 1994; Bonatz 2000, 2001; Manniche 1997; Ziffer 2005; Draycott and Stamatopolou, forthcoming.

² See also in this volume figs. 3.1–6, 7.2–5, 8.5, 9.2, 11.4, 11.7, C8, and C17, and Catalog Nos. 13 and 19.

³ For more on the politics of feasting in the Middle East and elsewhere, see, e.g., Pollock 2003, 2007, 2012; Otto 2012; Sallaberger 2012; Hayden 2009; Dietler and Hayden 2010.

21. DOOR PLAQUE WITH BANQUETERS

Limestone

Early Dynastic III, ca. 2600–2350 BC

Iraq, Khafajah, Sîn Temple IX

Excavated by the Oriental Institute,

1933–34

20 x 20 cm

OIM A12417



D. 017502

21

This limestone plaque belongs to a third-millennium **BC** category of temple dedication that commonly has a square, relief-carved area pierced with a central hole.¹ Such plaques have a functional purpose since they formed a locking device; a peg driven through the hole would have secured the plaque to the wall next to a door. A cord or hook attached to the peg was used to secure the door.² The dedication of a locking device, which in concept would impede the donor's own entrance to the temple, can be tied to the issues of access associated with Early Dynastic temples.³

The main subject of the relief-carved imagery dispersed across three registers is usually that of a banquet in which seated figures in the upper register, each holding a cup and vegetation, are attended upon. Processions and revelry are depicted in the lower registers. Both textual sources and visual imagery indicate that banquets were celebrated on a variety of occasions. The human participants in relief-carved banqueting scenes are likely members of the elite realm, if the

media, materials, and inscriptions associated with banqueting are considered.

The bottom register of the plaque here is completed by an inscribed fragment now in the Iraq Museum in Baghdad. The fragment depicts two wrestlers, thus complementing the revelry of the musicians in the left half of the register.⁴ The inscription is difficult to read, but such plaques are usually inscribed with the name of the donor and sometimes also a dedication. The location of the inscription suggests that the donor is best associated with the revelers outside of the banquet proper. **JME**

PUBLISHED

Frankfort 1939, no. 185

NOTES

¹ Frankfort 1939, no. 185; all examples are cataloged in Boese 1971.

² Hansen 1963; Zettler 1987.

³ Evans 2012, pp. 103–05.

⁴ Boese 1971, K7.

22.-23. CYLINDER SEALS OF
SEATED GOD OR RULER
WITH CUP

Late Isin-Larsa period, ca. 2000-1750 BC
Iraq, Tell Asmar

22. Black stone
Dump associated with the Palace of
the Rulers
Excavated by the Oriental Institute,
1930-31
3.0 x 1.1 cm
OIM A8583



22

22, modern impression

D. 019106

23. White stone
Top layer of Trench F
Excavated by the Oriental Institute,
1935-36
2.2 x 1.3 cm
OIM A17896



23

23, modern impression

D. 019137

The image of a seated man holding a cup already had a long history before it was carved on Katumuwa's stele. Not only was this motif used for a very long time in the ancient Middle East, it was also employed in very different media. Statues of seated men holding a cup can be found during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Such statues range in size from 20 centimeters to almost life-size. This motif was even more common among the delicate depictions carved on cylinder seals. Seated men holding a cup appear on two types of cylinder seal images: banquet scenes and presentation scenes. Banquet scenes depict (usually) two seated figures, often with a table of food or a beer vessel between them and attended to by other figures.

The two cylinder seals from Tell Asmar shown here are examples of presentation scenes. Presentation scenes can be defined as a worshiper

(usually identified by his raised hand) approaching a deity or the king. Most presentation scenes include a third figure: the *lama*-goddess. The *lama*-goddess — a type of personal deity — introduces the person to the god, hence the name “presentation scene.” Presentation scenes begin to appear on cylinder seals during the Akkadian period and seem to largely replace the banquet scenes that were popular during the Early Dynastic period (Collon 1987, pp. 32-35). Akkadian presentation scenes do not always include a seated figure; the deity can also be depicted standing or ascending. However, this changes during the Ur III period.

During the Ur III period, the deity is — with rare exceptions — depicted seated and often holds a cup. In a large number of presentation scenes, the deity is replaced by the king, who was deified during this period (Collon 1987; see also Winter

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1986). Moreover, presentation scenes dominate the glyptic (i.e., seal) repertoire of the Ur III period: over 90 percent of cylinder seals depicted this motif (Mayr and Owen 2004, p. 147). This overabundance ends with the Ur III period and is replaced in the early second millennium BC by a wider range of cylinder seal motifs. Nevertheless, the seated figure (deity or mortal) continues to be depicted on seals in Mesopotamia and the ancient Middle East in general until the Neo-Babylonian period.

Both cylinder seals from Tell Asmar depict presentation scenes, but in different styles. Catalog No. 22 — found in a large trash dump that extended north of the Palace of the Rulers — is executed with more care and includes finer detail (Frankfort, Lloyd, and Jacobsen 1940, p. 159). The seated god or ruler holds a cup and wears a cap, long garment, and long beard. He sits on a stool in front of a biconical stand that contains a palm leaf from which hang two bunches of dates. The *lama*-goddess wears a long dress and wears a horned crown signifying her divine status. She holds the left hand of the bearded worshiper, who is also dressed in a cap and wears a long fringed garment. Additional

spaces are filled with a scorpion, a star, a crescent moon, and a snake.

Catalog No. 23 was found in the top layer of Trench F at Tell Asmar. This seal was probably found in the debris of domestic houses like the ones excavated to the west of Trench F (Delougaz, Hill, and Lloyd 1967, p. 188). Here the seal cutter relied more heavily on the cutting wheel, resulting in a more abstract and less detailed image. The deity or ruler holding a cup sits on a simple stool wearing a long garment and a cap. Behind the deity stands a crescent-shaped standard that was probably decorated with ribbons. The personal-deity in a long garment introduces the worshiper, who wears a fringed garment (that seems to fall open from his extended left arm). Like the seated figure, the worshiper seems to wear a cap. VJVE

PUBLISHED

22: Frankfort 1933, p. 22, fig. 15; Frankfort, Lloyd, and Jacobsen 1940, p. 235, fig. 102:f; Frankfort 1955, pl. 67:723

23: Frankfort 1955, pl. 70:771; Delougaz, Hill, and Lloyd 1967, pp. 209, 255



D. 05483

24

24. FURNITURE INLAY WITH A BANQUET SCENE

Ivory

Late Bronze Age II, ca. 1400-1200 BC

Israel, Megiddo, Stratum VIIA

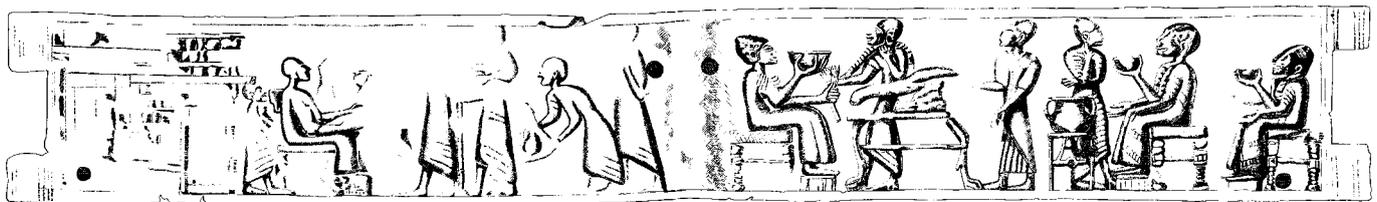
Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1936-37

39.5 x 5.7 x 0.9 cm

OIM A22270

This now degraded piece of ivory furniture inlay was probably once fixed to a wooden stool or chair frame (Catalog Nos. 4-5). It is one of many ivory objects discovered as part of a hoard collectively known as the "Megiddo Ivories." Although the hoard itself was deposited in the late twelfth century BC at Megiddo, this ivory was probably carved at some point between the late fourteenth and the thirteenth centuries BC. It is one of a group

of four ivory inlays carved in a similar style. Taken as a set, the scenes carved in low relief may present a narrative of warfare, victory, preparations for a celebratory feast, and finally in this example, the victory banquet. Close parallels can be drawn between elements of this series of inlays and another famous inlay from the same Megiddo hoard (fig. C16) which depicts a Canaanite prince or ruler returning from battle with prisoners (right



15a



15b

FIGURE C15. (a) Drawing and (b) reconstruction of feast scene (right side) (Loud 1939, pl. 32: 160b-c)

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

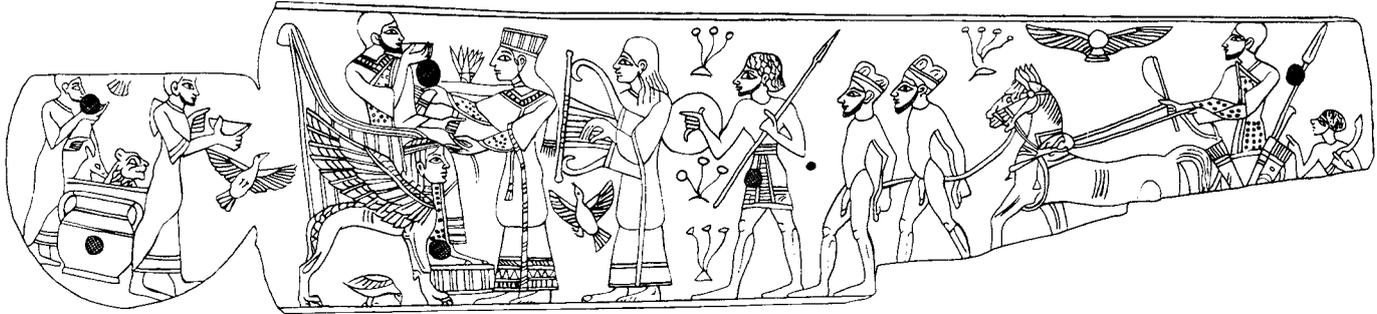


FIGURE C16. Drawing of an ivory plaque from Late Bronze Age Megiddo (Stratum VIIA) that shows a procession approaching an enthroned king drinking from a cup (Rockefeller Museum, no. 38.780; Loud 1939, pl. 4:2b)

side), and a victory celebration showing the prince seated on a throne holding his drinking bowl while receiving offerings (left side).

Of note in the exhibited example is the banquet scene on the better-preserved right side (fig. C15). A total of eight male individuals are represented here, including a series of figures seated on stools, three of whom are shown holding a drinking bowl with their right hands (consistent with the much later Katumuwa Stele; Catalog No. 1). The seated figures on the right are shown in pairs on stools with their feet on footstools, as if in audience. A stand holding either a metal vessel or ceramic krater of a type commonly associated with drinking wine (or possibly beer) is situated in front of them. On the left side is the main seated figure and intended focus of the scene, presumably a Canaanite prince or ruler. Both the figure and his drinking bowl are disproportionately larger than the others in the scene, reflecting his higher status. He also holds an upright lotus flower — a symbol of royalty in Canaan and renewal of life in Egypt. The lotus flower has also been associated with funerary imagery in the context of regeneration, although drooping lotuses have been interpreted as symbols of death (see fig. 8.4).

The items laid on the small table cannot be clearly determined, but are likely to represent food. The offering of geese as depicted in another of the inlays in this grouping may have been part of the banquet (cf. Catalog No. 10). The largest item placed on top may have been the limb of a large animal such as a calf or cow. Three standing figures are also present, including an attendant who offers a hand towel to the main seated figure. The more degraded

left side of the ivory inlay is a separate scene that may depict the same royal figure seated in front of an unidentifiable structure (a palace or temple?). Several figures approach, including one figure bending forward to offer a small jug or its contents.

It is unclear whether this banquet scene represents a historical event, such as a celebration of a specific victory in battle, or is more metaphorical in character. Although the banquet scene is already a long-established Middle Eastern tradition and this ivory is thought to display Syrian characteristics, there are a wide range of Egyptian symbols in such warfare and banquet scenes from Late Bronze Age Canaan, including those from Megiddo and Tell el-Far'ah South, as noted by Harold Liebowitz, Irit Ziffer, and others. According to Katia Charbit Nataf (2011), the banquet scenes on these ivories may hint at a Late Bronze Age Egypto-Canaanite mortuary cult for elites that included drinking ceremonies evoking the goddess Hathor. The scene could therefore be interpreted as a ritual banquet associated with a cult of veneration of deceased rulers or their ancestors, including drinking rituals that helped facilitate their passage into the afterlife.

In summary, the stool or chair to which this ivory panel was once affixed may have been used in actual banquets and feasts, perhaps witness to both the celebration of the living and commemoration of the dead. JG

PUBLISHED

Loud 1939, no. 160, pl. 32; Frankfort 1963, pp. 158–59; Liebowitz 1980, pp. 162–65, fig. 1; Novacek 2011, p. 51, cat. no. 28; Ziffer 2005, p. 153, fig. 22



25, side

D. 019125



25, bottom



25, modern impression

D. 019123

25. STAMP SEAL WITH A BANQUET SCENE

Serpentine

Amuq Phase O, Iron Age II-III, 900-550 BC

Turkey, Chatal Hüyük

Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1933-34

4.3 x 4.3 x 2.4 cm

OIM A12707

This square stone stamp seal found during the Oriental Institute's excavations in the Amuq Valley in Turkey, 100 kilometers to the south of Zincirli, shows a male figure (whose head is unfortunately lost in the broken corner of the seal) sitting on a low-backed chair with his feet resting on a footstool. His right hand holds a triangular object (possibly a cup) before his face, while his left hand touches another object (of uncertain identification) that is lying on the table before him. The broad table with grooved top and center support holds a stack of four crescent-shaped objects representing bread, topped by a circle that may depict another piece of flatbread in top, rather than profile, view (Meyer 2008, p. 532). A thin crescent moon hovers over the man's raised hand, and may reference the moon-god, whose cult at Harran in northern Syria was popular throughout the region in the late Iron Age. The primary purpose of seals such as this was for personal identification and verification of documents or stored goods, but they were also



FIGURE C17. Gold amulet plaque from Zincirli with a banquet scene. 9th-8th century BC. Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, inv. S 3625 (photograph by Virginia R. Herrmann)

decorative objects in themselves, often pierced for wearing on a string, and were thought to possess protective, amuletic force as well.

Though the banquet scene on this seal is miniature and schematically rendered, its similarity to the scene on the Katumuwa Stele is immediately apparent. We see that the motif of a ceremonial or cultic meal is repeated in this cultural milieu in a variety of media and at greatly different scales: from over life-size stone sculpture in the round and stone orthostats and steles, to much smaller ivory furniture decorations (see Catalog No. 24), stone containers (fig. C8), jewelry (fig. C17), and seals like this one. It is not always apparent, as in this case, whether the meal depicted honors a god or a human, living or dead, but the frequency of this scene in Syro-Hittite art shows the importance and flexibility of this symbol. **VRH**

PUBLISHED

Meyer 2008, no. 288; Pucci, forthcoming

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

**26. RITUAL VESSEL
(SITULA)**

Copper alloy, pigment
Late Period, Dynasties
26–31,
664–332 BC
Egypt, purchased in
Cairo, 1920
19.8 (30.7 with handle) x
5.7 (at rim) to 13.9 cm
max.
OIM E11394



26, front



26, back

D.019177

Handled buckets called *situlae* were used during libation rituals in temples and tombs in Egypt. This example is decorated with a scene of a priest pouring an offering for his deceased mother who sits before an offering table with loaves of bread. In Egypt, water functioned on various symbolic levels. Foremost, it was thought to slake the thirst of the dead, and from early times, texts in tombs call upon visitors to pour water for the deceased. But water also symbolized creation and rebirth; the most obvious manifestation of this was the annual rise of the Nile's waters that marked the New Year and the regeneration of the land, because the retreating flood left a fresh layer of rich alluvial soil on the agricultural lands. In the Pyramid Texts (ca. 2250 BC), the floodwaters of the Nile are said to have come from the body of the god Osiris, a discharge that was replenished through libation rituals. The deceased, who became Osiris in the afterlife, was the source of the liquid, and thus he

or she needed to be refreshed with water offerings. The offering was equated with the "Eye of Horus" that symbolized healing and regeneration (Assmann 2005, pp. 355–63). The text on this *situla* reads in part, "I have come bringing to you the Eye of Horus that your heart may be refreshed by it.... Take to yourself the flow that comes forth from you."

From about 1500 BC into the Roman era, professional priests called "water pourers" (later known as *choachytes*) were engaged to pour water offerings in private tombs. The income from their services was so lucrative that their contracts were inherited, sold, and leased to others, and lawsuits could result when one group of priests infringed upon the tombs of others. ET

PUBLISHED

Teeter 2003, pp. 96–97; Teeter and Johnson, eds., 2009, p. 44, cat. no. 12

DISHES FOR THE DEAD

Let him take from the best (produce) of this vineyard (as) a (presentation)-offering year by year. He is also to perform the slaughter in (proximity to) my "soul" and is to apportion for me a haunch.

— Katumuwa Stele, lines 8–13

Alongside items of personal adornment, pottery and metal serving and storage vessels are by far the most common goods found accompanying burials of the dead in all periods and regions of the ancient Middle East and Egypt. Because we know that the dead were considered to need regular nourishment in the afterlife, it is commonly understood that most of the vessels in graves and tombs contained actual food and drink for the soul of the deceased, but, as Jack Green notes below (Catalog Nos. 27–35), in many cases we cannot be certain about their precise purpose and contents (cf. Parker Pearson 1999, pp. 10–11). Nevertheless, in the same way as post-funerary offerings, these gifts form part of the reciprocity between the living and the dead: the dead needed a good send-off in order to become contented ancestors who could bestow blessings rather than curses on the living.

Though the number of vessels in each burial varied, the range of vessel types included was often quite standardized, leading archaeologists to identify burial or funeral “kits” in a number of periods and regions (e.g., Bloch-Smith 1992a; Baker 2012; Grajetzki 2003). The interpretation is that this set of vessels represented the types of provisions the dead would all require in the afterlife, regardless of their individual

identities and status in life. As food and drink are so strongly bound up with cultural and ethnic identity, burial with one of these kits marked the deceased as a member of a particular community, just as for the archaeologist the vessel types are diagnostic of particular periods and places.

The groups of vessels included here come from different regions and periods, as well as a variety of mortuary contexts. The sets from Early Dynastic (mid-third millennium **BC**) Mesopotamia (Catalog Nos. 36–38) and Middle Bronze Age (early second millennium **BC**) Anatolia (Catalog Nos. 39–40) come from pit burials of one or two people that were sealed and never reopened until their discovery by archaeologists, so their contents reflect a one-time deposition of offerings at the time of burial. By contrast, the group of vessels from Megiddo (Catalog Nos. 27–35) was found in a large multiple-chamber tomb that was used repeatedly for centuries (from the Middle Bronze Age to the end of the Late Bronze Age), accumulating and mingling bodies and offerings. At the similar, contemporary tomb that was recently discovered beneath the royal palace of Qatna, Syria (see fig. C9), archaeologists have documented that not only the most recently interred individuals received food offerings, but the long-dead, whose bones had been redeposited and mixed in a common chamber, also received gifts (Pfälzner 2012). The last set of vessels (Catalog Nos. 41–47) is part of the complex suite of remains associated with the tomb of the pharaoh Tutankhamun. Its current interpretation is an example of the use of food and drink and their containers not to feed the dead, but to protect them. **VRH**

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D. 019188

28

27

32 33

29

34

30

31

35

27.-35. DINING SET FROM A MEGIDDO TOMB

Late Bronze IIB, ca. 1300-1200 BC
Israel, Megiddo, Tomb 912
Excavated by the Oriental Institute,
1931

CHAMBER D

27. Painted krater
Baked clay, pigment
21.4 x 21.5 cm
OIM A16400

28. Chalice
Baked clay
13.6 x 15.8 cm
OIM A16399

29. Painted biconical jug
(the "Megiddo Vase")
Baked clay, pigment
37.1 x 30.9 cm
OIM A16415

30. Cooking pot, traces of burning
Baked clay
10.0 x 24.3 cm
OIM A16414

31. Dipper juglet
Baked clay
14.6 x 7.1 cm
OIM A16398

32. Dagger
Bronze
25.5 x 2.8 cm
OIM A16439

33. Bowl
Bronze
4.7 x 14.7 cm
OIM A16446

CHAMBER A1

34. Lamp, traces of burning
Baked clay
5.8 x 15.1 x 15.8 cm
OIM A28299

35. Bowl
Baked clay
5.8 x 18.5 cm
OIM A28292

These vessels and implements come from shaft tomb 912 at Megiddo (Guy 1938, pp. 69–72, pls. 32–36, 133–34; Gonen 1992, pp. 41–52). The tomb consisted of multiple chambers (912 A–D) and was in use from the Middle Bronze Age to the end of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1200 BC). The tomb contents were disturbed in antiquity (see fig. C18). These objects were found in different locations and do not derive from a single burial. Here they serve as an illustration of typical Late Bronze Age Canaanite dining equipment. Common tomb objects not represented here include flasks, pyxides, cosmetic stone vessels, personal ornaments, and animal bones that derived from meat or animal offerings.

Ceramic bowls and jugs tend to dominate tomb assemblages of the period, suggesting that food and drink played an important role at the time of burial. Cooking pots are rarely represented, however; this example (No. 30) may suggest that a cooked meal was placed in the tomb. The chalice (No. 28)

may have been used to present a special type of food or liquid offering on its pedestal. The painted “Megiddo Vase” (No. 29) is a high-quality piece. Its depiction of the “tree of life” motif, an ancient Middle Eastern symbol of fertility and regeneration, has added resonance in this funerary context. The vase was probably used for mixing and pouring wine, as was the krater (No. 27) next to it. The dipper (No. 31) was probably used for transferring liquids from larger vessels to bronze or ceramic drinking bowls such as No. 33. Knives and daggers (No. 32), traditionally identified as weapons, could also have been utilitarian tools for animal butchery or dining (Borowski 2004, p. 106). Light provided by a lamp (No. 34) would have been essential within the darkness of the tomb, allowing mourners to prepare the body and offerings of food and drink.

Debate surrounds the interpretation of food- and drink-related objects from tombs of Late Bronze Age Canaan and Iron Age Israel. Were



D. 019129

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such provisions required for the afterlife or the deceased's journey to the afterlife? Were they given to placate underworld deities or deceased ancestors? Was food and drink placed with the deceased by family members as a symbolic portion of a shared funerary meal? Whatever the interpretation, food and drink, probably including meat and alcoholic beverages, played an important role in rituals carried out by the living that honored or commemorated the dead. These dining or feasting rituals helped reaffirm relationships between living members of the kin group and probably helped secure rites of inheritance (Albertz and Schmitt 2012, pp. 429–73; Bloch-Smith 1992a; Lev-Tov and Maher 2001). JG

PUBLISHED

27: Guy 1938, pls. 35:30 and 133:8

28: Guy 1938, pls. 35:28 and 133:15

29: Guy 1938, pp. 69-72, fig. 81, p. 156, pl. 134; Novacek 2011, pp. 34–35, cat. no. 17

30: Guy 1938, p. 55, pls. 36.7 and 133:11

31: Guy 1938, pls. 35:27 and 133:10

32: Guy 1938, p. 161, pl. 133:20

33: Guy 1938, fig. 186:7, pl. 133.19

34: Guy 1938, pl. 32:12

35: Guy 1938, pl. 33.6

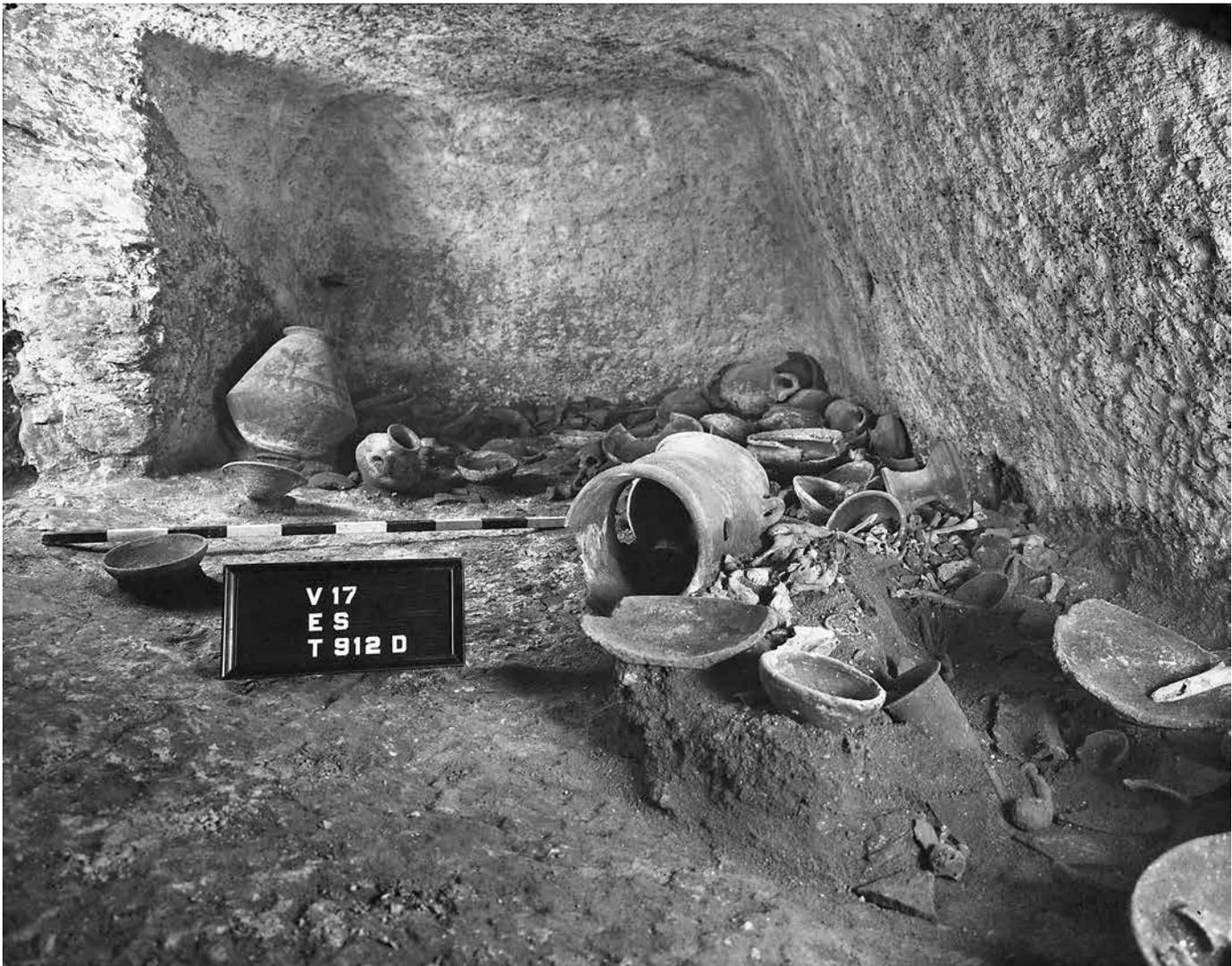


FIGURE C18. Tomb 912, chamber D from the west, showing the commingled material of Middle and Late Bronze Age dates. The intact “Megiddo Vase” (Catalog No. 29) can be seen in upper left of the photograph (Guy 1938, fig. 81)



36

37

38

D. 019108

36.-38. VESSELS FROM MESOPOTAMIAN GRAVES

Early Dynastic III, ca. 2600-2350 BC

Iraq, Khafajah

Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1930-33

GRAVE 165

36. Bowl

Baked clay
H: 8.5 cm
OIM A9279

37. Bowl

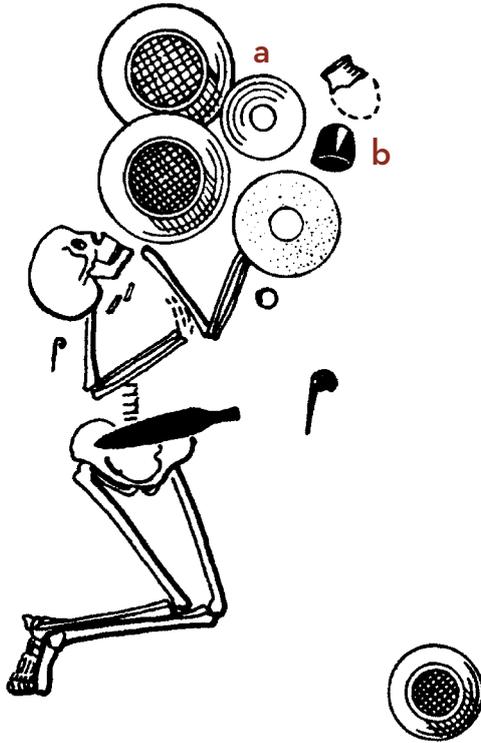
Copper
6.0 x 9.8 cm
OIM A9261

These vessels were excavated from the pit burial of a child wrapped in matting (fig. C19). A relatively high quantity of copper goods, including a bowl with a mat impression, as well as an ax, ring, blade, and pin, accompanied the burial along with stone and ceramic vessels. The burial also included three beads, two of lapis lazuli and one of agate, near the neck of the child.

The majority of the Early Dynastic burials excavated from the Houses (a residential urban area) at Khafajah consisted of simple pits dug some 75 centimeters to 1.5 meters below the floors of houses. In some instances, however, the graves were vaulted, and in two rare examples, the vaults were constructed with baked mudbrick. Although no architecture was associated with Grave 165, it was likely dug from the floor of a house that had eroded away from the surface of the mound.

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FIGURE C19. Early Dynastic III Grave 165 at Khafajah. Catalog Nos. 36 and 37 are labeled α and β , respectively (after Delougaz, Hill, and Lloyd 1967, p. 131, fig. 100)



Although the ceramics in Grave 165 have parallels with the household pottery at Khafajah, the large quantity of some pottery forms in other Early Dynastic graves has been associated with funerary libations. And at the southern Mesopotamian site of Abu Salabikh, animal bones retrieved from Early Dynastic graves have been associated with funerary offerings.¹ JME

PUBLISHED

36: Delougaz 1952, pp. 94, 142, pls. 96:b, 169:C.053.200

NOTE

¹ Postgate 1980, p. 74.

GRAVE 124

38. Carinated jar
Baked clay
28 x 24 cm
OIM A11629

This vessel also comes from the grave of a child, buried with seventy-five frit beads and a copper pin, as well as twenty-four pottery bowls and jars (fig. C20). The sharply carinated shoulder is marked by a band of incisions, including crosshatched triangles, that replace the painted decoration of jars of an earlier period. The “spout-handle,” so called because it was formed by flattening the end of a spout, bears an incised herringbone pattern. The Sumerian cuneiform sign for beer (*kaš*) depicts a narrow-necked jar with a spout extending vertically from the handle (Potts 1997, p. 141). Though this jar’s spout was not functional, it too may have been intended for storing beer or another liquid. VRH

PUBLISHED

Delougaz 1952, pp. 84, 89, pls. 79:a, 181:C.526.371b; Delougaz, Hill, and Lloyd 1967, pp. 114–15, fig. 87

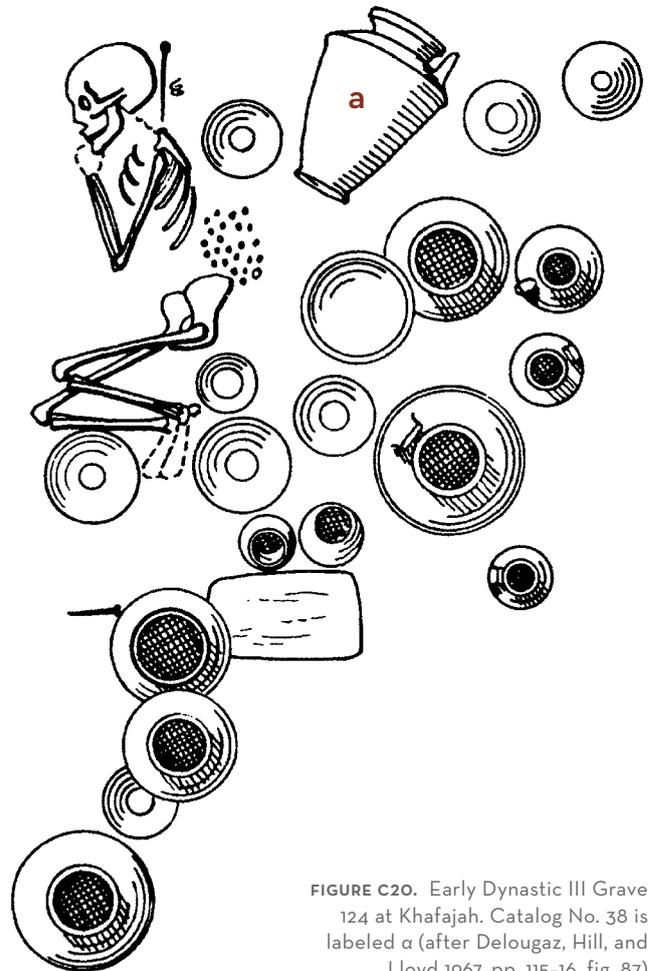


FIGURE C20. Early Dynastic III Grave 124 at Khafajah. Catalog No. 38 is labeled α (after Delougaz, Hill, and Lloyd 1967, pp. 115–16, fig. 87)



39

40

D. 019112

39.-40. VESSELS FROM AN ANATOLIAN GRAVE

Baked clay

Middle Bronze Age III, 1750-1650 BC

Turkey, Alişar Höyük, Grave d X42

Excavated by the Oriental Institute, 1931

39. Pitcher with clover-leaf mouth

10.8 x 7.6 cm

OIM A10633

40. Spouted pitcher

17.8 x 12.3 cm

OIM A10635

These pitchers were part of the grave goods that accompanied two people who were buried together at Alişar Höyük in central Anatolia. The deceased were laid out in two large jars whose openings were placed against each other (fig. C21). One skeleton had been placed on its back, with the arms folded across its body. The placement of the second skeleton could not be determined by the excavators. The grave goods consisted of four ceramic vessels

(von der Osten 1937, p. 93). As is the case with the artifacts from the Megiddo tomb (see Cat. Nos. 27-35), it is hard to pinpoint the meaning of these grave goods. Were they discarded at the end of the funerary rites or did they provide for the deceased in the afterlife? Among these grave goods, the vessel with a quatrefoil mouth and two large handles stands out (d 2715; von der Osten 1937, p. 190, fig. 201, pl. 6). A small flask with flat base

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and handle accompanied this jar (d 2716; von der Osten 1937, p. 188, fig. 194, pl. 5). The first pitcher (Catalog No. 39) has a clover-leaf spout. The pitcher with the beaked spout (No. 40) belongs to a type that was very popular during the Middle Bronze Age in Anatolia.

H. H. von der Osten, the director of the Oriental Institute's first excavations at Alişar Höyük from 1927 to 1932, assigned this tomb to the oldest subphase of Level 10T (1937, p. 84), presumably meaning the Old Hittite period (ca. 1650–1500 BC), since very few sherds found at the site date to the Hittite Empire period of the Late Bronze Age. But decades of scholarship based on excavations at other sites in central Anatolia allowed for a re-evaluation of the architecture and finds from Alişar Höyük (Gorny 1990). Clover-leaf vessels like Catalog No. 39 are especially abundant at Kanesh during



FIGURE C21. Grave d X42 at Alişar Höyük. Catalog No. 40 can be seen near the skull of the uppermost skeleton (von der Osten 1937, fig. 141)

the Karum Ib period and began to disappear in the fifteenth century BC (Gorny 1990, pp. 99–100). Pitchers with a beaked spout are one of the most popular shapes during any period at Kanesh. However, since pitcher No. 40 has a globular body that already displays some carination, it must date later in the Anatolian Middle Bronze Age sequence (Gorny 1990, p. 80). The exact dates of Anatolia's second-millennium BC chronology continue to be refined, but an eighteenth- or seventeenth-century date for this tomb seems to be acceptable (Gorny 1990, pp. 194–96; Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen 2012).

Among the seventy-two “Old Hittite” tombs that were excavated at Alişar Höyük, thirty-four were simple pits, one was enclosed by stone slabs, while thirty-six were pot burials like Grave d X42 (von der Osten 1937, p. 84).¹ These types of burials, as well as the absence of cremation burials (which are more common during the Hittite Empire period), can be found at other central Anatolian cemeteries. Stone tombs were also found at the (looted) cemeteries of Kazankaya (Özgüç 1978, p. 71) and Konaklı (Ferzant)-Büget, although pithos (large jar) burials may be absent there (Özgüç 1978, p. 87; 1986). A closer parallel can be found at the cemetery excavated at Gordion, used for a long period throughout the nineteenth to sixteenth centuries BC. While some of the deceased were buried in stone tombs (cists), most were buried in pithoi (Mellink 1956). The Alişar double pithoi burials are among the earliest examples of this tradition, which continued into (and spread during) the Late Bronze Age. (Bittel 1940; Green 2009). VJVE

PUBLISHED

39: von der Osten 1937, p. 186, fig. 180 (d 2662)

40: von der Osten 1937, p. 187, fig. 184, pl. 5 (d 2661)

NOTE

¹ The recent excavations at Alişar Höyük have revealed more tombs from different periods; see Gorny 1994; Gorny et al. 1995.



D. 019189

41.-47. DISHES FROM FUNERAL RITUALS OF TUTANKHAMUN

Baked clay, pigment

New Kingdom, Dynasty 18,

reign of Tutankhamun, ca. 1327 BC

Egypt, Luxor, King's Valley pit 54

By exchange with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1967

41. Jar

24.5 x 13.6 cm

OIM E26528

42. Beaker

21.7 x 11.1 cm

OIM E26525

43. Beaker

21.7 x 11.1 cm

OIM E26610

44. Bowl

2.9 x 14.0 cm

OIM E26500

45. Bowl

4.5 x 16.5 cm

OIM E26509

46. Bowl

4.3 x 7.3 cm

OIM E26585

47. Bowl

4.4 x 7.8 cm

OIM E26586

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

These pottery vessels are part of a group of material that was buried in large jars in the Valley of the Kings near the tomb of Tutankhamun. The king's name appears on seal impressions and on some of the linen sheets found in the jars, clearly associating the deposit with him. Once thought to be the remains of a feast held at the time of the burial of the king, much like a wake, the group of clay vessels, floral wreaths, textiles, and bits of food is now taken as the remains of the embalming process and of food sacrifices made at the time of the king's burial. Most of the pottery was smashed before being placed in the large jars, probably part of the ritual of breaking red-colored pots

that symbolized the destruction of evil forces that might harm the deceased (see Müller, *Chapter 11*, this volume). Thus, the material was more about the ritual protection of the deceased by the living, rather than a communal feast in honor of the dead king. However, other sources record an annual festival called the Beautiful Feast of the Valley during which family members met at the tombs of their ancestors and shared food and drink with a statue of the deceased. **ET**

PUBLISHED

Winlock 1941; Arnold 2010

FAST FOOD: MAGICAL METHODS OF PROVISIONING THE DEAD

Ancient Egypt is famous for its elaborate mortuary culture and mythology and for the extraordinary care and expense taken by its people to prepare for the afterlife. Eternity is a very long time, however, and all around was the evidence of the comparative brevity of mortuary cult in the form of neglected, looted, and forgotten tombs (see Baines and Lacovara 2002). It is no wonder, then, that particularly in Egypt, extra steps were sometimes taken to ensure a continuous supply of food and drink for the dead. Real offerings like those requested by Katumuwa or the spoken "offering formula" were always

preferable, sustaining the social as well as physical existence of the deceased, but magical substitutes would suffice in case offerings from descendants or priests should fail. The three objects below substitute either carved depictions of the food producers (Catalog No. 48) and of the food and drink itself (Catalog Nos. 49–50), or even just the names of the food and drink, uttered aloud (Catalog No. 50), for real offerings. These magical means of provisioning the dead demonstrate the perceived power of images and words to shape reality. **VRH**



D. 019181

48

48. MODEL WORKSHOP

Wood, gesso, pigment, linen

First Intermediate Period, Dynasties 9-10,

ca. 2160-2025 BC

Egypt, Sedment el-Gebel, Tomb 2105

Gift of the British School of Archaeology in Egypt, 1921

36.0 x 23.0 x 11.5 cm

OIM E11495

Food could be supplied for the deceased by leaving actual food at the burial, but in Egypt, representations of food and drink also sufficed. Wooden models of workshops were placed on or near the coffin in the sealed burial chamber, for they were believed to produce an endless supply of fresh food and drink for the deceased. This example shows workers producing the most essential offerings: bread, beer, and beef. The bakers and brewers work side by side because bread was a basic component of beer. A woman leans over as she grinds grain while another kneels to collect the flour. The black pot on a brazier may represent the cooking of mash for the beer. In the middle is a rectangular basket filled

with tall beer jars with conical stoppers. A man stands over a vat with a grid painted on it, perhaps sieving the beer mash, and another fans a fire in a small brazier. Two other men slaughter a spotted cow, one holding a bowl to collect the blood. Some tombs were supplied with dozens of models that could supply every conceivable product and service for the deceased. Incidentally, they are very valuable records of technology and daily life. **ET**

PUBLISHED

Petrie and Brunton 1924, p. 10, pl. 16:374; Breasted 1948, p. 40, pl. 40:a; Marfoe 1982, pp. 36-37; Teeter 2003, pp. 35-36; Teeter 2011, pl. 14

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49. OFFERING TABLE

Egyptian alabaster (calcite)
 Ptolemaic period, 4th c. BC
 Gift of the Art Institute of Chicago,
 1917
 35 x 35 x 5 cm
 OIM E9374



D. 019165

49

Food and liquid offerings left in tombs were commonly placed on a stone slab at the base of the false door, an architectural feature that was thought to allow the spirit of the deceased to pass between the subterranean burial chamber and the offering chamber (see fig. 11.2). Many offering tables are rectangular with a short protruding spout from which liquid poured on the surface could drain. This form imitates the shape of the hieroglyph for “offering” , making the slab itself a substitute for food offerings. Many offering tables are carved with detailed representations of food because those images too magically served as substitutes for actual food.

This example is carved with the representation of three round loaves of bread and two slender vases with flat lids. This type of vessel, called a *hes* jar, contained liquid offerings. The *hes* jar is the same shape as the hieroglyph for “praise,” indicating that the soul of the deceased was

thought to be honored by the offering. Between the jars is a small oval basin whose shape was derived from the representation of a garden pool. In the Saite, Ptolemaic, and Roman periods (seventh–first centuries BC), this pool was often represented as a cartouche (Kuentz 1981, p. 257), a loop of rope that normally surrounds the name of a king or queen. On offering tables, the cartouche does not indicate royal ownership, but rather it symbolically stands for the deceased’s personal name, one of the essential markers of an individual’s identity that would be sustained and revived by the offering (Kuentz 1981, pp. 259–60; Martin 1986, col. 148, n. 17). In the Late Period and into the Roman era, special emphasis was placed upon liquid offerings, which were thought to not only sustain, but also to purify, the deceased (see Catalog No. 26). ET

Previously unpublished



50

50. STELE OF KAKA AND BENIT: A REQUEST FOR FUNERARY OFFERINGS

Limestone, pigment

First Intermediate Period, Dynasties 7–11,

ca. 2181–2055 BC

Egypt. Purchased in Cairo, 1935

66.0 x 43.8 cm

OIM E16955

The Egyptians' desire that the deceased be provided with food and drink for eternity could be met in different ways, as shown by this funerary stele in honor of an official named Kaka and his wife Benit. According to Egyptian beliefs, food could be supplied by leaving actual food in the tomb chapel, or, as here, by images of food, such as the haunch, ribs, and head of a cow, yellow baskets of food, and jars of beer or wine in stands and racks in front of

Kaka. But food could also be actualized by reciting a “voice offering” that specified what food was desired. The text on this stele instructs visitors to the tomb, if they have nothing “in their hand,” to say “a thousand of bread, beer, oxen, and fowl and every good thing.” Ironically, the literacy rate in Egypt was very low, perhaps 2 to 3 percent, so it is unlikely that a visitor to the tomb would be able to read the text, but the fact that it appeared on the stele provided yet more security for the deceased, because even the written reference to food had the power to provide sustenance. **ET**

PUBLISHED

Dunham 1937, pp. 101–02, pl. 31; Woods, ed., 2010, pp. 152–53, cat. no. 80

EPILOGUE: CONTEMPORARY COMMEMORATIONS

Today, the modern funeral industry allows many people to keep a distance from death and the dead that was impossible in antiquity. Meanwhile, popular belief systems, especially in North America and Europe, have increasingly turned against the idea of interaction with the dead and the power of the dead to influence the world of the living (see Walter 1996). There can be benefits in these developments, in protecting people from both the fearsome aspects of death and the corpse and the terror of malevolent ghosts. But there has also been a backlash against the sanitization, medicalization (Bartalos 2009), and commercialization of death (Mitford 1998), as many people reject this attitude of denial or crave a continuing connection with their lost loved ones. Both secular and religious people devise their own idiosyncratic rituals of mourning and commemoration,¹ and new social traditions such as memorial websites or social media profiles² and “death cafés”³ have been born from the power of the Internet to bring friends and strangers together even over great distances.

Alongside these recent trends, however, stand age-old traditions of commemoration and communion with the dead kept alive in cultures around the

world despite or even in reaction to modernization and globalization. In most cases there is no cultural connection with ancient Middle Eastern and Egyptian traditions, and attitudes toward the dead even in the world religions born in the Middle East have undergone significant transformation. But many of these festivals share with the cultures of the ancient Middle East (and with each other) key attitudes and practices highlighted in this exhibit.

As in the ancient Middle East and Egypt, contemporary memorial rituals reinforce family continuity as the basis of identity and meaning in life by gathering together its members, both past and present. The local specificity of memorial practices at gravesides and in family homes induces many scattered family members to return home to participate. In most cases the dead are commemorated on certain days of the year, in festivals and holidays that are community-wide, whether in spring, summer, or fall (see Box C1). The sharing of normative rituals and emotions both solemn and joyous reinforces a sense of belonging in the larger community (see Scott 2007, pp. 222–23). Also shared among many world traditions is a sense of the reciprocity between the living and the dead.

BOX C1. FESTIVALS FOR THE DEAD IN 2014

April 5	Qingming (“Clear Bright”) Festival (China)
August 10	Yu Lan (“Hungry Ghost”) Festival (China)
August 13–15	Obon Festival (Japanese Buddhism)
September 8	Chuseok (Korea)
September 9	Boun Khao Salak (Laos)
September 9–24	Pitru Paksha (Hinduism)
October 2	Chongyang Festival (China)
November 1	All Saints’ Day (Catholicism), Día de los Niños (Latin America)
November 2	All Souls’ Day (Catholicism, Vodou), Día de los Muertos (Latin America)

EPILOGUE: CONTEMPORARY COMMEMORATIONS

The ancestral dead need care so as not to become “hungry ghosts” (who are specially appeased, for example, in the Chinese Yu Lan (“Hungry Ghost”) Festival. As motivations for the living, filial piety and feelings of pity compete with the hope of receiving blessings, rather than curses, from the dead (Scott 2007, pp. 228–31). A story from Mexico expresses these mixed feelings:

One day, a man who is to be away for the *Noche de Muertos* tells his wife to prepare a nice offering and altar for his deceased mother.... When the husband returns to the village the next morning, he meets his mother’s spirit crying by the gate of the cemetery. She tells her son that she was not welcomed to his house. Being so hungry and cold, she was eagerly looking forward to the candles, food, and drink. Nothing had been set out, not even a cup of chocolate! ... His mother’s spirit tells him to say nothing of what he knows and instead he is to ask his wife to take her finest dress from her wooden chest to wear when they attend morning mass together.... His lazy, foolish wife readily agreed. Upon kneeling at her wooden chest to retrieve her dress, she died instantly of fright and fell to the floor. Her beautiful lace dress had turned into a mass of *calaveras* [skulls] and bones! (Scalora 1997, pp. 76–77)

Each festival for the dead has its specific set of rituals and practices with local significance: in Japan, horses and cows made of vegetables and chopsticks are placed outside the gate for the ancestors to ride back home; in Mexico, yellow marigolds (*cempazuchitl*) are the flowers of death (fig. C24); while in Haiti, people dress in purple and black (see Catalog No. 55); the Hindu Shradha ritual for the dead must be performed by a male heir, while women usually keep vigil for the Mexican dead.

However, like ancient Middle Eastern and Egyptian mortuary rituals, nearly all of these contemporary festivals include offerings of food and drink as central components. Whether offered at home, temple, or graveside, food and drink are a universal means of transmitting life force to the disembodied dead who lack it and are a source of sensual earthly pleasure for the departed. Sometimes the offerings are disposed of, or given to monks (as in Laos) or birds (as in Nepal) to eat, but when the food and drink are also consumed by the family (as in Mexico, China, and Benin), this can be considered a shared meal between living and dead that continues to define the family group even across the divide of death (figs. C22 and C24). In contemporary memorials, candles and



FIGURE C22. Food offerings for Qingming at a tombstone in Bukit Brown Cemetery, Singapore. This cemetery has been placed on the 2014 World Monuments Watch list (see <http://bukitbrown.com>) (photograph by Claire Leow, used with permission)

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FIGURE C23. Altar with ancestral tablets, Kwong Wai Siew Li Si She Shut Clan Association, Singapore (photograph by Kenneth Tan, CC-BY-NC-SA 2.0)

flames to provide light and warmth to the dead are also nearly ubiquitous (sometimes constituting the only material “offering”; see Catalog Nos. 56–57), and fire is the means of transmitting inedible paper offerings to the ancestors in Chinese culture (see Catalog Nos. 53–54; Scott 2007). In modern Judaism, visitors to a gravesite often leave a small stone on the tomb. This not only records the visit and builds up the memorial, but some say it helps to hold the soul in the grave and to prevent its wandering.

As the Katumuwa inscription and Egyptian mortuary texts show, the soul of the deceased was often believed to be able to inhabit effigies of stone or other materials in order to receive offerings from the living. This belief is much less common in the contemporary world, but ancestor or memorial tablets inscribed with the name of the deceased and placed on the home or shrine altar are considered to house the spirits of the honored dead in East Asian cultures (fig. C23), and iron poles called *asen*, topped by small figures, can be inhabited by all of a family’s ancestors in Benin (Bay 2008). Elsewhere, an image of the dead (as in the Día de los Muertos) or his or her tombstone is often used as a focus for memorial rituals and a prompt for reminiscence (see fig. C24), and the spirits of the dead are expected to visit these places in immaterial form. In Haitian vodou (as well as some African religions), a visit from an ancestor sometimes takes the form of a person’s possession, either by the

ancestor herself or by the spirit that used to possess that ancestor (Brown 2001, pp. 364–68). In Chinese culture, a “passport” with the name of someone who died elsewhere might be burnt to allow the spirit to travel to the place where offerings were being given (Scott 2007, p. 133).

This final section of the exhibit showcases a variety of objects that are used in commemorations of the dead in contemporary cultures (Catalog Nos. 51–57). These are not everyday items, but are specific to rituals of remembrance or offering and reserved for use on certain days of the year. These objects are thus imbued with a special power to connect the material world of the living with the immaterial one of the dead and mediate their continuing relationship. **VRH**

NOTES

¹ For a compendium of noteworthy new memorial practices, see Death Reference Desk. “Archive for the ‘Monuments + Memorials’ Category,” accessed December 4, 2013, <http://deathreferencedesk.org/category/monuments-memorials/>.

² Facebook. December 7, 2011. “Remembering Loved Ones on Facebook,” accessed December 4, 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/facebook-safety/remembering-loved-ones-on-facebook/306746312679491>; Death Reference Desk. February 5, 2012. “19,000 Facebook Users Die Each Day. Here is How FB’s Memorialization Mode Works,” accessed December 4, 2013, <http://deathreferencedesk.org/2012/02/05/19000-facebook-users-die-each-day-here-is-how-fbs-memorialization-mode-works/>.

³ “Death Cafe,” accessed December 4, 2013, deathcafe.com.



51

51. SUGAR SKULL FOR THE DAY OF THE DEAD

Sugar, pigments
 Made in Mexico
 Modern
 10.0 x 8.0 x 9.5 cm
 Private collection



52

52. "CASTILLO STYLE" SKELETON BREAD BAKER

Ceramic, pigments
 Made in Mexico
 Modern
 11.5 x 16.5 x 14.0 cm
 Private collection

The human skull (*calavera*) is a quintessential symbol of death. Making this macabre object beautiful and sweet with color, flowers, and sugar communicates the dual message of the Día de los Muertos: remember death, but celebrate life and the community between living and dead. Decorated sugar skulls, some with a name inscribed on the forehead, can be given to either the living or the dead, and in the latter case are placed on the altar or *ofrenda*. Skulls, animated skeletons, and coffins are ubiquitous decorations around the Day of the Dead, serving as the humorous icons (and sometimes political symbols, invoking death as



FIGURE C24. Altar for an unmarried woman, Michoacán, Mexico. Some elements, including candles, incense, and flowers, serve to guide the deceased back home, while others, such as water, dried corn, salt, *pan de muertos* (bread in human shape), and seasonal fruits provide energy and purity (photograph courtesy of Cristina Potters, www.mexicocooks.typepad.com)

the great leveler of the social classes) of what has become a very significant community festival in Mexico. This ceramic figurine of a skeletal baker with his brick oven and breads ready for offering on the altars of the dead, complete with a skeletal dog thief, is typical of this genre of black humor. VRH

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST



53

53.-54. PAPER OFFERINGS FOR QINGMING

53. Joss paper banknotes

Paper

Modern

Private collection

54. Paper iPhone, watch, and clothes

Paper

Modern

38 x 30 cm

Private collection

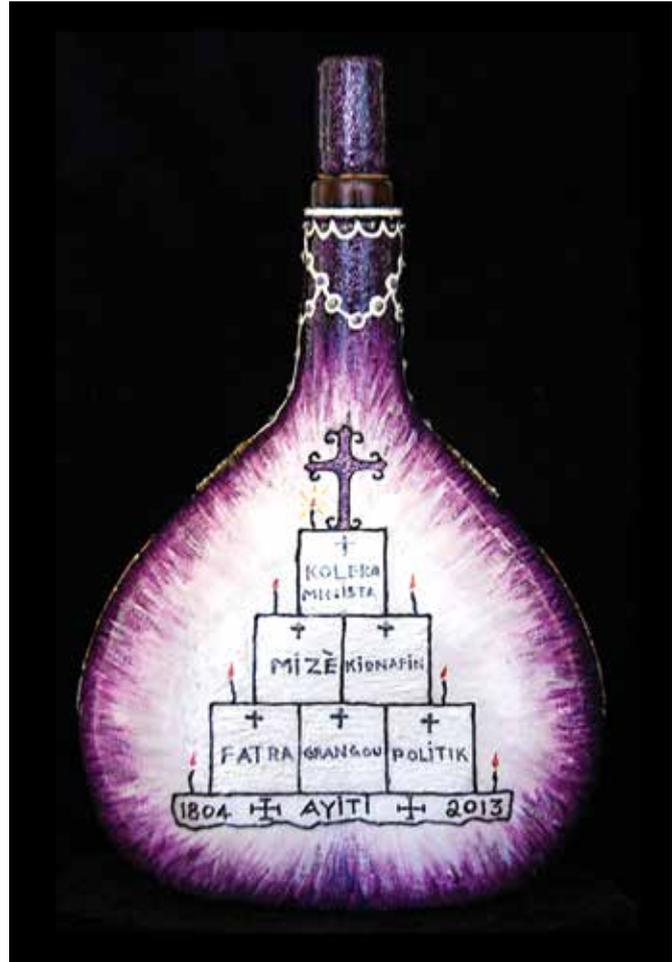
On the occasion of the Chinese Qingming (“Clear Bright”) Festival each year in early April, people visit and tend to the graves of their deceased relatives (the festival is also sometimes called “Tomb Sweeping Day”). In addition to offerings of prayer and food and drink (fig. C22), paper items such as these are burnt as a way to provide ancestors with goods they might need or want in the afterlife (see Scott 2007). More traditional joss paper or “spirit money” is made of bamboo or rice in a simple design with gold and silver foil, but also popular today are colorful and elaborate faux banknotes such as these, often in huge denominations and depicting the Jade Emperor. Almost any household or personal item can be purchased in paper to burn for the ancestors, including clothing and the latest gadgets, such as this paper iPhone. VRH



54



55, three-quarters view



55, back

55. HAITIAN BOTTLE FOR THE GEDE

Glass, acrylic paint, glitter

Kesler Pierre, 2013

H: 26.3 cm

Collection of Kesler Pierre

This contemporary bottle is the work of Kesler Pierre, a Haitian-born, Brooklyn-based artist who specializes in the vodou arts. Such bottles, sometimes highly decorated but more often plain, are a standard feature of vodou altars and hold liquors that are poured out as libations for the spirits. This bottle honors the spirit Gran Brijit, who probably came to Haiti via the Celtic goddess Brigid and the Scots and Irishmen who were deported to Caribbean colonies during the War of the Three Kingdoms. Along with her husband Bawon Semetye,

Brijit presides over the cemetery and the rituals that fall within this domain. The first woman buried in a cemetery in Haiti is recognized as a Brijit, and the first man as a Bawon. Both Brijit and Bawon represent and lead what are called the Gede spirits. These spirits are the reclaimed souls of the deceased, and, as such, anyone can become a Gede after death, though not all do. Gedes are trickster spirits who relish the comedy of life and death. They are grand mediators of mortality but are also purveyors of sexuality and protectors

IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME: FEASTING WITH THE DEAD IN THE ANCIENT MIDDLE EAST

of children (Brown 2001). Papa Gede's comic performances, orchestrated through possession, are rife with vulgarity and rudeness. This is evident on the day the innumerable Gede are honored most passionately in Haiti: November 2nd, or All Souls' Day. On this day, followers of Gede adorn black and purple garb, powder their faces, string pacifiers around their necks, and don one-eyed sunglasses. They solicit small change and an embarrassed guffaw from passersby who ask to see the surprise in the tin box and discover, for example, a doll

with hairy genitals. Though comical, Gede's jokes often belie a jarring truth. This bottle joins in this spirit of satire. It announces the life and death struggle of Haiti since its independence in 1804 to the year 2013. The inscriptions on the tombstones lay blame on the epidemic of cholera brought by the peacekeepers (*kolera minista*), poverty (*mizè*), kidnapping (*kidnapin*), garbage (*fatra*), hunger (*grangou*), and politics (*politik*). Kesler Pierre's work has been used for ceremonial purposes and been displayed in several museum exhibitions. CK

56. JAHRZEIT CANDLE

Metal, glass, plastic
 Modern, mid-20th c. AD
 Made in Israel
 15 x 10 cm
 Private collection

In modern Judaism, the anniversary of a loved one's death (German *Jahrzeit*) is marked by the burning of a candle for twenty-four hours, from sundown to sundown, at home or at the grave, and may be accompanied by the recitation of the Kaddish, the mourners' prayer. A memorial candle may also be lit during the week of Shiva immediately after the death, on Yom Kippur, and on the last day of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot. Electric candles with a Star of David filament like this one became popular as a safe alternative to wax candles in the mid-twentieth century. The inscription on the base reads "In Loving Memory" in English, but in Hebrew *lzkrl wlm* "In Eternal Memory," using the same word for "eternity" found in the Katumuwa Stele inscription. VRH



56

57. CEMETERY LANTERN (ZNICZ)

Glass, plastic
 Modern
 Made in Poland
 25 x 14 cm
 Private collection

The observance of All Souls' Day (November 2) is common to Catholics worldwide. In most places, special foods are cooked to be shared by living and dead, graves are tidied and decorated, prayers are offered, and candles are lit, but each local culture has its particular set of traditions for the commemoration and care for the dead. In Poland, the celebration of *Zaduszki* is particularly popular, and schools and workplaces are closed so that people can travel to the cemeteries of their relatives and reunite with extended family. For days at the beginning of November, Polish cemeteries twinkle with hundreds of *znicze*, decorative domed lanterns placed on and around the tombstones (fig. C25). There are now even services available online that place *znicze* on graves for Poles living abroad. VRH



57



FIGURE C25. *Znicze* on All Souls' Eve, 2013, in a cemetery of Sanok, Poland (photo by Silar / Wikimedia Commons)

CONCORDANCE OF MUSEUM REGISTRATION NUMBERS

Registration Number	Catalog / Figure Number	Description
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM, ASIAN COLLECTION		
A6716	Cat. No. 15	Stone Spirit
A6723	Cat. No. 20	Cuneiform Tablet: Fragment of the Hittite Royal Funerary Ritual
A8583	Cat. No. 22	Cylinder Seal
A9261	Cat. No. 37	Bowl
A9279	Cat. No. 36	Bowl
A10633	Cat. No. 39	Pitcher with Clover-leaf Mouth
A10635	Cat. No. 40	Spouted Pitcher
A11629	Cat. No. 38	Carinated Jar
A12417	Cat. No. 21	Door Plaque with Banqueters
A12640	Cat. No. 9	Lid
A12707	Cat. No. 25	Stamp Seal with a Banquet Scene
A16398	Cat. No. 31	Dipper Juglet
A16399	Cat. No. 28	Chalice
A16400	Cat. No. 27	Painted Krater
A16414	Cat. No. 30	Cooking Pot
A16415	Cat. No. 29	Painted Biconical Jug
A16439	Cat. No. 32	Dagger
A16446	Cat. No. 33	Bowl
A17345	Cat. No. 8	Cylindrical Box (Pyxis)
A17896	Cat. No. 23	Cylinder Seal
A18828	Cat. No. 14	Stone Spirit
A22164	Cat. No. 5	Ivory Furniture Inlay
A22169	Cat. No. 4	Ivory Furniture Inlay
A22270	Cat. No. 24	Furniture Inlay with a Banquet Scene
A22292	Cat. No. 3	Hittite Plaque with Winged Sun-disks
A27075	Cat. No. 11	Red-slipped Footed Platter
A27852	Cat. No. 10	Duck Weight
A28292	Cat. No. 35	Bowl
A28299	Cat. No. 34	Lamp
A34980	Fig. C7	Neo-Assyrian Orthostat

Registration Number	Catalog / Figure Number	Description
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM, EGYPTIAN COLLECTION		
E4461	Fig. 11.1	Statuette of <i>ba</i> -bird
E9374	Cat. No. 49	Offering Table
E10618	Cat. No. 18	Funerary Statue of a Man and His Wife
E10825	Fig. 11.2	False Door of Ny-su-redi
E11394	Cat. No. 26	Ritual Vessel (Situla)
E11495	Cat. No. 48	Model Workshop
E13945	Fig. 11.8	Letter to the Dead
E14287	Cat. No. 19	Stele of an Ancestor (<i>akh</i>)
E16955	Cat. No. 50	Stele of Kaka and Benit
E26500	Cat. No. 44	Bowl
E26509	Cat. No. 45	Bowl
E26525	Cat. No. 42	Beaker
E26528	Cat. No. 41	Jar
E26585	Cat. No. 46	Bowl
E26586	Cat. No. 47	Bowl
E26610	Cat. No. 43	Beaker
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE MUSEUM, CAST COLLECTION		
C5676	Cat. No. 12	Statue of Panamuwa II of Sam'al
C5677	Cat. No. 1	Katumuwa Stele
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART		
32.161.1	Cat. No. 6	Phiale (Drinking Bowl)
74.51.2777	Cat. No. 7	Pinecone from a Funerary Cippus
91.34.2	Cat. No. 13	Syro-Hittite Banquet Stele
PENN MUSEUM, UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA		
32-20-382	Cat. No. 17	Stone Spirit
64-11-14	Cat. No. 16	Stone Spirit

CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBIT

Katumuwa Stele (cast) (OIM C5677)

Video: “Remembering Katumuwa”

An Eternal Feast: Reading the Katumuwa Stele’s Image

Hittite Plaque with Winged Sun-disks (OIM A22292)

Ivory Furniture Inlay (OIM A22169)

Ivory Furniture Inlay (OIM A22164)

Phiale (Drinking Bowl) (MMA 32.161.1)

Pinecone from a Funerary Cippus (MMA 74.51.2777)

Cylindrical Box (Pyxis) (OIM A17345)

Lid (OIM A12640)

Duck Weight (OIM A27852)

Red-slipped Footed Platter (OIM A27075)

The Soul In the Stone: Effigies of the Dead

Statue of Panamuwa II of Sam’al (Cast) (OIM C5676)

Syro-Hittite Banquet Stele (MMA 91.34.2)

Stone Spirit (OIM A18828)

Stone Spirit (OIM A6716)

Stone Spirit (Penn Museum 64-11-14)

Stone Spirit (Penn Museum 32-20-382)

Funerary Statue of a Man and His Wife (OIM E10618)

Stele of an Ancestor (*akh*) (OIM E14287)

Cuneiform Tablet: Fragment of the Hittite Royal
Funerary Ritual (OIM A6723)

The Banquet in Life and Death

Door Plaque with Banqueters (OIM A12417)

Cylinder Seal (OIM A8583)

Cylinder Seal (OIM A17896)

Furniture Inlay with a Banquet Scene (OIM A22270)

Stamp Seal with a Banquet Scene (OIM A12707)

Ritual Vessel (Situla) (OIM E11394)

Dishes for the Dead

Painted Krater (OIM A16400)

Chalice (OIM A16399)

Painted Biconical Jug (OIM A16415)

Cooking Pot (OIM A16414)

Dipper Juglet (OIM A16398)

Dagger (OIM A16439)

Bowl (OIM A16446)

Lamp (OIM A28299)

Bowl (OIM A28292)

Bowl (OIM A9279)

Bowl (OIM A9261)

Carinated Jar (OIM A11629)

Pitcher with Clover-leaf Mouth (OIM A10633)

Spouted Pitcher (OIM A10635)

Jar (OIM E26528)

Beaker (OIM E26525)

Beaker (OIM E26610)

Bowl (OIM E26500)

Bowl (OIM E26509)

Bowl (OIM E26585)

Bowl (OIM E26586)

Fast Food: Magical Methods of Provisioning the Dead

Model Workshop (OIM E11495)

Offering Table (OIM E9374)

Stele of Kaka and Benit (OIM E16955)

Epilogue: Contemporary Commemorations

Sugar Skull for Day of the Dead

“Castillo Style” Skeleton Bread Baker

Joss Paper Banknotes

Paper iPhone, Watch, and Clothes

Hatian Bottle for the Gede

Jahrzeit Candle

Cemetery Lantern (*Znicz*)

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